
Abstract

This interdisciplinary research draws on the fields of international development and political economy. A gap is present in current evidence to support the conceptualisation of humanitarian donorship and specifically the causal links between donorship mechanics and the ability of those affected by crises to recover. This research investigates the question of why it is challenging for donors to align the characteristics of their humanitarian funding with the lived experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. The research takes a qualitative ethnographic approach using primary and secondary data bounded by a case study of Overseas Development Aid (ODA) for the recovery of shelter and settlements. The theoretical framework uses a critical accounting approach based on Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting (Miller & Power, 2013). Miller and Power’s original framework is extended from these accounting roles to include the broader economic practices of humanitarian donorship. This research finds that while donorship with the characteristics of flexibility and a longer-term perspective aligns well with the lived experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises, these characteristics are challenging for donors. Exogenous influences incentivise donors towards short-termism, restricting longer-term approaches, and endogenous influences create rigidity in funding processes, preventing flexibility. Together the lack of longer-term approaches and the lack of flexibility contributes to insufficient support to the agency of affected households over the lived experience of the recovery of their shelter and settlements. The research findings inform humanitarian policy and practice and in particular humanitarian donorship for the recovery of shelter and settlements.
Acknowledgements

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Thank you to my family and friends for all their support. Special thanks to John Adlam, Irantzu Serra-Lasa and Dr Margaret Tilley for their constant encouragement, valuable insights, and steadfast support.

My deepest gratitude always to my husband David and my son Orryn for their unwavering love and patience throughout.
Dedication

In memory of the life and work of

Graham Saunders

RIP
Publications by the Candidate

https://www.interaction.org/blog/roadmap-for-research


https://www.sheltercluster.org/resources/library/state-humanitarian-shelter-and-settlements
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHA</td>
<td>United States’ Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>The Central African Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBPF</td>
<td>Country Based Pooled Funds</td>
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<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Relief Fund</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Australia’s Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (merged with the Foreign and Office in 2020 to become the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).)</td>
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<td>DIPECHO</td>
<td>European Commission’s Disaster Preparedness Programme</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations</td>
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<td>ESRC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Research Council</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FCA</td>
<td>European Commission’s Forgotten Crises Assessment</td>
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<td>FCDO</td>
<td>The United Kingdom’s Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office</td>
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<td>HIP</td>
<td>European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations’ Humanitarian Implementation Plan</td>
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<td>HLPHF</td>
<td>High Level Panel for Humanitarian Financing</td>
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<td>HNO</td>
<td>United Nations Humanitarian Needs Overview</td>
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<td>HPP</td>
<td>Irish Aid’s Humanitarian Programme Plan</td>
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<td>GB</td>
<td>Grand Bargain</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GHA</td>
<td>Global Humanitarian Assistance</td>
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<td>GHD</td>
<td>Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative</td>
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<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>GSC</td>
<td>Global Shelter Cluster</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>KII</td>
<td>Key informant interview</td>
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<td>LIC</td>
<td>Low Income Country</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Middle Income Country</td>
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<td>MYHF</td>
<td>Multi Year Humanitarian Funding</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Overseas Development Aid</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OECD DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>OFDA</td>
<td>United States’ Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance</td>
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<td>OMD</td>
<td>Obsessive Measurement Disorder</td>
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<td>PASSA</td>
<td>Participatory Approach to Safer Shelter Awareness</td>
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<td>RRF</td>
<td>The United Kingdom’s Rapid Response Fund</td>
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<td>RRM</td>
<td>Sweden’s Rapid Response Mechanism</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States’ Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>WHS</td>
<td>World Humanitarian Summit</td>
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Chapter 1:
Challenges of Recovering Shelter and Settlements
with ODA in Humanitarian Crises.

1.1 Introduction.

This chapter introduces original research into Overseas Development Aid (ODA) in support of those who have lost their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. The following section explains the research problem addressed and its context. It also describes the inspiration for the research and how the problem was identified. The second section presents understandings of humanitarian crises and donorship and outlines the challenge of recovering shelter and settlements with support funded with ODA. There follows a brief description of the gaps in current knowledge and the contribution of this research, followed by the aims of the research and the main research questions. There is a brief introduction to the theoretical framework and the methodology, explaining how the relationship between state donors and those affected by crises was investigated in order to answer the principal research question. The next section includes the thesis argument and the main research findings. The chapter ends with a summary of the structure of the upcoming chapters of the thesis.

1.2 Background.

1.2.1 The Challenge.

“...finance is about more than money. It affects the organisations that are strengthened or neglected, the level of attention that is paid to people, sectors or countries, the information to which funders have access and on which they base future decisions, and the economic impact felt in locations where the money is spent, as it travels through the layers of the humanitarian system. Financing is also one of the few things over which donors have control. Our view, therefore, is that policies on financing merit serious attention.”

(Kellet, Walmsley, & Poole, 2011: p2)
This research considers the phenomenon that the funding available for the recovery of shelter and settlements during humanitarian crises is often misaligned with the characteristics required to uphold the agency of affected households. Two main characteristics required are flexibility and a longer-term perspective. Flexibility enables donors to uphold the agency of affected household by adapting resources to their changing priorities. A longer-term perspective allows for continuity of resources in support of household recovery attempts, enabling opportunities for sustainable development. This misalignment is particularly acute for the recovery of shelter and settlements because shelter and settlements take a long time to recover fully, and often provide opportunities for developmental approaches such as disaster risk reduction, leaving shelter and settlements firmly in the overlap between the territories of humanitarianism and development. Shelter and settlements provide a good case, therefore, because they do not fit neatly into these boundaries set up by donors. Those households who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises often require a long period of time to recover (Devictor & Do, 2016; Platt, 2018), during which time their priorities often shift (Twigg et al., 2017). Overseas Development Aid (ODA) often lacks the flexibility and longevity required to respond effectively to meet these household needs. While recent trends in state donor humanitarian policy have emphasised support to the agency of those affected by crises in the form of principles such as ‘participation’ and ‘localisation’ (WHS, 2016), the shape and scale of ODA has yet to catch up (Levine & Sida, 2019; Metcalfe-Hough & Fenton, 2019; Stoddard, Poole, Taylor, & Willitts-King, 2017). This research explores why there is such slow progress towards closing the gap between pro-poor donor intentions and the experiences of those affected by humanitarian crises.

Funding to support recovery from humanitarian crises comes from a range of sources including governments, development banks, private foundations, the public and remittances (Thomas & Urquhart, 2020). This research considers humanitarian crises in both disaster and conflict settings, and specifically those where state donors seek to offer support by funding their implementing partners, including United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This funding is known as ODA. ODA includes concessional grants and loans from governments “that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries” (OECD, 2019b) . ODA specifically does not include “military aid and promotion of donors’ security interests, or transactions that have a primarily commercial objectives” (ibid). Data on the amount of ODA provided by state donors is recorded and the target is collected, verified and made publicly available by the
While there are a range of different types of donors, this research will use ‘donors’ to mean those donors who contribute ODA. While the misalignment of funding and recovery presents a practical problem, since poorest and marginalised communities suffer the worst in humanitarian crises, effective state donorship is also a question of social justice. The tendency of humanitarian crises is, on the one hand, to affect the poorest countries and the most marginalised individuals (Cramer, 2009; Stromberg, 2007). On the other hand, humanitarian crises involve state level decisions with a degree of urgency. This contrast creates a dynamic space through which to investigate the relationship between economic and social ideas, and in particular, those concepts valued by those affected by crises and those who seek to support them.

The loss of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises represents a major loss of wellbeing for the families affected and housing is a major economic cost to the affected state (Victoria Maynard, Parker, & Twigg, 2017). This research includes the loss of shelter and settlements the loss of physical structures, tenure, location and kinship networks which make up a household’s home. Consequently, the recovery of shelter and settlements is a catalyst for regaining households’ wellbeing in areas such as health, livelihoods and education (Kelling, 2020), and at a national level it can be a major contributor to recovery of the national economy (Sheppard & Hill, 2005). While the humanitarian outcomes from supporting households to recover their shelter and settlements are considerable, the initial per capita cost can be larger than for other necessities such as food security, and the large physical size of shelters may attract unwanted political attention. Support to shelter and settlements may not, therefore, fulfil other motivations for state donorship.

The inspiration for this thesis was drawn from a combination of the researcher’s empirical experience of working with households affected by humanitarian crises and an interest in filling the gaps created by interdisciplinary problems, such as those which rely upon both economic and social ideas. The researcher worked for two decades as a humanitarian practitioner and programme director for international non-governmental organisations supporting the recovery of shelter and settlements, and as a humanitarian adviser working for the British Government’s Department of International Development. Her empirical experience includes fieldwork in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas in disasters and conflict settings. She has provided advice to INGOs, UN agencies and government officials in a number of the largest crises in recent history, including the Balkans conflict, the South

1 About the OECD - OECD visited on 10.08.21
2 The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) merged with the Foreign and Office in 2020 to become the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).
Asian Tsunami, the Haiti Earthquake, Dollo Ado Refugee Camp in Ethiopia and the Syrian conflict. She has also worked on many small ‘forgotten’ crises which often recur year on year, which receive little donor interest.

1.2.2 Understanding Humanitarian Crises and Donorship.

Those who suffer the most in humanitarian crises are understood to be the poorest and most marginalised who are likely to suffer the most, and to recover more slowly (Stromberg, 2007). Flinn et al. highlight, however, that affected communities use whatever agency they have to try to recover, they are “never passive, and the initiation of reconstruction and recovery is an inevitable process.” (Flinn, Schofield, & Morel, 2017: p13). Recent studies have used the example of the recovery of shelter and settlements to illustrate that even in the midst of an international humanitarian response, the majority of those affected by crises recover the capability to shelter and settle themselves on their own and without external support (Flinn et al., 2017; Parrack, Flinn, & Passey, 2014; Twigg et al., 2017). This echoes the theories of Sen and Nussbaum who understand people as agents with the freedom to act, rather than those who passively receive (Sen, 1985; Nussbaum, 2000).

Those affected by the crises overlap with those responding to a crisis, because often those most appropriately situated to respond are located ‘locally’ to the crises, and at least within the same national boundaries (Brokopp Binder & Baker, 2017; Kilby, 2007; Roepstorff, 2019). Communities, local organisations and authorities will often be the first responders and those with the most relevant knowledge about the context where the crises occurred. At the same time, where local resources and capacity are overwhelmed and outstripped, affected states may call on the support of donor states who fund their implementing partners to provide assistance (Joanna Macrae et al., 2002; Walker & Maxwell, 2008). In humanitarian crises substantial resources and therefore power lies primarily in the hands of external actors, such as donor states. Consequently, humanitarian action is often constructed from the perspective of those who seek to support rather than from those who are affected, as discussed above. Together this range of actors is known as the humanitarian community. It is this relationship between the provision of resources by donor states and the experience of those affected by crises that is the focus on this study.

The following diagram (Figure 1) shows organisational entities in the humanitarian system, including those whose primary mandate is provision of aid and those who play a critical role, but humanitarian action is not their core function.
Figure 1: Organisational entities in the Humanitarian System (Knox Clarke, 2018:p33)
While donorship can be understood as a relationship and a political action, donorship is at its most basic the transfer of resources. As such it can be investigated as an economic activity. Furthermore, the economic aspect of donorship can be argued to influence the political aspect of the behaviour of the donor. The assertion that ‘economising’, or putting economic ideas into practice through economic activities, influences social relations emerges from the works of Weber and his early ideas around organisational theory (Weber, 2001), Argyris’ observations of management practice (Argyris, 1984) and Hopwood’s assertion of the social implications of the practice of accounting (Hopwood, 1976). Sen also observes that when you set up an economic system you set up an ethical system (Sen, 1991). The power of an economic system, such as donorship, can therefore be judged as having good or bad consequences; curative or divisive. Sayer argues for consideration of a ‘moral economy’ as a way of examining and assessing the moral influences on, and implications, of economic activities (Sayer, 2015). Shearer highlights that reflections on economic accountability often fail to adequately describe ethical assumptions regarding the moral status of economic actors (Shearer, 2002).

Humanitarian donorship is linked to both humanity and economics. Humanity calls upon those who have resources to support those who suffer (Ashby Wilson & Brown, 2008). Humanitarian action can be understood to be more than pure generosity, rather it represents a responsibility for the relief of suffering. This responsibility gives rise to the concept of the ‘humanitarian imperative’, or the “obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed”(Terry, 2013). Donorship can therefore be understood as a duty, rather than a gift or an exchange (Baviera et al., 2016; Laidlaw, 2013), and it is from this duty that the political dimension to human suffering is derived.

For donor states, humanitarianism’s pure intention to relieve suffering intervenes in a framework of other government duties and relationships that may be either aligned or at odds with it. Attention to humanitarian donorship, and wider donorship within international development, is then largely occupied with the motives and behaviours of donors. In addition, running through theories of donorship is the acknowledgment of donorship as soft power (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004; Schraeder, Hook, & Taylor, 1998). This literature is framed by the consideration of the balance of humanitarian, commercial and political motivation of governments which, Macdonald and Hoddinott for example, call the “trinity of mixed motives” (Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004: p294).

In humanitarian crises in particular, the allocation of humanitarian funding across different contexts has been found to share similar political and commercial determinants to development funding, with the addition of media influence (Drury, Olson, & Van Belle, 2005; Stromberg, 2007). In situations of conflict, Duffield and Fox argue that a further dimension of complexity exists between aid for
immediate humanitarian objectives, and longer term objectives such as conflict resolution or development (Duffield, 2001; Fox, 2001).

While the relief of suffering is in essence arguably a positive action, the scale and complexity of donorship has been found to have a range of characteristics, from curative to divisive. Humanitarian action has a long history with the notion that aid can in fact do harm (Anderson, 1999; de Waal, 1997; Klein 2008). Donini provides a useful summary and framing of this broader perspective, conceptualising “the functions behind the official or declared functions” (Donini, 2010 p226). The meta functions of humanitarianism may occur when humanitarianism is co-opted either willingly or unwillingly to serve priorities other than the humanitarian imperative.

As a counter measure to the politicised nature of donorship which challenges its ethical dimension as an economic activity, attention is paid to measuring its success at supporting the most marginalised and vulnerable. There are a range of understandings of this success, including those described by quantitative and qualitative measures. A more detailed approach to measuring the success of donorship has arisen in the form of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, encompassing the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative and the Grand Bargain specific to humanitarian aid. Aid Effectiveness considers a range of characteristics of donorship to establish not only the quantity but the quality of aid. Scott applies this to humanitarian funds in particular, pointing out that sufficient resources alone are not the answer for effective donorship, but that the money must be ‘quality money’ (Scott, 2015: First page, no number). The characteristics of quality money can be understood in terms of donor behaviour such as coordination (Leiderer, 2015; Smillie & Minear, 2003) and continuity (Pallas, 2016), and also more quantitative measures such as efficiency (Cabot Venton & Sida, 2017; Stoddard et al., 2017).

While those above who investigate the mixed motives of donorship concentrate on key geographical locations as measures of success, others focus on quantity of aid as an indicator (Gupta, Pattillo, & Wagh, 2006). Quantity of aid, and particularly a lack thereof, has become a recent concern for humanitarian action as humanitarian need are perceived to rise (Lattimer, 2016; E. S. Swithern, 2018). Quantity has, however, been noted as a poor measure of the impact on those supported by the resources donors provide. Critics warn that how governments choose what to do with their resources will influence the success of aid beyond simply the volume of aid provided (Dreze and Sen 1982; Boone, 1996; Collier & Dollar, 2002).

Quantitative measures are of particular interest to this research since their value to governments has increased in recent times (Valters & Whitty, 2017). Just as the political considerations of humanitarian
donorship can compete with the humanitarian imperative, so too can economic considerations. The challenge for donorship as an economic activity is to maintain humanitarian values alongside economic values without one becoming subordinate to the other, causing challenges to those affected by crises. Natsios observes the negative influence of the practice of measurement itself, describing it as “an intellectual dysfunction rooted in the notion that counting everything in government programs (or private industry and increasingly some foundations) will produce better policy choices and improved management” (Natsios, 2010: p1).

1.2.3 Contribution

This research contributes original and new knowledge based on primary and secondary sources to close these gaps by paying attention to humanitarian donorship in particular and specifically the economic processes which frame its ethical relationship to those affected by crises. This research finds that it is challenging for donors to align ODA with the experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises for two main reasons:

First, exogenous influences, such as domestic and international relationships and short governance terms, incentivise short termism. Short termism restricts the longer-term approaches to humanitarian donorship which enable sufficient support to affected households to recover of their shelter and settlements.

Second, endogenous influences such as institutional cultures of structures and processes create rigidity in humanitarian funding processes. This rigidity prevents the flexibility that would increase the agency of affected households during the recovery of their shelter and settlements.

Consequently, this research finds that together these characteristics of flexibility and a longer-term perspective in humanitarian donorship increase the accountability of donors for their funding approaches because they strengthen the influence of affected households over the use of resources.

1.3 Research Aim and Questions

The aim of the research is to build a picture of the drivers of success and impediments which influence humanitarian donorship and the experience of those affected by crises. The research examines how perceptions of the role of those affected by crises and the role of donors are changing, and the effect of these changes on the part played by humanitarian donorship in the recovery of shelter and settlements. The following research questions emerged initially from empirical experience of working
with those affected by humanitarian crises and humanitarian donors. They were then tested against existing literature to establish their validity before being posed to the research participants.

The central research question driving this research is:

Why is it challenging for donors to align Overseas Development Aid (ODA) with the experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

Three sub-questions are posed to answer the research question in a way that meets the research aim:

1. What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

2. How do ODA donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises and their experience of recovering shelter and settlements?

3. What is the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

1.4 Investigating Humanitarian Donorship

This section introduces the theoretical framework and methodology. The research explores the reasons for donor behaviour, using a theoretical framework which allows for the dissection of ODA as both an economic and ethical practice. As a way to investigate how the success of humanitarian donorship can understood with respect to the experience of those affected by crises, a framework that considers both economic processes and social relationships is required. The chosen framework emerged from the field of critical accounting. The research employs a qualitative methodology, collecting perspectives from a range of actors to build up a picture of donor behaviour in humanitarian crises. A systems approach was taken to collect and analyse data from both participants and from documentary sources.
1.4.1 Theoretical Framework

Miller and Power gathered together observations regarding the link between the practices of accounting and its influence, intended or otherwise (Miller & Power, 2013). With these they formed a framework around four key roles of accounting, namely the practices of territorialising, mediating, subjectivising and adjudicating. This research takes the framework of these four roles and extends it to investigate the broader practice of donorship. Using these four roles as a framework enables this research to identify the economic practices of donorship, such as budgeting, grant administration and evaluation, and to trace their influence on those affected by crises. This provides evidence on which to base a hypothesis of why impediments to the success of humanitarian donorship may exist.

Miller and Power title the four roles of accounting as follows: territorializing, mediating, adjudicating and subjectivising. The first role, territorialising, can be described as placing boundaries around spaces of interest: “the recursive construction of the calculable spaces that actors inhabit within organizations and society” (Miller & Power, 2013: p557) or in other words, “(re)creating calculative spaces for organizational and societal actors” (Bebbington, Schneider, Stevenson, & Fox, 2020: p1).

The second, mediating, describes the process that happens in these territories when accounting instruments “link up distinct actors, aspirations, and arenas” (Miller & Power, 2013: p593) and as a result make it “possible for these actors to interact with each other” (Bebbington et al., 2020: p1).

Thirdly, adjudicating defines and determines the success of the action in the territories, playing “a decisive role in evaluating the performance of individuals and organizations, and also in determining failings and failure” (Miller & Power, 2013: p593) by “providing information that would allow activities to be evaluated” (Bebbington et al., 2020: p1).

Fourth and lastly, subjectivizing describes the relationship between the actor and the accountant who “subjects individuals to control or regulation by another, while entailing the presumption of an individual free to choose” (Miller & Power, 2013:p1), thereby “creating contexts in which control can be achieved” (Bebbington et al., 2020: p1).

Four roles of donorship can be understood as the way in which donors construct and behave within calculable spaces. These can be investigated using Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting as a frame for a range of donorship activities to build a picture of the ethical and economising aspects of donorship. Firstly, donors can choose territories based on the geographic locations and types of crises and vulnerable groups chosen as beneficiaries of their humanitarian assistance. Donors also draw territories around different locations, groups and moments in time, around and during a crisis.
includes reducing the impact of a crisis ex-ante, and managing a crisis ex-post. Secondly, donors mediate between themselves, other states, implementing partners and those affected by crises. Mediating occurs through practices of diplomacy, coordination, and granting. Third, donors adjudicate what should be chosen to be funded, and the success of the activities resourced by their funding through assessments, monitoring and evaluations. Fourth, donors are rarely operational themselves, but instead work through the affected states or implementing partners. The way in which donors perform these four roles can benefit those affected by crises or they can create impediments. The success of donorship to support those also affected by crises can be affected by the relative strength or weakness of these four roles. For instance, territorial boundaries can be robust or weak and this may help or hinder the pursuit of the humanitarian imperative.

1.4.2 Methodology

The research employs a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods were considered the primary approach suitable for a constructivist enquiry, and in particular empirical social enquiry, into a system such as humanitarian financing that can be understood to have more than one purpose. While humanitarian funding appears to have one overarching purpose, for the relief of suffering during crises, this has been interpreted and even manipulated in different ways. Qualitative methods allow the collection of the perspectives from a range of actors to build up a picture of overlapping understandings of the purpose of the system.

To maintain a manageable boundary around the research, the question of understanding the role of humanitarian funding in humanitarian crises was operationalised as a more focussed study. This was achieved through selecting ODA as the specific type of funding to be analysed, since it represents a large proportion of financial resources in humanitarian crises. ODA is sufficiently documented to be able to identify trends from the data, and government donors share sufficient similarities and differences to be comparable. The research takes shelter and settlements as its focus, as it is a major loss to affected households, closely interconnected with wellbeing. Shelter and settlements also provide a vertical link between macro and micro issues, such as household economy and national economy. From a temporal perspective, the research considers the immediate aftermath of a humanitarian crisis as a starting point, from which donorship decisions dynamically unfold and become connected or run in parallel with longer term considerations. Longitudinally the research concentrates attention on the last two decades of donorship, to ensure a substantial number of crises to analyse and for trends to appear.
The research took a systems thinking approach, focused on “seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots” (Ben Ramalingam, Jones, Reba, & Young, 2008). Different actors were consulted to ensure that an overview of the system could be pieced together. The research questions pointed towards two main data sources. These were primary data from individual participants with a range of empirical experiences of the humanitarian system, and secondary data from documentary sources accounting for humanitarian policies and practices. Data to inform an understanding of the humanitarian financing system are necessarily diverse, due to the range of different actors involved, the processes involved in humanitarian assistance and the structures that have been established. The resulting dataset includes not only individual perspectives and organisational perspectives, but also the collective perspectives of organisations, either in a community of practice or legal treaty.

Individual informants provided an interpretation of their organisational perspective plus their own personal perspective, especially where this related to events they had experienced first-hand. Informants were chosen from ODA donors, their implementing partners, their grant managing bodies, and industry commentators working for humanitarian think tanks. Documents provided a range of information developed and curated by different organisations and individuals, for a range of different purposes. These included policy documents, guidelines, funding proposals, project reports, media reports and industry commentary.

1.5 Thesis Argument and Findings

This research finds that it is challenging for donors to align ODA with the experience of those affected by humanitarian crises because the donor accountabilities of leadership and risk management do not fit easily alongside the ongoing priorities of affected households in a fluid environment. When donors attempt to manage their accountabilities for resourcing humanitarian action by establishing territories and subjectivizing partners they introduce rigidity and distance into the relationship with affected households. Where donor territories such as ‘humanitarian’ and ‘life saving’ become rigid and relationships with those local to the crises become distant, this can impede flexibility and continuity of the donor’s response. When donors manage adjudication of humanitarian action by assigning value in such a way that prioritises their own leadership, and when they manage the mediation of humanitarian action according to the reduction of risk, humanitarian outcomes can be overtaken by economic considerations. Where efficiency is valued over effectiveness and risk management is
valued over responsiveness, economic considerations such as a reduction in cost and an increase in auditing can begin to drive humanitarian action.

Support to those in particular who lose their shelter and settlements do not easily serve the donor priorities of leadership and risk management. While the scale of shelter and settlements, particularly in terms of funds, can be large, the speed at which progress can be achieved is often slow. This goes some way to explain donor preferences for some aspects of shelter and settlements such as erecting tents, over reconstructing permanent buildings. In addition, the initial per capita cost for shelter and settlements support is high when compared to other technical sectors, which would appear to reduce the success that can be achieved when measured from a purely quantitative perspective.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This chapter sets out how the thesis understands and investigates the donorship of ODA in humanitarian crises. Chapter Two introduces and critically reviews the literature that pays attention to those affected by humanitarian crises. Theories of how and why support is provided, including donorship and the relationship between social and economic ideas and practices are explored. This chapter also identifies gaps in knowledge where this research makes a contribution and outlines the chosen theoretical framework. Chapter Three describes the methodology used to operationalise the research and the rationale for the research design, introduces the participants and the secondary data sources. Chapter Four presents analysis of secondary and documentary data as a vehicle to introduce the aspirations of the humanitarian financing system. Chapters Five and Six present original analysis of primary data, drawing out the two key concepts of ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’ as aspects of donorship valued by participants, in the pursuit of supporting those affected by crises. Chapter Five investigates understandings of ‘flexibility’ as a way to present how donors and their implementing partners understand the current practice of humanitarian assistance. Chapter Six investigates understandings of the ‘longer term’ as a way to present how donors and their implementing partners understand how humanitarian assistance is evolving. Chapter Seven draws together the data using the theoretical framework of Miller and Power’s four accounting roles, to bring together a conceptual picture of the trends in donorship that lead to contribute to or impede alignment with the experience of those affected by humanitarian crises. Chapter Eight reviews the research findings and provides an answer to the central research question. It outlines the main contributions made by the research and
their implications for the study of donorship during humanitarian crises. This concluding chapter also makes a number of recommendations for further research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter serves to critically review the actions and motivations of those who seek to support through donorship those who have lost their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. The chapter sets out four key bodies of literature to inform the research. The following section explores how state donorship is understood. It opens with a discussion of donorship as an ethical concept and an economic practice, and the tensions these drivers introduce in a state context. The second section explores the success of donorship in relation to the humanitarian outcomes of those affected by humanitarian crises, focusing on the ways in which the success of donorship has been measured. This research takes as its case the support to households who have lost their shelter and settlements during humanitarian crises, and the third section explores the understanding of shelter and settlements as both a human right and also an economic asset, and how support to the recovery of shelter and settlements has been conceptualised by humanitarian actors. The fourth section describes the literature used to inform the analytical process of this research drawing on the fields of economics, organisational and management theory, and international development. A theoretical framework is described which allows for the analysis of the influence of the economic ideas of donorship upon recovery from humanitarian crises. Lastly the chapter is drawn together in the conclusion which identifies the gaps where this research contributes its findings.

2.1 Humanitarian State Donorship

The external actors key to the central research question are governments in their role as state donors, and specifically when they perform this role in humanitarian crises. This section explores how state donorship is understood. It opens with a discussion of donorship as an ethical concept and an economic practice, and the tensions these drivers introduce in a state context. Firstly, as an ethical action in relation to concepts of gift, exchange and duty, and in the context of different understandings of humanitarianism. Then the links between economics and social relations are identified. Lastly, the balance between an ethical and economic actor is discussed with reference to recent trends in quantitative measurement in humanitarianism.
2.1.1 The Ethical Complex of Humanitarian Donorship

State donors who provide funds in humanitarian crises represent a paradox. First, from an ethical point of view, while the concept of humanitarianism calls upon the instinct for rational agents to support fellow humans out of choice (Rorty in Ashby Wilson & Brown, 2002), a state’s legal obligations confer a duty of humanitarian action (Terry, 2013). Second, from an economic point of view, state donors are accountable to both their domestic constituents in their national capacity (Drummond, Metcalfe-Hough, Willitts-King, & Bryant, 2017) and from an ethical point of view to other states in an international capacity (United Nations, 2014). Several strands of enquiry, therefore, relate to donorship, including those which draw on ethics and those which draw on economics.

The ethical framework of gift, exchange and duty is useful to briefly illustrate different ways that humanitarian donorship is both perceived and enacted. While donorship is often likened to a gift, for example blood donation (Ungureanu, 2013), the ‘humanitarian imperative’, or the “obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed” (Terry, 2013: p19) confers on states a duty. It is from this duty that the political dimension to human suffering is derived. This expectation has been enshrined in law, for example, when the Monterrey Summit reiterated that developed countries should allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries. This legal obligation removes the element of surprise which underpins a donation as a gift and pushes government donorship into the sphere of duty.

In addition, donorship can be considered an exchange even though it is not necessarily the receiver who reciprocates. For example, the act of state donorship is given publicly which benefits not just the receiver but also the giver. These symbolic acts can benefit donor states in terms of communicating solidarity with their political allies or communicating their own national leadership to their domestic constituency. Donors can ‘receive’ something they desire from a wider range of stakeholders in the donation, such as recognition from their citizens or the political cooperation of the affected state. In other words, the act of state donorship is not a gift but an exchange.

Measurement of the success of state donorship can become complicated where a donor has multiple accountabilities, and especially where these are based on an exchange logic. De Renzio describes the relationship between these accountabilities in Figure 2 below, which shows how donors are pulled in various directions by their accountabilities to different actors and different targets. These each bring

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3 “The International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) signalled a turning point in the approach to development cooperation by the international community. It was the first United Nations-sponsored summit-level meeting to address key financial and related issues pertaining to global development.” Financing for Sustainable Development [un.org] visited 13.07.2022

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their unique pressure to bear on the type of targets and standards chosen, and consequently the extent to which the causal relationship is evidence based.

For this reason, state donorship is often perceived as a particular interpretation of humanitarianism, namely ‘Wilsonian’ humanitarianism, where humanitarian and state interest are proactively aligned. Wilsonian humanitarianism, named after President Woodrow Wilson, explains humanitarian aims as an extension of a state’s foreign policy objectives (Donini, 2010; Stoddard, 2003). While Wilsonian humanitarianism sees the donor state as a humanitarian actor, it sees the humanitarian imperative as just one of a range of tools for protecting and promoting national interests. It tends to result in a more pragmatic approach, focused on the immediately logistical and technical.

Wilsonianism can be contrasted with ‘Dunantist’ humanitarianism, named after Red Cross founder Henry Dunant, which explains humanitarianism as action which places itself outside of the political interests of the crisis, and in particular in a conflict (Donini, 2010; Stoddard, 2003; Terry, 2013). Dunantist humanitarianism calls for humanitarian actors to be ‘neutral’ and ‘impartial’ to the stakeholders in a crisis, with the purpose of allowing the provision of support. Wilsonianism may
overlap with ‘New’ or ‘Solidarist’ humanitarianism which seeks to respond to humanitarian crises alongside those affected by crises and their concerns, which may be political concerns. One advantage of this approach is that it enables a conversation between humanitarian and development thinking where there are clear links between crisis management and development outcomes (Mosel & Levine, 2014).

Meanwhile, the self-interest of Wilsonian humanitarianism becomes apparent where states seek to ‘contain’ crises (Donini, 2010) to preserve their own national security, where their primary motivation becomes their national interest over and above that of alleviating the suffering of those affected by the crisis. Humanitarian space also highlights the paradox of the Wilsonian view of the state as a humanitarian actor, especially if that state is a party to the conflict, either directly or by proxy, and how humanitarian action on behalf of that state becomes highly politicised. Linked to this, it is also criticised for using the speed and visibility of a technical solution to achieve political aims, while ignoring underlying structural causes of longer term vulnerabilities of those affected by the crisis (Donini, 2010; Stoddard, 2003). That said, it is difficult for a donor state to adopt any other approach since it is a government entity. While a donor’s state approach may not be pure Wilsonianism, a state will always be balancing a range of accountabilities.

The following sections explore how humanitarian donors balance these accountabilities in more detail, and the way in which this affects the way in which their success is measured.

2.1.2 Donorship as an Economic Pursuit

Economic activities can include seemingly technical tasks such as ‘costing’, ‘budgeting’ and ‘accounting’, but the preceding discussion highlights that these activities have ethical dimensions with respect to state donorship. Economic activities involve decisions about the scale of funds to spend and when to spend them, who to disburse funds to and how to disburse them, how to divide budget lines, and deciding which measures of success indicate a successful outcome. As Kellet, Walmsley and Poole illustrated in section 1.2.1:

”...finance is about more than money. It affects the organisations that are strengthened or neglected, the level of attention that is paid to people, sectors or countries, the information to which funders have access and on which they base future decisions, and the economic impact felt in locations where the money is spent” (Kellet, Walmsley, & Poole, 2011: p2)
Economic activities are, therefore, a conduit for decision making, and decisions have consequences that may be intended or unintended. Consequences can be judged as good or bad, ethical or unethical. While the analysis of links between economic policy and social relations benefits widely from the attention of the social sciences, analysis of the sociological conditions of economic activity itself is the focus of a select few.

Stepping back from donorship specifically for a moment, in order to place it in the wider economic context, the assertion that economics influences social relations emerges from the works of Weber and his early ideas around organisational theory (Weber, 2001), Argyris’ observations of management practice (Argyris, 1984) and Hopwood’s assertion of the social implications of the practice of accounting (Hopwood, 1976). Rose and Miller distinguish between the role of economic ideas as ‘programs’ or aspirational performance ideals, and economic activities as ‘technologies’, or the grounded basis for their realization (Rose & Miller, 1992). In becoming a conduit for economic ideas, economic activities have the power to translate abstract objectives, such as addressing a crisis, into concrete practices and, crucially, at a distance. Neu et al. argue that “budgets, cost allocation mechanisms and other cost accounting conventions facilitate the coordination of action in distant locales” (Neu, Ocampo, Graham, & Heincke, 2006: p638). This implies that abstract objectives can be implemented from afar and without direct contact with the immediate context where this occurs. With reference to humanitarian crises, state donors can facilitate the coordination of humanitarian assistance remotely through the medium of funding.

Sen distinguishes between approaches to economics which acknowledge this ethical dimension, and those that do not. He calls these approaches an ‘engineering’ approach and an ‘ethical’ approach (Sen, 1991). The ‘engineering’ approach treats economies as morally neutral machines which economists can fix and improve, while the ‘ethical’ approach treats an economy as a set of social relations and practices. In other words, this second approach asserts that when you set up an economic system you set up an ethical system. As an ethical system made up of a set of social relations it is easy to see how an economy can influence human behaviour, as this gives economic decisions power over the desired outcomes of social activities. The outcomes of economic decisions can therefore be assessed as good or bad on moral and ethical grounds. This means that the power of an economic system can be judged as having good or bad consequences. Sayer offers a political explanation for the existence of these two approaches, namely that they embody the difference between ‘values’ which underpin moral judgements and ‘objectivity’ that underpins scientific judgements (Sayer, 2015).
Certain scholars have observed that the ethical dimension of economics is often excluded. The former, ‘engineering’ approach can dominate, to the exclusion of the ethics, or economics can be considered in isolation from ethical factors. Shearer highlights that reflections on economic accountability often fail to adequately describe ethical assumptions regarding the moral status of economic actors (Shearer, 2002). Sayer rejects the dominance of the engineering approach in political and sociological thought, arguing for consideration of a ‘moral economy’ as a way of examining and assessing the moral influences on, and implications, of economic activities (Sayer, 2015). Sayer uses capitalism as an example of a system that has been considered purely as an engineering system, with morally disadvantageous consequences. The disadvantage of capitalism, he concludes, is that there is no mechanism for provisioning to enable people to live well, including forms of unpaid labour. While provisioning can be a side effect of capitalism, it is not a proactively intended consequence. More on the separation of ethics and economics later.

Meanwhile, the implication of economising social relations is that economic activities are much more than instrumental and purely technical activities, in fact they have some power over social behaviour, economic activities being a ‘means’ and ‘social behaviour being the ‘end’. Dower explains Aristotle’s conceptualisation of means to an end:

“Aristotle says ... that means and ends form chains in which one action or set of activities may be the end of some other action but also be the means to some other” (Dower, 2010: p30)

In this way the act of donorship can be broken down into a set of linked activities which are a means to the recovery from humanitarian crises. The identification of different levels of economic actions allows then for ethical questions to be asked. Dower illustrates this process:

“At each of these levels, certain key questions of an ethical kind arise. First, is the goal being pursued one that ought to be pursued? Second, are the actions being taken to realize the goal the right ones?” (Dower, 2010: p31).

Goulet argues that, especially in the field of development, economic instruments, such as an agreement between a donor and its implementing partner, are therefore, far from neutral, rather they involve an ethical dimension that requires attention. He argues that:

“Ethics must somehow get inside the value dynamisms of the instruments utilised by development agents and itself become a “means of the means.” Ethicists do not discharge themselves of their duty merely by posing morally acceptable values as ends of economic action. Nor does it suffice for them to evaluate, in the light of some extrinsic moral rule, the
economic and political instrumental it is employed to pursue those ends. Rather, ethicists must analyse and lay bare the value content of these instrumentalities from within their proper dynamism” (Goulet, 1995: p24-25).

Far from being simply technical, economic ideas and activities are powerful. The power of economic ideas over social behaviour is in part due to the relationship between economic ideas and economic activities as being recursive, such that economic activities are set up in the image of economic ideas, to in turn inform economic ideas. So, “the calculative instruments of accountancy pre-suppose and recursively construct the calculable spaces that actors inhabit within organizations and society” (Miller & Power, 2013: p562). Moreover, the practice of selecting measures that are entered into economic systems to allow them to make judgements, enables these measures to become valuable. Put differently, the economized relations in turn provide rationales which shape an organisation (Hopwood, 1986). Sargiacomo et al draw on the work of Bourdieu, to describe this power of calculative practices such as accounting within an economic system as a type of ‘soft domination’, since “distribution reproduces, maintains or challenges social and economic inequality” (Sargiacomo, 2014: p652). At the extreme, Marx suggests that economic activities can manipulate. Rather than revealing the true nature of the social relationship, activities such as accounting have the power to mystify and present social relationships in an entirely artificial way (Marx, 1894).

The extent of this power appears to be far reaching to a point where an economic system gains enough power to take on the role of a normative system itself (Miller & Power, 2013; Sayer, 2015; Shearer, 2002). One problem with this scenario is that at this point economic policy eclipses social policy, and the ethical and economic become separated. The ethical can become a subordinated objective. Social policy can no longer be used to argue against economic policy where it has become a norm, because: “To be against normativity is to contradict oneself – like saying ‘it’s wrong to say anything is wrong’”

This research is concerned with state donorship at a time when the above approaches were emerging from the gathering pace of neoliberalism in the largest donor states in the form new public management as an approach to public service. Neoliberalism can be broadly defined as “the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life, including the economy, politics and society” (Springer, Birch, & MacLeavy, 2016). In an attempt to decentralise and shrink government, new public management reorganises “public sector bodies to bring their management, reporting, and accounting approaches closer to (a particular perception of) business methods.” (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994: p1) For example, adopting methods of managing personnel, reward structures, and doing business which make “the public sector less distinctive as a unit from the private sector” (ibid).
Power argues that this enabled “...fundamental transformations in the style of government, away from direct provision and towards oversight and rule setting” (Power, 1994: p15), something which economic activities can enable. This sets up a tension between, on the one hand decentralising power, and on the other hand retaining control. While the goal of new public management is a more efficient and effective service, Power notes that one negative consequence of new public management is “displacement in the terms of government discourse, from service specific values of teaching, care and so on to more abstract, financial and quantitative categories” (ibid:p16). In this way, we find the ethical and the economic separating.

Dunleavy and Hood list some of the ways in which new public management has contributed towards an abstraction of social values into more financial and quantitative categories. Of particular interest to this research are:

“• Reworking budgets to be transparent in accounting terms, with costs attributed to outputs not inputs, and outputs measured by quantitative performance indicators.
• Viewing organizations as a chain of low-trust principal/agent relationships (rather than fiduciary or trustee-beneficiary ones), a network of contracts linking incentives to performance....
• Opening up provider roles to competition between agencies or between public agencies, firms and not-for-profit bodies” (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994:p1).

2.1.3 The Rise of Quantitative Humanitarianism

Three phenomena arose from the above approaches. First, a trend towards the value of quantitative performance indicators over qualitative performance indicators emerged resulting in an ‘explosion’ of auditing (Power, 1994). With respect to state donorship, traces of this phenomenon can be found in the rise of the Results agenda, the Value for Money approach (Valters & Whitty, 2017) and the aid effectiveness goal of Efficiency (Stoddard et al., 2017), both discussed below. Second, some governments became more distant from their implementing partners, using auditing as a quality control instead of close relationships. This is described in Mowjee, (2001), comparing donors who use auditing to measure and control and those who keep implementing partners close so that can base funding decisions on trust. Third, implementing partners became at once more distant from one other, and also less able to challenge donor states as funding became a more competitive process. These trends are examined in more detail in the next section.
Stoddard et al. discuss the complexity of balancing qualitative and quantitative values and the cost of bureaucracy in the process of disbursing funding, explaining the importance of measurement concepts such as ‘efficiency’. They conceptualise efficiency in relation to its counterpart effectiveness: “If effectiveness is “getting things done,” i.e. achieving objectives, efficiency is “doing things well” by reducing waste, optimizing resources, and maximizing desired outputs” (Stoddard et al., 2017: p9). But they also make it clear that these concepts are not equal; that efficiency factors into effectiveness and is “clearly superseded by other considerations, above all being how the funding will best enable an effective response to people’s needs” (ibid: p34). They use the example of reducing bureaucracy for managing small sized grants to illustrate an inefficient process that has a negative impact on desired outcomes and could be made more efficient.

“Inordinately high transaction costs on small-sized grants are inefficient for donor and grantees alike. These should be addressed by making the [administrative] requirements commensurate with the size and timelines of the grants and by maximizing the flexibility to modify them to suit changing conditions” (ibid: p3).

So quantitative measurement would appear to have a place in measuring the success of donorship where quantities are considered as conceptually separate but contributing to notions of quality.

Quantitative measurements become problematic when the measurement of ‘efficiency’, ‘value for money’ and ‘results’ starts to attract as much attention as the quality of the outcome itself. Where the act of measurement itself becomes a proxy indicator for good implementation, quantity can become conflated with quality. This can arise from a perception of a shortage of resources to cover the required outcomes, for example humanitarian funding to support recovery from humanitarian crises. The notion that there is not enough funding to go around increases pressure on measuring how much funding is spent on achieving a particular outcome, because making processes more efficient has the potential to release more funds into the overall pot of resources. Stoddard et al. observe that “in a resource-scarce and largely reactive environment, how efficiently money moves to enable response is a critically important component,” (Stoddard et al., 2017: p1). Valters and Whitty identify the UK government’s diminishing budgets as the “the political logic for results-based reforms” (Valters & Whitty, 2017: p10).

Natsios terms the consequences of this bureaucratic culture ‘Obsessive Measurement Disorder (OMD)’: “an intellectual dysfunction rooted in the notion that counting everything in government programs (or private industry and increasingly some foundations) will produce better policy choices
and improved management” (Natsios, 2010: p1). Natsios highlights this as a problem because development programmes require best practice, innovation and risk taking, all of which can be hard for measurement systems to quantify. This often means, Natsios argues, that “those development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable” (ibid: p3). Consequently, the more donors focus on precise measurement, the more programs are driven away from innovation and towards risk aversion. Natsios also highlights a paradox present in the practice of OMD, namely that the practice of measurement itself represents a cost. While precise measurement may have the objective of ultimately ensuring efficiency, it is in reality a budget line in itself. Natsios observes that

“More staff must be hired by these partner organizations to account for every dollar spent, to measure everything, to comply with voluminous federal regulatory law .... and ensure —results, results, results. This means higher and higher overhead costs imposed” (ibid: p36).

For instance, Tafti demonstrates that quantitative targets do not guarantee successful humanitarian outcomes in using the example of post-disasters housing distribution policies in Iran and India. While Governments hit their quantitative targets of houses reconstructed, these were not necessarily the houses of the most vulnerable groups. Measurement focussed on the “number of built residential units – and not the recovery of the affected households” (Tafti, 2015: p375).

Similarly, Mowjee finds that the more donors rely on very formal audit-based relationship with their implementing partners, the less trust is built and poorer quality results. She found that one donor’s more relaxed grant management processes:

“not only elicited more detailed and honest information than [another donor’s] detailed contract but may also have resulted in better aid programmes. In addition, there were significant differences in the relationship of the two donors with the NGOs” (Mowjee, 2001: p2).

Valters and Whitty’s longitudinal study of DFID’s political agenda for foreign aid centres on ‘results-based management’. They define results-based management as “using measurement and target setting to drive improved performance” (Valters & Whitty, 2017: p16), or in other words, setting up aspects of development programming so that it is accountable to a quantifiable framework, and using the process of measurement to incentivise the meeting of certain standards. While results-based
management is not a new concept, they explain that there are trends in its use and they identify a point where “a new explicit focus on aggressively implementing RBM emerged” (ibid: p8). They link this partially to the need to justify an increase in DFID’s budget while other departments had their budgets reduced, but also to the phenomenon that, in certain cases, numbers drive numbers. For example, Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for International Development (2010-2012) described the drive for measuring results as an influencing tool, stating “you’ll never sustain the 0.7% commitment and get other countries to do so too unless you can demonstrate results” (ibid: p37). Accountability to quantifiable targets is not only instrumental, it is believed to have a certain power.

Valters and Whitty contrast reducing results to “narrow number-oriented promises of what aid spending can achieve” (ibid: p10) with the flexibility development programming requires. They argue that “Interventions need to be based on the best available information, with regular testing to see if they are on the right track, rather than being overly focused on pre-planned numbers” (ibid: p10). Valters and Whitty criticise a focus on results-based management because the focus on accountability to pre-set targets over and above real time outcomes can create a donorship culture too detached from the causal links between action and outcomes. They use the example of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact’s comments on the counter-productive elements of DFID’s results focus, that:

“the results agenda had firmly established when and where taxpayers’ money is being spent, but not what that spending actually achieves. It argued that DFID’s focus on results prioritised short-term economy and efficiency over long-term, sustainable impact” (ibid: p32).

Valters and Whitty suggest a more productive way forward would be “a revitalised approach to how evidence of different kinds can be used to support (or challenge) bad ideas” (Valters & Whitty, 2017: p32). This may provide a clue to how donorship can be more closely linked to the recovery of those affected by crises, whose experience changes over time.

As mentioned above, Sayer warns against the normative power of economic systems becoming paramount, so that “To be against normativity is to contradict oneself – like saying ‘it’s wrong to say anything is wrong’” (Sayer, 2015: p292). Hofmann et al also warn against too much emphasis on measurement, explaining that:

“a focus on measurement could reduce operational effectiveness and lead to the neglect of issues such as protection and dignity because they are difficult to measure. Focusing on what is measurable risks reducing humanitarian aid to a technical question of delivery, rather than
2.2 Measuring the Success of Donorship

This research explores the success of donorship in relation to the humanitarian outcomes of those affected by humanitarian crises, and this section focuses on the ways in which the success of donorship has been measured. Firstly, the notion of aid effectiveness and the practice of measurement are introduced. Indicators or measurement are then explored including scale and quality. There follows a discussion of the influences on scale and quality, including those within and outside of a donor’s control. The subsequent sections explore how evidence is collected to support notions of success and, lastly, how the type of measurement indicators which are chosen can influence success itself.

2.2.1 The Aid Effectiveness Agenda

The powerful influences on state donorship and the negative impacts these can have on humanitarian outcomes, alongside a perceived rise in the overall amount of funding provided, created an impetus for measuring the effectiveness of aid. ‘Aid effectiveness’ can be understood as holding donors accountable for achieving humanitarian outcomes. Donorship can be measured against a range of indicators that represent success. The crudest measure is the quantity of aid provided, and this is often used to represent the scale of suffering. Measuring whether there is enough aid involves quantifying the amount of suffering involved and the cost of relieving this suffering. A more sophisticated measure is a qualitative measure of aid, using indicators for the quality of the aid provided. These indicators can be understood in two ways. Firstly, direct indicators of the impact of aid on its recipients can be used to produce evidence of what has worked and what has not worked. For example, whether the timeframe in which the funding was provided was long enough to sustain recovery from a crisis (Pallas, 2016). Secondly, higher level proxy indicators based on the behaviour of donors themselves, can be used to demonstrate approaches that are likely to be conducive to relieving suffering, or not. For example donor coordination is argued by some to produce better outcomes for recipients (Leiderer, 2015). A further measure of success that also uses proxy indicators has evolved from frustrations with concepts of ‘impact’ (Hofmann et al., 2004) and ‘effectiveness’ (Victoria Maynard, Parker, & Twigg, 2017) where these were seen as too complex to measure. Instead measures such as ‘efficiency’ (Stoddard et al., 2017) have become an acceptable way of measuring the success of donorship. The process of measuring efficiency circles back to a quantitative perception of quality because it uses...
quantitative indicators. For example, efficiency can be broken down into how much is spent on which budget line (Stoddard et al., 2017).

Aid effectiveness became formalised following the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. The MDGs set up certain measures of success which highlighted the lack of successful donorship, reflected in issues as “lack of co-ordination, overly ambitious targets, unrealistic time and budget constraints and political self-interest have too often prevented aid from being as effective as desired.” Ministers, Heads of Aid Agencies, recipient countries and multilateral and bilateral development institutions came together to agree a “continuous effort towards modernising, deepening and broadening development co-operation and the delivery of aid”.

Aid effectiveness has been framed by four notable events, including the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness in Rome 2003, Paris in 2005, Accra in 2008 and Busan in 2011. The Declaration agreed in Rome in 2002, signed by 28 recipient countries, focused on ‘harmonisation’ between the aims of donor state and recipient states. By 2011 in Busan, 100 recipient countries along with a broader range of donors and development actors, signed up to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. The Busan Declaration is framed around five principles developed in Paris and Accra, to “encourage local ownership, alignment of development programmes around a country’s development strategy, harmonisation of practices to reduce transaction costs, avoidance of fragmented efforts and the creation of results frameworks”.

Humanitarian aid effectiveness initiatives include the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2003) and the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016). The general purpose of these initiatives is conceptually aligned with the series of aid effectiveness declarations by the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, while the focus is specific to humanitarian crises. Good Humanitarian Donorship was formalised by a group of 17 donors who met in Stockholm in 2003. They endorsed the Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship, “to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donor action, as well as their accountability to beneficiaries, implementing

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5 ‘The High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness: A history’ https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenessahistory.htm#Rome Visited on 08.02.2021
6 ibid.
7 ‘Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness’ https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/fourthhighlevelforaonaideffectiveness.htm Visited on 08.02.2021
8 ‘The High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness: A history’ https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenessahistory.htm#Rome Visited on 08.02.2021

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organisations and domestic constituencies, with regard to the funding, co-ordination, follow-up and evaluation of such actions” ⁹. The GHD was then formally endorsed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2006 (Development Initiatives, 2006: p58). These principles remained largely unchanged until 2018, when an additional principle was added concerning the use of cash-transfers, by which time 42 donors had signed up to the GHD principles. Meanwhile, following the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, a Grand Bargain was agreed between 61 partners, including donors and aid agencies, in response to the perception of a lack of resources to tackle growing humanitarian needs. The commitments of the Grand Bargain focus, therefore, mainly on reducing need and leveraging more resources, including “gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonised reporting requirements” ¹⁰. While the GHD promotes principles, the Grand Bargain also seeks to make change at the level of working practices of donors and aid organisations.

One aspect of measuring the quality of donorship is that quality becomes subjective in different contexts, and with different actors. Harmer and Ray illustrate the difficulties of using principles as a measure of the success of donorship by asking whether aid effectiveness principles for development complement aid effectiveness principles for humanitarian action (Harmer & Ray, 2009). They acknowledge that development aid and humanitarian aid share some principles and areas of good practice, particularly in aid management, but across thematic areas. However, they find that while some donors see aid effectiveness as a process of mutual learning and a policy priority, other donors see the Paris agenda in particular as “posing a threat to humanitarian action and the principles that guide it” (ibid: p19). They find that this is partly due to the aid architecture in donor government which can be bifurcated around ministries and budgetary envelopes, and also due to the different geographical centres of aid diplomacy, namely Paris and Geneva. Furthermore, in the field differences are exacerbated in conflict contexts where donor governments can be caught in a contradiction between aligning with policies of governments party to the conflict and delivering aid with neutrality and impartiality. Harmer and Ray conclude that “Donors (and their partners) are required to uphold complex principles, with some shared and some distinct elements. This creates a complex aid dynamic in some of the most difficult, insecure and needy environments” (ibid: p19).

The commitments of the Grand Bargain are in their essence designed to generate more funds for humanitarian action. At the simplest measure, it could be argued that for donorship to have an impact

¹⁰ ‘The Grand Bargain’ https://agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861.html Visited on 08.02.2021

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there must be sufficient resources provided to ensure that suffering is relieved. This may appear to be a basic question but attempts to provide an answer can prove far from straightforward. Gupta et al. provide a useful summary of trends in the overall volume of ODA from the 1960s to the early 2000s. They measure not only how much aid is provided but also trends in the rise and fall of these amounts (Gupta et al., 2006). They pay particular attention to aid since 2002 when the Monterrey Summit reiterated that developed countries should allocate 0.7% of their GNP for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries\(^1\). While this is a measurement of a quantity of aid as a proportion of the funds a donor has, it was decided following a discussion that quantified the resources needed to achieve internationally agreed development goals. The 0.7% provides at least a rough benchmark for whether sufficient aid is being provided. Gupta et al. do not consider the volume of aid as a measure in isolation, stating that both donor behaviour and types of aid instruments can also indicate how resources are being provided, and therefore how effectively they might leverage development outcomes.

As we focus in on humanitarian donorship we see quite a different picture. Both measuring the scale of suffering and the resources required to address it appear to be moveable feasts. Swithern argues that there is a shortfall in the resources required to meet humanitarian need, and that this is because “Needs are increasing faster than the resources available to meet them” (Swithern, 2018: p1). Similarly, Lattimer states that humanitarian action is no longer sufficient to meet its scope, which has broadened “beyond emergency response to include preparedness and the protracted aftermath of crises, but it is neither appropriate nor sufficient for the task” (Lattimer, 2015: p1). Lattimer sets up the shortfall as a problem of humanitarian funding being stretched to cover issues that could be covered by development budgets. Lattimer suggests that other forms of finance, “such as domestic, development, climate and security-related resources are already critical in crisis-prone and crisis-affected contexts but are not mobilised to the extent required” (ibid). So ‘sufficient’ funds to address humanitarian suffering depend upon what is acknowledged to be ‘humanitarian suffering’ rather than any other type of suffering. Ramalingam and Neal support an approach that reduces the scope of what should be considered humanitarian responsibility to a more Dunantist approach. They go further, echoing Cohen and Werker (Cohen & Werker, 2008), to suggest that a broad remit of humanitarian action can lead to a moral hazard where government and development actors fail to anticipate and make provision for responding to crises. They propose that a sharper focus on the limits of

\(^1\)“The International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) signalled a turning point in the approach to development cooperation by the international community. It was the first United Nations-sponsored summit-level meeting to address key financial and related issues pertaining to global development.” Financing for Sustainable Development [un.org] visited 13.07.2022

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humanitarian responsibility, such as relief rather than recovery, “could help to avoid situations where humanitarian actors are relied upon as the indefinite fall-back option in difficult and protracted situations” (Ramalingam & Neal, 2015: p23). The malleability of the boundary around humanitarian suffering appears to feed the lack of clarity around the question of what is to be measured, from a quantitative perspective.

This malleability also contributes to a problem of gathering data to inform any calculation of resources. Lattimer notes that a lack of transparency “within and across financial systems prevents us from understanding the full picture of the range of resources – humanitarian and beyond – that reach crisis-affected populations” (Lattimer, 2015: p1). A perennial problem, the lack of data, can be traced over a decade back to Buchanan Smith and Randel who explain its impact on the operation of the humanitarian system:

“The absence of easily accessible and comparable data reduces transparency, and hinders accountability across the humanitarian system. It also makes coordination more difficult, and obstructs informed decision-making” (Buchanan-Smith & Randel, 2002: p4).

Scott points out that sufficient resources alone is not the answer to effective donorship, but that the money must be ‘quality money’. Scott rejects the narrow focus on increasing the quantity of resources, or “writing a bigger cheque”, because “the money also needs to arrive in the right place, in the right way, and at the right time. “ (Scott, 2015: first page, no number). This is supported to some extent by the findings of Pallas, who explores the effects of aid reduction, or in other words, the timing of the cessation of funding provision. Pallas looks at the timing of both donor ‘entry’ and ‘departure’ and the effect of this on the sustainability of the work of CBOs (Pallas, 2016). While the issue of the timing of funding is critical in humanitarian contexts, this appears to be a key gap in the literature, and one that this research aims to inform.

Key to effective donorship is the notion of ‘aid quality’ or ‘quality money’, which can be understood to mean “measures over which the official donor agencies have control” (Birdsall & Kharas, 2010). Aid quality therefore uses donor behaviour as a proxy measure for the relief of suffering for the recipient. Key to aid effectiveness is the notion that donorship is required not just to be altruistic or humane to benefit the profile of the donor, but to be effective in relieving the suffering of the recipient. Moreover, aid effectiveness holds the donor accountable to certain measurable objectives, conferring a duty on the donor.

Donorship with a view to relieving suffering can be captured in both development and humanitarian objectives. In terms of development, aid effectiveness expects donorship to address “poverty and
inequality ... sustainable growth and decent work ... promoting human rights, democracy and good governance” (OECD, 2012), while humanitarian donorship is expected to “save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2003). These objectives also overlap. For example, humanitarian crises are formally recognised by the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation as situations where sustainable development may be promoted (OECD, 2012), and the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship promote donorship that includes “the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2003: Principle 9).

The question of effectiveness relates to both how the objectives of donorship are balanced, in addition to how donors are able to influence the demand side environment. Collier and Dollar state that volume of aid alone will not necessarily leverage a proportional impact (Collier & Dollar, 2002). They cite a wide range of evidence that the quantity of aid does not systematically affect the quality of the economic policies of the recipient state, so poverty reduction is not necessarily achieved. They argue that aid can be more effective if it is targeted towards states with good economic policymaking environments, rather than used as an incentive to economic policy reform, “the allocation of aid that has the maximum effect on poverty depends on the level of poverty and the quality of policies” (Collier & Dollar, 2002: p1475). Boone therefore focuses on the politics of the recipient government as an indicator for the likelihood of development gains. He takes this line of enquiry for two reasons. Firstly, he begins with the premise that “poverty is not caused by capital shortage” (Boone, 1996: p332), because while aid can increase consumption, higher consumption does not necessarily benefit the poor. Secondly, he investigates the belief that “politicians will not allocate aid efficiently when measured against the goals of aid programs” (Boone, 1996: p292). He concludes that while socially liberal regimes perform slightly better in terms of certain development outcomes, his findings reinforce the argument of Dreze and Sen that “the failure of governments to reduce infant mortality and improve basic human development indicators reflects public choice” (Drèze and Sen in Boone 1996: p322), whether or not a certain volume of aid is provided.

In the context of crises, in countries affected by disasters or conflict, understanding of the links between donorship and the impact of aid on those who suffer can be largely found at the level of macroeconomics. Notably, the small amount of research that considers this context tends to stay at a national level rather than exploring the finer grain of indicators of community or household recovery. While those cited above highlight that aid for development has political determinants, evidence
suggests that certain characteristics of a country will also determine donor interest during a crisis. Post disaster contexts are more likely to receive aid if the affected country lacks resources to recover, and also if there is a considerable presence of humanitarian system actors. Becerra et al find that the main determinants of an increase in aid following a disaster include “the intensity of the event itself and the recipient country’s characteristics such as the level of development, country size and the stock of foreign reserves” (Becerra, Cavallo, & Noy, 2014: p456). They argue that richer countries are perceived to be able to secure more resources to direct towards reconstruction, while poorer countries are perceived to need more support. Olsen et al examine conflict contexts where donors find the presence of humanitarian system actors is an attractive characteristic. They demonstrate that where more actors are present and they are better coordinated, the country attracts more aid. They argue that these international and national actors are able form a ‘humanitarian lobby’ to reassure donors that the

“mere existence of the specialised humanitarian agencies, donor administrations (for example, ECHO, USAID, Danida), early warning systems and rapid reaction units, industry standards (Sphere, Codes of Conduct), specialised information structures (IRIN, ReliefWeb), coordinating entities and professional networks (OCHA, SCHR, VOICE) ensure some kind of basic response to most major or medium-sized disasters.” (Olsen, Carstensen, & Høyen, 2003: p113).

A focus on countries which are vulnerable to crises, which are poorer and with fewer resources, sets up two issues for donors to delicately navigate. Firstly, disasters and crises often take place in conflict contexts within fragile states, and fragile states are documented to be less efficient at using aid to achieve an impact on growth and poverty. Secondly, the expectation of ex-post funding when a crisis occurs can disincentivise crisis prone states to invest in crisis mitigation. Feeney and Mcillivray consider the absorptive capacity of fragile states. They find that absorptive capacity varies from state to state and that while some struggle to absorb what they are given, others could take more. While they suggest that different types of aid channelled in different ways might support better impact (Feeny & Mcillivray, 2009). Cohen and Werker examine how well governments prepare for disasters. They find that the presence of aid increases the chance that a government will underinvest in preparedness measures ex ante due to an expectation that international donors will fund ex post, arguably setting up a ‘moral hazard’ where affected states are disincentivised to invest in disaster preparedness. (Cohen & Werker, 2008). Raschky and Schwindt take this argument further to show that not only can past aid flows “crowd out the recipient country’s incentive to provide protective measures that decrease the country’s exposure and vulnerability to natural disasters” (Raschky &
Schwindt, 2016; p642), and especially in poorer, less democratic countries, but that unearmarked funds appears to exacerbate this effect. They argue for more targeted funds earmarked for disaster prevention, suggesting that “ex ante in-kind transfers could be a possible solution in case of natural hazards, since mitigation activities are likely to reduce the extent of catastrophes and the need for ex post relief “(ibid: p642). Raschky & Schwindt’s causal analysis demonstrates that below the level of macroeconomics in aid relationships, there are ways of ensuring that donorship works for those experiencing poverty and those affected by crises, and also donorship approaches that do not work. Put another way, the success or failure of donorship is something that can be measured, and more importantly, that it can be controlled to some extent.

Aid effectiveness establishes principles that seek to influence donor behaviour towards better policy and practice. An example of one such difficulty is donor coordination, which appears to span the humanitarian development divide. Using donor coordination as our example, ‘harmonisation of aid with that of other donors’ is a principle of aid effectiveness that aims to encourage coordination (Bigsten & Tengstam, 2015). In a similar way the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship encourage coordination between donors towards a shared goal of meeting humanitarian needs. Leiderer illustrates a lack of donor coordination with stand-alone projects as a cause of poor aid quality. A ‘projectized’ approach to aid has been criticised as “ineffective, costly, unsustainable and donor-driven” (Leiderer, 2015: p1424). Stand-alone projects can lead to ‘fragmentation’ of aid where aid agencies, instruments and processes work independently, to the extent that inefficiencies arise and create a bureaucratic burden for the recipient state. Liederer warns that this negative impact “adversely affects capacities on both sides, keeps transaction costs high, undermines the overall quality of cooperation and fails to generate effective incentives for better policy choices” (ibid: p1440). Leiderer suggests that programme-based approaches could provide more effective aid, coordinated support for a locally owned development programme, but that these approaches will need incentives for donors to change their behaviour.

Similarly, Smillie and Minear argue that for humanitarian donorship, individualistic donor behaviour is considerably less effective than coordinated efforts, for instance multilateralism (Smillie & Minear, 2003). While their findings were presented before the establishment of current aid effectiveness initiatives and pooled funding mechanisms, these findings have also been echoed in recent research. For example, Swithern finds that “Bilateral relationships between donors and individual humanitarian agencies tend to override attempts at improving overall coordination and joint implementation of humanitarian response, leading to a crisis of trust in, and within, the humanitarian system” (Swithern, 2018: p2). This is partly because, despite informal coordination at field level, there is no platform for
coordinating donor approaches and allocations at the global level. Swithern recommends that donors could “share information about their allocation plans to begin to ensure complementarity of sectoral and geographic coverage” (ibid: p14).

There are, however, dissenting voices that argue for a less idealistic approach to the best practice of donorship. Yanguas puts forward an alternative proposal for a broader approach than a single principle, based instead on analysis of collective action that does not assume all parties have the same intentions or power. Yanguas argues that while coordination is one solution to collective action for the public good, another solution can be donor leadership. Where stronger and weaker donors are present, forming a consensus can take time and result in a solution necessarily aligned with the lowest common denominator. Yanguas argues that committed donors should in fact “exclude those among them who are least invested in actual reform” (Yanguas, 2014: p309).

2.2.2 A Trinity of Mixed Motives: The Challenges of Donorship

In practice, maintaining aid effectiveness while remaining accountable to multiple stakeholders presents many challenges. Macdonald and Hoddinott conceptualise the combination of the humanitarian imperative with incentives to pursue other benefits which donors receive in exchange for their resources as the “trinity of mixed motives” (Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004: p294). They highlight the non-humanitarian benefits for state donors as primarily political and commercial, for instance, the maintenance of the economic health of the donor state itself, its political alliances, and the appeasement of its domestic constituency. These benefits can be described as ‘supply side objectives’. Humanitarian and development objectives may sit alongside these other objectives, they may contribute towards them or compete against them.

Macdonald and Hoddinott focus on a single donor state, namely Canada, comparing humanitarian, commercial and political considerations, which they call the ‘trinity of mixed motives’. They find that Canada’s aid allocation is moderately altruistic or humanitarian with more funds going to countries with good human rights. Canada is, however, more likely to continue aid to Commonwealth and Francophone countries even if their income starts to rise, in contrast with countries who do not have this membership. Countries which import goods from Canada also receive greater levels of aid. They also noted that the importance of political or economic partnerships fluctuates over time. Schraeder et al. focus on Africa in an attempt to inform aid policies by clarifying the considerations that have driven foreign aid policies in the past (Schraeder et al., 1998). They compare a set of variables including strategic importance, economic potential, cultural similarity, ideological stance and region, with the recipient’s ‘humanitarian need’. They find that while aid can be allocated partly as an inducement to
policy reform it is also allocated according to a variety of historical and strategic reasons. The result is a pattern of allocation that may target weak policy environments and countries which do not have severe poverty problems. Alesina and Dollar perform a wider study, examining these objectives through the pattern of allocation of bilateral foreign aid from various international donors to various receiving countries. (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). They ask whether developed countries respond to the variables that make aid effective in reducing poverty. They find that donorship is often driven by existing links between donor states and their colonial past, and the desire to continue current political alliances indicated by a correlation of the UN voting patterns of donor and recipient states. The drawback of this practice is that opportunities are lost for rewarding good policymaking, incentivising more efficient and less corrupt regimes.

For humanitarian crises, the acute and immediate human suffering may appear to raise the humanitarian imperative above other objectives. In conflict contexts, however, it may be easier to see how the national interest of a donor state, for instance national security, might influence funding allocations. Intuitively, one could perceive that donor states respond more objectively to disasters. In fact, the allocation of humanitarian funding across different contexts has been found to share similar political and commercial determinants to development funding, with the addition of media influence. For some this represents a move away from a more ‘principled’ Dunantist humanitarianism, and towards ‘new humanitarianism’ or a Solidarist approach. In other words, a move from an emphasis on neutrality and independence from political objectives and towards alignment with those objectives in certain circumstances. This opens up the debate around the extent to which the alignment of humanitarian objectives with other objectives is acceptable.

Drury et al. and Stromberg take a similar approach to Macdonald and Hoddinott. Drury et al consider the motives of a single donor, USAID (Drury et al., 2005). They focus on two funding decisions, namely the ‘yes/no?’ of whether to provide funding, and the ‘how much?’ of the allocation. Their modelling demonstrates that while both of these are influenced by political considerations, “political considerations dominate the yes/no disaster assistance decision, but subsequent how much decisions are left more to the OFDA12 professionals” (Drury, Olson, & Van Belle, 2005: p469). Furthermore, their results demonstrate that U.S. foreign policy decision makers see disasters as opportunities to enhance domestic security, and that a disaster’s media salience has a powerful impact on the likelihood of funding being allocated. Stromberg focuses on European donor policies, exploring the influence of donor-recipient relations and the media, examining a broader range of donors and countries.

12 The Office of United States Disaster Assistance https://www.usaid.gov/ visited 25.08.20
(Stromberg, 2007). Stromberg finds that while there is a positive correlation between funding allocation, severity of the disaster and low income of the affected state, there is also a correlation between the news coverage of a disaster, shared language and colonial ties. Extrapolating from the influence of this last variable, Stromberg concludes that “A country without colonial ties must have 50 times as many fatalities to have the same chance of receiving relief as a former colony” (Stromberg, 2007: p221).

In the context of conflict, concern about using humanitarian funding in support of non-humanitarian objectives is arguably more acute, especially where government donors can benefit from an exchange logic with the warring parties or their allies, hence the Dunantist tradition of neutrality and independence. Governments have, however, experimented with aid as a device in the stabilisation and containment of conflict, viewing their implementing partners as “core components of the strategy to bring ‘order’ to these areas of ‘disorder’” (Duffield, Macrae, & Curtis, 2001: p270). The unintended consequences of humanitarian aid have been criticised as prolonging or exacerbating war, or even sustaining war economies (Duffield et al., 2001). Driven by this experience, ‘coherence’ between humanitarian and political responses emerged with a view to addressing the root causes of conflict (J. Macrae & Leader, 2001). Duffield et al argue that as a result donors became more directly involved in decision making at the operational level, including: “contributing to donor co-ordination bodies, earmarking funds for multilateral agencies, monitoring donor-partner contracts and developing their own operational capacity” (Duffield et al., 2001: p271). Duffield and Fox argue that a further dimension of complexity exists between aid for immediate humanitarian objectives, and longer term objectives such as conflict resolution or development (Duffield et al., 2001; Fox, 2001).

The public relations component of politics also plays a part. Duffield et al. argue that Western governments realise that humanitarian action following military action can act as a public relations exercise. They describe the notion of a ‘humanitarian war’ as “an alliance with the non-governmental humanitarian community to contain the humanitarian effects of Western military actions” (Duffield et al., 2001: p272). This in part explains how donor states sideline their humanitarian objectives as a device to further non-humanitarian aims. Their humanitarian implementing partners are not, therefore in an equal partnership with military and political actors in this context (Pugh, 2001; Woodward, 2001). Drummond et al. focus on the UK foreign policy, arguing that the risks of side-lining humanitarian objectives is most acute in certain situations. These situations include where “the UK is actively involved in a conflict; where national security considerations prevail; and where domestic drivers around migration trump a deep-seated sense of British values around charity” (Drummond, Metcalfe-Hough, Willitts-King, & Bryant, 2017: p19).
Even while donor states may claim externally to uphold ‘principled’ humanitarianism, not only the policy but the mechanics for the support of mixed motives are in explicit existence internally. Certain donor states establish budgets specifically to resource shared objectives, for example Canada, the Netherlands and the UK (Harmer & Macrae, 2004). These budgets serve not only development objectives such as poverty reduction, but security agendas such as diplomacy and defence. Alongside budgets, donor states also blur the boundaries between the type of implementing partners they choose, for example the use of the military for traditionally humanitarian tasks, rather than humanitarian agencies. Poole lists these as:

“logistical support to enable access for humanitarian personnel and relief goods, followed by medical operations and the provision of material relief goods (such as tents, clean water and food supplies)” (Poole, 2013: p3).

Donor states may task military personnel and assets in disasters, or they may expand the role of UN Peacekeepers in conflict contexts. State use of the military has been criticised for putting humanitarian agencies in danger by confusing their neutral role with the more aggressive role of the military, which led to the establishment of the Oslo Guideline on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2007). There is an added incentive for a donor state to use the military for humanitarian action, which is that the cost of that action may be reported as ODA. This is especially the case in situations where it may be easier to argue for the deployment of a military budget over a humanitarian one (Poole, 2013), which may be the case where the commitment to 0.7% ODA is unpopular with a large or vociferous domestic constituency.

The question of how humanitarian actors offer and provide support to suffering in humanitarian crises requires not only attention to principles, but to the ramifications of humanitarian action beyond its intended beneficiaries. The international humanitarian system in particular has been called out as a conduit for political or economic projects that are not necessarily of any benefit to those who are suffering. Despite the virtuous philosophical origins of humanitarianism, the nature of a humanitarian system whose behaviour takes place at an international level is that it is open to unintended consequences, manipulation and corruption.

Humanitarianism’s pure intention to relieve suffering intervenes in a framework of existing relationships that may be either aligned or at odds with it, particularly in terms of the relationships held by those affected. The humanitarian imperative is consequently buffeted by power dynamics of stakeholder interests and wider environmental factors that bring pressure to bear. Not only does
humanitarian action have a long history with the notion that aid can do harm (Anderson, 1999; de Waal, 1997), but humanitarian actors also find themselves in a double bind whereby withholding aid can be just as detrimental to those who suffer. Anderson argues that:

“it is a moral and logical fallacy to conclude that because aid can do harm, a decision not to give aid would do no harm. In reality, a decision to withhold aid from people in need would have unconscionable negative ramifications” (Anderson in Terry, 2013: p25).

Donini provides a useful summary and framing of this broader perspective, conceptualising the negative aspects of the international humanitarian system as ‘macro, meso and micro functions’, that is “the functions behind the official or declared functions. They are not necessarily the ‘ulterior’ functions, as this would imply that they are designed as such” (Donini, 2010: p226). The meta functions of humanitarianism may occur when humanitarianism is co-opted either willingly or unwillingly to serve priorities other than the humanitarian imperative.

At the macro level, Donini conceptualises the consequences of the Western power and influence of the international humanitarian system as dominating the values and ideologies of those countries affected by crises. Humanitarianism can channel the power of a new type of political sovereignty which can be either attractive or challenging to the states involved (Ashby Wilson & Brown, 2008). The result is action that may save lives, but in the longer term risks “depoliticizing or dehistoricizing” (Ticktin, 2014: p277). Barnett takes this further to suggest that the Western humanitarian system is comparable to a new Western Empire (Barnett, 2011) using its power to subjugate less poorer countries. At the meso level, Donini argues that the political economy of the humanitarian system leaves countries open to economic abuse, by paving the way for capitalist projects, such as security and infrastructure, with no humanitarian agenda. Similarly, Klein suggests that crises create a fertile environment for this “rise of a predatory form of disaster capitalism that uses the desperation and fear created by catastrophe to engage in radical social and economic engineering” (Klein, 2005, p. 9). Konyndyk argues that the political economy of the international humanitarian system itself is incentivised to allow implementing partners to pursue their own supply driven agendas at the cost of constructive outcomes for populations in need. He argues that:

“The predominant business model in the humanitarian sector encourages UN agencies to conflate their designated normative and technical leadership functions with their own programmatic fundraising in ways that directly impede cohesive, end-user-centered humanitarian response” (Konyndyk, 2018: p1).
Lastly, at the micro level Donini identifies the international humanitarian career as an opportunity to pacify the conscience without concern for longer term structural inequalities. So, whether humanitarian actors desire it or not, humanitarian action can be understood as a currency for those who may not have the humanitarian imperative as their primary motivation and humanitarian actors have come under fire for failing to acknowledge this.

2.3 Humanitarian Donorship in a Specific Case: Housing, Shelter and Settlements

This research takes as its case the support to households who have lost their shelter and settlements during humanitarian crises. Shelter and settlements can be understood as both a human right and also an economic asset. ‘The Right to Adequate Housing’ (United Nations, 2014) upholds the right to the shelter and settlements of those affected by humanitarian crises, and especially displacement. The economic, health and wellbeing benefits of securing and recovering shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises are documented by many, including Buckley & Kalarickal (2005), Sheppard & Hill (2005), and Kelling (2020).

Shelter and settlements provide a good case because they push the traditional boundaries of humanitarian donorship. The establishment of shelter and settlements relies on interlinkages of various social and economic systems, requires relatively large initial capital investment, and relatively long periods of time. So support to those who have lost their shelter and settlements challenges the normative framework of humanitarian funding which places short timeframes around humanitarian assistance and limited per capita costs per sector. This misalignment of these funding characteristics with the characteristics of shelter and settlements is well placed to call into question the reluctance of some donors to provide quality funding.

2.3.1 Housing as a Human Right

Even before a humanitarian crisis, adequate housing is recognised by states as an essential human need, and especially in those countries most affected by crises. In terms of human development, inadequate housing can be understood to lead to “life or health threatening conditions” (United Nations, 2014), and so conversely the provision of adequate housing, can protect and restore health and wellbeing. Housing first appeared as a right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Leckie explains that up until this point housing was seen as mainly an economic issue because
the most common reason for people lacking adequate housing was their inability to afford housing which meets their needs (Leckie, 1989), rather than failure of housing provision by others. By including housing in this declaration this conferred, for the first time, duties upon states to ensure their citizens have access to adequate housing. The conditions of adequate housing include: security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy (United Nations, 2014).

Governments now have various instruments at their disposal to ensure an enabling environment for the conditions of adequate housing listed above, including policies concerning tax and market incentives. The Declaration of Human Rights is used alongside other instruments such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which states that State parties are obliged to provide refugees with treatment “not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances” with regard to housing (UNHCR, 2007). It is not, however, the intention of the Declaration that states are expected to undertake the full provision of adequate housing, and some would argue that certain Governments are in fact not well placed to do so, and especially those in a less stable economic position (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005).

The Declaration can provide leverage in humanitarian crises since states can be held accountable by those who seek to support those who have lost their shelter and settlements, including other states. It could be argued that in this way humanitarian donors have a proxy responsibility for the provision of adequate housing following crises, and especially when a government is an aggressor in conflict. Since the declaration is shared between states, it

“made it more difficult to argue that a government’s treatment of its own citizens was solely a domestic matter, as governments have done for centuries” (Leckie, 1989: p92).

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are specifically mentioned alongside the Declaration, with the United Nations recognising that they must be assisted to return home or resettle:

“Refugees and IDPs who choose not to return to their homes must be protected against forced return in all circumstances, and should be enabled to resettle in conditions that respect, inter alia, their right to adequate housing.” (United Nations, 2014: p26).
This sets up multi-state responsibilities which include the state of origin, the state where refugees want to settle, and any donors states who can provide resources to assist.

### 2.3.2 Housing as an Asset.

In terms of economic development, housing can also be understood as an asset, collateral and a generator of GDP. As such it can play a part in economic growth and, therefore, economic recovery after certain crises (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005; Sheppard & Hill, 2005). One reason housing is instrumental in economic development and recovery is because it requires sizable resources, and creates a sizeable asset in a way that is different to other humans needs, such as food or water. This characteristic goes some way to explaining why the most common reason for people lacking adequate housing was (and remains) their inability to afford housing which meets their needs (Leckie, 1989). In humanitarian crises, although sheltering households rarely involves constructing whole houses immediately, even the immediate support in the form of materials and often labour can have a significant economic impact due to the scale of capital required.

Housing can be understood as instrumental in both economic development and recovery from crises. For example, Wen shows that not only does housing cause the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)\(^{13}\), but this in turn causes capital formation in the business sector, plant and equipment (Wen, 2001). Sheppard and Hill go on to explain how shelter projects in humanitarian crises play a similar key role in stimulating the economy in humanitarian crises because they

> “often represent a large portion of the relief programming implemented in post disaster settings and are seen to provide a range of stimulus to the local economy and to household incomes.” (Sheppard & Hill, 2005: p7).

When construction occurs in developed economies it is a driver of economic growth, builder of confidence in the market, and creator of a key source of inflation-resistant capital. While in humanitarian crises populations are affected by some unique dynamics, they also bring with them familiar economic strategies. In this way, Sheppard and Hill argue that the economic benefits are still felt, since

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\(^{13}\) “Gross domestic product (GDP) is the standard measure of the value added created through the production of goods and services in a country during a certain period”. [GDP and spending - Gross domestic product (GDP) - OECD Data](https://data.oecd.org/spending/gdp.php) visited 12.07.22
“poorer populations recovering from disasters typically utilize economic strategies that are similar to those of unaffected populations of a similar economic level; and critical economic dynamics are similar.” (Sheppard & Hill, 2005: p8).

Mackie et al observe this in Somaliland where urban, conflict affected communities developed an informal economy during a period where external aid to Somaliland was disrupted, which communities used to recover largely unassisted (Mackie et al., 2017). They found evidence that in the absence of external actors, households were able to rely on small-scale informal economies to replace disrupted services with a key source of livelihoods. Community solidarity and trust persisted, and with women often stepping into key economic and political roles.

Repair and reconstruction can act as a catalyst, not only for the recovery of household livelihoods, but the creation of employment in the construction sector that serves construction and repair, which bolsters the recovery of the national economy of the crisis affected country (Twigg, 2002). Barakat and Zyck observe that those recovering after crises in Lebanon experienced multiple benefits as they moved towards more secure recovery. They explain that

“housing reconstruction following conflict and other crises has implications beyond the provision of permanent shelter, such as for health and psychosocial well-being” (Barakat & Zyck, 2011).

Post-disaster recovery can also be seen as a critical process in reducing risk and building resilience, rather than returning to the same pre-crisis state (Levers & Bhatia, 2011; Twigg et al., 2017).

The recovery of shelter and settlements has been shown to create positive impacts not just in isolation, but on wider household and community needs. Kelling draws out the wider impacts of support to shelter and settlements

“Even the most basic shelter and settlements assistance can contribute to a sense of normalcy, provide physical and legal protections, improve psychological and socio-economic conditions, contribute to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and increase access to essential services such as health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education” (Kelling, 2020: p2).
Conversely, over time, if this incremental initiative is delayed, further suffering can result. For instance, where they are displaced by conflict issues at a political level, and these issues cannot be immediately resolved, the support provided is necessarily incomplete. Elorduy presents the counterfactual, illustrating the implications of the insufficiencies of temporary settlements for those displaced from their homes, identifying overcrowding and lack of adequate building materials and sanitation as obstacles to successful child protection and development (Elorduy, 2017). So, where recovery is possible, shelter and settlements are a key to positive outcomes from household to state level, and where recovery is stalled, poor shelter and settlements have detrimental outcomes. Despite the clear benefits of investing in shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises, humanitarian agencies have yet to harness this evidence to make the case for support to shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. Kelling warns that these benefits are yet to become widely accepted:

“However, the overarching contributions of shelter and settlements assistance, and its impacts on other sectors are often less understood or overlooked” (Kelling, 2020: p2).

Further reasons for shelter and settlements to be overlooked by donors are the complexities involved in creating an enabling environment for these wider benefits to come to fruition. The enabling environment for adequate housing is complex and relies upon a range of drivers, even outside of a humanitarian crisis. Since housing in developing countries, where many humanitarian crises tend to occur, has a sizeable economic value, this might suggest that treating housing and shelter more like an asset than a human right would prove fruitful, but Buckley and Kalarickal find that

“there is no mysterious, straightforward capitalist panacea that can address all the shelter problems faced by low-income families in developing economies.” (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005: p249)

Buckley and Kalarickal demonstrate that the value of housing is linked to several different drivers such as land title, housing policy and employment. These drivers indicate where support from either the public or private sector might be required. For example, in developed economies land and property title is often treated as an asset which can be used as collateral. Buckley and Kalarickal describe the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa where no effective formal financial system exists to help realise the value of collateral. For those living in informal housing, they often have the added issue
of proving income to obtain credit from financial institutions. These specific differences in the economic system mean that

“There is also less value to a title if it cannot offer value as collateral…. The result is that the collateral value of property title in most developing economies remains low.” (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005: p246).

Leckie identified that the nature of housing as an asset adds to the complexity of supporting those who seek adequate housing. Leckie points out that upholding housing as a social and economic right is ‘redistributive’, unlike civil and political rights. Upholding housing rights can involve several forms of redistribution, namely:

“...redistribution of income ... redistribution of assets or at least limiting individuals’ rights to freely buy, sell and use these assets” (Leckie, 1989: p93).

In this way, housing involves more stakeholders than simply the state and the householder, taking on an economic and political significance for the whole community. This is reflected to some extent in humanitarian crises, where support to shelter and settlements can involve redistribution of land and property in situations of displacement, and tough decisions concerning the distribution of donated funds between different human needs.

In summary, shelter and settlements provide a useful case for exploring humanitarian donorship because they push the traditional boundaries of reducing cost and time, and maintaining political neutrality. The enabling environment for adequate housing, and consequently shelter and settlements, is complex and relies upon a range of drivers such as land title, housing policy and employment. While governments have various legal and policy instruments at their disposal to ensure an enabling environment for the conditions of adequate housing, and shelter and settlements in crises, the social and economic aspects of this human need demand a range of rights and market-based approaches. While the declaration of Human Rights provides leverage in humanitarian crises to hold states accountable, states will rarely be able to ensure all the provisions necessary to support shelter and settlements without well-developed financial systems and access to land. That said, when states are supported with a range of approaches, the benefits of the recovery of shelter and settlements are wide reaching from community to national level. This
suggests that for humanitarian donorship to be successful in support of households who have lost their shelter and settlements, a range of humanitarian approaches may be required.

2.3.3 Providing Support for Adequate Shelter and Settlements.

The discussion above uses the lens of rights and markets-based approaches to examine how the complex nature of housing, and consequently shelter and settlements in crises, is perceived. The following section explores literature which addresses the how support has been provided to those households who have lost their shelter and settlements. This section adds additional dimensions using empirical scenarios, introducing specific geographical and crisis contexts and also the aspect of time.

The traditional framing of support to those affected by crises, and one which particularly impacts the shelter and settlements, is the bounding of both short, and long term, assistance with respect to humanitarian funding and development funding. Mosel and Levine explain that

“Policymakers and aid actors have been grappling for decades with questions of how to better support vulnerable people affected by protracted or recurrent crises, and how to create a more seamless fit between short-term life-saving interventions and long-term efforts to reduce chronic poverty or vulnerability” (Mosel & Levine, 2014).

Attention to the intersection between the social and economic, humanitarian and development concerns of those affected by crises has long tested the ability of external support actors to address their whole lived experience; to respect culture, address social justice, and support livelihoods, risk reduction and resilience, and subsequently the full range of benefits shelter and settlements can generate. How those affected by crises recover changes over time, both in terms of their priorities and the subsequent level of support they may require (Murphy, Pelling, Adams, Di Vicenz, & Visman, 2018; Twigg et al., 2017). This is partly due to the fluid nature of humanitarian crises. Beall et al. explain this fluidity in conflict contexts:

“Conflicts are not static and can reshape themselves in response to new threats, shifting objectives, fresh actors and changing economic circumstances” (Beall, Goodfellow, & Rodgers, 2013: p3073).

Similarly, Twigg et al. explain the fluidity that follows disasters, including not only the influence of natural hazards but also the intervention of external actors:

“The needs, priorities and opportunities of affected people shift frequently over time and according to changing circumstances (such as the arrival of monsoon rains or the availability
of different forms of assistance) and as a consequence of the policies and interventions of external actors, from local organisations to international humanitarian agencies (together with the resources provided by them and conditions attached to their assistance)” (Twigg et al., 2017: p33).

Households affected by humanitarian crises also typically spend several years moving from survival to recovery, over which time priorities, capacities and resources are likely to change. Humanitarian crises which see the involvement of donor states are by definition large scale, and those affected by such crises are consequently affected for a long time. Research by Platt (2016, 2017), and Devicter and Do (2016) present evidence that it is often several years before security, dignity and sustainability can be restored in countries affected by humanitarian crises. Platt’s study on factors affecting the speed and quality of post disaster recovery and resilience analyses this process for cities affected by earthquakes, where over 25,000 people were displaced (Platt, 2018). Of the ten cities in Platt’s study, in both high and low-income countries, the most common period of recovery from an earthquake was five years, and the mean average was eight years. Similarly, Devicter and Do studied refugees of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from 173 countries and found that “people who were refugees at the end of 2015 have been in exile for an average duration of 10.3 years and a median duration of 4 years; the average duration of exile has varied between 10 and 15 years since the late 1990s” (Devictor & Do, 2016: para 1). The lived experience of the journey towards security, dignity and sustainability most often continues for several years. Resourcing support for this journey is accordingly a long-term endeavour.

Rather than conceptualising humanitarian crises from the perspective of those affected, policymakers and aid actors have often divided aspects of this experience into different territories which they then struggle to reconnect, through ‘linking relief, rehabilitation and development’ (LRRD) (Mosel & Levine, 2014), building ‘resilience’ (Murphy et al., 2018) and supporting the Nexus (Poole & Culbert, 2019).

This phenomenon is highlighted in disasters where, although there may be few practical obstacles to recovery, funding may not be forthcoming due to the normative and homogenous way in which recovery from crises is perceived by donors and their implementing partners. Collins et al explain:

“The common perception within the aid community is that shelter is humanitarian and life-saving, while reconstruction is developmental and linked to recovery. Assistance to reconstruction often begins only many months after a disaster. This rarely reflects the priorities of affected populations, who begin to recover materials and stabilise their homes as shelter in the first days after a disaster” (Collins, Corsellis, & Vitale, 2009).
Maynard and Barritt contrast the changing situation on the ground with the boundaries some, yet not all, donors place around humanitarian funds. They describe how implementing partners are left to manage this complexity.

“CARE was able to reallocate some funding from its emergency programming to self-recovery shelter programmes (although it was unable to reallocate funding already committed to emergency relief [...]). Some of CARE’s donors allowed the transfer of funds from emergency to self-recovery programmes, while additional funds were provided from CARE’s own fundraising efforts to meet the higher costs per household” (V Maynard & Barritt, 2015: p40).

This mismatch between the fluid nature of recovery from crises and the rigid boundaries placed around funding is discussed further in chapter six.

One disadvantage of bounding humanitarian assistance to short timeframes is the missed opportunity for early action to have an impact on the longer term. These opportunities can include the economic recovery explained above, in addition to addressing perennial household vulnerabilities in the form of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and building resilience to future shocks. Kennedy et al find that reducing risk is achievable during support to recovery from humanitarian crises. They recommend that “Thinking ahead is necessary by integrating relief and development through long-term planning and disaster risk reduction” (Kennedy et al., 2008: p24). Ievers and Bhatia find that “Recovery offers the opportunity to address the underlying risk factors from multiple hazards and ‘build back better’” (Ievers & Bhatia, 2011: p1), and Peters et al explore the possibilities of risk reduction in conflict contexts (Peters, Peters, Twigg, & Walch, 2020). Opportunities for risk reduction and building resilience are an important link between recovery from crises and the longer term lived experience of those who suffer. Understandings differ, however, over who is responsible to support longer term aspects of recovery from humanitarian crises. Kennedy et al suggest humanitarian practitioners have a role (Kennedy et al., 2008), while Ievers et al conclude that “recovery is fundamentally a development issue” (Ievers & Bhatia, 2011: p1), and Peters et al highlight the lack of attention paid to risk reduction and resilience in conflict contexts (Peters et al., 2020). This confusion is reflected further in the humanitarian policies analysed in Chapter Four.

Similarly, in conflict contexts, short term ‘life-saving’ approaches can become a priority over longer term ‘living’. Saunders identifies where this life-saving framing breaks down, for example where short term external support in the form of temporary imported solutions such as tents can deteriorate, resulting in the need to replace them only several months later (Saunders, 2004). Cabot Venton and Sida illustrate a longer term solution to this issue in an Ethiopian refugee camp, where transitional
shelters were brought in to remedy the problem of quickly deteriorating tents, making sizable cost savings over time and providing a more adequate and sustainable living environment (Cabot Venton & Sida, 2017). Sanderson et al. use the example of the 2010 Haiti earthquake to argue that a focus on transitional shelter must be followed up with permanent and improved reconstruction or risk leaving a legacy of new slums (Sanderson, Sharma, Kennedy, & Burnell, 2014).

2.3.4 Aligning Global Support with Local Recovery.

More recently, with increasing awareness of a mismatch between humanitarian policy, funding and architecture and the characteristics of shelter and settlements as a human need and asset humanitarian actors have taken inspiration from systems to ensure accountability to affected populations such as the Common Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and certain commitments of the Grand Bargain around concepts of ‘localisation’ and ‘participation’. Those supporting households who have lost their shelter and settlements following crises have purposely observed how they attempt to recover.

Despite the journey of the concept of ‘participation’ as a developmental theory (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey & Mohan, 2004), ‘participation’ and more recently, ‘localisation’ have become widespread as the basis for measures of success for the external provision of support to those affected by humanitarian crises. The ability of those affected by crises to determine and recover various aspects of their home has become a striking feature of the architectural and humanitarian literature concerned with the recovery of shelter and settlements. There is now a critical mass of studies which stress that the most vulnerable who suffer must at least be active in decisions concerning the recovery and stabilisation of shelter and settlements to survive, recover and achieve sustainable development outcomes.

Turner’s work in the field of housing policy, observing how low-income households build their own houses in Peru, provides a foundation of ethnographic study from which to theorise the provision of adequate housing (Turner, 1976; Turner, 1983). His work has subsequently been used to frame similar inquiries into people helping themselves in humanitarian crises. Davis first emphasised the importance of observing the local community and their participation in recovering their own shelter and settlements during crises (I Davis & Alexander, 2016; Ian Davis, 1980, 1982, 2011). It has become clear

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that, irrespective of external support, households seek to continue their recovery journey towards adequate housing, even when stuck in the immediate process of survival or between survival and recovery. Ashmore et al. explores how those internally displaced in Afghanistan make adaptations to their tents (Ashmore et al., 2003) and Wagemann explores how earthquake affected communities modify their transitional shelters in Chile and Peru (Wagemann, 2015). Flinn et al. and Bakewell remind us that communities proactively recover (Bakewell, 2000; Flinn et al., 2017). Flinn et al. highlight that communities “are never passive, and the initiation of reconstruction and recovery is an inevitable process” (Flinn, Schofield, & Morel, 2017: p13). They use the example of the recovery of shelter and settlements to illustrate that even in the midst of an international humanitarian response, the majority of those affected by crises recover the capability to shelter and settle themselves on their own and without external support. This amounts to 80-90% following disasters and 70% of refugees who recover without the support of international organisations. It is important to note that these groups are likely to be those with stronger capacity and the intention behind the focus of this work is primarily to investigate how to scale up safer construction support to a larger number of households. In a similar way, Bakewell states that those who do receive support will exert agency over it:

“however top-down, externally driven or otherwise non-participatory an emergency programme may be, the benefits or services will not be received passively by the targeted community. They exert agency to mould what is on offer to their particular interests and incorporate it within their coping strategies” (Bakewell, 2000: p115).

Fan and Earle suggest that the existing exclusion of particular households and communities must be taken into account when humanitarian crises occur. Fan discusses urban planning and the importance of linking urban policy in crises with existing policy (Fan, 2012), and Earle argues for a more integrated approach to humanitarian action in the context of urban poverty (Earle, 2016). Tafti explores failures to enable the most vulnerable to access support through exclusionary post-disaster housing distribution policies in Iran and India (Tafti, 2015). Kennedy et al. discuss the importance of community involvement in the policy to ‘build back better’ in Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Kennedy et al., 2008) Opdyke et al. and Rand et al. measure the success of external support using ‘beneficiary satisfaction’ as an indicator. They find that beneficiary satisfaction improves with early involvement of those affected in the decision making around planning the recovery of shelter and settlements (Opdyke, Javernick-Will, & Koschmann, 2018; Rand, Hirano, & Kelman, 2011). Schilderman, Lyons and Maly attempt to ground aspirational policies of ‘building back better’ in more specific ‘people centred’ external support (Maly, 2018; Schilderman & Lyons, 2011), while da Silva and Batchelor argue that
even in large scale crises, the decision making involved in the recovery of shelter and settlements can be de-centralised (da Silva & Batchelor, 2010).

As the agency of those affected by crises has become more clearly articulated as an essential characteristic of any external support provided, so flexibility to respond to the shifting priorities of affected households has become an important characteristic by association. Based on this principle, Corsellis and Vitale (2005) developed the approach of ‘transitional shelter and settlements’, which can adapt to where local actors find themselves on their journey to recovery. This approach was in part a reaction to the increasing polarisation between crisis-affected groups who were able to rebuild their houses and those remaining in tents, and also the common practice of considering affected communities as passive onlookers to the recovery process by distributing tents or building houses for them with little or no involvement. Transitional shelter refers to an incremental process of recovery using any of a range of temporary shelter options. A further incarnation of transitional shelter frequently used in the immediate aftermath of crises is ‘Shelter Kits’ that consist of a range of items to enable households to construct or repair shelters, for instance, tools or materials, based on the assumption that households also have access to the remaining resources they can use to complete a shelter (Fredriksen, 2014). The original concept was developed by Howard and Spice at Oxfam, who documented how plastic sheeting could be used to flexibly respond to crisis-specific needs (Howard & Spice, 1989). More recently, they were further developed into shelter kits by Adlam’s team at the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and into a range of construction and tool kits under Saunders’ team at the Red Cross (Fredriksen, 2014). The advantage of these approaches is that they can be adapted by local actors depending on where they are on their recovery journey, avoiding ‘one size fits all’.

At settlements level, a range of approaches has also emerged to guide community-based disaster risk management, including the Participatory Approach to Safer Shelter Awareness (PASSA) (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies [IFRC], 2011), developed under Saunders’ team at the Red Cross. This is a variation of Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (World Health Organization, 1997), used in water and sanitation programmes. With the rise in urbanisation creating more vulnerability for those living in cities, approaches to urban humanitarian crises have emerged. In some respects, urban approaches have provided a conduit for a more localised focus, given the complex relationships of national, municipal and local systems. ‘Settlements’, ‘neighbourhoods’ or ‘area based’ approaches have emerged as a way for external actors to engage with a range of local entities as “an area-based means of responding to multi-sector needs that is informed by a community-based decision-making process reflective of the social, economic, and physical features of
the delimited area” (USAID, 2011: p1). Maynard et al promote the use of urban planning to increase the agency of affected communities, stating that “the development of recovery and reconstruction plans can empower urban communities and governments to identify their needs and priorities and manage their own recovery process” (Maynard, Parker, & Garcia, 2017: p265). Sanderson supports the Area Based Approach, in terms of its acknowledgement that “actions need to be driven by local populations (local communities and local governance structures), and that recovery takes time” (Sanderson, 2017: p361), while also warning that external actors may themselves need to change in order to make a success of their support since “Currently, the humanitarian aid architecture is not well set up for either of these” (ibid).

The initiative taken by households to recover has been termed ‘self-recovery’ (Parrack et al., 2014; Flinn et al., 2017; Maynard, Parker & Twigg, 2017; Harriss, Parrack & Jordan, 2019). Flinn et al. suggest, that attention to how households recover by themselves can inform more successful strategies for the provision of external aid to those who are unable to recover alone (Flinn et al., 2017), and this could include groups with less agency freedom. They propose that a larger number of families can be reached if external support complements their existing strategies, and they conceptualise this process as ‘self-recovery’.

Maynard et al. take the context of a crisis receiving external aid and focus on households that can recover with minimal support. They expand the definition of self-recovery to include:

“material, financial and/or technical assistance provided during the relief and/or recovery phase to enable affected households to repair, build or rebuild their own shelters themselves – either alone or with the assistance of local industry” (Maynard, Parker, & Twigg, 2017: p1).

This includes households who have at least either the skills or resources to contribute to their own recovery, and who can consequently recover with less external support. Their evidence synthesis considers two key aspects of self-recovery. First, the outcomes of supporting households who are recovering largely alone and second, the obstacles to this process. While they are considering how people recover, external aid is a given. Maynard et al. found that a household’s own ability to contribute skills, labour, materials or finance was a major factor in the success of their recovery. For those supporting them, undertaking adequate initial assessments and regular monitoring, and delivering adequate financial, technical and material assistance is essential to complement household efforts. Twigg et al. further define self-recovery as “the process whereby disaster-affected households repair, build or rebuild their shelters themselves or through local builders” (Twigg et al., 2017: p5). One advantage of the concept of ‘self recovery’ is that it may apply to a range of recovery activities
and at any point on the recovery journey, including construction of temporary or permanent shelter. The concept of ‘self-recovery’ also uses Turner’s original approach of starting with the intentions of households themselves to follow the strategies of those affected by crises and asks how best to tailor external support.

2.4 Critical Accounting as a Theoretical Framework

This last section describes the literature used to inform the analytical process of this research drawing on the fields of economics, organisational and management theory, and international development. A theoretical framework is described which allows for the analysis of the influence of the economic ideas of donorship upon recovery from humanitarian crises.

We explored above how donorship is at once an economic and ethical exercise, involving the provision of resources and a relationship between the donor and the recipient. Attention to the power of economising coalesces around a strand of economic thought related to organisational and management theory, called critical accounting. Critical accounting views the practice of accounting and corporate behaviour as inextricably connected to many allocative, distributive, social, and ecological problems. Critical accounting is useful to this research because it provides a framework for the analysis of the group of economic activities under accounting, and their relationship to social behaviour. This research takes the particular theoretical framework described by Miller and Power (Miller & Power, 2013) and extends it for the analysis of the practice of donorship, including an examination of the shaping and evaluation of financial instruments that occurs when states plan and budget. This theoretical framework allows for donorship to be investigated at the different levels of and build a picture of the range of donorship decisions at different stages and levels of the process of funding disbursement and their effects on the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises.

Miller and Power gather together observations regarding the link between the practices of accounting and its influence, intended or otherwise. With these they form a theoretical framework to analyse the four roles of accounting (Miller & Power, 2013). These four roles comprise Territorialising, Mediating, Adjudicating and Subjectivising. This research uses Miller and Power’s schematic framework of the four roles of accounting as a simple analytical tool through which donorship can be examined. While this framework has been primarily used by scholars to draw attention to the collection of financial information via accounting, this research extends the theory to use it as a lens examining the influence of economic approaches in shaping and evaluating humanitarian action that occurs when
governments plan, budget and disburse funds. This includes such economic activities as setting up territories such as ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’ budgets, mediating the idea of supporting those who suffer with specific budget lines, subjectivizing through disbursing funds to implementing partners acting as proxies, and choosing the lenses with which to adjudicate the success of humanitarian action.

Territorialising draws on the notion that economising, and more specifically, the setting up of a calculable space, can be regarded as demarcating a territory. Within government, Miller observes that forming ‘calculative assemblages’ is itself a type of territorializing, because an assemblage itself implies territory (Miller, 1990). Conceptualisation of humanitarian assistance as an economic activity provides its territory. For instance, the budget for a particular team in an organisation can be regarded as a territory, because once it becomes demarcated it is protected by financial policies and processes and afforded associated human and material resources in order to achieve the idea it was set up to serve. Furthermore, and at a higher level, a thematic budget such as a ‘humanitarian’ budget forms a territory over certain social activities such as responding to crises, and perhaps more importantly, not others. Saunders identifies the example of territories as a division of responsibilities in the US government; a split signalled by terminology:

“OFDA can implement ‘shelter’ programmes, seen as rapidly implemented, lower cost ‘emergency’ assistance, but not ‘housing’ which is viewed as longer term and more costly ‘development’ assistance, whereas USAID can support ‘housing’ but not ‘shelter’ for the same reasons” (Saunders, 2004: p165).

The ability of economic activities, described above, to translate economic ideas into concrete practices, are referred to by Miller and Power as ‘mediating’. Not only do economic activities provide economic ideas with a territory, but the territory is where economic ideas can be realised. In this way the activities of economising mediate between economic ideas and social behaviours. For instance, a ‘humanitarian’ budget allows for ‘humanitarian activities’ to be resourced. While the power of a humanitarian policy is to state what type of activities may be resourced, the power of a finance policy is to state how they may be resourced and the scale of their economic importance, using such measures as timeframe, amount and the role and the authorisation of those who can make use of the budget.

Once a calculable space, its territory and its power to mediate, has been established, it is often used to inform judgements about social activities through the exercise of adjudicating. For instance, an accounting system not only describes the budgets and how they will be used to resource social

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activities, it also ‘accounts’ for how budgets are used. These records not only describe social activities in terms of the economic system that was set up; they also provide a process to determine what is valued. These values can subsequently be used to judge good or bad. Adjudication has been shown to influence social behaviour, such that “people change their behaviour in reaction to being evaluated, observed, or measured” (Espeland & Sauder, 2007: p1), and therefore cannot be considered an entirely innocent practice. Strathern explains that

“Techniques for assessing, auditing and evaluating institutions are often defended on the grounds of transparency. What is interesting about this case is that in a social world where people are conscious of diverse interests, such an appeal to a benevolent or moral visibility is all too easily shown to have a tyrannous side” (Strathern, 2000: p310).

Adjudication in humanitarian donorship therefore offers insight into the relationship between economic values and humanitarian values. For instance, economic values such as ‘efficiency’ and Value for Money may override humanitarian values such as ‘resilience’ and ‘protection’.

The accountability that is established by the process of adjudicating confers responsibility upon the individuals and organisations included in the economic system. They must hold themselves to account against certain values, also described by the economic system. Miller and Power describe this as ‘subjectivising’ or ‘responsibilising’. In other words, ‘subjectivising’ involves delegating responsibility to another entity. Shearer observes that economic theory creates a community of sovereign and independent subjects, partly as a function of their assumed neutrality, and then instantiates ethical norms and moral codes. Subjectivising therefore contributes towards normativity. The effect of normativity is that so long as the economic system remains unchallenged, so too will the ethics that govern it (Shearer, 2002). Subjectivising is also important in terms of those who are not chosen as the subjects of adjudication. For instance, where donors use the success of their partners as a proxy for their own success, donors themselves are hidden from evaluation. Alternatively, where social decisions such as the nature of humanitarian action are subject to scrutiny but economic decisions, such as the length and amount of a grant are not subject to scrutiny, the effect of these economic decisions on humanitarian action is hidden.

In this way the four roles of accounting are extended to describe the broader four roles of donorship. These include practices of creating territories around aspects of humanitarian crises, adjudicating what should be valued and what should not, or in other words what should be bounded by territories, subjectivising implementing partners to act on behalf of donors and creating a process by which humanitarian outcomes can be mediated.
2.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the existing research which pays attention to those affected by crises and those who seek to support them through donorship to identify thinking that has informed the research. Humanitarian state donorship was introduced as both an ethical and economic pursuit, and the specific challenges for state donors were explored. Key influences on state donors were discussed and the impact of those influences on humanitarian outcomes highlighted. The aid effectiveness literature illustrated the ways in which donors have been held to account, and how this relates to the measures that are used to describe successful humanitarian outcomes. Housing, shelter and settlements was introduced, including the way in which those affected by crises continuously and incrementally attempt to recover their shelter and settlements, and the challenges faced by donors who seek to align their support these households. The evolution of approaches to the recovery of shelter and settlements was discussed as a specific context where those who seek to support those affected by crises attempt to do so in ways that uphold their agency, in the form of self-recovery. Lastly critical accounting was selected as the theoretical framework for this research, as a frame that can break down the components of donorship and demonstrate how they relate to each other and explain the processes and tensions involved in providing ODA in support of those affected by crises.

Existing literature goes some way to forming an evidence base for how those affected from crises seek to recover, although the voices of the most vulnerable can be muffled by the way international actors conceptualise humanitarian assistance. There exists rather more critique of the behaviour of those who seek to support those affected by crises, their motivations and influence on humanitarian outcomes, although studies focussed on humanitarian donorship in particular remain few. While humanitarianism and specifically donorship as a principled practice receives attention, the study of donorship as an economic and ethical practice, and the influence of economics on humanitarian outcomes remains under researched and it is to this gap which this research contributes its findings. The next chapter turns to the methodology to explain how the theoretical approach is operationalised.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research design and the explanation of the design choices made. The research design is based exclusively on a qualitative approach that includes qualitative tools specifically chosen to analyse the multifaceted nature of humanitarian donorship and the recovery of shelter and settlements during humanitarian crises. The first section introduces the motivation for the research design, including the inspiration to fill gaps arising from empirical experience and the literature review. This section also details the research questions. The second section identifies the theoretical approach including the epistemological standpoint and the qualitative methodologies considered and chosen. The following section explains the types of data required to answer the research questions, the data sources, the data collection and management techniques. The fourth section documents the process of analysis, explaining the analytical approaches and tools used. Finally, the risks, assumptions and limitations of the research are shared.

3.2 Motivation for the Research Design.

The motivation for the research is informed jointly by the researcher’s empirical experience and the results of the literature review, which together indicate a need for more research in the field of humanitarian donorship. The researcher has two decades of experience supporting those affected by humanitarian crises which began to suggest tensions in the policy and practice of humanitarian donorship. The literature review demonstrated a notable gap in evidence of the impact of donorship decisions in humanitarian crises and especially their impact on the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises, validating the need for more targeted research in these areas.

3.2.1 Empirical Experience

Prior to the implementation of this research, the researcher’s empirical experience included working for and with INGOs, multilaterals and government donors, as a research assistant, technical adviser and a programme director in the international humanitarian community. Fieldwork included working
directly with those affected by disasters and conflict in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. These events ranged from well-funded crises with international media presence where large numbers of people were affected, to smaller localised crises where funding was scarce, media attention was lacking and difficult decisions were required. Following some crises people began to recover quickly whereas others expected many years of displacement. Recovery from any crisis that began with an international response often took several years. During this time the researcher also gained empirical experience of people recovering their shelter and settlements following conflict or disasters and a range of organisations seeking to support this process. This experience included providing technical advice in support of hazard resistance, strategic programmatic decisions about how resources would be allocated, and donorship involving the selection of implementing partners and disbursement of funds.

It became clear that while funding is essential for the international community to support those recovering from humanitarian crises, certain aspects of the funding which is disbursed have become impediments to this same objective. These aspects include the timeframes set up by donors within which funding must be spent and the cost of the bureaucratic burden associated with certain grants in terms of time and money. Funding processes also sit within broader structures of humanitarian action which do not necessarily align well with the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises. For example, humanitarian and development work is divided institutionally between teams within donor organisations and their implementing partners. In this context the researcher experienced a mismatch between the ways in which funding is disbursed and the patterns of recovery required by those who were affected by crises. For example, early disbursement of funds often requires a very quick spending deadline, there is a lack of flexibility in how funds are managed, and gaps regularly appear between the initial disbursement and later disbursements, even from the same donor. This results in difficulties with planning for recovery on the ground both by those affected by the crisis and those supporting them to recover.

3.2.2 Positionality and Reflexivity

In the context of the researcher’s positionality, with respect to being a member of the community of practice which is also to subject of the study, it was important to emphasise reflexivity in both the research design and implementation. This was not only for ethical reasons, but to enable an exploratory approach that would ensure the inclusion and consideration of multiple perspectives. In other words, reflexivity was important to enable “the researcher consciously [to step] back from action in order to theorise what is taking place” (Attia & Edge, 2017: p1). In this particular case, since
the researcher’s experience was relevant to certain aspects of the research, a prospective approach to reflexivity was taken whereby:

“Rather than seeing such influences as potential contamination of the data [...] prospective reflexivity seeks to help researchers grow their capacity to understand the significance of the knowledge, feelings, and values that they brought into the field to the research questions that they came to formulate, to the analytical lenses that they chose to employ, and to their findings” (Attia & Edge, 2017: p35).

In addition, the intention of the research was to reach above and beyond the researcher's own experience, since the research was inspired in part by the knowledge siloes the researcher had experienced as both a humanitarian practitioner and a donor. The research is intended to fill gaps in the researcher’s own knowledge by stitching together knowledge from various different organisational and technical knowledge silos. Nonetheless, to ensure rigour and avoid bias, the researcher left out any points that could not be triangulated with those made by research participants.

One example of employing a method to enable the inclusion and consideration of multiple perspectives, and a balance of the same, was to ensure a majority of participants who were unknown to the researcher. An iterative sampling approach was taken where the researcher initially selected some participants who had worked alongside the researcher. These participants recommended other participants who were either known to the researcher, but had not worked alongside the researcher, or were completely unknown to the researcher. The resulting balance of participants was approximately 21% known well by the researcher, 21% known by the researcher, and 58% unknown to the researcher. Key data provided by well known participants could be triangulated with lesser-known participants to ensure validity. Close collaboration with respondents and triangulation was also proactively employed to form the themes and categories of key themes and to ensure validation of the findings (Attia & Edge, 2017; Creswell & Miller, 2010).

Participants, on the whole, were comfortable and even eager to share knowledge which they considered important, yet for which they had no other outlet. In addition, they often expressed appreciation for the space to think more reflectively about the research questions in a space which was removed from their day-to-day role in the humanitarian system.
3.2.3 Literature Review

The literature review for this research revealed that further enquiry into several under-researched areas specific to donorship would contribute towards better understanding of humanitarian donorship and its relationship with the experience of those recovering from crises. Existing literature on related topics can also aid this understanding. Certain evidence exists to inform what it means to suffer and recover in humanitarian crises, and the various motivations for assisting those who suffer. When it comes to donorship, and in particular humanitarian donorship, less evidence is available to inform an understanding of what the act of donorship represents, what kind of relationships it creates, what determines the success of donorship and how this is measured. The literature review also highlighted the theoretical thread concerned with the effect of economic decisions on ethical behaviour, which fits well with donorship as a practice that involves both economic and ethical dimensions. Within this field, critical accounting is an approach which can provide a foundation from which to approach the economic and ethical practice of donorship. From this discipline Miller and Power’s roles of accounting fit this purpose well. These roles include territorialising and subjectivizing, which can reveal the boundaries and relationships that donors establish and maintain, and mediating and adjudicating, which can reveal how the success of donorship is managed and judged. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for this research to extend Miller and Power’s theoretical framework beyond accounting to include other processes more specific to donorship, such as the planning, budgeting and disbursement of funds.

3.2.3 Defining the problem

This thesis seeks to examine why it can be challenging for donorship to align with the experience of those recovering from humanitarian crises, and why certain aspects of donorship have become impediments to this process. To examine this disconnect between donorship and the process of recovery, the impediments to this process were identified and the reasons for their existence investigated. To maintain a manageable boundary around the research and to provide rich data, the question of understanding the role of humanitarian funding in recovery from humanitarian crises was operationalised as a more focussed study. This was achieved through selecting two specific aspects of humanitarian donorship, namely Overseas Development Aid (ODA) as the specific type of funding to be analysed, and shelter and settlements as the technical sector to be studied. ODA represents a large proportion of financial resources in humanitarian crises, and the sector of shelter and settlements challenges certain boundaries placed around humanitarianism in a way that other sectors do not. ODA is sufficiently documented to be able to identify trends from the data, and government donors share
sufficient similarities and differences to be comparable. While a broad range of donors provide funds in humanitarian crises, where this research uses the term ‘donor’ it refers to donors of ODA unless otherwise stated. Shelter and settlements acts as a case in order to provide a vertical link between macro and micro issues around recovery in the sector of shelter and settlements. The term ‘shelter and settlements’ refers to singular (shelter) and collective (settlements) buildings “designed to give protection from bad weather, danger, or attack”16. This research pays close attention to the process of sheltering as a component of recovery from a crisis, rather than simply the product of a shelter, and the role of sheltering as a catalyst for household agency.

3.2.4 Research Questions

This research examines the challenges ODA donors face when putting their humanitarian policies into practice in support of those recovering their shelter and settlements in crises. It does this by answering the following central research question:

Why is it challenging for donors to align Overseas Development Aid (ODA) with the experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

The following sub-questions were chosen to suit the analysis of primary and secondary data sources which could inform the central research question:

1. What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

2. How do ODA donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises and their experience of recovering shelter and settlements?

3. What is the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

This research aims to contribute new knowledge to both theoretical debates and empirical practices in the field of humanitarianism in general, and donorship in particular. The findings inform several

16 Definition of the term ‘shelter’ in the Cambridge English Dictionary
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/shelter visited 10.11.21
academic fields including economics, sociology, politics, international development and also the built environment disciplines. Within these fields, specific findings contribute to current thinking in critical accounting, organisation theory, systems thinking, international relations and humanitarianism. The findings can be used as a basis for the policy and practice of institutions involved with ODA such as those who disburse funding and those who collect data concerning funding. They can also be used as advocacy points by the implementing partners of humanitarian donors and by those recovering from crises to discuss with donors improved funding decisions.

### 3.3 Theoretical Approach

The epistemological standpoint for this research is constructivist interpretivist, given that the tenets of constructivist epistemology are that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered, that it is multiple rather than singular, and it is a means by which power is exercised (Stainton Rogers, in Potter 2014). An epistemology that supports the use of subjective interpretation as a way of building up an understanding supports enquiry into processes involving multiple actors because each actor has their own knowledge about the process. A constructivist approach is particularly appropriate in the study of processes such as humanitarian response, where multiple actors operate together as a system to achieve an outcome. No one actor is likely to hold all the knowledge about the processes involved, and different perspectives are therefore likely to exist. A constructivist approach enables the multiple perspectives of these different actors to be gathered, to both build up an overview of how phenomena are perceived, or to compare different perspectives with one another. For example, tensions in the system can be revealed where different actors vary in their perspective of what they should be responsible for and what success looks like. Furthermore, this research requires knowledge to be drawn from multiple sources to avoid focusing solely on knowledge generated by donors as the prime actors in the financial supply chain. Stainton Rogers states that “Those who create knowledge thereby gain power” (Stainton Rogers, in Potter 2014: p81), and in the hierarchical humanitarian system, donors are perceived to hold a certain amount of power.

Qualitative methods were chosen as the primary approach suitable for a constructivist enquiry. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for this empirical social enquiry into a system such as humanitarian donorship that appears to have more than one purpose. As discussed in the literature review, while the humanitarian system appears to have one overarching purpose, this has been interpreted and even manipulated in different ways. Qualitative methods allow the collection of the
perspectives from a range of actors to build up a picture of overlapping understandings of the purpose of the system. The purpose of the research is primarily exploratory, but also to identify causation. Rather than measure the relationship between the values of the variables, the collection and comparison of patterns created by different variables is required; “concepts and themes that, when taken together, will provide the best explanation of “what’s going on” in an inquiry” (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009, p77). Qualitative methods also provide flexibility and allow adaptation, to react to changing contexts, for example changing the questions to probe deeper into certain issues to suit the context of the participant.

The research was built on inductive reasoning and based on multiple examples of the application of donor policy and practice in humanitarian crises, and the perspectives of multiple actors in the humanitarian donorship system. Induction was used to unearth patterns, themes and categories, which were then analysed to determine whether general laws of cause and effect were indicated (Stainton Rogers, in Potter 2014, Patton, 1980, in Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009). Berkowitz’s (1997) describes how this process unfolds, as:

“a loop-like pattern of multiple rounds of revisiting the data as additional questions emerge, new connections are unearthed, and more complex formulations develop along with a deepening understanding of the material. Qualitative analysis is fundamentally an iterative set of processes.”

Quantitative methods were briefly considered as a tool to produce evidence about the scale of the problem to justify the research question. For instance, numerical data that suggest aspects of humanitarian donorship may have a negative impact on those trying to recover. These may include proportion of overheads spent on bureaucratic procedures rather than humanitarian programming, or number of humanitarian crises where long gaps appeared between the initial disbursement of rapid response funding and any follow up funds. This quantitative evidence was later found to be surplus to requirements when it became clear through the literature review that literature on the Aid Effectiveness Agenda already highlighted various impediments addressed at an institutional level. This literature was considered sufficient to justify the research question.

An ethnographic approach was taken, and this approach was bounded by a case study. Ethnography allows participants to be studied “in their own space and time” (Burawoy, 2009 : pxi), building up a picture of their ‘universe’ (Thomas, 2007). This approach was necessary because no one actor has an overall perspective of humanitarian donorship, so the central research question sets up an inquiry into
the perspectives of a range of actors. It is, therefore, best served by an approach that helps to unravel “relations between purposeful behaviour by several actors or agencies” (Burawoy, 2009 : p303). The ‘universe’ for this research is the humanitarian system and the actors and agencies are donors, their implementing partners and specialist commentators. The data collected recorded a range of different perspectives that could be pieced together to explore the humanitarian system as it is viewed by the different actors involved.

The case study approach provides a way of creating a manageable boundary around the research questions, which is particularly necessary for questions that involve not only multiple actors by multiple processes. Yin describes criteria for research suitable for a case study approach. These include where the central research question asks “Why?”, and where the research questions are concerned with contemporary events and some historical events, over which the researcher has no control. This research question bears these characteristics, in that the questions asks: “Why is it difficult for ODA to align with recovery from crises?”, the events considered are both current and historical humanitarian crises, and there was no need for any control exerted over these events or over the participants interviewed. The research design therefore fitted the requirements of a case study approach.

Since different actors record their perspectives in different ways, the case study approach was also appropriate since it provides a framework within which different methods of data collection can be used (Thomas, 2007). For instance, donors record their policies formally, but often staff often had different perspectives that had to be collected informally. This necessitated the use of both documentary research and participant interviews.

This ethnographic study was bounded with a case as the framework for investigation. The case study chosen is the use of ODA to support the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. Firstly, the research is concerned with humanitarian funding in general. ODA is a focus because governments disbursed the largest amount of funds, their approaches are very structured and therefore data can be collected, and governments experience many pressures aside from the humanitarian imperative, such as domestic and international political agendas. Their wide geographical spread can also be used to identify trends. The formality of government funding also provides a backdrop against which more informal understandings can be mapped, and a case study approach supports the study of formal and informal understandings. Use of a case study provides a way to identify “discrepancies between normative prescriptions and everyday practice – discrepancies
... traced to internal contradictions” (Burawoy, 2009: p22). In this way, the case study approach helped to uncover the contradictions between formal and informal understandings that lead to impediments and tensions in the humanitarian system. For example, donors and their implementing partners produce formal policy and guidelines, but normative prescriptions of humanitarian action also exist. These can be compared with the informal understandings of the staff of these agencies. In addition, formal financial systems were compared with empirical experiences of the unpredictable, changing environment of humanitarian crises they are intended to serve.

Within the field of ODA, the recovery of shelter and settlements was selected as a case for the following reasons:

- As a vertical link between macro and micro issues.
- To offer the opportunity to consider temporal aspects of recovery from humanitarian crises.
- To offer the opportunity to consider political aspects of recovery from humanitarian crises.

The shelter and settlements sector represents an extreme example of recovery from humanitarian crises. Extreme cases can be particularly useful for showing up causal mechanisms (Langrish, 1993; Yin, 1994). A “Why?” research question is not only exploratory but also considers some level of causation, so a case provides a basis to determine cause and effect. A case can be used to “investigate causality directly by looking in detail at how the causal processes work within particular cases” (Thomas, 2007: p302). The recovery of shelter and settlements often defies the normative structures of humanitarian action on various fronts, for instance the temporal, economic and political, where tensions occur. The per capita cost of supporting people to recover their shelter is often higher than in other sectors and the outputs can be more visible due to their size which renders them subject to scrutiny. The recovery of shelter and settlements is also a catalyst for the recovery in other sectors such as health and livelihoods, on an individual, household, community and national level. This sector therefore provides a rich ground for data.

### 3.4 Methods

This section details the types of data, data sources, collection techniques, storage and ethical dimensions of the research. The data required to answer the sub-questions fell largely into three types outlined by the research sub questions, namely, influences on ODA donors, definitions of the beneficiaries of humanitarian donorship and understandings and experiences of recovery. The
taxonomy of data types above pointed towards two main sources. These were individual participants with a range of different empirical experiences of the humanitarian system, and secondary sources including policy documents, funding guidance, commentary on the humanitarian system and project reports. Sources of data to inform understanding of the humanitarian donorship system are necessarily diverse, due to the range of different actors involved, the processes involved in humanitarian assistance and the structures that have been established. While some data was easily available, for instance the definitions of beneficiaries in donor policies, other data required more critical enquiry of more than one source, such as the influences on ODA donors.

Since the research question interrogated a system, namely the humanitarian donorship system, the research took a ‘systems thinking’ approach. This approach was informed by different actors from different parts of the system to reveal how the different parts relate to each other. Ramalingam et al., (2008) state that “systems thinking focuses on seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots”. Different actors were consulted to ensure that an overview of the system could be pieced together. Since the architecture of the humanitarian system is quite formalised, actors often stay in the same part of the system throughout their careers, especially if they develop a specialism. The result is that while their perspective of that part of the system can be detailed, they are often unable to offer a detailed understanding of other parts of the system or the system as a whole. A select few participants have moved around, for example, some government advisers have previously worked for a government’s implementing partners and are therefore able to provide a wider perspective.

3.4.1 Sources and Sampling

Individual informants provided an interpretation of both their organisational perspective plus their own personal perspective, especially where this related to events they had experienced first-hand. Informants were chosen from ODA donors, their implementing partners, their grant managing bodies, and industry commentators working for humanitarian think tanks. Documents provided a range of information developed and curated by different organisations and individuals. This included policy, guidelines, funding proposals, project reports, media reports and industry commentary.

Different types of data were consulted to ensure a full understanding of the relationship between formal and informal perspectives. Certain parts of the system are formalised either legally, for instance governments and UN agencies, or voluntarily, for instance through shared charters and standards. The resulting dataset includes formal organisational perspectives and the collective perspectives of
organisations, either in a community of practice or legal treaty. One further distinction between formal and informal perspectives is between formal reports published by organisations in the interest of accountability, and the informal personal perspectives of the staff of those organisations who have empirical experience of the events that have been documented.

Sampling was chosen by following Daniel's sampling choices (Daniel, 2014) which include the objectives of the study, the definition of the population, the nature of the population, the availability of resources, research design considerations and ethical and legal considerations. While the exploratory aspect of the research, namely building a picture of what is happening in the humanitarian donorship system, did not require a rigorous sampling design, the explanatory objective of the research, to find pattern to explain the relationship between ODA and the experience of those recovering from crises, did require more rigour. To meet this objective, it was important to ensure that the target population contained a balance of participants from donor governments, their implementing partners and also those observing the humanitarian system more objectively, such as the staff of think tanks. Inclusion criteria also consisted of participants having knowledge and experience of the humanitarian system. Further to this a sufficient number of participants were required from one or two subsets of the target population, firstly those with specific experience and knowledge of funding processes, and secondly, those with experience of the recovery of shelter and settlements. Figure 3 below shows the different types of knowledge and experience sought from different participants and the target population subsets they fell into.
The sample size needed to be large enough to include several different donors of different sizes and from different geographical locations. It had to include different types of implementing partners with different experiences of different types of crises, some participants were able to fulfil several of these criteria, while others had detailed knowledge in just one area. The sample size was also informed by theoretical saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), indicated by participants beginning to refer to the same examples of crises or the same policy documents. The sample was a nonprobability sample because the selection of participants was not randomly chosen, and sample size was small because there are only a small number of informants with particular experience and viewpoints relevant to the research (Ahlin, 2019; Daniel, 2014). While the small sample size might lead to concerns over the
reliability of the research, this was balanced with higher validity following Ahlin’s approach that “gathering data right from the source and allowing for interactive participation increases validity of the data” (Ahlin, 2019: p10). This was achieved by detailing in-depth the participants’ perspectives and triangulation, discussed above.

An iterative approach was taken to choosing participants, starting with a few key informants with good relevant knowledge and often long experience in a particular part of the humanitarian system, for example a particular donor or implementing partner. An initial group of participants was carefully chosen to ensure that the research began with a balance of participants from different types of organisations. Snowballing, based on the initial participants’ contacts was then used to pinpoint other participants who could offer further insight into specific areas, and these were cross referenced with the secondary sources to ensure that both documentary data and empirical experience was being collected. Access to participants generally worked well using the researcher’s existing networks and credentials, but snowballing was used to offset the researcher’s own network of participants and let a new network of contacts emerge specific to the research.

The researcher sought to ensure a breadth of participants by frequently monitoring the breadth of participant types as new participants were added to the sample. Monitoring was conducted with the use of a tool that allowed all participants to be shown in terms of their current and previous role and this was used in conjunction with a spreadsheet of participant serial numbers. Figure 4 shows a snapshot from the tool showing colour coding and mapping to ensure an appropriate mix of participant types. A list of the participants interviewed can be found at the back of this thesis, in Appendix A.
3.4.2 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using structured and semi-structured participant interviews and documentary research techniques. Individual participant interviews allowed for the course of questioning to be more easily directed, flexibility to pursue unexpected new information or complex issues and provided a more intimate space for participants to reflect more candidly on their experiences and beliefs. As Ahlin explains, semi-structured interviews:

“are both structured and flexible because semi-structured interviews include a set number of survey questions that will be asked of all respondents while also incorporating opportunities for more detailed inquiry into topics that arise during researcher-respondent discussions.” (Ahlin, 2019: p4).

Ahlin supports semi-structured interviews as an appropriate research method if there is some knowledge about the topic, a need to understand the perspective of the respondent and an
opportunity to interview someone very knowledgeable about the subject matter. The research question, the prior empirical experience of the researcher and access to expert practitioners fulfilled these criteria. Some structure was also favoured over a more open approach to capture the range of informal understandings used in the humanitarian system around certain terms such as the word ‘recovery’, and the specific focus of the research question on particular processes, namely disbursement of funds in humanitarian crises. Initially focus groups had been considered because many participants from the humanitarian community were already familiar with this approach. Focus groups were then rejected due to concerns about how anonymity could be maintained and a lack of resources for travel, venue hire and logistics administration.

Interviews were implemented in several rounds, starting with structured interviews to build up a broad overview, followed by more focused rounds following specific lines of enquiry. A standardised protocol where similar questions were asked of each participant allowed certain themes to build up while also allowing for ‘data rich tangents’ (Daniel, 2014; Ahlin, 2019). Using more than one round of interviews allowed for reliability concerns to be addressed where a useful point raised in one round by one participant, could be included in the next round of interviews by asking a similar question to new participants as a way to increase the number of responses on that particular topic (Guest et al., 2006, Ahlin, 2019).

For the first round of structured interviews, key participants were chosen who were likely to be able to provide an overview of the humanitarian donorship system. The interview questions drew on systems thinking to ensure a broad overview of the whole humanitarian system. Ulrich’s Critical Systems Heuristics boundary tool was used as a basis around which to structure the interview questions so that all aspects of the system could be covered. The questions in the tool are deliberately open so that responses are the participants own and not shaped by the researcher. The tool is included in full at the back of this thesis, in Appendix B.

Two pilot interviews were conducted, one with a participant with experience of working for a donor and one with a participant with experience of working for an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) implementing partner, one interview was conducted face to face and the second interview was conducted via Skype. This allowed the researcher to test the boundary tool as a basis for the interview questions and test the different settings and equipment for recording participant responses. Ulrich’s boundary tool was used in full for the pilot interviews, and the primary data collected provided a good overview of the humanitarian funding system. The full boundary tool, however, was found to be too detailed for collecting the specific data relevant to the research
question so the questions were refined for subsequent interviews. The questions in the tool also took a long time to complete in comparison with the usefulness of the data collected.

The pilots also allowed the researcher to test the advantages and disadvantages between face to face and Skype interviews. Face to face was initially preferred by the researcher, but since many participants were based in several different parts of the world, Skype provided a suitable alternative. An exception to this was for participants who were employed by government ministries since they were often not allowed to use Skype due to security concerns. In these cases, interviews were conducted by telephone. Following the outbreak of COVID 19, Skype remained the only possible option for conducting the remaining interviews required at this time.

While face to face interviews were found to provide additional cues such as body language and facial expressions, the advantage of this was sometimes outweighed by the availability or suitability of the venue, which was often chosen by the participant. Some participants were able to travel to an Open University venue, but the majority were not. The pilot interviews also provided an opportunity to test software and hardware for sound recording and data storage and data analysis. For example, recording in Skype is straightforward, but the file format cannot be opened in NVivo for analysis, so a file format converter was required. The process of creating, moving and storing data was practiced after the pilot interviews, including transcribing and file management.

After refining the interview process a first round of interviews was conducted with the core group of participants. Once a foundation of data had been collected, this revealed further, more specific, lines of enquiry. Based on these lines of enquiry, a second round of interviews was set up using a new set of questions. These questions were adapted to each participant who had been sought out for their particular area of expertise or knowledge. Typical questions can be found at the back of this thesis, in Appendices C and D.

Documentary data gave the researcher “the ability to produce larger-scale analyses than would otherwise be possible” (Tight, 2019). Certain secondary sources contain a large amount of data describing trends in humanitarian donorship and in addition, much of the data required exists in formal documents such as policies. Hakim also explains that “the lack of resources (time and/or money) for new empirical research can be overcome by secondary analysis” (Hakim 1982: p169). Secondary data was collected initially as a function of the literature review, which turned up a substantial amount of relevant grey literature, in addition to academic sources. Participants were also asked to make reference to key documents, or to provide them, and documents referred to by several participants were especially sought out. In addition, several online sources of policy and practice commentary were
regularly consulted such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)\textsuperscript{17}, The New Humanitarian\textsuperscript{18}, Public Finance\textsuperscript{19}, The Overseas Development Institute\textsuperscript{20} and The Institute of Development Studies\textsuperscript{21}. Documents were stored according to organisation and thematic area and collected as they became available throughout the primary data collection.

The Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) reports were chosen because they collate a number of datasets, including those produced by the UN, the OECD, universities, independent institutes, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. The reports are generally divided into description of global humanitarian needs, which donors are providing funding, who are their implementing partners and where the funding goes to geographically. Analysis of these documents provides, therefore, a good background to the trends in donor priorities and events that influence them, and the priorities of the wider humanitarian community. The GHA reports are collated by Development Initiatives, a global organisation based in the UK and funded by a range of private foundations, UN agencies and governments. The GHA reports are generally used by donors and humanitarian practitioners as a reference guide to the state of humanitarian assistance due to their ability to present “clear, unbiased, independent data” (Kellet, Walmsley, & Poole, 2011: p2). That said, while these reports rely upon a large amount of quantitative data, they also provide a more qualitative interpretation of the figures. They have evolved to be written with a view to holding donors to account, acknowledging that:

“finance is about more than money. It affects the organisations that are strengthened or neglected, the level of attention that is paid to people, sectors or countries, the information to which funders have access and on which they base future decisions, and the economic impact felt in locations where the money is spent, as it travels through the layers of the humanitarian system. Financing is also one of the few things over which donors have control. Our view, therefore, is that policies on financing merit serious attention.” (ibid.)

The principles of the GHD (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018) and the commitments of the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016) were chosen for analysis as the two key initiatives for aid effectiveness specifically in humanitarian crises. These principles can be understood to express the expectations of

\textsuperscript{17} The OECD https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/ visited 06.11.20
\textsuperscript{18} The New Humanitarian https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/conflict?gclid=Cj0KCQiAhZT9BRDmARIsAN2E-J0Y9mrZ7W3u9agadsNd0TQuuVpilFTp_S2RIK5_ZYpqYF-hql61JqQaArObEALw_wCB visited 06.11.20
\textsuperscript{19} Public Finance https://www.publicfinance.co.uk/ visited 06.11.20
\textsuperscript{20} The Overseas Development Institute https://www.odi.org/about-odi?gclid=Cj0KCQiAhZT9BRDmARIsAN2E-J3TceaYp6GHAvroGNeZwChp753ew588Z8b6j8hBDxSjZrNsNGQ_rYBkaAnRhEALw_wCB visited 06.11.20
\textsuperscript{21} The Institute of Development Studies https://www.ids.ac.uk/ visited 06.11.20
the humanitarian community for donor policy and practice, including their understanding of the relationship between donors and those affected by humanitarian crises.

The policies chosen for analysis include policies from a range of donors, of different sizes and from different geographical locations, to ensure a range of perspectives to build up an overview. Some of these donors share similarities, such as the UK and the Australian governments who have recently merged their international development ministries with ministries of foreign affairs, and the Irish and Australian governments who work through a smaller number of NGO partners, or the US and EU who often provide the largest share of funding in humanitarian crises. They also all have unique characteristics such as the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)’s multi-state structure or Australia’s regional focus on the Asia Pacific. Certain donors refer to the terminology of aid effectiveness, which demonstrates a commitment to a shared vision of donorship, while others concentrate on their own individual approaches. Public facing policies also describe the level of public accountability donors are willing to take on in the form of more or less systematic framing of success, for instance the structured framing of the Australian government’s Performance Assessment Framework (Australian Government, 2016:p26) that breaks down success into component parts, compared with DFID’s narrative based format that describes success in terms of activities (DFID, 2017). Further documents analysed include those describing funding mechanisms to illustrate how donors have addressed the challenges of the mechanics of disbursing humanitarian resources. Finally, donor guidelines specifically for supporting those who have lost shelter and settlements are analysed to investigate the challenges of aligning policy aspirations and funding mechanics with empirical technical realities.

3.4.3 Data Management

The research was approved by the Open University’s Human Research Ethics Committee after a full review. The ethics application included a description of the intended research methodology, a full data management plan, project information sheet and participant consent form. The research is also registered with the University’s Information Rights Team and follows the Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics.

Several steps were taken to safeguard the protection of data and anonymity of participants. Participants were required to complete and sign a consent form detailing their agreement to take part and express permission for the use of their data before any interview could take place. The consent
form was accompanied by a project information sheet which included an overview of the project, detailed the key objectives and informed them of the right to withdraw at any time. As soon as signed consent forms were received, participant serial numbers were used in place of individual names. Serial numbers were generated using a codebook. The method for generating the code was unique. It was memorised by the researcher and is not recorded anywhere.

The consent forms were stored in a separate location to any of the data. Consent forms were the only place where the full names of participants existed. Their organisation name, if relevant, was stored separately from these in a password protected spreadsheet. Any recordings were copied from recording devices to the secure university server and the original recording immediately deleted from the device used to record it. In only a few instances participants produced hard copy consent forms. These were scanned and stored as electronic copies, and the hard copy was then immediately destroyed. Where participants are mentioned in the empirical chapters their identities and organisations are anonymised through the use of generalised references so participants are not compromised.

Quotes in the text from participants are presented in a certain way to ensure both clarity and anonymity. Square brackets are used in several ways. Where text has been omitted, for clarity or to preserve anonymity, it is shown with dots [...]. Where text has been replaced or added, for clarity or to preserve anonymity, it is shown in italics [additional text]. Reasons for text to be removed, replaced or added include circumstances where a direct quote is unclear without the context in which it was said, where the participant gave a negative opinion of an organisation or where there was enough information in the original quote to identify the participant.
3.5 Analysis

Three specific analytical approaches were used to organise and analyse the data and several analytical tools, understanding that analysis:

“requires a leap across the intermediate steps between abstract and concrete in the hope that the model will still serve to identify key processes without too much distortion. When it is successful, its power lies in its potential for explaining much by little” (Sayer, A. 2010: p259).

Multiple approaches proved useful to deal with the main characteristics of the field of inquiry in question: humanitarian donorship, namely that it is a system, the second is that both formal and informal understandings exist, and lastly the system involves concrete processes that have a causal impact on ethical concerns. For these reasons analytical approaches were required that could enable the modelling of different perceptions of the system, including its multiple processes and relationships. Analytical tools were required that allowed for different ways to document the analysis and different ways for theory to be presented.

The first heuristic used was Ulrich’s boundary tool. Using this in the initial interviews enabled the collection of data describing the overall humanitarian donorship system. A light process of analysis to record emerging themes began after the first few interviews to enable the interview questions to then be refined to focus more closely on aspects of the research questions, using the tool’s themes of ‘influence’, ‘control’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘legitimacy’. The second approach was to analyse the secondary data using thematic analysis to identify important themes. This served to identify the way in which donors are held to account, both by the public and peers by way of donor policies, and by collective initiatives such as aid effectiveness. The primary and secondary data were compared such that institutional beliefs stated in the formal secondary data documents were compared against the empirical experience of the key informants. Instances where these matched, where there was a discrepancy, or where there was a marked contrast were recorded to build up current characteristics of humanitarian donorship. The specific concepts of ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer-term’ emerged as important indicators of where donorship is able to align with the recovery efforts of those affected by crises, and in particular for recovering their shelter and settlements.
The third approach was to analyse and organise the data, then communicate the findings using the theoretical framework of Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting taken from the field of critical accounting. These roles include territorialising, adjudicating, subjectivising and mediating. The roles were adapted to the broader roles of humanitarian donorship which include not just accountancy practices but assessment, budgeting, disbursement of funds through instruments and monitoring and evaluating both the humanitarian assistance process and the humanitarian outcomes that were resourced. Using a critical accounting framework enables this research to identify the economic practices of donorship and to trace their social impact, such as impediments to recovery from crises. This provides evidence on which to base a hypothesis of why such impediments exist. The way in which donors perform these four roles can benefit those affected by crises or they can create impediments. The success of donorship to support those also affected by crises can be affected by the relative strength or weakness of these four roles. For instance, territorial boundaries can be robust or weak and this may help or hinder the pursuit of the humanitarian imperative. Both primary and secondary data were organised according to perspectives on each of the four roles to organise a picture of the humanitarian donorship system and identify the relationship between them, including where the roles were strong and positive in terms of achieving the overall goal of support to those affected by crises, and where they were weak and creating impediments to this humanitarian goal.

Initially grounded theory was considered as an approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006), where a theoretical framework would have grown from the data, but pure grounded theory was not appropriate for two main reasons. Firstly, pure grounded theory was not possible with the topic being not entirely unknown to the researcher. Secondly, the research question implies causality and is not purely exploratory, so grounded theory did not prove to be the best fit. A more structured approach was taken to find an existing theoretical framework which might be extended to inform the research questions more specifically.

Several software programs were used to analyse the data and organise the findings. Interviews were transcribed and initially reviewed in Word which allowed for some rudimentary colour coding. Secondary data documents were analysed with highlighting tools in Mendeley for colour coded thematic analysis. For more in-depth analysis, interview transcripts were stored, organised, and coded using Nvivo. This was successful for initial coding, but as themes emerged and patterns began to appear, the way Nvivo presents coding proved too linear for research that requires multiple comparisons of different perspectives. For this, bespoke spreadsheets were created in Excel. These presented a matrix of participants responses against a range of themes. This allowed new quotes to
be added to groups under existing codes, and new codes to be created, and for all of these to be seen at once providing an overview rather than snapshots. Trends could then be seen across a wider cross section of the humanitarian funding system.

Graphic tools were also used to develop theoretical ideas. Word was initially used to create small diagrams describing certain concepts such as relationships and processes (Figure 5 below). Later, Corel Draw was used to create more complicated diagrams that could include a large number of elements and a higher level of complexity (Figure 6 below). These diagrams often served to push the theoretical thinking further outside the limitations of the linear narrative of text.

![Diagram](image-url)  
*Figure 5: Using Word to begin to organise theoretical ideas.*
3.6 Risks, Assumptions and Limitations

The research design was based on several assumptions necessary for the collection and analysis of data. These included assuming participants were willing to contribute, that they were available, that they had relevant knowledge. It also assumed that key documents could be accessed, and that enough relevant secondary data would be available, given the very specific nature of the enquiry. Risks included not having access to enough data that was specific enough to answer the research questions, including the possibility of the research being stopped by government officials if the research became seen as a threat. These risks were mitigated by choosing a broad focus rather than singling out a particular government donor, and keeping participant contact informal and personal.
Participants were generally willing to contribute their reflections, despite being asked at times to comment on the actions of their employer, that in some cases was a government ministry. Several participants appreciated the rare time and space to reflect on their work, describing the interview as ‘cathartic’ and ‘like therapy’. There were some obstacles to access which included participants who did not respond despite being recommended by their colleagues, and participants who initially agreed to take part but were then deployed to humanitarian crises and therefore unable to contribute within the timeframe. One participant turned down the opportunity to take part because they disagreed with the research design, stating their preference for quantitative methods. Some participants specifically chosen for their long service with a particular organisation were then unable to recall past events in much detail.

The main limitations to the research initially included a lack of resources for travel and, latterly, disruption caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. The lack of resources for travel restricted the locations in which data collection could take place and consequently the type of participants that could be included in the target population. Travelling to the field to directly interview those affected by humanitarian crises was rejected in favour of a focus on those directly involved with the processes of humanitarian donorship. By the time the COVID 19 pandemic had spread to the location where the researcher is based, the majority of participants had been interviewed so the main disruption to the research involved a lack of time and focus for analysis and necessitated changes to the sequencing of writing up.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodology used to address the research questions. It has detailed data collection, analysis and how theory was applied to this process. The following chapters discuss the outcomes of this analysis. There are three empirical chapters. The secondary data of Chapter Four sets up the formal perspectives that respondents in Chapters Five and Six then reflect upon using their own experiences. Chapter Four uses secondary data, and particularly public facing documents, to answer questions one and two. Both Chapter Five and Chapter Six use the primary data to examine the key concepts arising from the secondary data analysis, namely ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer-term’, respectively, to answer questions one and three, providing clues to the causal links between influences and challenges. Chapter Seven is framed with Miller and Power’s four roles, drawing on both the primary and secondary data analysis from these three chapters to answer question one.
Chapter 4: The Documented Face of Donorship

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents original analysis of secondary documentary sources gathered over two decades to illustrate the landscape of the humanitarian funding system. Secondary sources were chosen specifically to include those documents which together would map the broad range of formal perspectives in the humanitarian community, comprising donors, their implementing partners and commentators on humanitarian assistance. These documents situate donorship within humanitarian trends and specific sources offer perspectives on support to the recovery of shelter and settlements.

The analysis below contributes to answering the first two research questions:

1. What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

2. How do ODA donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises and their experience of recovering shelter and settlements?

The chapter is divided into six sections, comprising five sections of analysis and the conclusion. The first three sections analyse the aspirations of donorship laid out in their policies. The fourth and fifth sections analyse how these aspirations meet the practicalities of addressing those affected by crises by means of funding mechanisms and technical guidance. The first section summarises analysis of key Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Reports, to build a picture of how the humanitarian community has conceptualised humanitarian funding over the past two decades, and which trends and influences have emerged. The second section summarises analysis of the humanitarian policies of five different key donors to demonstrate how individual donors pay attention to those affected by crises. The third section analyses the formal commitments of two humanitarian aid effectiveness initiatives, illustrating how the humanitarian community holds donors to account. The fourth section summarises analysis of the evolution of funding mechanisms to illustrate how donors have addressed the challenges of the mechanics of disbursing humanitarian resources. The fifth section analyses donor guidelines specifically for supporting those who have lost shelter and settlements are analysed to investigate the challenges of aligning policy aspirations and funding mechanics with empirical technical realities.
Finally, the conclusion draws on Miller and Power’s critical accounting framework to summarise key findings.

The first section concerning understandings of humanitarian funding explains the context and sets the scene for the emergence of donor policies and aid effectiveness initiatives. The second and third sections look more closely at how policies and initiatives align donorship with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises. The analysis of existing literature and the secondary data below revealed three core concepts that can be taken as indicators of alignment. These concepts are ‘localisation’, ‘flexibility and adaptability’ and the ‘longer-term’. These concepts were used to investigate the extent to which donor policies could respond to their target groups, over and above their other priorities. The first concept of ‘localisation’ frames how closely donors are prepared to work with those at the heart of humanitarian crises. Localisation, since the Grand Bargain, has in practice come to refer mainly to funding local actors as directly as possible, and it has been extended here to include the more general relationship between donor states and local actors. The second concept is how ‘flexible and adaptable’ donors aspire to be. Flexibility and adaptability enable donors to respond to the specific context of the crisis, which includes changing events and, as a consequence, the changing capacities and needs of those affected. The third concept is the extent to which donors see their contribution in relation to the ‘longer term’. Since the lived experience of those affected by crises often starts and ends either side of the timescale in which a donor engages with a crisis, the longer term includes the lived experience not only beyond the immediate crisis, but also the time leading up to a crisis. Analysis using these three concepts revealed wide differences between donor policies and also differences between how donors plan to put their policies into practice.

4.2 The Humanitarian Funding Landscape.

This section considers how humanitarian funding has been documented for the benefit of the humanitarian community using secondary source data from those who collect and record data. This data includes the type, scale and location of crises and the climatic, the financial and political environment in which they occur, and the amount of funding they attract, including who provides it. This section summarises analysis of key editions the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (GHA) which records trends in funding for humanitarian assistance on an annual basis. Not only do these reports provide a picture of the scale and nature of crises and alongside the priorities of the humanitarian community, but together they illustrate trends over time.
4.2.1 Recording the Humanitarian Funding Landscape

Four of the Global Humanitarian Assistance reports were chosen as the focus for analysis from the years 2000, 2011, 2015 and 2019. These dates were chosen to reflect the humanitarian landscape around key moments in humanitarian funding. The reports including the first GHA report, prior to the launch of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD), mentioned in the introductory chapter, the 2011 report written after the GHD but before the Grand Bargain was agreed, the 2015 report written immediately following the Grand Bargain and lastly a recent report four years on. This last report was chosen to be 2019 to avoid skewing the data with the 2020 focus on the unprecedented event of the COVID 19 pandemic. Other reports in the series were also consulted to triangulate specific points around certain key events, including funding for the South Asian tsunami of 2006, and the first chapter heading of the 2014 GHA promoting attention to those affected by crises. The reports analysed provide at least two levels of information useful to this research. At a basic level they consistently record the scale, source, channels and recipients of funding. All four reports contain these sections as a framework for understanding the humanitarian funding landscape. Taken together as an ongoing chronological record, certain trends and shifts can be identified. At another level, the pattern of attention paid to different topics in the report chapters provide an insight into changes in how humanitarian funding is thought about, for instance the shift of focus from the politicisation to the mechanics of humanitarian funding.

The purpose of the reports has evolved over time. In particular, there has been an increasing focus on presentation of evidence that can influence humanitarian actors. The first report was commissioned by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as “a study of trends in humanitarian aid flows over the last decade” to “contribute to public understanding of the international financing of global humanitarian assistance” (Randel & German, 2000: pvi) A decade later the report recognised its influence on not only the public but also humanitarian actors themselves, as “a shared evidence base for those who are working to achieve the best possible use of resources for people vulnerable to crises and insecurity” (Kellet et al., 2011: p2). By 2015 the emphasis on the report as an evidence base had become more explicit, described as key to understand “the urgent challenge of attempting to meet rising humanitarian needs with limited resources” and to inform “the unique opportunities to find solutions presented by a suite of global processes in 2015 and 2016” including World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Humanitarian Summit (Swithern, 2015: p8). By 2019 the report had the explicit aim “to reflect, respond to and inform efforts to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance” (Urquhart, 2019: p6).
4.2.2 The Quantified Humanitarian Landscape

The quantitative data in the reports can demonstrate the scale of humanitarian funding but it also allows identification and comparison of the level of intention from different donors. In terms of the basic framework of the reports, the humanitarian landscape is understood according to the amount of funding provided, who provides it, how it is provided and who receives it. For instance the total amount of humanitarian funds recorded in the 1990s averaged approximately US$4.5 billion, (Randel & German, 2000: pviii), rising to US$16.7 billion in 2010 following the Haiti earthquake (Kellet et al., 2011: p6), to US$24.5 billion in 2014 (Swithern, 2015: p2) and US$28.9bn by 2019 (Urquhart, 2019: p11). A figure to consider alongside these totals is the percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) and later Gross National Income (GNI) that these totals represent. These percentages indicate the level of commitment towards humanitarian assistance in comparison with other government priorities. For instance, in the 1990s, “as a share of GNP, Humanitarian Assistance has dropped from 0.03 percent to 0.02 percent over the decade”, (Randel & German, 2000: pviii), and while many donors surpassed this by 2019, the United States, as the largest donor, was still only providing 0.03% of its GNI.

Another set of figures came to prominence in the reports ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) (Swithern, 2015: p22). The executive summary of the 2011 report begins with the statement that “Humanitarian aid is being stretched” (Kellet et al., 2011: p6), acknowledging that these large scale crises were perceived to be rather too large for donor states to support individually and according to their own international relations agendas. This data compared the amount of funding requested in UN appeals with the amount actually received, which is illustrated in Figure 7 below. UN appeals were presented as a proxy indicator for the scale of humanitarian need, and this set of figures suggested that donors were not meeting the humanitarian need on an ongoing basis. While the data is imprecise, as UN appeals do not represent total requests for funding or total funding provided, this data was powerful enough to be used a critical lever at the WHS to argue for more efficiency in the humanitarian system in order to channel more funds to those affected by crises (HLPHF, 2016).
Figure 7: Graphs showing the extent to which UN humanitarian appeals have been underfunded from 2004 to 2018


4.2.3 The Shape and Location of the Humanitarian Landscape

A trend over time is apparent across the reports which sees a change in focus from the political question at a macro level concerning which state a donor has funded, to a focus at the micro level concerning the situation of the individual households who are supported. This trend demonstrates a shift in focus from the ‘push’ factors that influence donor decisions to the ‘pull factors’, such as the humanitarian needs of those who suffer. This is positive in that it brings those affected by crises into
the spotlight. However, a possible negative result is that the politicisation of humanitarian funding may go unchallenged because the political economy of humanitarian funding is no longer brought front and centre. A possible reason for this shift may be that donors have been able to access more detailed and immediate information concerning those who are affected. In this way, their ability to mediate within their humanitarian territory becomes clearer and the mechanics of this process are brought into focus.

The 2000 GHA summarises the politicised provision of humanitarian assistance across the 1990s where

“Higher profile situations that were well up the political agenda, and which involved not just a humanitarian response but political, diplomatic and military engagement, got the lion’s share of attention and resources” (Randel & German, 2000: pix)

In addition, donors appeared to stay closer to home:

“European donors have been strongly oriented to the crisis in the Balkans; the USA, Canada and Spain were major contributors to relief following Hurricane Mitch. Ethnic minorities in donor countries have put effective pressure on governments and NGOs to respond to crises in their countries of origin.” (Randel & German, 2000: pix).

The next decade was dominated by large scale crises that required a more coordinated approach, including conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, the South Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan, large-scale conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the escalation of political turmoil in parts of the Middle East and North Africa (Development Initiatives, 2006; Kellet et al., 2011).

2011 heralded the start of the Syrian crisis which was to rage for the next decade. By 2015 the longer duration of crises known as ‘protracted crises’ became a focus, with “more displaced people in the Middle East region than in Africa” and a change of target group, with “more displaced people in middle income countries (MICs) than in low income countries (LICs)” (Swithern, 2015: p4). By 2019 regular OECD data collection enabled the humanitarian community to recognise more clearly where certain crises were protracted. The incidence of protracted crises continued and became the thematic focus of the 2019 report, which listed Syria, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo as ongoing plus Afghanistan and Sudan, where “drought and floods devastated the lives of people whose resilience had already been weakened by conflict” (Urquhart, 2019: p6).

A sharp reduction in the discussion of how external influences affect donor allocations can also been seen across the reports. The first report (Randel & German, 2000) was written shortly after the Kosovo
crisis, when the politicisation of humanitarian funding was in sharp focus for the humanitarian community (Duffield et al., 2001), but by 2019 the reports become notably apolitical (Urquhart, 2019) despite the larger share of humanitarian funds provided in conflict contexts. More attention is paid in later reports to the mechanics of how humanitarian assistance is provided, rather than the politics that influences donor decisions. It could be argued that the increased profile of the report reduced the willingness of the authors to make political comment, or that the donors that funded it preferred a more neutral presentation of the data.

More positively, the reports record a rise in the attention paid to those affected by crises, as methods of collecting data closer to those affected become more sophisticated and widespread. While in 2000 the perspective of the report remains at the level of donors and countries, with an emphasis on the relationship between states, by 2014 the very first chapter of the report becomes titled “Who was affected?” (Randel, 2014) as the amount of data available concerning those affected becomes more available. A focus at the state level that fitted with interests in the politicisation of aid, and specifically whether donor states were serving humanitarian need or political agendas (Drury et al., 2005; Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004) shifts latterly towards an interest in more detailed data concerning who is affected by humanitarian crises, allowing the humanitarian community to follow funding to its final recipients and learn more about the impact of funding upon them. This fits with the move from the more principled approach of the GHD to the more practical approach of the Grand Bargain, discussed in the following section.

4.2.4 Summary of how the Humanitarian Funding landscape is Conceptualised

Recording and publicising data on humanitarian funding has provided donors with a mirror with which to examine their individual and collective donorship. The process of gathering data has also catalysed a more detailed understanding of the lived experience of those affected by crises. The ability to quantify the humanitarian funding landscape and qualitatively describe the changing or enduring nature and scale of crises has enabled the humanitarian community to use quantitative data for advocacy with donors. Holding donors to account is considered in the following section focussed on aid effectiveness.
4.3 Aid Effectiveness for Those Affected by Humanitarian Crises.

This next section considers how the humanitarian community adjudicates the actions of donors, holding them to account for their relationship with those affected by crises. It presents analysis of the evolution of aid effectiveness initiatives over the two decades 2000-2020, including the trends and shifts in focus. This section traces the relationship between donors and those affected by crises through an analysis of the priorities described in the aspirations of aid effectiveness initiatives. The analysis below focussed on the concepts mentioned above, used to understand those affected by crises as indicators for the attention paid to their recovery attempts, namely ‘localisation, ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’. Aid effectiveness initiatives, described in chapter 2, indicate the aspirations of the collective humanitarian community, who understand themselves as advocates for the most vulnerable groups affected by crises. Since individual implementing partners are individually dependant on donors for resources, collective action preserves this aspect of their bilateral relationships. As discussed above, crises which stretch the humanitarian community to its limits in terms of scale, duration or complexity have influenced changes in donorship. One way the desire for change has been expressed is through the aid effectiveness agenda.

4.3.1 The Aid Effectiveness Agenda

As mentioned in the literature review for this research in Chapter Two, the key to effective donorship has been understood through the notion of ‘aid quality’ or ‘quality money’, which can be defined as “measures over which the official donor agencies have control” (Birdsall & Kharas, 2010). While the humanitarian policies of donor states outline their individual intentions, aid effectiveness initiatives have evolved to hold donors to account more collectively for the resulting quality of their aid, using aid quality as a proxy measure of the relief of suffering for the recipient. Aid effectiveness initiatives encompass aid for international development, with more specific initiatives aimed at aid for humanitarian crises.

The following sections examine trends in humanitarian funding through a comparison between the GHD principles and the Grand Bargain commitments asking, in particular, how those affected by crises have been considered by donors and their implementing partners. While the two initiatives address similar concerns, it is important to note two key differences that prevent a direct comparison. Firstly, signatories to the GHD principles are donors only, while the signatories to the Grand Bargain are a wider group, including both donors and their implementing partners. Secondly, the GHD is framed with principles while the Grand Bargain is framed with both principles and actions. The most recent
reports on progress against Grand Bargain commitments are also referenced with respect to a specific point (Metcalfe-Hough, Poole, Bailey, & Belanger, 2018; Metcalfe-Hough & Fenton, 2019). The decade between their starting points also provides a sufficient amount of time to track trends related to the events discussed in the analysis of the GHA reports above.

The following agreements and initiatives are discussed below:

- The Millennium Development Goals, followed by the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Monterrey Consensus.
- The Paris Declaration, followed by the Accra Agenda for Action.
- The Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative.
- The Grand Bargain.

**4.3.2 How are those affected by crises understood?**

This section briefly discusses how both the principles of GHD and the Grand Bargain commitments describe and understand those affected by crises. It covers the evolution of a more dignified language from the GHD to the Grand Bargain, the disaggregation of different affected groups and the level of participation reflected in the principles drawn up and commitments made.

In some cases, the GHD uses language to describe those who are affected by crises that could now be perceived as outdated and even offensive. These include terms such as ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘victims’ which describe their subject solely from the perspective of those providing assistance; ‘beneficiaries’, and lacking in agency; ‘victims’, rather than bestowing any dignity. The term ‘dignity’ only appears once in the document as part of the overarching objectives of humanitarian action “to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p1). While these terms were first included in 2003, they have not been updated since. The GHD does, however, include more neutral terms such as ‘affected people’, ‘affected populations’ and “civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p1).

The Grand Bargain demonstrates key changes to the way those affected by crises are described, introducing more neutrality, precision and disaggregation into various vulnerabilities. ‘Beneficiaries’ and ‘victims’ are replaced by ‘people’, ‘affected people’, ‘affected populations’ and ‘people in need’ (WHS, 2016: p2,4,7,8). Here the term ‘the most vulnerable’ is also used, and broken down into target groups “defined by their age, gender and abilities” (WHS, 2016: p2). There is also a greater sense of the ability of donorship to support the agency of those affected, for example in the recognition that
they can be assisted to have “greater choice and empowerment” (WHS, 2016: p6), that aid can be to “the direct benefit of affected people” (WHS, 2016: p7), when it is disbursed well. The Grand Bargain also recognises that worst practices can fail those affected by crises, “putting a burden on affected populations” (WHS, 2016: p8).

While there is no mention of the term ‘participation’ in the GHD principles, the concept is captured in the phrase ‘involvement of beneficiaries’, where donors commit to:

“Request implementing humanitarian organizations to ensure, to the greatest possible extent, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p1).

This could be interpreted as a wider range of activities than the Grand Bargain sets out. While the Grand Bargain promises a ‘participation revolution’, a closer look at this commitment reveals that participation for the Grand Bargain is primarily understood in terms of participants being ‘informed and consulted’ rather than taking the agency of those affected as a starting point. The decisions described are still owned by Grand Bargain signatories, not those affected by crises:

“We need to include the people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities in our decisions...that design and management decisions are responsive to the views of affected communities and people” (WHS, 2016: p10).

Rewording this to say “We need to listen to the views and decisions of people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities and take a responsive approach to the design and management of our support”, highlights those affected as owners of the process.

4.3.3 Aligning Aid Effectiveness with the Recovery of Those Affected by Crises

This section summarises findings of the attention paid by the aid effectiveness agenda to the lived experience of those affected by crises. It discusses the way in which aid effectiveness initiatives have referred to those affected by crises and their focus on the key concepts of ‘localisation’, ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’. Localisation is a term that has risen to prominence as part of the Grand Bargain and encapsulates an intention to harness the agency and capabilities of those closest to the crises. Flexibility has been a recurring aspiration necessary to support the recovery attempts of those affected rather, than impose rigidity on them. Lastly, the longer term is where those affected are headed, so an awareness of and intention to support the longer term has been interpreted as an indicator that donors are willing to align with the recovery attempts of those affected.
The GHD principles understand localisation primarily in terms of a general principle for “strengthening the capacity of affected countries and local communities”. Two goals are outlined, firstly “meeting their responsibilities” and secondly “co-ordinating effectively with humanitarian partners” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p2). These goals focus rather more on the affected state’s international obligations than the assistance that could be provided by donor states. That said, principle 5 subtly hints that donors should sometimes explore partners beyond the affected state, striving to “ensure flexible and timely funding, on the basis of the collective obligation of striving to meet humanitarian needs.” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p1).

By the time the Grand Bargain is drawn up we see localisation rising in importance, with a whole commitment dedicated to it in the form of Commitment 2: “More support and funding tools for local and national responders” (WHS, 2016: p5). This commitment is more specific to those responding to the crisis ‘on the front line’, rather than more generally the affected state. The commitment also spreads responsibility more broadly than the GHD, identifying “governments, communities, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and local civil society” as these first responders. The Grand Bargain also attempts to contextualise and balance local and international responsibilities:

“We are committed to making principled humanitarian action as local as possible and as international as necessary recognising that international humanitarian actors play a vital role particularly in situations of armed conflict” (WHS, 2016: p11).

The Grand Bargain is more explicit about whether the affected state is the appropriate lead for supporting those affected by crises, especially in conflict where they may be party to the conflict. It also acknowledges that not only the affected state, but ‘refugee-hosting states’ may be in need of assistance.

The Grand Bargain also contains a more technical set of commitments, including more focus on the practical detail of how national responders could be supported, for instance by channelling more funds to them. It recognises the role of ‘quality funding’ in the realising of Commitment 2. Aspects of quality funding in Commitment 2 include multi-year investments, reducing the administrative burden, and increased funds to instruments that can be accessed directly by national actors, such as Country Based Pooled Funds. Cash modalities are also seen as key to supporting localisation, namely that “delivering cash should, where possible and appropriate, use, link or align with local and national mechanisms such as social protection systems.” (WHS, 2016: p6).

Flexibility appears several times in both the principles of the GHD and the commitments of the Grand Bargain, although adaptability appears only once. Flexibility as an approach to aligning donorship with
the recovery attempts of those affected by crises appears twice in the principles of the GHD. Principle 12 relates flexibility to changing needs and Principle 13 relates it to the balance of flexibility against accountability (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p2). Principle 12 stays at a general level, committing donors to be “dynamic and flexible” when funding their implementing partners, in response to changing needs. Principle 13 focusses on the detail of how funds are accounted for, committing donors to at least “explore the possibility of reducing, or enhancing the flexibility of, earmarking, and of introducing longer-term funding arrangements”, caveating this with “stressing the importance of transparent and strategic priority setting and financial planning”. These principles demonstrate early recognition that a more flexible approach would allow for more alignment with the changing priorities in humanitarian crises, alongside the acknowledgement of the accounting culture of the humanitarian community and the barriers that exist.

The principle of flexibility is also valued in the commitments of the Grand Bargain, and it is presented as key to at least three commitments. These commitments relate to the participation of people receiving aid, multi-year planning, earmarking and cash modalities. Commitment 6 explicitly requires flexible funding to enable humanitarian actors to “facilitate programme adaptation in response to community feedback” (WHS, 2016: p10), therefore enabling them to contextualise their assistance. Commitments 7 and 8 require flexible planning and flexible accounting, respectively. Commitment 7 requires flexible planning in the context of multi-year funding in order to “catalyses more responsive programming” (WHS, 2016: p11). Commitment 8 requires flexible accounting in response to the reduction in earmarking that would result from more flexible funding, acknowledging that flexible funding “enables response to needs” (WHS, 2016: p11). Lastly, cash modalities are the focus of commitment 3 because “Using cash helps deliver greater choice and empowerment to affected people and strengthens local markets” (WHS, 2016: p6). For this commitment cash is seen as a type of flexible funding in itself, as an enabler of flexibility in terms of the choices those affected by crises can make. This can be effective in contexts where cash is traditionally used to purchase essential items such as food or clothing. Shelter and settlements are often resourced differently so disbursing cash to address recovery requires careful consideration. For instance, the large amount of cash required to recover household shelter can create security issues around the management of the cash received.

An understanding of the longer term is one area where the GHD principles use a few words to say a great deal. While the longer term and long-term development are mentioned only a few times, and in only two principles, it is clear that donors are expected to maintain support for those affected by crises over a long period of time, in some way. Principle 9 relates to recovery and long-term development while Principle 13 relates to longer term funding alongside flexibility. Principle 9 commits donors to:
“Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.” (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018: p2).

Principle 9 describes an expectation to maintain a continuum, or at least links between, the immediate aftermath of a crisis, through recovery from the crisis towards sustainable development. Principle 13 includes the “longer-term funding arrangements” that might support this continuum in the context of evolving specific types of flexible funding. Over a decade later, longer term funding arrangements reappear in the commitments of the Grand Bargain. Commitment 7 is focussed on longer term funding arrangements that can “Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding” (WHS, 2016: p11). Multi-year funding also appears as an action in Commitment 2 for “More support and funding tools for local and national responders”.

Originally the Grand Bargain included a commitment 10, to “Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors” (WHS, 2016: p12). A review of the associated actions listed beneath this commitment reveals a general emphasis on increasing the scale of various existing innovative mechanisms and practices, but with a preamble in language extremely sensitive to organisational mandates. This preamble states that the commitment is “not about shifting funding from development to humanitarian programmes or from humanitarian to development actors. Rather, it is about working collaboratively across institutional boundaries on the basis of comparative advantage”. This is perhaps one reason what this commitment was ‘mainstreamed’ almost immediately after the Grand Bargain was launched. Metcalfe-Hough et al. report that “Progress was made under this workstream in 2017 at the level of individual or groups of signatories, but actions taken as a collective body were limited. The workstream was officially closed in March 2018 at the request of the co-conveners, but many signatories raised concerns regarding “how this important area of work would be continued.” (Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2018: p60). A year later progress was unfortunately slow with “...little evidence of a coordinated or strategic approach among signatories to achieving the commitments under this workstream, or maximising synergies or links with other commitments” (Metcalfe-Hough & Fenton, 2019: p54).

4.3.4 Summary of Aid Effectiveness.

There is some clear progress in the thirteen-year period between the GHD and the Grand Bargain regarding the alignment of donorship with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises. The increase in detailed data gathered over this period, outlined in the preceding section, appears to have
informed the aid effectiveness agenda in terms of a more specific, practical and nuanced approach to donorship. There are apparent, however, intractable issues such as earmarking of funds and a failure to break down institutional barriers between territories of ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’, and these are explored with respect to individual donor policies in the following section. Perhaps more surprising is the failure to truly address the agency and capabilities of those affected by crises, with true alignment, over and above merely allowing low level participation in decisions owned by donor states which is unlikely to enable flexibility.

4.4 Humanitarian Funding Policies

This section explores how individual donors pay attention to those affected by crises, or in other words how they present their relationship with those affected by crises in their public facing humanitarian policies. Donors use policies to place boundaries around those aspects of crises that they commit to engage with. The section is organised around the way that donors describe those affected by crises and their responsibilities towards them. Analysis of these policy documents gives a good insight into the different ways that donors see their relationship with those affected by crises and the emphasis they put on their different priorities. Public facing policy documents are also value laden, in that they describe the type of institution a donor wishes to be known as by choosing certain terms and drawing boundaries around certain concepts. In a similar way to the preceding section on aid effectiveness, the analysis focusses on concepts used to understand those affected by crises and uses the same three concepts as indicators for attention paid to their recovery attempts, namely ‘localisation’, ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’.

Donor policies were current at the time of writing and include the following:


- October 2015, ‘Policy for Humanitarian Action’, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance\textsuperscript{22}.


At the time of writing these policies had been current from thirteen to four years respectively. Notably none of these policies were revised following the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 or the subsequent commitments made to the goals of the Grand Bargain. The analysis was structured in a similar way to the section on aid effectiveness above, using the three concepts of ‘localisation, ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’.

4.4.1 How are Those Affected by Crises Conceptualised by Donors?

Donors draw boundaries around their target groups using similar terminology, suggesting they generally seek to support specific vulnerable populations affected by crises in countries which have few resources. The policies analysed described the ultimate recipients of their funds in terms of where they are located, in terms of their ‘vulnerability’ and, in some cases, their level of poverty. ‘Vulnerability’ is a key concept used across the policy documents analysed. All the policies include ‘vulnerable’ as a criterion for the ultimate target group to receive ODA. They describe vulnerability in terms of “vulnerable people” in general (DFID, 2017:p3) and in some cases the smaller group of the “most vulnerable” (DFID, 2017:p8) (Australian Government, 2016:p8). Most donors describe vulnerable groups as a subset of the larger group of those affected by crises, for instance, those in a country “affected” (DFID, 2017:p10) or a population “affected” (OFDA, 2015:p2) by crises. Notably, Irish Aid describes those who are vulnerable specifically “in a time of crisis” (Irish Aid, 2015:p2), suggesting that they may not necessarily be vulnerable outside of a crisis. ECHO specifies the “poorest and most vulnerable” (European Commission, 2001: p1 and p2), suggesting poverty as an additional criterion.

\textsuperscript{22} In 2020 the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance merged with their Food for Peace Department to become the Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs (BHA).

\textsuperscript{23} In 2020 the UK Government Department for International Development merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to become the Foreign, commonwealth and Development Office.

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Specifying vulnerability as a criterion draws a distinction between those who are vulnerable and the wider group who are not vulnerable but are nevertheless affected by crises. This distinction is important for two reasons. Firstly, these donors are clear that their funds are not intended for crisis affected countries and populations who are not understood to be vulnerable in some way, for instance populations with good access to power and resources such as those in high income countries. Secondly, this distinction is important because it determines the scale of funding required which depends upon the number of households in the target group of the donor.

Just two donors qualify the criterion of ‘vulnerable’ with a specific explanation of why ‘vulnerability’ itself matters in the first place. They stress the diverse nature of vulnerabilities arising from the different obstacles that people face, especially in crises. These obstacles range from a lack of access to assistance, to exposure to certain environmental or social issues. For example, Office For US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) explains why those who are vulnerable should be a priority, because “Disaster-affected populations are not homogeneous: some groups are more affected, less able to access assistance, and more vulnerable to risks for harm, exploitation, and abuse.” (OFDA, 2015:p10). The Australian government adds to this list of hazards, deprivation, discrimination and inequality (Australian Government, 2016:p10). The Australian government suggests some of the structural issues that contribute towards vulnerability, such as “poverty, inequality and marginalisation”, and that marginalisation in particular can be on the basis of “gender, gender identity, age, disability, social group, sexual orientation or other identity such as ethnic or religious group”. (Australian Government, 2016:p10). These policies do not go further, however, to close the loop by identifying the root causes of poverty or abuse before a crisis occurs, rather they concentrate on how crises can contribute further to vulnerabilities. The linkages between humanitarian crises and long-term development issues are discussed more fully below.

These policies also recognise a wider group of those geographically local to the crises. They recognise this group as not only recipients of assistance but also providers of assistance. This wider group is often referred to very generally as “local response” (European Commission, 2008:p6, DFID, 2017:p6) or “local capacities” (Australian Government, 2016:p12), and sometimes more specifically as “local actors” (European Commission, 2008:p6, DFID, 2017:p6). Where key entities are mentioned these include national governments, national and local organisations and communities (DFID, 2017:p10), first responders (Irish Aid, 2015:p2), the local private sector (Australian Government, 2016:p10), host communities and local economies (DFID, 2017:p18). The recognition of the role of local actors by states providing ODA has been a growing trend and the concept of ‘localisation’ of aid will be discussed further below. Ireland describes local and national NGOs as among “a new wave of actors ...
increasingly at the centre of humanitarian response” (Irish Aid, 2015:p11) suggesting that local and national actors have only recently been responding to their own domestic crises, but it is donor states who have only recently become aware of their activity. Donors frame their relationship with this wider group with a political understanding of national sovereignty and a practical understanding of proximity to the crisis.

At the national level, the donor states analysed see their involvement as secondary and contingent to the leadership of the affected state, as a consequence of respecting the sovereignty of the affected state. For instance, ECHO states that “National authorities in countries faced with crisis retain the primary responsibility for protecting populations confronting disaster” (European Commission, 2008:p1), implying that ECHO’s funding is a secondary responsibility, and DFID emphasises the contingent nature of its funding such that a moral hazard is avoided: “Emergency funding has become a substitute for investment in risk management and resilient national systems” (DFID, 2017:p7). At a more local level most donors acknowledge that those geographically closest to the crisis are those who respond to it most immediately, are the most informed about the local context and the immediate situation:

“We recognise that local communities are the first responders in many crises, and we believe in the importance of putting affected people – who themselves are agents of change and self-help - at the centre of humanitarian action” (Irish Aid, 2015:p2).

Despite this demonstration of respect for local actors, the mention of local capacity in these policies is generally coupled with an understanding that this capacity is insufficient in certain circumstances where a crisis becomes overwhelming, therefore requiring external support. For instance, DFID states that “at times local and national systems are overwhelmed, and an international response is required” (DFID, 2017:p10), and Irish Aid states that “More often than not, the capacity of disaster-affected countries to withstand and respond to ‘shocks’ becomes overwhelmed.... In many cases, external assistance is required” (Irish Aid, 2015:p8). ECHO states that its objective is to provide aid not only when governments are overwhelmed or cannot act but when they are “unwilling to act” (European Commission, 2001: p2), suggesting that the fate of those affected by crises is not always the priority of a national government, for example during conflict. These donors, therefore, frame their role as key to building local capacity. Positioning themselves in this way serves two purposes. Donors can acknowledge the sovereignty of the affected state while, at the same time, present themselves in a leadership role. There is a subtle difference between how donors express this which can be seen in these following examples from the Australian government:
“More often than not, the capacity of disaster-affected countries to withstand and respond to ‘shocks’ becomes overwhelmed. There is increasing recognition of the need to build this local response capacity. In many cases, external assistance is required to effectively support and coordinate activities” (Irish Aid, 2015:p8)

and Irish Aid:

“Work to reinforce local capacities during a response and ensure they are not marginalised by international actors arriving with their own staff, systems and priorities. We will support national and local authorities to drive coordination where possible”. (Australian Government, 2016:p15).

Irish Aid seeks to ‘build’ local response capacity and take control as they ‘coordinate’ activities rather than local actors leading coordination. The Australian government seeks to ‘reinforce’ local capacities, supporting them to drive coordination themselves, suggesting a more equitable partnership.

4.4.2 Aligning policy with the lived experience of those affected by crises.

This section summarises findings of the attention paid by donors to the lived experience of those affected by crises. It discusses the way in which donors have referred to those affected by crises and the nature of their focus on the key concepts of ‘localisation’, ‘flexibility’ and the ‘longer term’. While the current understanding of localisation precedes the documents chosen, the concept of the ‘local’ is present in all the policies analysed. Flexibility and adaptability are also present in all the policies with varying levels of value placed upon them. Lastly, donors visualise their humanitarian assistance as either part of or connected to longer term action.

All the policies analysed included some notion of flexibility or adaptability as an important concept. But certain donors present them as more valuable than others. Of the five donors, OFDA and Irish Aid value adaptability and flexibility the most highly and at the level of key components in their humanitarian policies. OFDA includes ‘Adaptability and Flexibility’ in its core values and explains this particular value in terms of prioritising the needs of those affected by crises. OFDA states that “As a part of its commitment to placing the needs of those affected first, OFDA places a high value on remaining flexible and adaptable to the changing situation during a response”. (OFDA, 2015:p5, Core Value 5). Irish Aid includes flexibility in its first policy objective, and adds ‘predictability’ as a related concept, “To provide needs-based humanitarian assistance in a way that is predictable and flexible to respond to sudden onset, protracted and forgotten humanitarian crises” (Irish Aid, 2015:p1, Policy
Objective 1: Irish Aid also links flexibility to the concept of the longer term when it describes “inflexible funding modalities” as a key challenge “to realising the synergies between relief and development” (Irish Aid, 2015:p10). The Australian government links flexibility with longer term concepts such as “recovery and development” (Australian Government, 2016:p6) in the context of Good Humanitarian Donorship. It also sees flexibility as key to its objective to enable early recovery, aspiring to “Build greater flexibility into DFAT’s country aid programmes to allow them to refocus and accommodate early recovery activities if required, particularly in disaster, climate and conflict prone countries” (Australian Government, 2016:p20). While neither ECHO or DFID explicitly mention the terms flexibility or adaptability at the same level of priority, similar links are made to the longer term. ECHO picks up on the link between assessing needs and being flexible (European Commission, 2008:p4), and also flexible transitions to recovery (European Commission, 2001: p9). DFID alludes to the notion of flexibility in terms of contextualising the type of resources it can provide to the specific context, to “Ensure the most appropriate response depending on the nature of the emergency” (DFID, 2017:p12).

There are three main ways in which these donors understand the longer term in relation to humanitarian crises. These understandings include measures taken, firstly before a crisis, such as mitigating the risk of crises and building resilience, and secondly, preparing well to respond to a crisis. They also understand the long term in a third way, with respect to being able to weather a crisis, for instance a protracted conflict, or recover from a crisis such as a disaster. Building resilience is also understood to be possible during a crisis. The longer term is often mentioned accompanying concepts such as ‘responding to crises’, for instance, DFID commits to being “more focused on helping other countries prepare for humanitarian crises, build resilience, and on resolving conflicts, not just responding when disaster strikes.” (DFID, 2017:p4), and OFDA includes in its definition of humanitarian action, not only protection and disaster assistance, but “disaster risk reduction, and efforts to build resilience” (OFDA, 2015:p2). Donors therefore visualise their humanitarian assistance as either part of or connected to longer term action.

While most donors include longer term issues within the general boundaries that describe their commitments, different donors value the longer term to a greater of lesser degree, and this can be related to specific types of crises. The Australian government frames its boundaries strongly in the context of the longer term, to the extent that three of its four strategic objectives refer to longer term actions, namely, reduce disaster risk, support preparedness and enable early recovery. Responding to crises is seen as only one part of an objective. By contrast, OFDA describes disaster risk reduction as a simply a cross cutting theme incorporated only “into response programmes” (OFDA, 2015:p10)
and ECHO relegates “promoting disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness” (European Commission, 2008:p9) to a short thematic section of its policy. Irish Aid and DFID both place a value on the longer term to the extent that they acknowledge longer term issues in their high level concepts, with one policy objective, “to prevent, prepare for, support recovery from, and build resilience to” crises (Irish Aid, 2015:p23, Policy Objective 3), and one section heading respectively, “Context: more crises, lasting longer” (DFID, 2017:p6: Heading 1).

Reasons behind the different values donors assign to investing in longer term action can be identified from the way in which they explain their development logic, or in other words what kind of outcomes they understand will be achieved through their investment of funds. These outcomes range from inward looking to outward looking. Inward looking outcomes aim to reduce the impact on donor states, for instance, reducing the need for an international humanitarian response and reducing costs. Outward looking outcomes reduce the burden on those affected by crises, or mitigate the impact on affected countries and preserve development gains.

DFID’s logic is rooted in reducing the burden on the international community. DFID states that for predictable natural disasters, more focus on preparedness, resilience and risk management will “reduce the amount of international assistance required” (DFID, 2017:p5). So, if countries are more prepared, more resilient and can better manage risk, DFID, its peers and partners will not need to support so many countries responding to crises. Irish Aid promotes cost effectiveness as the reason to invest in “interventions that prevent or reduce the risk/vulnerability and the impact of disaster, along with those that enable recovery”, in addition to reducing the need for “emergency relief” (Irish Aid, 2015:p23) and reducing the overall cost of humanitarian action. ECHO steers the focus back to those affected, linking an investment in the longer term with the simple objective to save lives. ECHO argues that “reducing risk and vulnerability through enhanced preparedness is essential to preserving life” (European Commission, 2008:p9). OFDA’s logic is focussed on the longer term recovery attempts of those affected by disasters, stating that “mitigating the economic and social impact of disasters” is the reason for a longer term approach to humanitarian assistance (OFDA, 2015:p2), while the Australian Government explains in more detail that in the long term “Humanitarian crises undermine growth, reverse hard-won development gains, increase poverty and can result in instability which can last for decades” (Australian Government, 2016:p2). One of the few donors to mention and value recovery in one of its Key Results, the Australian Government goes further to explain its practical belief that “The sooner work on early recovery begins the shorter and more effective the post-crisis recovery process is likely to be” (Australian Government, 2016:p20, Key Result 1).
4.4.3 The Limits of Donor Accountability

In addition to those aspects of humanitarian assistance which donors value, they also outline the periphery of the boundaries of their humanitarian donorship. While all donors express value for longer term actions outside of an immediate response, they conceptualise these actions in terms of their own boundaries between ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’. For some donors, despite an acknowledgement of the longer term, this distinction leads to an absence of accountability for longer term actions by their humanitarian teams, outside of an immediate response. OFDA is perhaps the clearest, stating that “Since DRR programmes are part of the larger effort to build resilience, DRR programmes should be squarely situated within the context of USAID’s long-term development programmes.” (OFDA, 2015:p10). ECHO deals with responsibility for longer term issues by omission, in that it commits to nothing beyond ensuring “humanitarian, development and other relevant aid instruments work better together” (European Commission, 2008: p9), save for its separate Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) funding instrument for preparedness (European Commission, 2008:p10).

DFID and Irish Aid approach responsibility more softly, valuing adaptability to context over specific actions. While Irish Aid firmly places longer term resilience outside of its primary remit, stating “Whilst resilience is the glue that can bring humanitarian and development work together, Ireland recognises that the primary responsibility for longer-term resilience-building lies outside of the scope of humanitarian action” (Irish Aid, 2015:p26), it has a softer approach through flexible funding such as its Humanitarian Programme Plan (HPP) mechanism that allows for preparedness, disaster risk reduction and early recovery alongside humanitarian response. DFID is clear that in protracted crises “National health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, and social protection systems should be supported to adjust to the surge in demand [from refugees]. Development finance, including the instruments of multilateral development banks, should help fund these initiatives” (DFID, 2017:p16). Meanwhile, DFID also provides multiyear funding plus “new risk financing tools such as insurance, concessional loans and contingency funds” (DFID, 2017:p4).

The Australian Government takes on perhaps the most responsibility for the longer term and could be described as overlapping its humanitarian and development priorities. Not only does it focus on coordination between different teams, it also provides flexible funding to address these differing priorities “by deploying funding mechanisms that target both humanitarian and longer-term development needs” (Australian Government, 2016:p19), and supports the integration of development policy within humanitarian action, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4.4.4 Summary of How Donors Conceptualise Those Affected by Crises.

The evidence presented suggests that, despite the varying nature of the different donors considered in this section, they outwardly present a common understanding of the principles and commitments of aid effectiveness. While the aid effective initiatives provide a framework for donor policies to work with, the limitations of these initiatives are passed on to donors, unless they decide to surpass them. For instance, ‘humanitarian’ remains a rigid territory for most donors in their own policies, with no strong steer from the Grand Bargain. Beyond this commonality, their policies vary in the extent to which they intend to align with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises, and this intention is demonstrated partly through the precise or imprecise nature of terms, for example the term ‘vulnerable’. For instance, the donors in this study vary in the way in which they describe their target groups. Some donors support those who are merely affected by crises, allowing for a more flexible boundary around which states can receive support, whereas other donors support more specifically those who are already marginalised and in poverty, providing a stronger ideological link to development concerns. Donors also vary in their interpretation of their relationship with those local to the crisis, where certain donors see their role as proactively supporting the local communities to respond and others see their support as only a last resort when national governments lack capacity. While all these donors appear to value flexibility, some see this mainly as a characteristic of response modalities, where others acknowledge the role of flexibility in accountability to affected communities. Lastly, in terms of the longer-term, some donors include the period leading up to a crisis, which allows them to focus on preparedness but makes it harder to support recovery, and some donors include the period after the crisis onset, which opens up opportunities to support recovery and protracted situations. Accountability for these intentions is demonstrated by the extent to which a donor policy is systematically structured to be measurable, or lacking in measurable statements, and the extent to which they value concepts such as ‘flexible and adaptable’.
4.5 Innovation in Humanitarian Funding.

Funding mechanisms are the interface between the aspirations of donor policy and the lives of those affected by crises. These mechanisms take the form of processes by which funds are delivered from a donor to those affected by crises, usually via implementing partners who manage the funds. Funding mechanisms are the channels by which humanitarian principles and commitments are resourced, so that they can become humanitarian action. In other words, they deliver the resources that turn humanitarian ideas into humanitarian activities. The processes set up by a funding mechanism delivers resources to humanitarian crises in a particular shape, for instance, over a particular duration and via specific implementing partners. In this way the shape, duration and implementing partners become crucial points of contact with those affected by crises and influence their lived experience. Examining innovation around funding mechanisms therefore provides, insights into how donorship has attempted to improve alignment with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises through the practical management of resources. The Global Humanitarian Assistance reports prove a fruitful source of data on these trends in innovation.

4.5.1 The Challenge of Mechanics

Over the last two decades the humanitarian community, through the aid effectiveness agenda and wider humanitarian reform, has focussed mainly on the equity, timeliness and efficiency of humanitarian funding (Urquhart, 2019). Achieving these outcomes involves grappling with three key interrelated mechanics of funding, and these mechanical aspects at the macro level, are arguably a prerequisite to achieving the more nuanced aspects of humanitarian assistance once funds are disbursed. In other words, if the funding does not arrive no humanitarian assistance is possible. These three key mechanics are as follows: Firstly, ensuring funds are available equitably to those most in need, which calls for humanitarian principles to be maintained above other agendas such as political opportunity. Secondly, dealing with the reality of moving large amounts of funds extremely quickly and in a timely way. This requires a balance of trust between a donor’s implementing partners and financial teams. Thirdly, keeping the system itself efficient so that the greater share of funds reaches those affected by crises. This calls for an appropriate balance between funds for the mechanics and funds for humanitarian activities. The overall challenge with donorship is to keep the attention paid to these mechanics in balance with the attention paid to supporting the recovery attempts of those affected by crises.
4.5.2 Innovation in Humanitarian Funding Mechanisms

Trends in innovation in humanitarian funding mechanisms include the development of a range of approaches to ensure equity, timeliness and scale. Key mechanisms that have emerged to this end include pooled funding, rapid response mechanisms, prepositioning and multi-year humanitarian funding.

Initially the main focus of humanitarian reform was equity (Randel & German, 2000) and the funding innovation directed towards equity was pooled funding. Emerging from the 1990s, following concerns about the politicisation of aid, humanitarian reform was focussed on ensuring that enough humanitarian funding was distributed to crises where it was needed most, rather than channelled to crises that represented political opportunity. The large scale and complex nature of the humanitarian response to the conflict in Darfur, Sudan in 2003 and the South Asian tsunami of 2004 also galvanised similar reforms to address these issues within individual crises. Donorship at this time was found to be insufficient, slow and to leave gaps despite obvious human suffering. Several mechanisms were developed at this time with a view to enabling “Coherent funding within crises - ensuring a coordinated response and that priority needs are met first” and “Adequate and equitable funding globally across crises” (Development Initiatives, 2006:p60).

Pooled funding, where several donors pay into an independently managed fund, emerged as a mechanism intended to overcome individual donor interests and to also speed up the release of funds. Initially coordination was attempted through the UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund, established in 1991 to “expedite the response of operational UN agencies to sudden crises […] before they received funds [directly] from donors” (Development Initiatives, 2006:p59). In 1992 the European Union also established the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) to manage funds from European Union member states. One drawback of the EU’s revolving system was that the requirement to replenish rendered it attractive to use only for high profile crises where further funding was likely to arrive, rather than for low profile crises where humanitarian suffering was sometimes greater. The mechanism was, therefore, relaunched in 2006 as the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) with the addition of grant funding with no reimbursement expectation, and with a specific focus on "under-funded emergencies" (Kellet et al., 2011: p44). At the same time, ECHO instigated its Forgotten Crises Assessment (FCA), allowing funds to be specifically directed to crises with a low profile but high vulnerability (Development Initiatives, 2006:p60). Country based pooled funds were also established, known as Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs). These funds were disbursed under the authority of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in country, rather than by the Emergency Relief
Coordinator at a global level, to ensure more specific alignment with the timing and capacities in each specific crisis, with the aim of “early and predictable funding” (OCHA, 2012a).

One drawback of both the CERF and country based pooled funds piloted at this time was that they were only accessible to UN agencies, who were not always best placed in an operational capacity where humanitarian crises occurred. International and local NGOs could only access funds as a partner of a UN agency, which often required establishing this relationship in advance. Humanitarian coordinators at the time noted that “if NGOs are best placed to meet the priority needs within the emergency, then they should have the flexibility to fund NGOs as well” (Development Initiatives, 2006:p61). While the CERF remains closed to non-UN agencies, other pooled funds opened up to other actors. Country based pooled funds have become a primary channel for local organisations to access humanitarian funding, as donors sought a way to fulfil their commitment to increasing funds to local actors (Metcalf-Hough et al., 2018). While this represents a certain flexibility across the humanitarian funding system, it also represents a proliferation of instruments, which is a point to which we will later return.

Following the rapid and large scale destruction of the earthquake in Haiti earthquake and floods in Pakistan, donors came under pressure to release larger amounts of funding more quickly (Kellet et al., 2011). Donors developed two main approaches to the more timely release of funds: Firstly, delegating grant management to those with less bureaucratic systems to reduce the time for administration, and secondly, establishing funding agreements in advance of crises by prequalifying implementing partners.

Pooled funding had established a precedent for donors to delegate grant management and donors had previously practiced the use of NGO consortiums to manage one off grants. Donors then applied this to NGOs, whose independence afforded them less bureaucratic systems than UN agencies. USAID piloted delegation to an NGO forum in the form of its RAPID mechanism in Pakistan, and DFID and Irish Aid developed a similar approach at a global level through the START Network, (then known as the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies). In a similar way that donors had delegated the nuances of individual crises to UN Humanitarian Coordinators, donors began to delegate these decisions to INGOs. This enabled donors to disburse large grants quickly without directly taking on the administration of each individual relationship with each implementing partner. This provided the nimble approach required to reduce the time taken for disbursing funds. In comparison with the CERF’s forty-five day process for funds to be allocated, “The START Fund … specifies that funding should be disbursed within seventy two hours and spent within forty-five days.
At country level, RAPID, the NGO-led fund in Pakistan, funded by USAID, takes an average of nine to ten days to disburse to local, national and international NGOs” (Swithern, 2015: p95).

At the same time, individual donors began to use prepositioning of funds and prequalification of partners as a way to speed up the process of disbursement. Prepositioning of funds enabled donors to have financial approvals in place before a crisis occurred and prequalification enabled due diligence to be carried out on partners in advance. Two examples of this approach include Sweden’s Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) (Swithern, 2015: p95), and the UK’s Rapid Response Fund (RRF) (DFID, 2013: p1). Sweden “pre-positions funding with Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and with NGOs. RRM partners are pre-selected according to a defined set of quality and capacity criteria, and then allocated funding annually, which they can draw down as required for rapid response.” (Swithern, 2015: p95). The UK prequalified NGOs and private sector partners to be able to apply for funds when a crisis occurs. The main advantage of rapid response funds is the ability to release funds quickly. One disadvantage, however, is that the timeframe to spend the grant remains short, for instance this was initially three months for DFID’s RRF. This is due to the need to manage the size of their financial risk. This restriction limits, therefore, the contribution rapid response mechanisms can make to the ongoing crises, particularly in cases where recovery can begin immediately, but will take a longer time to achieve.

A further approach to prepositioning funds, this time for national governments rather than NGOs, is known as risk financing, which includes insurance mechanisms that allow for the release of funds in the event of a crisis. This approach applies household insurance mechanisms at a regional level draws upon preparedness measures for climate change which use early warning signs such as meteorological indicators to predict crises such as drought. One example is the African Risk Capacity24 (ARC), established in 2014, which “uses risk-pooling and risk-transfer mechanisms to respond to early warning signs of disaster” (Swithern, 2015: p94, Clarke & Dercon, 2016).

The rise of protracted crises pushed two issues to the forefront. Firstly, these crises were both large scale and ongoing, and secondly, the affected countries had become repeat recipients of humanitarian funding year on year. This raised concerns about both the scale of funds available and the suitability of the mechanisms by which the funding was delivered as each yearly disbursement incurred its own overhead costs. Donors became aware that funds were being potentially wasted on financial administration when they could be targeted at humanitarian assistance, creating an inefficient process. One approach to tackling these issues became multi-year humanitarian funding (MYHF),

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24 African Risk Capacity https://www.africanriskcapacity.org/ visited on 15.03.21

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where humanitarian funds are granted at one point in time to be spent over a period of several years, rather than the more common period of six months. One of the largest pilots of MYHF was in 2014 by DFID, with grants over three years in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Pakistan (Levine & Sida, 2019). The potential efficiency and savings made MYHF an attractive approach to donors under pressure to reduce overheads, and by 2017 at least twelve other donors followed suit, especially as the crisis in Syria became more protracted (OCHA, 2017a). MYHF still faces impediments, partly due to the annual nature to which government finance systems, and the systems of their partners, are set up. Several donors only receive their humanitarian budget on an annual basis, such as Canada, Sweden and ECHO, and even where MYHF is possible, some governments restricted it to two years. MYHF is also currently considered mainly in the context of protracted conflict and displacement, rather than disasters, despite research showing that recovery from disasters takes many years (Platt, 2018).

4.5.3 Summary of Innovation in Humanitarian Funding Mechanisms.

Donors have risen to the challenges of equity, timeliness and efficiency through a series of innovations in mechanisms to disburse funds, including pooled funding, rapid response mechanisms and MYHF. The achievements of these innovative funding mechanisms include better coordination to reduce gaps and overlap in coverage, faster administrative processes to ensure funds are available when they are needed and longer spending windows to reduce cost inefficiencies and make more funds available for humanitarian assistance. Without taking away from these achievements, observations can also be made concerning the way in which these innovations have been approached that reveal some intractable impediments. In the main, flexibility has been achieved by a proliferation of funding mechanisms rather than an ongoing evolution across the humanitarian community. Some implementing partners have been slow to change their own systems, so donors have been required to channel funds through others. In addition, some of the innovative mechanisms analysed above sit alongside more traditional mechanisms which still receive the larger share of funds, with the possible exception of MYHF. In summary, there are a range of approaches taken by the state donors in this study which represent different levels of ability to reduce bureaucracy and subjectivise others to make funding decisions. For instance, DFID developed an arms-length approach in its support to the START network and reduced bureaucracy to allow for the speed of RRF disbursements. In contrast, ECHO remains more bureaucratic, partly due to its consensus led administration, which restricts its ability to administer MYHF.
4.6 Donorship for Those Who Have Lost Their Shelter and Settlements.

The following section explores how these donors understand their support to those who need to regain their shelter and settlements. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, shelter and settlements provide a good case because they do not fit neatly into the boundaries set up by donors or framed by the wider humanitarian architecture of humanitarian agencies. Providing humanitarian assistance to support those affected to secure their shelter and settlements can therefore create some critical challenges for donors. This study reveals tensions in the ability of donors to mediate beyond their own territories of humanitarian assistance. There are contradictions in the aspirations they set up for their implementing partners, for instance, the high per capita cost of support to shelter and settlements challenges their aspirations to cover the most vulnerable and the pressure to show results quickly restricts their ability to remain involved in the longer-term reality of recovery.

It is not, however, easy to discover from documentary sources how donors understand shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises since few donors have developed their own specific policy or guidelines. The lack of donor policy or guidance on shelter and settlements may possibly be due to the increasingly distant relationship between donors and those affected by crises which has yet to catch up with trends towards funding local actors such as those described above. As multiple implementing partners appear in between donors and those affected by crises, some donors leave the more technical aspects of humanitarian assistance to those closer to the crises, seeing their role as ‘wholesalers’ not ‘retailers’ of humanitarian assistance. Many donors simply reference the Sphere Standards (Sphere Association, 2018) to explain their understanding of technical sectors and require implementing partners to follow these standards. The Sphere Standard for Shelter and Settlement is heavily rights based, without substantial reference to the wider economic impacts, in contrast with some donor approaches to development which focus on growth and environmental considerations. Another reason could be that donors who have produced guidance simply because they are organisations with a more bureaucratic and technocratic culture who seek to exert control through documented requirements (Mowjee, 2001). Two donors who have produced policy and guidelines concerning shelter and settlements are USAID and ECHO. ECHO produced guidelines for its implementing partners in 2013 and updated them in 2017 (ECHO, 2017). USAID has produced a range of documents for its implementing partners, including humanitarian shelter and settlements principles (USAID, 2013), a description of humanitarian shelter and settlements activities (USAID, n.d.) and sector specific proposal guidelines (USAID, 2018).
Resourcing support to recover and secure shelter and settlements challenges the principled notions of how those affected by humanitarian crises are understood, for instance supporting the most vulnerable households. ECHO and USAID repeat their aspirations to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in their guidance concerning shelter and settlements. ECHO states that implementing partners should target “the disaster-affected population that is most vulnerable and exposed to context-specific threats, and that has the least adequate coping capacity” (ECHO, 2017: p29), and USAID establishes protecting and empowering the most vulnerable as a key principle (USAID, 2013: p2). Yet, ECHO highlights that the most vulnerable may be a larger group than their funding can address, and USAID’s focus on broader coverage seems to contradict this principle (Goldwyn, 2022).

One reason for limited ambition may be because support to recover or secure shelter and settlements often carries an initial high per capita cost in comparison with other technical sectors such as food security. ECHO states that “In most cases, people consider shelter their most important asset or their highest living cost, meaning that shelter is also essential in promoting economic well-being and securing livelihoods” (ECHO, 2017: p3). While ECHO acknowledges the economic impact of support to shelter and settlements, opportunities for links to the longer term and more sustainable approaches are missed. The high per capita cost factors into decisions on coverage, and this is illustrated by the complex wording of ECHO’s guidance on coverage. ECHO explains that household by household coverage may not be possible in the longer term and that prioritisation may be required:

“Where a high proportion of the population is vulnerable or subject to acute needs, the priority is rapid coverage. Subsequently, prioritisation should increasingly balance coverage with targeted focus on the greatest needs and vulnerabilities in order to maximise the impact of the intervention. Considering the range of possible S&S [shelter and settlements] response options, prioritisation may result in a combination of settlement-based targeting with household-based coverage.” (ECHO, 2017: p30).

In fact, ECHO acknowledges that coverage of affected households with humanitarian assistance from donor states is minimal compared with households who support themselves, stating that “It is also important to note that in many contexts, the majority of shelter solutions are undertaken by affected households themselves” (ECHO, 2017: p3). One of ECHO’s two specific objectives centres on this understanding “assistance should be supportive, focusing primarily on enabling and assisting household self-recovery and strengthening systems towards more sustainable outcomes and processes” (ECHO, 2017: p3).
Flexibility in donor technical guidance relates more to flexibility of support options than flexibility of the shape of funds mentioned above. Support options operate at a different level of flexibility since the shape of funding will always exert restrictions on any support option, for instance, the cost and duration. The shape of funding is not, however, mentioned in the guidance, and for both donors funding tends to become ‘one size fits all’ with respect to the length of a grant. ECHO and USAID, however, do promote flexibility in two main ways. Firstly, both donors encourage participation and people-centred interventions and, secondly, they promote a wide range of shelter and settlements interventions to cater for different contexts. USAID values flexibility in two of its principles, calling on partners to:

“Deliver context-appropriate assistance [...] Tailor assistance by supporting community-driven efforts that reflect beneficiary concerns, views, management skills, access to resources, and decision-making capacities” (USAID, 2013:p1)

and

“Empower beneficiaries and build local capacities. [...] Promote meaningful participation of disaster-affected populations in decision-making processes through safe, equitable, and effective mechanisms to collect input and address concerns” (USAID, 2013:p2).

ECHO’s first specific objective is for assistance to be “people centred” which they describe as:

“ensuring that the interests and protection of beneficiaries are at the centre of operations, that assistance is accountable to them, and that it is tailored to the differentiated needs of women, girls, boys and men” (ECHO, 2017: p3).

ECHO illustrates a commitment to certain assistance options which will in themselves promote flexibility, including household reconstruction, where a different level of household involvement may be more possible and appropriate in different situations, stating that:

“consideration should be given to whether beneficiary-driven, community-driven or agency-driven programmes are most appropriate, taking into account factors such as household capacity for reconstruction” (ECHO, 2017: p17).

ECHO uses the example of unrestricted cash grants which can allow those affected to “best benefit from the flexibility and choice to spend the money on a wider range of products and services, other than construction materials and shelter NFIs” (ECHO, 2017: p56). ECHO even explains the detail of how flexibility can be achieved in the specification of construction materials such as plastic sheeting,
where “Rolls (usually 4mt wide, 50-60mt long) provide more flexibility, compared to pre-cut sheets (packet in bales of 5 or 10), for construction of shelters, latrines, and washrooms.” (ECHO, 2017: p61).

This research has identified the long term as a critical challenge for donors’ funding support to recover or secure shelter and settlements. Whereas, both donors, ECHO and USAID, encourage links with longer term action, they do not, reflecting their humanitarian policies above, take responsibility for it, so it is unclear how it might happen. Neither USAID or ECHO acknowledge in much detail the long term context in which vulnerable groups find themselves even before they experience a humanitarian crisis, for instance marginalised from access to tenure and adequate housing, far from basic services and in fear of eviction (United Nations, 2014). ECHO does, however, summarise in general what it refers to as ‘trends’, including:

“increased urbanisation; increased vulnerability of settlements, including from climate change; the impacts of growing mobility of people, of cash and remittances, and of greater access to information; and the consequences of increased displacement due to conflict” (ECHO, 2017:p3).

In contrast, USAID describes the pre-disaster context as “normalcy” (USAID, n.d. p1) as if pre-crisis contexts are trouble free. In general, the longer term is considered outside of the territory chosen by donors for their humanitarian teams. This narrow scope creates challenges for the recovery attempts of those affected by crises in two ways. First, the idea of establishing links between immediate humanitarian response and recovery attempts has limited policy support and so with piecemeal resources over the years it often takes time for those affected to recover their shelter and settlements. Second, a lack of acknowledgement of the pre-crises root causes of a household’s poverty, and vulnerability to humanitarian crises, undermines attempts to conceptualise what support to household led recovery might look like.

It is, therefore, useful to compare how these two donors manage the challenge of longer-term action in their guidance on shelter and settlements. ECHO’s general principles include ‘building synergies’ with other programmes and emphasising ‘durable outcomes’. ECHO encourages “building synergies with complementary humanitarian interventions and links with longer-term initiatives” (ECHO, 2017: p6) and ECHO encourages as a priority

“emphasis on the durable outcomes of S&S [shelter and settlements] assistance, and on establishing synergies with development and/or other social protection programmes.” (ECHO, 2017: p9).
USAID includes in its principles to “Facilitate longer-term recovery through humanitarian action” (USAID, 2013: p2) and accepts that humanitarian assistance can involve “laying the foundation for longer-term recovery” (USAID, n.d. p1), suggesting that there may be ways in which immediate response options could be a catalyst for those activities which take longer to complete, but without stating what this might look like. Contrast this with DFID, above, which describes “new risk financing tools such as insurance, concessional loans and contingency funds” (DFID, 2017: p4), albeit not in the context of shelter and settlements.

While USAID emphasises the bridge from the immediate to the longer term, certain shelter options which might facilitate this are restricted, such as permanent reconstruction. USAID understands humanitarian assistance with a clear boundary around just two main types of humanitarian shelter and settlements assistance “the provision of emergency and transitional shelter activities” (ibid). While USAID is explicit that its humanitarian shelter and settlements assistance does not include

> “the reconstruction of permanent housing, the development of new settlements, or efforts to resolve chronic market, policy, and institutional deficiencies related to the provision of housing and basic services, including housing finance” (USAID, n.d. p2),

but without making explicit reference to how it links to these economic considerations. ECHO, on the other hand, frames its guidance in terms of the experience of those affected by a humanitarian crisis. ECHO allows different kinds of humanitarian assistance and be provided “particularly if activities such as reconstruction, rehabilitation or the maintenance of S&S facilities clearly address the health, protection or livelihoods needs of the affected population” (ECHO, 2017: p5). This apparent flexibility comes with the caveat that ECHO’s humanitarian funding is unlikely to support this kind of assistance ‘in full’, because:

> “Given the short-term, emergency life-saving focus of its funding, DG ECHO responses will not always provide these solutions in full, but they should promote them and help facilitate their achievement in a reasonable timeframe” (ECHO, 2017: p8)

Again, ECHO does not elaborate on approaches to link its humanitarian funding with these longer-term solutions.

These restrictions on how far implementing partners may support the longer term sit uncomfortably with the aspirations of both donors to award Multi Year Humanitarian Funding (MYHF), by way of their commitment to the Grand Bargain. It is clear that USAID is still piloting the MYHF approach, encouraging NGOs to discuss multi-year awards with its field representatives since “Funding
determinations are based on the local context, incremental multi-year planning, and available funding” (USAID, 2018). While ECHO’s shelter and settlements guidance appears more flexible, it is also restricted by its existing processes. ECHO is as yet unable to award funds beyond twenty four months, and is tied to an annual planning and prioritisation cycle (OCHA, 2017a).

It appears that both donors wrestle with the reality that while their humanitarian funding is constrained to the short term, those who are affected by crises may take years to recover or secure their shelter and settlements. Further to this, they miss opportunities within humanitarian crises to leverage links to more sustainable shelter and settlements. USAID acknowledges this challenge stating that

“Currently, humanitarian S&S [shelter and settlements] assistance often overlooks linkages to longer-term needs, mainly because those needs are well beyond the mandates, protocols, expertise, and institutional memories of most humanitarian actors.” (USAID, n.d. p2).

Likewise, ECHO acknowledges that its own funding will fall short of durable solutions, stating that:

“In the likelihood of protracted displacement, where the average duration of such refugee situations is estimated to be around 25 years, S&S interventions should promote durable solutions as the ultimate goal, even if humanitarian aid in itself is unlikely to fund them to completion.” (ECHO, 2017: p14).

These technical guidelines exist in a space within humanitarian crises with little reference to the world beyond. Since humanitarian assistance begins when a household is displaced or their home is destroyed, these two donors say very little about the existing inequity of access to shelter and settlements outside of a humanitarian crisis. While both ECHO and OFDA mention reducing disaster risk and supporting households to secure tenure, there is little to acknowledge development issues surrounding structural barriers to safe and secure housing such as poor governance and poverty. The humanitarian action these donors will fund is conceptualised within a bubble of its own, which questions its ability to ‘build synergies’ or ‘lay foundations’ for longer term action.

4.6.1 Summary of Those Who Have Lost Their Shelter and Settlements.

Analysis of technical sectors such as shelter and settlements, reveals tensions between the boundaries around the aspirations of policy and joint commitments, and the shape of the boundaries which funding mechanisms place around the disbursement of funds. While donors seek to serve humanitarian principles, their humanitarian assistance is bounded by territories around the
management of time, cost and risk. Donors seek to support the most vulnerable but cannot support all of the vulnerable, yet they seek to extend coverage as widely as possible. Donors seek to be flexible but cannot entirely influence the flexibility of either their implementing partners or their financial teams. Donors seek to provide support in the long term but have yet to see their traditional approaches catch up with current innovations in funding mechanisms.

This section identifies two main types of donor, namely those who document guidelines for supporting shelter and settlements and those who do not. Those who do not publish their own guidance rely heavily on the rights-based approach of the Sphere Standards, and do not proactively attempt to link humanitarian action with opportunities to leverage the economic impact of shelter and settlements. Even USAID and ECHO, who document their guidance, both spend far more time describing where the boundary lies around humanitarian action than how it links with wider developmental and sustainable support. This perhaps reflects a more Dunantist approach to humanitarian action than the Wilsonian one might expect from a state donor.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented trends and shifts in humanitarian funding as documented by both donors themselves and a wider group of those involved in humanitarian funding. Each section used public documents to analyse how donors pay attention to those affected by crises and what influences them in their humanitarian funding decisions, with particular focus on key concepts of localisation, flexibility and the longer-term. The table below, in Figure 8, briefly summarises the findings from each section above. This is followed by concluding remarks framing the findings with the theoretical framework of territorialising, adjudicating, subjectivising and mediating.
### The Documented Face of Donorship

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<td>Innovation in Humanitarian Funding</td>
<td>Through a series of innovations in funding donors have achieved better coordination, faster administrative processes, and longer spending windows, yet observations can also be made concerning the way in which these innovations have been approached that reveal rigidity in the system. There are a range of approaches taken by the state donors in this study which represent different levels of ability to reduce bureaucracy and subjectivise others to make funding decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who have lost their shelter and settlements</td>
<td>Overlapping boundaries around policy aspirations and around funding mechanisms create restrictions for the flexibility and longer-term perspective required to effectively support the recovery of shelter and settlements. With respect to technical guidance, one group of donors documents guidelines and another group does not. The former rely heavily on the rights-based approach of the Sphere Standards, and the latter spend far more time describing where the boundary lies around humanitarian action. Both approaches miss the opportunity to link more closely with development concerns.</td>
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Figure 8: Summary of findings concerning the Documented Face of Donorship.

At the highest level, donors formally place a territorial boundary around the concept of ‘humanitarian’, as distinct from their other available resources. Their formal policies are influenced both by collective agreements such as aid effectiveness initiatives, and their internal organisational structures. A positive effect of demarcating a territory for ‘humanitarian’ is to allow for specific funds and expertise to be developed to address specific requirements. Demarcating a territory allows for funds to be calculated against ‘humanitarian’ as an economic activity. It is not easy for donors to place a boundary around their target group of those affected by crises. This boundary is, in fact, constantly moving and shifting. While most donors generally identify ‘vulnerable’ groups in their policies, the location and context where these groups are found varies enormously from crisis to crisis. The criteria for being vulnerable also shift, for instance when comparing displaced households in a Middle-Income Country (MIC) with disaster affected households in a Low-Income Country (LIC). This means that donor policy must place a flexibly boundary around a notional and generic vulnerable group broad enough to encompass the most likely eventualities. One advantage of this is that it does allow donors some flexibility in terms of where to direct their funds. While the humanitarian territories in donor policies allow for flexibility of geographic focus, they are less malleable when it comes to considering the longer-term. A negative effect of placing a boundary around what can be considered ‘humanitarian’ is that humanitarian crises are rarely bounded in isolation but interlinked with development concerns. For instance, humanitarian crises rarely have a single cause or a single effect, they rarely last for a predictable and finite period of time or happen to a neatly isolated group. Donors describe a range of
longer-term activities in their humanitarian policies, but many donors place the responsibility for the longer term with other departments or actors. In addition, there is little acknowledgement of the pre-crises root causes of a household’s poverty and vulnerability to humanitarian crises, undermining a donors’ ability to conceptualise what support to household led recovery might look like. Subjectivising across the territories of ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’ remains, therefore, a challenge, even to the extent of simply “enhancing engagement” between humanitarian and development actors, as seen in the fate of commitment 10 of the Grand Bargain.

A further challenge for donors to align their funding with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises is the ability to mediate funds in a flexible and adaptable way so resources are responsive to local priorities. Local actors are a group who these donors are under pressure to subjectivise, even through direct funding. For several of these donors, however, this relationship remains largely focused on building local capacity rather than a more equitable partnership for implementation. While funding flexibility is identified as best practice early on within the GHD, instruments such as multi-year humanitarian funding, including for local actors, are still only starting to emerge within the commitments of the Grand Bargain. Reducing earmarking is also identified early as a way to mediate in a more adaptable way, and yet the percentage of earmarked funds remains quite stable over the two-decade period of analysis.

Finally, donor policies vary in the way they adjudicate success and present themselves to be held accountable. Aid effectiveness initiatives have provided some common concepts they can rely on for adjudication, for instance, donor coordination, flexible funding and supporting national responders. The extent to which donors incorporate these concepts in their own policies demonstrates the extent to which they are comfortable to be judged against them. The format of different policies indicates the extent to which donors value their own accountability. Two extremes of this can be seen by comparing the highly structured Australian government strategy that allows for measurement at the level of actions, in comparison with DFID’s policy which contains very few measurable commitments, despite commitments to results and efficiency.
Chapter 5: Donorship and Flexibility

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter explores further the concept of flexibility as a key indicator of donorship that aligns with the recovery attempt of those affected by humanitarian crises. It investigates the value placed on flexibility by both donors and their implementing partners and how its role is understood in relation to the agency of those affected by crises. This chapter presents original analysis of primary data gathered from key informant interviews (KII). Participants included the staff of humanitarian teams in government donor agencies, humanitarian teams in International Non-Governmental Organisations and United Nations agencies, plus commentators on the humanitarian system employed by international development think tanks (see Chapter Three for a wider discussion of participants). The analysis of these interviews builds on the picture of the humanitarian funding system set up in the previous chapter which used secondary sources, by contributing answers mainly to the first and third research questions:

1. What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

3. What is the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

The chapter is divided into seven sections, comprising six sections of analysis plus the conclusion. Analysis of the literature and data in chapters two and four saw the concept of ‘flexibility’ become a primary driver in the alignment of ODA with the experience of those affected by crises. The first section therefore analyses why flexibility is a valued concept in humanitarian donorship. The next three sections explore a range of influences on the ability of donors to be flexible. These include the influence of resources on the role of the donor, individually and in groups, the influence of the relationship between donor states, between donors and their implementing partners, and the role of the bureaucracy employed to disburse humanitarian funds. The section which follows considers examples of flexible donorship which can respond to the crisis context and enable the agency of those affected. Finally, the conclusion draws together the layers of influence on the flexibility of donorship with reference to Miller and Powers four roles of accounting.
The analysis of existing literature and the secondary data in previous chapters revealed flexibility as an indicator of the alignment between donorship and the attempts of those affected by crises to recover their shelter and settlements. Flexibility is used below to investigate the extent to which donor policies can respond to their target groups, over and above their other priorities. Flexibility and adaptability enable donors to respond to the specific context of the crisis, which includes changing events and, consequently the changing capacities and needs of those affected. For flexibility to be achieved, boundaries around territories must be malleable, mechanisms for mediating within those territories must be responsive, the subjectivising relationship between donors and implementing partners must be adaptable and adjudication must allow for responsive measurement of success. Analysis of the primary data below using the concept of flexibility revealed a gap between donor policy aspirations and the ability of donors to respond to the context of a humanitarian crises, mainly due to rigidities within their own institutional culture and structures.

5.2 Flexibility as a Key Concept for Humanitarian Donorship.

This section explores flexibility as a key characteristic of donorship which aligns with the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises. It describes why both donors and their implementing partners value flexibility and how they understand its role in relation to the agency of those affected by crises. This includes flexibility to respond to the way that the priorities of affected populations differ geographically, and to the way these priorities shift over time. The lack of flexibility in certain donorship processes is highlighted.

5.2.1 The Value of Flexibility

Flexibility in this research is understood as an indicator of the alignment between donorship and the agency of those affected by crises. The value of ‘flexibility’ in donorship is rooted in the ability of a donor to be able to react to change, including shifts in the crisis context and the switching of priorities by affected households. Conversely, when donorship is inflexible priorities are dictated to affected households and so resources may not align with their attempts at recovery. Flexibility is, therefore, key to upholding the agency of those affected by crises because it allows them to direct the recovery process with respect to the speed and shape of recovery. Examples of flexible behaviour in donorship include where donors react and respond to the context of the crisis, by allowing funding mechanisms,
instruments or programming requirements to adapt to the changing situation. Concepts which contribute to flexibility therefore include responsiveness, reactiveness and adaptability. Donors and implementing partners described flexibility as a way of ensuring that resources for humanitarian action can follow and support those affected by crises. They suggested that where resources follow the agency of those affected by crises then a humanitarian agenda can be served over and above other agendas such as political opportunity or organisational interests. This suggests that for donors to be flexible they must subordinate these other agendas to a certain extent or at least ensure that they do not contradict the humanitarian imperative.

Flexibility is valued across various aspects of donorship to accommodate the different priorities of different households and their associated timescales. One commentator from a think tank on the humanitarian system, who had also previously worked as a humanitarian donor, emphasised the importance of recognising different priorities for different crises affected populations. They highlighted the importance of funding flexibly to respond differently across geographic locations, since donors are faced with different contexts and different crises in different countries. They explained that affected communities would bring their agency to bear on different priorities if they could:

“a dignified response for Rohingya in Bangladesh is about gender segregated toilets, whereas for Syrians it’s a different order about opportunities and rights. They are very different in terms of what they would want if they could control the assistance” (6WF:5).

Although both these two crises occur in conflict contexts, the geographic location and culture of those affected is different, and they have different expectations and capacities.

Adding another layer of complexity, the priorities of those affected by crises change over time. A humanitarian programme manager for an international NGO elaborated the situation for those affected, showing how their priorities shift during their journey through recovery from a crisis:

“...if you have lost your house and you are sleeping outside, all you will be thinking about is sleeping inside, but in two weeks’ time, when you are sleeping inside, you think well I have a temporary situation at the moment and I did say a permanent house was what I wanted but now I really need to plant seeds so what I really need is some seeds, and I can probably put the house thing on hold for a little bit while I sort this out. Beneficiary priorities actually change quite quickly, and we can better meet their needs and resilience by having that flexibility” (38A:7).
These examples suggest that donorship must respond to at least two dimensions, namely to differences in geographic context and to changes affected by temporality. For the recovery of shelter and settlements, flexibility between geographic contexts is important because the meanings of buildings, the way they are built and who builds them vary from place to place. In addition, those recovering their shelter and settlements will be able to prioritise this more or less depending on which other priorities they are managing and at what stage they are in locating themselves and finding shelter.

5.2.2 Change is the Rule

The context of humanitarian crises is fluid over time with frequent changes. The principle of flexibility is therefore necessary for working in humanitarian crises. Despite this logic, donor mechanics are often rigid. One donor official, responsible for the financial management of humanitarian grants, explained the paradox of the fluid humanitarian context and the rigidity of donor mechanics. The example of modification requests was used as an indicator of the need for flexible funding, commenting that “80% of our grant agreements sooner or later have modification requests” (4Y:5). A modification request is a request to make changes to the grant agreement between the donor and implementing partner. Modification requests can be made as a result of changes in the activities described in the original proposal to support the priorities of crisis affected households, changes in the operational context, for example because a population of migrants has moved from one place to another, or simply because the national government has withdrawn authorisation for implementing partners to work with the affected households. For shelter and settlements support which relies upon purchasing of materials, prices often increase due to an escalation in demand in the wake of the crisis. These events are very common in humanitarian crises, but despite this, modification requests in their very nature as a ‘modification’ are understood and set up as exceptions to the rule, rather than the rule and the expectation.

The result is that change processes can take up time and create a burden for both donor and implementing partner. One humanitarian practitioner for an international NGO reported that even when donors themselves requested a change there was no quick way to gain approval. They explained that it could take several months:

“…it wasn’t as simple as a notification to the donor to say we have changed this and this for this reason, as requested by you in the meeting, you still had to go through all the modification processes. [...] it was a situation where their systems were overly burdensome I think in terms of flexibility and making changes” (38A:2).
The mismatch between the way in which humanitarian crises unfold and the mechanics donors use to distribute their resources demonstrates a disconnect between the way in which donors perceive the process of supporting affected households and their understanding of the context they are responding to. While change is the rule, rigidity is the expectation. Flexibility remains the exception.

5.2.3 Summary of the Value of Flexibility.
Flexibility in donorship is a required attribute of donorship mechanics if donorship is to align with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises, because crises are fluid and regularly change. The population affected will have different priorities depending on their context, and their priorities are likely to change over time as the crisis progresses. Currently donor mechanics are more static and do not easily allow for change. This introduces a tension between the humanitarian aspirations of a donor and their ability to respond to the context of the crisis.

5.3 The Limits of Flexible Donorship.
This section considers how participants understood different influences on a donor’s ability to be flexible in humanitarian crises. These influences include the relationship between donor states and states affected by crises, and the relationship between different donor states, the scale of resources available and the scale of donor interest in a particular crisis.

5.3.1 The Influence of Resources
On the one hand donor states are perceived by their implementing partners to be at the top of the hierarchy in the humanitarian system, with ultimate power, no restrictions on the choices they make and the freedom to be flexible. This research found that there are both internal and external influences which restrict the ability of donors to be flexible. These influences include political pressure to respond or not respond to certain crises. This can be due to the opportunity a humanitarian crisis offers for public profile in the media, or the sensitivity of the political relationships involved.

An official from the humanitarian team of one donor commented on the perception of implementing partners, stating that there is usually an assumption that “Donors tend to occupy an elite position because they are the bankers. They are to be revered and feared and not held to account” (GP2:7).
This may be because implementing partners are somewhat restricted in their ability to negotiate with donors or hold them to account due to their dependency on the donor for resources. In this way being the ‘banker’ who provides resources affords a donor power and autonomy. One humanitarian commentator explained that resources do have influence because:

“If you can put money on the table, you can nudge the system in a particular direction because there is money attached to it. That’s a very important potential impact of the humanitarian financing system supporting policy reform” (6WF:11).

This point also highlights the reverse, that is to say certain action may be taken because donors make resources available, not because the action is a priority of those affected. In other words, resources lead humanitarian action towards certain priorities. These two examples show how powerful donors can be since they are unlikely to be directly challenged and their resources enable them to lead where others follow. It is, therefore, important for the priorities of those affected by crises to be made known and promoted, a point explored further below.

While donors possess this autonomy and influence over humanitarian outcomes, humanitarian practitioners recognised that this can lead to the politicisation of their humanitarian role, as seen in Chapter 2 (Drury et al., 2005; Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004). While ODA is usually disbursed by a government ministry with responsibility for international development, that ministry is part of a wider government with wider interests. Some countries such as the UK and Australia even combine their international development ministries with ministries handling their foreign affairs. One independent humanitarian adviser, who works for several INGOS and multilaterals, acknowledged that donors use humanitarian resources with a deliberate and strategic political agenda, stating that “… the US state department and DFID are not doing this in an entirely disinterested manner. Targeting [specific groups] and branding are part of a donor country’s soft power” (22M:2). Humanitarian teams within government ministries reported varying degrees of independence to respond to humanitarian crises appropriately, and particularly independence from government ministers. One donor official stated that their ministers enjoy the profile they gain from being involved with disasters and exert internal pressure to respond regardless of the appropriateness of the response. They commented that "Every time there is a drop of rain anywhere [the minister’s team] want to know about it" (22U:5). It is widely appreciated that the countries and affected populations that donors choose to target are linked to their foreign policies, and that support to humanitarian crises from donor states can be at the same time both altruistic gestures and politically motivated actions (Drummond et al., 2017; Duffield, 2001;
Duffield et al., 2001). One donor official explained further that this can be positive where international political interest is high, as this can in turn inspire humanitarian action, for instance, for Kurdish Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Iraq following The Kuwait conflict:

“There was a dynamic created by the invasion and remedial action and therefore an imperative to do something about it.....In Bosnia, [...] it represented a significant threat to the stability of Europe” (GP2:1).

In these circumstances, political action can have a positive side, as “a tool for alleviating suffering” (GP2:1), where donor states can use their political influence, often with the national affected state, to advocate for humanitarian action. So, crises that carry more political weight may attract more humanitarian resources from donor states, but this can work against the ability of a donor to respond purely to humanitarian suffering. Some donors manage this by contributing collectively with other states to specific funds for lower profile crises, for example ECHO or the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), also discussed below.

Another donor official explained that sometimes humanitarian action can be merely a gesture of political support with no intention of becoming more practically involved. Using the example of Venezuela, they explained,

“[We] sent a modest aid package in a low key way to multilateral partners. [We do] not want to set up a Venezuela department. It is just a band aid for those affected on the ground. Shows that the government is not ignoring the crisis” (22U:5).

The negative aspect of the politicisation of humanitarian funding in certain situations is that support driven by political objectives can backfire for those affected by the crises because “Beneficiaries can be persecuted by being associated with a certain donor” (GP2:6). Similarly, a humanitarian practitioner for a large INGO explained that accepting government funding put their staff directly at risk:

“... it has real security implications accepting funding from certain donors. Especially because the biggest donors are the UK, the USA and increasingly Germany as well, those are very politically sensitive donors in some countries, so that’s a big issue” (42O:2).
One antidote to this difficulty is that donor states have some flexibility in which implementing partners channel their humanitarian resources through, and subjectivise less sensitive entities depending on the context. Another donor official from a humanitarian team recalled when a national government was unable or unwilling to provide humanitarian support:

"For example, in North Korea we have provided funding through the UN community, the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization, because we couldn’t fund directly. So, we work with that [UN] network as well, both in countries of presence and countries of non-presence so we are not conflicting" (8A: 1).

In extreme circumstances it can even be more effective for government donors to step back from certain crises. The same donor official stated that there are sometimes other entities that may be better placed to respond.

"If the entity is not a government, they are much better placed to respond than the [...] government might be. There are sometimes political reasons why it is less appropriate for government to support for scale or political reasons" (22U:3).

In summary, donor states have several approaches within their remit that will allow them to uphold the principle of flexibility, including who they give resources to and who the resources are intended to support. They are, however, under pressure to balance this against political opportunity and gain. The recovery of shelter and settlements can have a bearing on this balance since the location where people settle during crises can be politically sensitive, for instance due to land disputes, the burden on local services and the size and consequent visibility of shelters and settlements.

5.3.2 The Influence of Group Dynamics
Donor states do not work in isolation, but alongside other donor states and also alongside other types of donors who provide private and public sources of funds. The way in which donors behave, the opportunities available to them, and the ability of any one donor to be flexible, is influenced by who else may be providing resources in a crisis. One humanitarian practitioner for both INGOS and UN agencies described donor behaviour in a crisis along a scale of how much donor attention a crisis attracts. At the one end of this scale lie crises where many donors are providing resources, and at the
other end of the scale few donors are present, and resources are tight. The humanitarian practitioner recounted that where there are more donors and more resources, this appears to result in more donor flexibility and openness to innovation. Fewer donors and resources provide donors the opportunity to be more prescriptive.

In high profile crises that attract many donors:

“donors operate relatively independently ... but they are under pressure to get large amounts of money out the door and are very eager and open to discussions with implementing organisations [...] So in those situations defining success is much more of a negotiation (on the ground) it can be much more open to a palette of interventions and a much wider palette of defined outcomes....” (22M:18).

In low profile crises at the other end of the scale:

“The other stereotype of response is where everything is different, is a forgotten response, where it’s a protracted crisis, where there is very little funding and often it is just one donor. There are plenty of places in Central Africa where it’s just ECHO and nobody else, and where the funding goes through a UN national appeal fund. Where the four big UN agencies choose their implementers and choose their geographical target zones. There is much more likely to have an atmosphere of begrudgingness [sic] on all sides – I am not sure how to quantify that (laughs)” (22M:18).

In addition, this participant elaborated further, that donors have more impact with what they prescribe where they are the only donor, and they are providing a large share of the resources available.

“It will have the maximum impact if no one has any money and everyone is waiting for that $3m, for someone to push the start button on it. If at the same time, however, there are $30m coming in in drips of $100 here and there to 10,000 families, who are spending it on all sorts of materials that the donor funded program would not recommend... [it will have less impact]” (22M:14).
In relation to the point above concerning the priorities of those affected, it is important for these priorities to be made clear in situations where fewer donors are present because there will be less peer-to-peer accountability between donors to ensure that a humanitarian agenda is upheld. Donors may therefore have the ability to be flexible to respond to these priorities, but this will be tempered by how many other donors are present.

In addition to donor states, where the bulk of resources still come from tax payers in OECD countries, donors with other private funding sources are increasing their share. One commentator on the humanitarian system commented:

“What is interesting is how that is shifting to a wider range of actors including the private sector, including innovative finance approaches such as insurance, equity investment, impact bonds where you have the resources coming from the capital markets, often blended with public funds or foundations, philanthropic funds which is another important source” (6WF:6).

An independent humanitarian practitioner explained that this greater number of donors and a more even spread of funds affects how states are influenced, including the affected state itself. For example, “With the splintering of the donor pie it may have enabled greater independence of voice on the part of national authorities” (22M:18), so where a crisis is well attended by many donors, the national authority may be less politically influenced by donor states and more able to set the agenda. This may be good news for those affected by a crisis if the national government is supportive and, conversely, detrimental if the political agenda of the national government is at odds with support to those affected.

Another way for donors to exert influence in the presence of many others is to act together as a group. One humanitarian commentator explained that solidarity can sometimes be important for diffusing the individual agendas of donor states and a better way of ensuring accountability to those affected. They gave the example of the CERF as a pooled funding mechanism that draws donors together in solidarity, saying:

“Sometimes its small money, but as an expression of solidarity it’s quite interesting. If you talk to DFID and USAID, it’s all about bang for your buck, value for money, effectiveness, efficiency. There is another level of solidarity and how do you demonstrate that as a fund this is reflecting humanity’s generosity towards people who are suffering” (6WF:3).

ECHO is also of particular interest in this regard because it is representative of more than one state. This multi-state structure gives it more flexibility in which affected states it can support. The same
commentator explained that “ECHO, not so much recently, but over the years has seen its role as a donor that focusses on forgotten crises where they can have a presence that DFID and OFDA cannot” (6WF:2). This is not to say that ECHO has no political agenda, but that it is influenced differently by the many states which contribute to its emergency fund and the collective agreement they embody subordinates any single donor state and their bilateral relationship with an affected state.

5.3.4 Summary of the Limits of Flexible Donorship.

The extent to which donors are flexible with their resources is influenced by several layers of the humanitarian system. Firstly, this includes the extent to which donors can maintain a humanitarian agenda in the face of international relations and organisational interests. Secondly, it depends upon the scale of a donor’s humanitarian resources alongside other donors, in relation to the number of other donors with an interest in a particular crisis. Lastly, it depends upon the dynamic between one donor state and other donor states, and the extent to which that groups of donors can collectively drive a humanitarian agenda and keep each other accountable.

5.4 The Limits of Flexibility for Implementing Partners.

This section discusses the way that implementing partners attempt to navigate their relationship with donors while remaining responsive to those affected by crises. This includes the challenges of managing unpredictable funding flows, multiple grants and limited resources to assess the context of a crisis.

5.4.1 Flexibility within Funding Partnerships

Since donors rarely implement humanitarian action directly, they rely upon funding partnerships between themselves and implementing partners such as multilateral and NGO agencies. Despite the variety of ways in which donors provide resources, implementing partners report that in any single crisis they have little freedom to choose their donors. The humanitarian practitioner above suggested that some high-profile crises attract many donors where implementing partners may have more choice, and more donors are likely to be present in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. The majority of crises, however, attract few donors, as will be seen in the following chapter, and the number of
donors and level of resources drops off considerably after the first year. Another humanitarian practitioner for an international NGO described this limiting position:

“I wish we were in a position where in many countries we were picking and choosing! [laughs] To be honest we’re not. Some NGOs who have a massive amount of [public] funding can be picky. The biggest thing we look for is “Does this donor match?”, either based on our contextual analysis in longer term programming or direct needs assessment in humanitarian programming” (38A:8).

The most common route to resources, even for immediate emergency relief, is through a competitive bids process (DFID, 2018; USAID, 2018). Implementing partners must therefore balance the risk of receiving funds against the type of donors they approach. In addition, and as discussed in the preceding chapter, while donors use different types of funding mechanisms, not all implementing partners are eligible to apply for all funding mechanisms. Where UN agencies can access funding, they often sub-contract to NGOs creating another level of transactions. The inefficiency of these transactions has gained profile under various workstreams of the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016). While certain UN and Red Cross agencies have standby agreements with certain donors, it is rare for INGOs to have any guarantee of funding, even if they have already prequalified with a donor. Implementing partners who have their own reserves of humanitarian funding, often from public appeals, are best placed to act quickly and subsequently approach donors to supplement the humanitarian action they have started. This also gives them the flexibility to direct the response rather than simply following a donor agenda.

Implementing partners reported that a lack of transparency from donors regarding their plans in humanitarian crises contributes to difficulties with being responsive to the context and effectively managing multiple grants. They reported not only the lack of guaranteed funding, but also a lack of predictability of the availability of funds and a lack of knowledge about which other agencies were receiving funding. Although the Grand Bargain includes a workstream on ‘Greater Transparency’ this relates mainly to retrospective logging of data rather than real-time transparency during a crisis (WHS, 2016). One humanitarian practitioner for a UN agency called for more and better communication as one solution, saying:

“There could be more dialogue between donors and operational partners. I wonder if donors are also transparent [with each other]. Sometimes we see them giving cryptic messages or unclear messages about whether the funding will be coming or not. I guess maybe it’s because they themselves are not sure either if will be coming or not” (28C: 2).
A humanitarian practitioner for an INGO highlighted the negative consequences of this lack of transparency during grant bidding processes, which in some circumstances creates competition between implementing partners instead of coordination:

“No one is transparent. In Lebanon that was a problem as well. You never knew who was applying for funding and everyone is up against each other, so you can’t actually coordinate properly your programming on the ground because people are not being open about where they are doing assessments or where they are planning to work. You need like a neutral person in the middle” (38A:11).

Others speculated that donors provide funds according to a range of concerns other than either the immediate capabilities of partners or humanitarian concerns on the ground. These concerns could include a preference for a particular part of the humanitarian system, e.g. funding NGOs rather than UN agencies, or funding based on previous relationships rather than current performance. One commentator suggested that there is a lack of incentive to be more crisis specific in funding decisions, explaining that

“a lot of decision making is related to what we did last year, [with one donor] it felt like rather than a zero based “What is the problem we are trying to solve?” it’s “Well last year we gave X million to Save the Children in this country and X million to WFP, and yeah we have some issues with how they do it but that’s the system we are supporting” (6WF:8).

The humanitarian practitioner for the INGO above suggested that more transparency over who is funded might incentivise more informed decisions and override favouritism:

“I think it is well known that certain donors prefer certain agencies in certain countries that are not necessarily performing the best. And I think if they had to be more public about who they funded with what amount each year, they would be more wary of potentially being, I don’t want to go as far as saying unethical, but potentially not prioritising the most deserving let’s say, projects or NGOs” (38A:5).

One UN official pointed out that donor accountability for predictability and transparency should be a matter of course when it is related to the job they are set up to do.
“Their job is to ‘fund things’, to fund proposals and to fund the response, the same way as our job is to implement the funding or whatever. Each of the pieces need to do their job well. The fact that we depend on the funding makes the job of the donors important. [...] the fact that it needs to be done in a responsible way doesn’t mean that this is at the discretion of the donors. Basically, I think the accountability of the donors should be strengthened…. It is their job, it is not out of the kindness of their hearts they are putting X amount available to people. The money is not coming from their pockets like philanthropists, no, it’s part of a chain and I think that part is missing. I find donors not very transparent, and it takes time for them to put things in place, and unpredictable” (28C:2).

It is, however, worth noting that often two different participants have had the opposite experience with the same donor. For example, one found them to be very responsive while the other has found them to be very rigid. This is sometimes due to the different approaches of different teams in different countries. This lack of consistency has also been flagged as a difficult trait to manage when building a long-term partnership with a particular donor. The lack of consistency and predictability appears to undermine trust between donors and their implementing partners.

5.4.2 Consequences of Complexity

In addition to the lack of predictability of funding, implementing partners reported that the multiplicity of grants itself can be an impediment to flexibility. Multiple implementing partners receive multiple grants from multiple donors. Each donor requires a slightly different process, and this is being addressed to some extent by the Grand Bargain workstream to ‘Reduce duplication and management costs with periodic functional reviews’ (WHS, 2016). Each donor also has a slightly different focus for the humanitarian action it supports, not only at policy level as discussed in the previous chapter, but on a crisis-by-crisis basis. Each implementing partner must piece together the grants it receives to approximate the humanitarian action it has proposed. One UN official recalled how this worked where many donors were present in a crisis:

“…the organisation I was working with in Honduras, [...] had an enormous amount of money and they managed to organise the funding in such a way that the project made sense … In the [2004 South Asian] tsunami it was the same where there were different strains of funding are coming and they are organised” (28C:6).
Another humanitarian practitioner for an INGO pointed out that managing this multiplicity of funding streams takes skill. The process of ensuring all the grants align is complex, taking time and energy. “Coordinating different grants that want different things but bringing it together in a program is a very specific skill. I wonder if there is a way of joining that conversation up a bit more between donors” (40:9). Figure 9 below shows an example of the different grants secured by one INGO to support the recovery of shelter and settlements following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

![Figure 9: Grants awarded to an INGO to support the recovery of shelter and settlements following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal (Ashmore, 2016: p7).](image)

The multiplicity of grants and the process related to managing them influence the type of grants an implementing partner will want, and it’s not always the largest grants. One humanitarian practitioner for an INGO explained that knitting together smaller grants can lead to more flexibility and responsiveness to those affected by crises because they can be used to add in different components of humanitarian action:

“I suppose when you have grants that bring in a certain component of a project there is the advantage of having access to smaller grants. Let’s say under one donor we are working on
livelihoods and Watsan [water and sanitation], but there is a donor that could help us with gender activities and integrate it into our program” (38A:8).

A diagram explaining the relationship between an implementing partner and grants awarded by different donors can be found below at Figure 10.

One way to view donor coordination could be as oil in a machine, reducing the friction caused by parts rubbing against each other that draws energy away from the ultimate purpose of that machine. The same practitioner reflected that if donors could coordinate more closely the type of humanitarian action they support, it would take less time and energy for implementing partners to juggle their grants. Not only that, but it would enable implementing partners to be more responsive without the energy spent on knitting together different grants.
“Communities need multifaceted responses to emergencies and as NGOs we cannot always respond to all of it. So, if there is better donor coordination in terms of what’s being funded and where, we could potentially respond in a more holistic manner” (38A:11).

The complexity of coordinating different grants is partly due to the range of flexibility donors will accept and the restrictions they place on the programming they fund. While implementing partners and donors both make an assessment of the crisis context, they often come to different conclusions about the humanitarian action required. This means that donor grants do not always fit the overall program the implementing partner designs. Sometimes the grant will cover some of the action and sometimes it requires more or different aspects of programming. One humanitarian practitioner described the effect this has on the ability of implementing partners to be responsive to the context:

“[Donors] can be quite prescriptive in what they will or will not fund, and I think that removes the opportunity to innovate or really respond in a way that you feel best based on a contextual analysis or assessments. ...and that can be quite difficult with donors who are not in country and do not know the context very well” (38A:2).

Flexibility on the part of a donor at the start of a response can also enable the agency of those who have been affected because it affords communities the opportunity to be listened to. Conversely donor restrictions mean that partners are not given autonomy to design the program entirely in relation to context. The same humanitarian practitioner explained:

“Wherever the donor is less prescriptive in what you have to do means that the communities are being listened to, and by that it doesn’t necessarily mean they are sitting round the table with you designing the program, it means that they have talked about their needs and if you can work in those sectors are being addressed” (38A: 11).

Donors can be prescriptive over a range of aspects of programming. This includes geographical area, delivery modality or technical sector. Paradoxically, this can sometimes be a function of donor coordination where donors agree to each fund a different piece of the humanitarian action, such as a technical sector, in order to avoid overlap. For the recovery of shelter and settlements, this rigidity often leads to underfunding, sometimes due to a lack of donorship decisions close to the crisis context. One humanitarian practitioner for a UN agency reflected that the recovery of shelter and settlements is better funded by mechanisms that are more embedded in the country rather than at headquarters, stating:
“I may have a biased perspective, but shelter is a very special or very essential need of people. The fact that shelter is very important for the people and it is so often underfunded, but CBPF and CERF are much better at recognising this need than other donors, makes me think that these mechanisms work better” (28C:7).

Other times it is an effort on behalf of donors to secure profile, for example so they can say they are covering a large geographical area. One humanitarian practitioner for an INGO recalls a situation where a donor in an attempt to retain a higher profile refused to be flexible to realities reported in the assessment:

“In the initial [proposal] we said we would support 5 of these areas and then in reality after a field assessment we saw that even two was quite challenging. So we fed that back but they refused to adapt it....why does a donor want to see that they have a wider impact to say they have reached five districts.... It’s ridiculous.... Because all the donors have wanted to see their money being spent more broadly across the affected region” (4O: 9-11).

Difficulties can also occur when donors disagree with their implementing partners about the type of modality that is appropriate to a specific context. One humanitarian practitioner offered the example of a donor’s preference for distributing food versus providing cash, despite the implementing partner having analysed the local markets:

“They are insisting that we have to do food distribution and/or food vouchers, but we are telling them we are doing cash and that the markets are ok with it. So you end up with this situation where you are running programs in the same geographical area and there’s not really a huge logic behind why some people are getting cash that’s much more flexible and other people are getting food”(38A:10).

The effect of the different perspectives from donors and implementing partners can therefore cause tension with local communities. Where those affected by crises are displaced, a lack of flexibility between target groups can even escalate conflict. A practitioner for a different INGO explained that

“It could lead to tensions within communities where some people are receiving support and not others. Donors that are more open to general vulnerability targeting with a portion that is specifically for displaced or refugees there tends to be less risk of that happening” (38A:4).
These problems often occur due to the different ways in which ‘the most vulnerable groups’ are defined and where a line must be drawn on what can be covered with limited resources.

5.4.3 Towards a Shared Understanding of the Context

While a shared understanding of context between donors and their implementing partners appears to be important, it is also perceived to be difficult to generate. This can be both due to a lack of dedicated resources or a lack of time. When asked the question “How does this donor align its support with the recovery plans of those affected by crises?”, one technical adviser for a donor explained that, despite assessments being made during the onset or escalation of crises, it is difficult to know the plans of those affected by crises:

“If those plans were made more explicit it would be easier at the outset […] When recovery begins has always been an open question within the humanitarian community. It’s difficult to program against it when it is nebulous” (8A:4).

One humanitarian practitioner for an implementing partner of this donor countered this by explaining that donors rarely fund assessments, and the expectation is rather that implementing partners will cover the cost. This suggests that assessments are either not a priority for donors, or there is little understanding of the difficulties implementing partners have funding them. The practitioner explained:

“They also won’t commit to post-date the funding to cover the assessment afterwards, so you can’t put the assessment into your proposal even though you have to do it before the money arrives. That’s just a challenge, I am not saying there are other agencies that would allow that, but you would think the larger donors that can take on an amount of risk would be in a position to do that” (40:2).

The perceived speed required as funding becomes available also plays into the lack of emphasis on listening to those affected by crises. The time required for those affected to participate in assessments is not always available due to time required by the mechanics of competitive bidding processes. Implementing partners who take the time to do extensive assessments must balance their speed of response with tailoring that response to the plans of those affected:
“we take an approach that we have to do an on the ground needs assessment before putting in proposals. We get criticised or questioned for it because it makes the response slower. If you look at the Nepal earthquake ... We did the needs assessment, we found out people wanted. Our kits were better adapted to the needs of people” (38A: 11).

The perceived need for speed can also hamper implementing partners from finding the most vulnerable and most affected groups to listen to what they have to say. This can leave them still excluded from resources years later. One humanitarian practitioner who supported households to recover their homes after the Nepal earthquake observed that several years on:

“there are still so many people who haven’t been able to reconstruct now that there is a need for a new injection of funding for reconstruction for all of those people who fell through the cracks, who are much more vulnerable and were much less obvious and who did not have much of a voice at the beginning of the emergency” (4O: 4).

There is a fine balance between making sure the voices of the most vulnerable are heard and making quick decisions in the immediate peak of a crises. Funding mechanisms which allow the flexibility to listen in a timely way and respond to the context are therefore important in upholding the agency of those affected.

5.4.4 Summary of the Limits of Flexibility for Implementing Partners.
Implementing partners build a picture of a complicated system of attracting resources to support those affected by crises. Firstly, a lack of predictability of funding sources contributes to implementing partners putting a large amount of time and energy into coordinating different types of grants from different donors. Secondly, a lack of resources for context analysis and working closely with affected households contributes to discrepancies between donor and implementing partner approaches. Finally, competing donor agendas influence the ability of implementing partners to shape their support according to the priorities of those affected by the crisis.
5.5 Bureaucratic Rigidity in Donorship.

The following section considers examples where the bureaucratic processes of donorship influence the ability of implementing partners to be flexible. First, the relationship between bureaucracy and the agency of local actors is considered. Next the consequences of bureaucratic imbalance are discussed, where bureaucracy becomes the driver over and above responding to context. Lastly, examples that highlight the origins of bureaucratic influence are examined.

5.5.1 Bureaucracy and Local Agency

It is necessary for the mechanics of donorship to serve humanitarian outcomes by enabling humanitarian action, but there is currently a gap between what donors aspire to achieve and the mechanics they use to mediate implementation. In chapter four we saw that the overall challenge with donorship is to keep the mechanical aspects of disbursing funds in balance with the attention paid to supporting the recovery attempts of those affected by crises. The mechanics of grant administration can create impediments to the flexibility which allows donorship to uphold the agency of those affected in several ways. These include mechanics that fail to enable policy principles to be implemented because they allow insufficient time, adjudication that fails to value policy principles or an imbalance between the level of administration, and the amount of resources available. Lastly there appears to be a perception of rigidity in financial, legal and risk management aspects of grant management that may create an impediment to change and innovation. One donor official highlighted the power of the mechanics behind donor policies stating that, “No one is in command. There are people who are in command over amounts of money and timeframes” (GP2: 3). In other words, the bureaucratic details have influence, and this can be positive or negative.

While the administration of a grant is initially designed to serve the humanitarian purpose of the grant, implementing partners reported that the administration itself can also negatively influence humanitarian programming. One humanitarian practitioner described the administrative aspects of a grant as another layer of restriction on the program designed according to what the community wanted: “So I think a lot of it is around your ideal program design vs what your program design has to look like under a grant” (38A:4). The difference between the humanitarian action designed by implementing partners and the requirements of a grant that donors may offer is often reflected in the donor’s reporting requirements. Grant requirements can sometimes lack a connection with policy, oversimplifying the desired outcomes or overwhelming the implementing partner with the weight of
administration. This is important because the way in which donors require implementing partners to report drives the way the grant can be implemented.

One UN practitioner commented on the imbalance within the relationship between affected households, implementing partners and donors that gives the mechanics of compliance such powerful influence over humanitarian action:

“We know that if we do not report well to a donor, we will not receive funding. It is not the case if the community is not happy or if we have not met the needs. For us the happiness of the donor or compliance to donor requirements is a stronger card than meeting the needs and this should not be the case. The donor requirements should be done in such a way that meeting the needs and addressing the longer term needs even is the priority” (28C:3).

The disconnect between policy and mechanics can create a mismatch between designing humanitarian action in support of affected households and designing humanitarian action to satisfy grant administration. The UN practitioner went on to explain that this imbalance causes implementing partners to be concerned about asking for changes, reducing their ability to be responsive to the context of the crisis:

“Variations in the implementation in the project according to issues that are in relation to the needs of the community, changing needs or a better understanding of the situation, are always scary because you might think that if we change it now donors will think that our assessment was not correct, or it may mean a delay” (28C:3).

As discussed above, changes to household priorities are the rule during the rapidly changing environment of humanitarian crises, so it follows that change processes need to be sufficiently simple and timely. One humanitarian practitioner explained that this is not necessarily the case. They described a situation where the technical staff of a donor itself requested a change from an implementing partner, but the administrative process proved unable to action the change in a timely way:

“Yes, when they would tell us that you need to adapt and stop doing what you are doing and do something different, we said “That’s great, can we write you a letter to say this is what we are changing?”. “Well no you need to ask for a formal cost or no cost modification to the contract, and that can take several months, and to do that you need a pipeline budget, and
that needs to go through approvals and get signed off” [...] it was a situation where their systems were overly burdensome I think in terms of flexibility and making changes.” (38A:2)

Not only do these challenges influence how implementing partners design their programs they can exclude certain partners from accessing certain grants. One example of this is the way in which some donors and also implementing partners try to implement policies around localisation, but rather than issues of timeframes or values, impediments to localisation are related to managing risk. One humanitarian practitioner explained that despite the focus on localisation in the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016), some INGOs are not yet able to pass funding through to local NGOs:

“I see the EU putting [localisation] into the language of its contracts, the problem there is in terms of our own internal mechanisms for a lot of NGOs and in terms of the risk thresholds we are not quite there yet in terms of being able to apply the same financial regulations to a large international NGO as we can to a local NGO” (38A:12).

A humanitarian commentator described the current mismatch between donor policy which commits more funding for local partners and the mechanisms of those same donors which exclude local actors, stating that “[one donor] cannot fund local NGOs according to the legal frameworks they are governed by, so there are some hard constraints” (6WF:2). The legal, financial and risk management mechanics which currently prevent this are perceived by humanitarian teams to be rigid. Decisions about the standards local NGOs should meet are, however, not set in stone but guided by the level of risk donors are willing to take.

Lastly, with certain grants the administration burden itself is an impediment. The reporting requirements for some grants generate such a large amount of administration that implementing partners reported deciding not to apply for these grants at all. One humanitarian practitioner for an INGO explained that:

“the financial side is very burdensome for the amount of money you are getting and for the length of time you are getting it, it’s administratively very heavy. There is at least one if not several audits. There is a lot of reporting requirements. At the end of the day, you are putting in a lot of effort for not very significant money for not very significant time” (38A:7).
As discussed above, the mechanics of donorship often represent a different expectation by donors of the shape of humanitarian action to the empirical experience of their implementing partners. The mechanics of donorship appear to be designed for a predictable and managed context which is far from the nature of humanitarian crises.

5.5.2 Restrictions and Quantitative Measurement

A further issue with the mechanics of humanitarian grants is the way in which success is measured in donor reporting. Over the last two decades quantitative measurement has become prominent. Quantitative measurement can speak of scale but its ability to speak of quality is limited. Four participants commented on this particular point, explaining that quantitative measurement may not provide appropriate information on humanitarian outcomes.

Flexibility to respond to those affected is an approach valued by most of the donors reviewed in chapter 4, but those principles which enable this can be missing from the indicators of grant compliance requirements in favour of more quantitative measures. Participation is an example of a principle which donors value in their policies which is not necessarily monitored in donor reporting. One humanitarian practitioner for a UN agency commented that:

“we talk a lot about participation revolution, about people being in the driving seat of the response, and at the same time donors who care a lot about that don’t reflect that in their reporting requirements” (28C:3).

This suggests that despite being a policy level principle it is not demonstrably valued as a measure of success. This trend in a mismatch between policy and measuring success is also seen in the examples above regarding assessments.

The measures of success in donor reporting are often designed to describe only the scale of the humanitarian action rather than the wider outcomes for those affected by the crisis. They do not necessarily provide an opportunity for the voices of those affected to be heard. One humanitarian commentator explained that:
“a lot of the metrics are about how much stuff you deliver, not about whether it is delivered to the right people, and that goes back to measures of success of the system – it’s about inputs rather than outputs” (6WF:8).

This point was echoed by another humanitarian practitioner who explained that the different types of indicators donors require tell different stories about the humanitarian program that was funded. Often the story of those affected remains untold. They gave an example of measuring the success of upgrading household shelters:

“the indicators were always quantitative about “How many houses have you upgraded?” A lot of energy and a lot of work goes into working with these committees [...] but when talking to [the donor] we had to really play up the ‘direct’ impact rather than the indirect impact. So ‘how many households have shelter’.... It’s more about counting family units rather than the wider wellbeing of a community” (4O: 7).

A donor official concurred, and explained why quantitative indicators can miss the most important humanitarian outcomes for those affected, stating that it is

“easy to invest in a particular sector and conclude that because they have done a distribution quickly and at a good price it has been effective and efficient. That does not necessarily translate to an example of humanitarian worth. They may not have survived!” (GP2:2)

Quantitative measurement may be useful for calculating the scale of funds required or spent on humanitarian action, but qualitative indicators are necessary to demonstrate that the priorities of those affected have been supported.

The emphasis on quantitative measurement may stem from an increasing perception of a lack of available funds to address growing humanitarian needs (HLPHF, 2016). This has led to more emphasis on the concept of efficiency (Stoddard et al., 2017) and Value for Money (VfM) (Cabot Venton & Sida, 2017). Despite the use of the term ‘value’ in the title of the process, several participants observed that the way donors calculate VfM does not necessarily communicate information about the quality of programming. One donor official commented that “VfM has been whittled down to the cost of the intervention” (GP2: 6). They explained that calculating VfM had become too complex, even when project proposals were tested against a simple element such as a unit cost:
“It was too complex because the dataset required to demonstrate the best unit cost was never produced. Subsequent business cases were used to justify humanitarian action, but were just too difficult to write. It’s almost meaningless because most organisations claim that their intervention is VfM” (GP2: 6).

A humanitarian practitioner for an INGO reported that a common problem is that ‘VfM’ and ‘efficiency’ are confused with ‘cheapest’. They stated:

“If we are talking about true VfM and efficiency, it potentially makes responses better and more efficient, the problem comes when VfM gets confused with being the cheapest, and I think that happens a lot” (38A:12).

The humanitarian practitioner went on to demonstrate with a simple example why the cheapest cost of an intervention does not provide information about VfM or quality, related to the complexity of managing a range of different grants:

“…in some NGOs it could be covered under five, six, seven different donors, so each donor is taking 15% of the costs. But if you only have one or two donors and you only have one of two projects under way and each donor has to take 50% of that costs, you look like you are more expensive for what you deliver. But you are potentially delivering better programs because you are only delivering one or two programs as opposed to someone who is dedicating 15% of their time across seven projects. Sometimes we get feedback that is frustrating because we are told your costs per beneficiary are higher, and there are different factors behind that, but it is not necessarily meaning that the quality of your program would be less” (38A:12).

A more serious effect of a quantitative measurement culture is where concepts such as efficiency begin to drive budgets at the level of individual budget lines. This occurs where two misunderstandings of efficiency take place, and often together. Firstly, where ‘efficiency’ is misinterpreted as ‘cheapest’, as above, so budget lines are reduced and cut to bring down the cost of the overall budget or individual unit costs. Secondly, additional reporting became required to calculate and demonstrate VfM or efficiency, while no additional funding was provided to complete this complex task, so capacity had to be drawn from humanitarian activities. One humanitarian practitioner explained this with a comparison between funding for project reporting and funding for project oversite, commenting on the link to fraud.
“The recent fraud in the Democratic Republic of Congo that Mercy Corps\textsuperscript{25} brought to light under the UN funded Registre du ministère public mechanism: one of the big learnings out of that is that the need to decrease support costs and staff costs has led to less oversight, which has led to large amounts of fraud. So, whatever was saved from that perspective was lost in terms of oversight” (38A:7).

“Reporting and oversight, I have always considered them very different. Oversight for me is about having enough staff at the right levels to be able to be actively in the field. If you have very heavy and burdensome reporting mechanisms you decrease time that could be better spent on the ground with the team supervising, providing oversight. From that perspective I don’t actually think frequent reporting reduces either the risk of fraud or the risk of misuse of resources or other issues really” (38A:12).

At worst, in an attempt to make programming more efficient, programming instead became poorer quality because not enough value was placed on budget lines for ensuring quality. This trend echoes the lack of investment into context analysis discussed above, suggesting that quicker and cheaper limits the flexibility of implementing partners to be responsive.

5.5.3 Origins of Bureaucratic Restriction

Reasons for the mismatch between the aspirations of donor policy to respond to the context of a crisis and the restrictions of grant administration on humanitarian action are related to organisational capacities, structures and culture. These include the influence of historical processes, rigid organisational structures with hard boundaries between teams, and the rise in prominence of quantitative measurement.

One donor official described how funding processes are often historical and some have yet to catch up with the different types of crises experienced in current times. Grant administration practices are, therefore, slow to change. The adviser reflected that:

"... our history, our protocols have been predicated on a rapid onset disaster[...] A great percentage is allocated in the Middle East now, but our mandate and MO and protocols are the type of disaster that we are now seeing in Mozambique [i.e. rapid onset]..." (8A:2)

\textsuperscript{25} The New Humanitarian | Congo aid scam triggers sector-wide alarm visited 20.04.21

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This was echoed by a humanitarian commentator who suggested a lack of incentive to improve accepted models and make them more appropriate for different types of crises. Rather, it is easier to proceed without innovation or change because this might necessitate a change of infrastructure, “...it is much easier to continue with old models because they are the ones that the whole system is built on – grant based models” (6WF: 9).

There are few opportunities for change, partly due to the hierarchical culture within government ministries that takes its cues from ministers rather than directly from those it serves. Change can be ad hoc rather than systematic. A donor official explained that this can be a problem since change is not necessarily positive when it comes from the top:

“There is quite a lot of conservatism in the way the [ministry] operates. There are limited opportunities for new ways to finance except when there are changes of government or ministers where they have their own ideas or they are open to hearing the views of others, because there is a perceived opportunity for change. Sometimes things are swept away in favour of things that are less good” (GP2:7).

A rigid organisational structure can also prevent change and innovation and especially the sharing of ideas between teams focussed on different aspects of international development. Hard boundaries are perceived to exist around different teams responsible for development or humanitarian crises, so even when innovation occurs it does not necessarily influence other departments. One donor official reported that a particular flexible funding mechanism was not used by the humanitarian team despite being appropriate to the fluid nature of humanitarian crises. This flexible funding mechanism is

“typically applied to the development funds that the agency has. Our funding is by design crisis funding so the [flexible mechanisms] don’t come into play that much. They are handled by development colleagues” (8A: 2).

As discussed previously, the lack of evaluation of different funding mechanisms may also prevent useful mechanisms being applied to different contexts. This issue is revisited in the following chapter on longer term funding. Furthermore, when high profile crises become protracted, they are often afforded dedicated teams and budgets, with little need to liaise with others. One donor official commented that "Protracted Crises have their own funded programs. They are essentially like departments" (22U:2).
More broadly, liaison between financial and humanitarian teams appears to be lacking. The mechanics for disbursing funds can directly shape administrative processes with no reference to the context of a crises. One donor adviser was asked why one funding mechanism limited grants to three months rather than six or twelve, which might be more appropriate in the immediate aftermath of a crises. Rather than this restriction being based on experience of operations in the field, the three months is generated by the time taken to have budget requests approved for longer term grants.

"Three months was probably decided internally here because it has to be long enough to process all this... first we collect the needs from the [technical team], then we go to [the] budget, they have to request from the other [team] where they have other needs before they decide, it has to come back. Then they have to go to the accounting system to put the money on our budget line. So, we say that three months is what has been decided internally" (4Y:4)

While the funding mechanism in question fills this gap, there is then no guarantee for the partner to receive the long-term funding. A further bidding process is required. Similarly, a grant manager for a different mechanism commented that the spend window for the grants disbursed is dictated by administrative timeframes, not the context of the crisis.

"I think the forty-five day window was actually part of the average time that other funding needs to reach the organisation. [Other mechanisms] might need forty-five days or two months for the funding to actually reach and for the organisations to be able to respond. So initially in the design phase of the [mechanism] that was the most important factor" (8E:3)

In addition to the influence of financial administration over the shape of grants, the culture of quantitative measurement was also mentioned as a driver, and in particular its role in how donors and their implementing partners communicate their actions to the public. One humanitarian practitioner stated that “More practically speaking the humanitarian world is still 99% focussed on outputs. It is still the overwhelming way in which public communication is conducted” (22M:6). Switching from measuring impact and outcomes, to outputs and results has changed the relationship between donors and their implementing partners (Valters & Whitty, 2017). One donor official described how ‘results’ culture has changed the success for donors to a more rigid form of measurement.

"when you switch from this support base or input base to this result base [...] this would put more responsibility on our operational colleagues and not on Finance defacto, because now it’s a bit on
Finance to check the accounts and the auditing system, [...] but now the operational colleagues will have to verify that the result is there, and if the result is there it is no problem but the difficulty would start if they achieved the result but not fully, and not fully, is a very kind of subjective estimate” (4Y: 7).

The more simplistic and rigid the measure, the less ability a donor has to deal with change.

Donor capacity in the form of human resources impacts the type of administrative processes a donor favours, and these administrative processes determined the type of grants donors prefer to award. Any changes in administration processes are not necessarily followed up with the capacity to facilitate changes. The official noted that this influenced the type of program the donor preferred to fund, because

“the business case environment has made everything too complicated. No one has the capacity to write business cases for small programs. There are too few business cases and too few people to write them” (GP2:3).

This particular donor gradually abandoned a particularly innovative funding mechanism, which allowed for the quick release for rapid response, for over a decade, mainly due to a lack of capacity to implement the bids process or oversee the implementing partners. An adviser for a different donor confirmed that a lack of staff contributed to decisions about which type of funding mechanism to use, explaining: “You can imagine we are chronically short staffed so the decision to adopt a [longer and more flexible grant type] is a pretty serious decision” (8A:3). As reducing the cost of administration has become more important for donors, so this has influenced the way in which grants are disbursed. One humanitarian commentator explained how this has changed in recent years,

“So they may have had lots of different grants in a country before and a lot of different technical grant officers who went out and did the monitoring and worked with the agencies. Now they have one or two really large umbrella grants to two agencies and their administration burden has gone way down because they are shifting the risk to downstream partners” (4L:4).

This indicates that there is a connection between the culture of quantitative measurement, reducing cost and reducing risk for the donor.
5.5.4 Summary of Bureaucratic Rigidity.

Participants stressed that mechanics have influence. They provided examples of where attention to grant compliance is not balanced with flexibility. This reduces the ability of implementing partners to be responsive and the type of implementing partner who can receive funds. The mechanics of a grant can become a driver over and above the agency of those affected by crises. Bureaucracy can also do harm where the administrative burden is too large or inappropriate measures of success are employed.

5.6 Donorship to Enable Flexibility

Despite the restrictions created by layers of different influences, more flexible and responsive donorship would appear possible, at least at a small scale. Flexibility would appear to be most possible when donors work closely with the context and where they develop mechanisms specifically designed to respond to the changes in context.

5.6.1 Responding to the Context

Donorship that is guided by those close to the crisis context is more likely to be responsive and flexible to the lived experience of those affected. Despite the restrictive nature of the mechanics of donorship described above, small moves towards more flexible donorship appear to be happening both at the level of policy and at the level of funding mechanisms. These observations were made by several participants.

One donor official acknowledged that their approaches are changing, they are becoming less rigid and more suited to specific crises contexts. This includes broadening the target population for their grants in order to manage tensions and address wider vulnerabilities. This official gave the example of including host communities as beneficiaries:

"In disaster affected areas we have seen more and more, with our greater emphasis on looking broadly at affected population areas, be they villages or big cities that host communities are often direct or indirect beneficiaries, and recognised as beneficiaries" (8A:1)
The same official also described how several aspects of their approach are changing to address different types of crises such as more protracted conflicts:

"Our timeframes have to be a bit different, skill sets have to be different, it is changing” (8A:2).

Implementing partners expressed appreciation of donors who are field based and have more detailed knowledge of the changing context during a crisis. One humanitarian practitioner commented that these donors

“often have an office on the ground in the country where you are working, they often have technical advisers, who are at least regionally based and their knowledge on the context is usually pretty good” (40:1).

They also described seasonal variations as an example of donors using contextual knowledge and building flexibility around it to respond appropriately. They recounted that:

“...in Malawi [one particular donor] came forward and said they realised the urgency of everyone getting seeds at this moment in time because of the planting season for winter cropping, so we are going to realise some of that money immediately for agriculture, and then for shelter and WASH we will require a fuller proposal. So, they adapted the release of the funds according to the needs, they staggered it, so they can respond to the changing context” (40:1).

Being based closer to the context was flagged as an indicator that donors might place a higher value on assessment information as a driver of humanitarian action. Another humanitarian practitioner explained their positive experience of direct communication with regionally based donor officials:

“Regionally, I can talk directly to a regional representative about what I have seen on a field assessment and they will listen and take that into account. So that’s been good” (38A:6). One donor official also confirmed that having colleagues based in the field supports their job at headquarters where the administration of grants takes place because they provide accountability for any changes that are required.

"[our] network is about 400 people in the field, in all the countries where we are working, and this makes our life here in headquarters easier in a way that if a partner makes a modification
request for the reason of the context and the situation than we can always confirm with our field colleagues” (4Y: 5)

Field based decision making was also mentioned as positive with reference to funding mechanisms. Mechanisms where the allocation of funding is carried out in the field were described by one UN adviser as a way of ensuring that the voices of affected communities are heard.

“pooled funding, either CBPF or CERF, have a very interesting role because they are managed more closely at the country level....The fact that shelter is very important for the people and it is so often underfunded, but CBPF and CERF are much better at recognising this need than other donors, makes me think that these mechanisms work better” (28C:7).

Placing staff in humanitarian crises is valued by their implementing partners and contributes to donors responding flexibility to the crisis context. At the same time, as discussed above, donors are trying to reduce their administration costs, including staffing.

5.6.2 Flexible Mechanisms

Further from the geographical location of a crisis, characteristics of certain funding mechanisms were used as examples of flexible and responsive donorship. One humanitarian practitioner highlighted a donor who uses a particular type of grant agreement that allows for adaptable planning, where

“you don’t sign a contract with them, you have an agreement, so they are open to discussing at any point in the project if you want to adapt something about the project, and it’s not too complex to change because it is only an agreement, not a formal contract” (38A:6).

They also used the UK’s Disaster and Emergencies Committee (DEC) to illustrate a process that ODA donors might adopt, where the funds are allocated before activities are specified. They explained that

“the allocation is still done based on a formula for the NGOs that are on the ground, so you do know how much your allocation is. Then ... you submit a proposal to match kind of that allocation. That’s definitely a more flexible approach” (38A:8).

Other participants valued the ability to call on contingency funds to address unexpected changes in the crisis context, for instance moving programming from one geographical area to another. They explained that

“There are a few situations where I have found [one particular donor] to be quite adaptive to changing situations, not to say others don’t do it, but in terms of adapting any existing cash
programs they’ve got a modifier to move the cash programming to the area where the disaster has hit. I’ve seen them do that a couple of times” (4O:2).

An official for a different donor described their mechanism for addressing changes at the global level over the course of the year. In addition to their initial budget, they have

“extra budget ... which is the [...] reserve for unforeseen situations [...] The further you go during the year, if there has been no new earthquakes or natural disasters we can inject this [...] into our usual way of working” (4Y:2).

Cash and other financial modalities have become popular with donors for giving affected communities direct agency to choose how to use resources. This is also an interesting modality because it reduces the decision-making role of the implementing partner. One humanitarian commentator confirmed that “Microfinancing, cash and insurance have become more mainstream. Places more responsibility and autonomy on the beneficiary” (6WF:4). One UN official confirmed that

“There is a big push for the use of cash, so donors are more and more prioritising cash as a mechanism to for a large number of sectors, basic needs through cash. That’s more the direction we are going. Not necessarily sectors but this type of delivery mechanism” (28C:7).

A closer look at the use of cash with respect to particular technical sectors, however, reveals some disadvantages with the approach, related to the way that the success of cash programs is measured. One humanitarian practitioner presented the example of the use of cash to address the loss of shelter and settlements, stating that

“There are a lot of tools out there for finding out what happens when you just give people cash and where it goes. It doesn’t help with finding out whether people have a safe roof over their heads” (22M:15).

In other words, the success with respect to cash programming is often measured in terms of agency, but not necessarily the level of recovery or security that a household benefits from as a result. The humanitarian practitioner explained further: “Success no longer looks like everybody under a roof, success looks like everybody using resources for their own needs, whether that need is a roof or not” (22M:10). There is tension, therefore, between the freedom of households to choose and the responsibility of implementing partners to ensure their situation improves. This illustrates flexibility taken to an extreme, where flexibility as agency becomes the goal over and above recovery from a humanitarian crisis. Households may have agency, but they may not choose to use it to recover.
Donors have a range of different funding instruments available to them, which would suggest a capability to be flexible in terms of different mechanisms. This is not, however, the case. A donor official confirmed that their funding instruments are designed to suit different implementing partners rather than different types of crises, so in reality there is little flexibility to use one rather than another. They explained, "on rapid onset it would be necessary to use all of those instruments. I have never looked at them all and then decided between them which one to use" (22U:2). This means that the shape of funding instruments can be a rigid ‘one size fits all’ rather than tailored to requirements in different contexts and technical sectors such as shelter and settlements. A humanitarian practitioner and a humanitarian commentator both expressed concern over the lack of rigour around measuring the success of different funding mechanisms. When asked “Have you ever seen any measure between funding instruments, in terms of one being more successful than another? the humanitarian practitioner answered “No“ (22M: 7), then laughed realising that it is strange that such a study would not be a matter of course. The GHD has in fact carried out at least one review comparing the suitability of different instruments to different contexts (Stoddard, 2017), but the practice of evaluation and learning around funding instruments is not widespread or publicised within donorship. This contributes to the invisibility of donorship as a practice, where the success of donorship tends to be based on measuring the programming work of donor implementing partners. The commentator echoed this concern, stating that “…much research is not related to the effectiveness of different funding mechanisms and there is a problem there” (6WF: 9).

5.6.3 Summary of Donorship to Enable Flexibility.

The examples above demonstrate that where donor staff have closer proximity to those affected, this can improve responsiveness to context. Even where proximity to those affected may not be possible, flexible mechanisms can also enable responsiveness. Participants suggested this works best where mechanics are balanced against the need for adaptable programming and flexibility is not taken to an extreme but tempered with humanitarian goals.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented analysis of flexibility in humanitarian funding as experienced by both donors and their implementing partners. Each section highlighted the different influences on the ability of donors and their implementing partners to be flexible to the priorities of those affected by crises.
table below, in Figure 11, briefly summarises the findings from each section above. Concluding remarks follow this table, in answer to the question of what influences donors in their humanitarian funding decisions and the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Donorship and Flexibility</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Limits of Flexible Donorship.</strong></td>
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Figure 12: Table of findings concerning Donorship and Flexibility.
Flexibility is not only valuable but also necessary for the recovery attempts of those who have lost their shelter and settlements. To ensure the agency of those affected by crises, they must take the lead. Flexibility is essential for resources to be aligned with their lead over time because the context of humanitarian crises is regularly fluid and changing, with priorities shifting. While donor territories of ‘humanitarian’ laid out in their policies may encompass the principles required to navigate change, the way in which donors mediate their resources are more rigid. The impact of donor policy about humanitarian assistance on mediation is not as strong as the impact of mediation on humanitarian assistance. There is at present not enough flexibility in humanitarian donorship, and not enough attention paid to how to account for more flexible approaches.

The mechanics employed by donors to mediate their resources inside their humanitarian territories contribute to the rigidity of donorship to the extent that a gap between policy aspirations and humanitarian outcomes has formed. This rigidity results from a combination of a perception that the financial, legal and risk management aspects of mediation are rigid alongside a lack of opportunities within donor institutions to create change. The resulting rigidity of funding mechanics reduces opportunities for the voices of those affected by crises to be heard and for the inclusion of local actors with capabilities to respond to the context to receiving resources. An emphasis on quantitative measurement was found to encourage the disconnect between the aspirations of policy for flexibility and more rigid approaches to implementation. Mediating the implementation of policy aspirations was found to be a disconnected process where measures of success do not necessarily match policy principles. Territories set up in donor policies do not always match those used in the adjudication of implementation by partners.

Donors are challenged to balance the positive and negative effects of working flexibly. As resource providers donors themselves have power and influence to be responsive, and the way in which they subjectivise a range of different implementing partners provides them with some flexibility. The complexity created by this flexibility for donors, however, can create rigidity for implementing partners because the multiplicity of transactions is a draw on resources and time. In addition, the way in which donors work inside the same territories as other donors can create coordination to create predictability. At the same time drivers such as political opportunity and allegiances can counter this, bringing further rigidity.

Knowledge about the specific context of a humanitarian crisis and influencing funding mechanisms that better respond to change was found to counteract rigidity. Flexibility to support the recovery of shelter and settlements may be influenced by political sensitivities, especially due to land disputes,
burden on local services and the size and consequent visibility of shelters and settlements. For this reason, flexibility is most possible when donors work closely with the context and where they develop mechanisms specifically designed to respond to changes in context. Funding for the support of the recovery of shelter and settlements can benefit in this respect, since the suffering of households may be clearer to those making funding decisions close to the crises, offsetting the general principle that shelter and settlements has a high cost. For those attempting to recover their shelter and settlements, flexibility is also necessary to accommodate commercial or political challenges of the crisis context, such as the price increases of materials or changes in national government policy.
Chapter 6: The Longer Term for Humanitarian Donorship

6.1 Introduction

One of the most solid boundaries around donorship which limits flexibility is the short length of the spending window for the grants which donors make available. The following chapter focuses on the importance of a longer-term perspective in humanitarian donorship. Conceptualisation of the longer-term is analysed, as a further indicator of alignment between donorship and the recovery attempts of those affected by crises. It explores how donors resource support to the longer-term recovery efforts of those affected by crises and why mediating in this space can be challenging for donors.

This chapter presents original analysis of primary data gathered from key informant interviews (KII)s. Participants included the staff of humanitarian teams in government donor agencies, humanitarian teams in International Non-Governmental Organisations and United Nations agencies, plus commentators on the humanitarian system from think tanks on international development. The analysis of these interviews builds on the picture of the humanitarian system set up in the previous chapters on secondary and primary sources, by contributing answers to the research questions:

1. What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

3. What is the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

The chapter is divided into six sections, comprising five sections of analysis plus the conclusion. Analysis of the primary data saw the concept of ‘the longer-term’, which was identified as an important policy outcome in Chapter Four, become the key characteristic in the alignment of ODA with the lived experience of those affected by crises. The first two sections therefore analyse first, why the longer term is an important concept in humanitarian crises and, second, how donors understand the longer term. The next section explains the fruits of short termism in donorship, where the longer term is under resourced. This is followed by analysis of participants’ reflections on the current state of multi-year humanitarian funding. The next section focuses on some of the reasons provided by
donors to account for short termism. Finally, the conclusion draws together the layers of influence on longer term donorship, with reference to Miller and Powers four roles of accounting.

6.2 The Longer Term in Humanitarian Crises

This section explores the longer-term as a key indicator of donorship that aligns with the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises. It explains why funding for the longer-term is important in humanitarian crises and why this presents a challenge to both donors and their implementing partners in relation to the agency of those affected by crises.

6.2.1 Why is Funding for the Long-Term Important?

Humanitarian crises which see the involvement of donor states are by definition large scale, and those affected by such crises are consequently affected for a long time. As we saw in chapter two, recent research by Platt (2017), and Devicter and Do (2016) present evidence that it is often several years before security, dignity and sustainability can be restored in countries affected by humanitarian crises. Platt’s study on factors affecting the speed and quality of post disaster recovery and resilience analyses this process for cities affected by earthquakes where over 25,000 people were displaced (Platt, 2018). Of the ten cities in Platt’s study, in both high and low-income countries, the most common period of recovery from an earthquake was five years, and the mean average was eight years. Similarly, Devicter and Do studied refugees of concern to UNHCR from 173 countries and found that:

“people who were refugees at the end of 2015 have been in exile for an average duration of 10.3 years and a median duration of 4 years; the average duration of exile has varied between 10 and 15 years since the late 1990s” (Devictor & Do, 2016: para 1).

The lived experience of the journey towards security, dignity and sustainability most often continues for several years. Resourcing support for this journey is accordingly a long-term endeavour. For those recovering or stabilising their shelter and settlements in a humanitarian crisis, the longer term is an important lens, due to the time required to re-establish a home. Recovery can include returning from displacement or rebuilding a damaged property or infrastructure, and often involves both. One implication of the trajectory of recovering or stabilising a home is that action or inaction in the early days of a crisis can have long lasting consequences in the future, including opportunities for reducing future risks as set out in Chapter Two (ievers & Bhatia, 2011; Leon, Kelman, Kennedy, & Ashmore, 2009; Peters et al., 2020). This can be illustrated with the following example from a humanitarian
practitioner who responded to the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010. Very quickly after the earthquake, markets were re-established and households began to buy materials to rebuild their homes, such as rebar. Rebars are the steel re-enforcement bars necessary to strengthen concrete, and in this case in the concrete structural frames for houses and apartment blocks. Meanwhile, the international humanitarian community, primarily focussed on immediate needs and ‘lifesaving’, was procuring tents. While some households needed a tent, others were ready to reconstruct immediately, but donors were not generally supporting this. In this example the local context raced ahead of international donors’ understanding of an ‘emergency phase’ and began to impact households’ longer-term resilience. The humanitarian practitioner recounted:

“[a shelter adviser] was on his way from Leogane to Carrefour and saw one of these recovered rebar shops and was just appalled at the fact that the rebar hadn’t been hammered out completely straight, and where it had been it was in ways that had weakened the core strength of the metal bars. There were signs of fatigue as well as the bars being out of true, out of kilter, and when they were putting the armature back on the bars, they were still doing it wrong. But they were doing a roaring trade. And [he] decided that morning he was not going to go to the coordination meeting in Carrefour because he was genuinely so frightened by what he was seeing. He said I can save lives by jumping in and spending two hours at this workshop making sure that at least the armature [is] right. This was in the first two months”

(22M:2).

For donors funding support to those affected by crises, consideration of both short and long-term priorities are therefore, required in parallel. Long enough funding windows are also required to allow for longer term planning and implementation.

6.2.2 The Benefits of Long-Term Funding Windows.

Both implementing partners and donor officials highlighted the benefits of longer-term funding windows in humanitarian crises, where funds may be spent over a longer period of time. While many donors offer funds to respond rapidly to support those affected by humanitarian crises, the windows in which to spend these funds is often very short, for instance a matter of months. The expectation to react quickly is often conflated with the expectation to complete the support activities quickly, despite these being two different goals. The benefits of longer funding windows include flexibility to respond to both short and long-term priorities when they occur at the same time, to be able to build local
capacity and building the resilience to withstand future hazards. Longer funding windows also provide opportunities to plan for the future, use funds strategically and reduce administration.

In addition to disaster contexts, taking the longer-term view may have far reaching benefits for the lives of communities in conflict contexts. A humanitarian practitioner for an international NGO explained that often only short-term lifesaving is prioritised by donors over and above longer-term priorities, despite the potential of longer-term priorities to achieve development gains. They stated:

“So, if I take again the Central African Republic where we work in the south-east where we are responding […]. [Some] funding has to go where there are the most lifesaving needs. But if we were able to support the one community over two to three years over progressive recovery activities they could potentially get back to where they were before the crisis and would avoid them being in a protracted crisis situation, with the caveat that the conditions remain secure, and they don’t get attacked again and have to displace” (38A:6).

A humanitarian commentator concurred and went further to state that different types of funding are required to address different priorities, especially where conflict is protracted. Humanitarian funding tends to be reactive, lacking opportunities to consult communities and plan ahead. They explained:

“Certainly, in protracted crises where you need focussed developmental funding rather than very reactive humanitarian funding. It’s a different style of funding that doesn’t solve the problems in as appropriate way as it could” (6WF:9).

One donor official explained that longer funding windows could also help to ensure a more appropriate pattern of resource flow, to “smooth out peaks and troughs of funding and surge capacity to maintain a longer-term approach and growing expertise” (GP2:4). One effect of resourcing local capacity building would be to enable countries to be less reliant on external support in future. They continued, explaining that a longer funding window

“allows for expanding the capacity of national partners. We have seen it in Mozambique, Albania and the Philippines. National authorities have risen to the challenge and responded better next time round” (GP2:4).
A humanitarian practitioner expanded this to resilience in a wider context, confirming that “For anything where we are talking of building resilience it takes time, so the biggest factor is donors who are willing to give long term funding” (38A:9).

Other humanitarian advisers confirmed that longer funding windows enables a longer-term view which is a benefit when supporting those affected by crises because it allows for plans to be made. For instance, in countries with recurring disasters there can be some familiarity with what is going to happen and who will be involved. One humanitarian practitioner observed that there are ways in which the disbursement of funds over a longer period enables an implementing partner to work more closely with the affected communities because the lead in time tends to be longer, so

“you end up spending more time with the community in assessment and in design in focus group discussion. When you are going for short term grants you don’t have the time to invest in that” (38:A 10).

Another humanitarian practitioner echoed this, based on their experience working in Malawi,

“in April we knew what the plan was until December by then. If it’s a recurring disaster you can foresee what the strategy is quite quickly. It depends on the situation and if you know there are quite well-established development programs that you should be working back towards” (40:3).

In addition to the ability to plan, longer term funding windows provide the opportunity for a discussion with donors about the design of the assistance, to build trust through a closer relationship. Another humanitarian practitioner for an international NGO explained:

"With longer term humanitarian funding there is potentially much more scope for a conversation with the donors […] If you are going to be there for longer-term I think you can have much more nuanced conversations about how much of the support can be cash and how much should be technical support or accompaniment or in-kind support " (420:9)

Practitioners also pointed out that that there is economy of scale in terms of the administration required for shorter or longer-term grants, saying:

“Definitely our preference is for longer-term larger grants, just the opportunity costs. It takes the same amount of time to write a proposal for one month as it does for one and a half to two months, same reporting requirements but you are delivering on a much more significant
program. Then when you get into six-to-ten month large grants it’s a little bit different and usually there is a lot more time invested in those” (38A:8).

Lastly, they pointed out that co-funding is often required for humanitarian funding and that finding co-funding over a longer period of time is easier. They explained that

“co-funding would become less tricky if you have Multi Year Humanitarian Funding (MYHF), and if you know that you have this donor funding for three years, therefore I can match a program to it for the last two years and they can co-fund each other. But if you are only assured of a one year cycle the risk that you have to 30% co-fund with your own funds is very high” (38A:8).

6.2.3 Summary of Why Funding for the Long-Term is Important.
The long term is important to households who have lost their shelter and settlements because recovery, from the individual and household through to community and national experience, occurs over a long period of time. While there are immediate priorities in humanitarian crises, these are often experienced at the same time as priorities which impact sufferers further down the line, and these priorities will also shift over time. For those who suffer, the temporal territory within which their recovery from humanitarian crises occurs is therefore long term. As discussed in the previous chapter regarding flexibility, rather than the lived experience of humanitarian crises being linear, the experience often has overlapping aspects. The readiness of households to prioritise activities that impact the longer term will vary depending on the context of the crisis, so different types of funding may be more or less suitable at different times. Funding in the short term only allows for resourcing of immediate priorities while funding for the longer-term allows for more detailed planning and enables the agency of those affected. Furthermore, early action or inaction can have long lasting effects. The longer term is, therefore, another key characteristic of the experience of those who have lost their shelter and settlements.

6.3 Conceptualising the Longer Term in Humanitarian Donorship.

There is a tension between donor aspirations for longer term goals and their ability and enthusiasm to take on responsibility for longer term goals. This is reflected in the difference in policy goals described in Chapter Four and the length of funding windows available to implementing partners.
described below. This tension results in a confusion among donors about where to place their efforts when both short and long-term priorities overlap, as is common in humanitarian crises. In an attempt to reconcile this tension donors can be seen to create contradictions and restrictions on the type of outputs which they will fund, and they type of reporting they request, and a lack of connectivity and continuity between the funding instruments made available to mediate humanitarian action.

When recovering their shelter and settlements, in either conflict or disasters, communities are often at different stages of crisis, where some are dealing with very immediate needs, and some are ready to focus on longer term goals. It can be unclear who is in the humanitarian ‘phase’ (World Bank, 2014) addressing their short-term priorities, and therefore qualifies for humanitarian funding. Implementing partners reported that donors are often unclear where to focus and there can be a difference of opinion between donors and between implementing partners.

One humanitarian practitioner described a lack of coordination around long and short-term priorities in North Kivu in DRC:

“For example, you have some people in a context that are giving shelter and NFI [non-food items] kits to people who are returning, at the same time you have people distributing the same thing in a camp nearby to people who are displaced. ... sometimes you have different NGOs all doing their own programming all within a geographical area and sometimes it is causing a bit of conflict” (38A:5).

Another humanitarian practitioner described the experience of discussing with donors new funding for cyclone relief in Mozambique, after the initial emergency response grants had been spent. Some communities were yet to receive support as they had been isolated due to flooding, while others had begun to reconstruct their houses.

“I tried to bring up that actually partners were moving into recovery related activities to try to support local building practices and looking a bit more at local markets, we were just having a timber market assessment done at that time. At least from the conversations I had at that time they were not very open to support that kind of projects. They were still looking at continuous emergency support in terms of tarpaulins” (8H2:3).
Where households are ready to focus on longer-term priorities relatively early in a crisis, this can challenge the norms around the use of humanitarian funds, which tend to be restricted inside short-term boundaries. For those who are ready to recover their shelter and settlements, this is often seen as outside the boundary of humanitarian action. In some cases, even the type of outputs funded by donors are affected by this boundary and need to be modified in order to fit within the boundary of what is understood as ‘humanitarian’. For instance, one UN official described an experience in Indonesia after the 2004 tsunami where humanitarian funding was high at the same time as housing reconstruction was a high priority. Some donors specified less ‘permanent’ construction types to justify funding them with humanitarian budgets originally intended for lifesaving activities.

“We were building houses in a certain way and other colleagues funded by [another donor] were building in a different way and I was wondering “Why are you building like this?” “Because our donor only accepts semi-permanent houses, so they have to build in this particular way”. Basically, half of the house had to be made of timber which was giving them a lot of headaches logistically. It was not what the people preferred [...] At that time semi-permanent was perceived as ‘emergency response’ and they had to be within that limit, and they could not do other types of buildings that were more in line with what people wanted” (28C:4)

Other donors simply do not fund construction in humanitarian crises, which means that if the immediate priority for those affected is rebuilding a house, they are not supported to do this. In this example provided by a humanitarian practitioner, the priorities of those affected by crises are subordinated to the boundary set around humanitarian funding.

“For me the bigger thing particularly with [a specific donor] is actually their restriction on construction, and I think that relates a little bit to what you are saying in terms of sustainable long-term support. Digging a bore hole and constructing a water point or rehabilitating a health centre, or whatever, whether you do it in a humanitarian context or development context actually doesn’t make a difference. You are still putting something in place that is going to remain for a long time” (38A:3).

Even where donors allow the use of humanitarian grants for construction, the length of the funding window restricts the activities that can be completed within that time period. Another humanitarian practitioner explained:
"The short-term funding cycle means you are quite limited in how you can optimise the support you are giving to people to make it suitable to the context. We know that in shelter good training and technical support could be the most effective way of helping people but on a twelve-month timeframe often that’s just limited to giving people handouts and a briefing at a distribution, you know, you don’t really get into behaviour change or anything like that" (420:9).

6.3.1 Fluid Understandings

Both donor officials and humanitarian practitioners confirmed that donors appreciate and aspire to longer term outcomes such as building capacity, resilience and sustainability, even if the mechanics of their funding does not reflect this. As discussed in Chapter Four, long-term outcomes, such as resilience, capacity building and sustainability, are often included in their humanitarian policies. One humanitarian partner confirmed that donor teams disbursing humanitarian funding often discuss how a humanitarian intervention will fit into longer term activities and priorities. They described their experience in Malawi:

“[The donor] particularly wanted to see how our humanitarian intervention was going to link in to benefit or work with the communities where we had just been doing a project […] looking at livelihoods and irrigation and agriculture, Village Savings and Loans Associations. They were particularly intrigued to learn about the connection between the two” (40:4).

Between participants, however, the boundary around the understanding of humanitarian responsibilities appears to be elastic, without a shared understanding of how it links to the long-term. One donor official described the trigger to disengage from those affected by crises. Due to the boundary set around humanitarian teams, their goal is generally to withdraw, not necessarily to accompany the process of recovery or stabilisation to its natural end:

"If we hit 95% of the identified need and people are somewhat settled, then maybe it is time for us as [the humanitarian team] to withdraw […]. The big thing is “When are we done?” That’s always a question that comes up, particularly in these longer events. Obviously, we don’t have a crystal ball" (8A:4).
One humanitarian practitioner described a different version of the humanitarian measure of success as more open ended, based on the answer to the question: “Do we think we need to come back here again? And if we think we will need to come back here again, why and what could we have done to reduce that?” (22M:6). Another donor official explained that the humanitarian boundary is not even understood in the same way between humanitarian crises, for instance between protracted conflict and disasters, because the two situations are conceptualised differently. They attributed this to an unspoken norm where “We view conflict as continuous, and disasters as finite” (22U).

Another humanitarian practitioner concurred that donors responsible for humanitarian funding appreciate and request longer term outcomes, but they do not always understand longer term outcomes as their responsibility. One donor official reflected on their expectation that the ‘development community’ is responsible for longer term funding, and should therefore fund recovery and reconstruction during humanitarian crises:

"I think the development community writ large have done a fairly poor job at looking at recovery and reconstruction issues and funding against those identified needs [...] The questions is, who wants to assume the responsibility?" (8A:4).

Some donors do, however, understand longer term outcomes to be the responsibility of their implementing partners, but without taking responsibility to fund them beyond an initial short-term grant. A humanitarian practitioner explained:

“My experience in general is that donors are very results oriented, that they would like to see longer term impact. That is my experience, but I could be wrong. In a number of places, the question donors have is “We give you this but what happens after, what happens next?” (28C: 6).

They described the expectation from humanitarian donors that implementing partners will have access to other funds to enable them to link up a humanitarian intervention with activities in the longer term. A donor official confirmed this, framing their approach in terms of ‘vulnerability’ as a separate outcome from ‘recovery':
“Not sure how mindful [a particular donor] is of that continuity actually. We would probably be more interested in vulnerability than recovery agendas. It’s not that we are cruel and heartless, it’s just not really our business to ensure that an NGO has a financial stability strategy” (14C:8).

Another donor official captured the paradox of long-term aspirations for humanitarian teams with a short-term remit and short-term funding instruments at their disposal, saying “We will sign up to resilience and longer-term development, do no harm (not to cut across long term development), but we are short term” (22U:3). They reflected with some regret on the fact that donors often engage in humanitarian crises but then leave without engaging in the longer-term: "We are certainly not in it for long enough […] In Orissa after the cyclone we funded solar lighting and water pumps, but it was clear that we were only scratching the surface”(22U:6).

6.3.2Disconnected Funding Instruments

As we saw in the previous chapter, focussed on flexibility, the onus is on the implementing partner to knit funds together to resource support to those affected by crises. One donor official described their approach to linking up different resources for different types of work with the same implementing partners, particularly in protracted crises:

"Working with the same organisations doing relatively similar work in the same places, it does not make sense to have different parts of the house here interacting separately with organisations. From a development effectiveness perspective for sure the distinction between the chronic humanitarian and long-term development really does not make much sense in most of the countries where these things are being implemented" (28M:5).

This approach appears to be the exception rather than the rule. For the most part, implementing partners reported that while donors are keen to address longer term outcomes, humanitarian funds are generally short term, and even funds from the same donor are rarely formally connected.

Participants working for donors and implementing partners alike acknowledged that, by comparison with the time periods outlined above (Devictor & Do, 2016; Platt, 2018), the initial funding provided in humanitarian crises is most often short term (DFID, 2018; USAID, 2018). It is often only available for a portion of the lived experience of those affected by crises, for instance between three and twelve
One donor official described the evidence they had seen, over their years of managing humanitarian grant contracts, that humanitarian assistance is commonly required for a longer period than traditional humanitarian grants will cover. They confirmed that this demonstrates that those affected by crises usually take several years to recover or stabilise as a rule, stating:

"Now we know from our perspective 75% of the contracts are like follow up contracts, so it means that the crises are not six months, or one year or two-year crises. Some crises are there forever, for twenty years sometimes. [...] in reality we do actually deliver humanitarian aid for ten years in some places non-stop" (4Y:7).

One practitioner commented that the EU and ECHO have begun to coordinate internally to create continuity around the Nexus (Poole & Culbert, 2019), but other donors have yet to follow this example:

“... I think ECHO and EU are trying to do this with the Nexus approach and we do see some evidence of that in the Sahel and Chad which used to be an area where ECHO funded clearly the EU is coming in with potential funding for it, but both ECHO and EU make decisions around that funding. I think that is being tried, that’s an interesting approach. I don’t see [other donors] doing it the same way” (38A:6).

Not only are humanitarian grants short-term they are rarely formally connected to different types of longer-term funding. One donor official lamented that “Short termism is not justified unless there is a relay” (GP2:4), meaning a relay between different grants and donors to more fully the recovery priorities of those affected by crises. One practitioner commented that “There is an interest to see how things link up more”, but when asked “Do the funding instruments link up?” their answer was immediately “No (laughs)” (4O:4). Another donor official reflected that donorship has somehow become disconnected with those affected by crises, describing the collection of available funding instruments as "... a reaction to an ecosystem that is evolving and is no longer getting it right, no longer delivering aid to the right people” (14C:9). As discussed in the previous chapter, the short length of some funding windows is driven by other agendas, and in some cases generated by the restrictions around the financial administration rather than the context of the crises (4Y, 8E).

Where donors do allow humanitarian funding to be used to support longer term outcomes, reporting on those outcomes can also prove complex. One humanitarian practitioner described how their organisation was awarded humanitarian funding annually for the same crisis several years in a row, because there was no link between that donor’s humanitarian and development budgets and at
that point there was no mechanism for resourcing an understanding of humanitarian crises as multi-year.

“Is there a way for [their humanitarian budget] to automatically at some point link up with [their development budget] to transition that project into a longer-term project, rather than each year the country office having to think of something new and snazzy to write into a project when it is actually working really well. Why do we need to keep reinventing the wheel if we can see really good outputs from what we are doing? We actually just need a bit of longevity to scale it up.” (4O:8)

Since the funding came from the humanitarian budget each year, they had to report justifying their activities against the measure of ‘lifesaving’. They explained that both donor officials and implementing partner staff knew the link between the activities was tenuous, but that the approach was required to justify the funds. They recounted:

“I remember writing that if we assist the Syrian refugees in Lebanon with housing then that will stop people becoming homeless and leaving on boats to Greece and drowning in the sea to justify how it was lifesaving [laughs]. But you do find yourself playing the game” (4O:8).

They continued, highlighting that one disadvantage of exaggerating this link was to undermine the dignity of those affected, saying “We need to paint the situation as desperate to get this funding, and it is desperate, but we can write about it in a more dignified way” (4O:8).

Another practitioner explained that, related to the concept of ‘lifesaving’ the concept of ‘most vulnerable’ also becomes difficult to operationalise over a period of time as households start to recover and stabilise.

“Starting from the bottom, those most in need should benefit the most, and that’s what the appeals adverts say, not to mention the sections in every donor proposal which discusses vulnerability criteria and how you weigh vulnerability and things like that. The first counter argument would be yes, but although there needs to be some individual lifesaving attention at the household level, in terms of sustainability should the benefit in the first instance be more diffuse towards community-based approaches, settlements approaches, where everybody is protected by the next flooding” (22M:1).
This highlights a tension between saving life and reducing risk; between immediate priorities and longer-term priorities, the trajectories for the support required for these and their value to donors themselves. Within the boundary of ‘humanitarian’ donors value publicising their aspirations to longer term outcomes and development gains at policy level, while shorter-term priorities appear to be more valuable in their retrospective reporting.

6.3.3 Summary of Conceptualising the Longer Term in Humanitarian Donorship.

While donors responsible for humanitarian funding appreciate and aspire to longer term outcomes, they do not always see longer term outcomes as their responsibility. Their conceptual boundary around humanitarian action is often small, especially when translated through budgets and measures of success. This restricts the ability of those donor officials in humanitarian teams to directly address longer-term outcomes. At present there also appears to be an organisational, financial and temporal split of responsibilities for the concepts of humanitarian and longer-term. This can result in implementing partners squeezing humanitarian support into rigid timeframes and static concepts that neither reflect nor dignify the nature of the lived experience of those affected by crises. The results of resourcing a long-term situation with short term funding are far reaching. While short term funding can address immediate needs, there can also be parallel needs in the immediate term that impact on the longer term, but these can be missed.

6.4 The Fruits of Short Termism.

Short term donorship in humanitarian crises has a range of negative effects on those affected by crises and the implementing partners who attempt to support them. Short termism creates an imbalance in the availability of funds, especially after rapid onset crises where there is often an early funding surge. This can be followed by a gap in funding and a lack of continuity between donors and their implementing partners. The availability of funding can become more unpredictable over time and this influences how implementing partners use the funds they have and how they work with affected communities. Most importantly, short termism can undermine development gains.

6.4.1 Funding Surge

As we saw above, a common result of the short-term focus of humanitarian funding is a surge in funds in the immediate aftermath of crises, following by a sharp drop off in funds in the next six months to a year. The following figure 12 (a repeat of figure 9) shows the funding windows of grants awarded to
one INGO to support the recovery of shelter and settlements following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, typical of large disasters. The INGO secured grants from seven different donors in the initial funding surge within the first three months. Five of these, however, had to be spent within the first nine months and after a year only three grants were still live.

![Figure 12](a repeat of Figure 9 above): Grants awarded to an INGO to support the recovery of shelter and settlements following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal (Ashmore, 2016: p7).

At a time when practitioners emphasised the importance of engaging well with those affected by crises, one humanitarian practitioner described the reality of securing resources at this time:

“So, I think there is a lot of panic at the beginning in just throwing proposals off to government to try and secure funding before there is a really solid strategic plan or a longer-term recovery plan” (40:3).

One reason that implementing partners value securing funds in an initial funding round is because the availability of funds can quickly reduce, as seen above. Another reason is that securing funds early on enables implementing partners to demonstrate their capabilities to donors if further funds do become available. One humanitarian practitioner described this process:
“So, I guess in very changing, rapid onset emergencies, smaller grants and shorter grants are easier because you can get in there and start the work and then look for longer term funding, and respond to immediate needs, so it could potentially be more flexible” (38A:8).

One donor official confirmed that they recognised this use of short-term humanitarian funding, commenting that "It helps them to kick start programs to establish themselves… I suppose once they have done that it helps them to approach other donors for larger amounts of money for longer term interventions" (28M:5). Another humanitarian practitioner explained further how funding could be managed in a different way that would more effectively resource the ongoing crisis over a longer period of time.

“If there was a way of staggering that money but putting people’s minds at ease that that money will come, that they will only spend 50% of what they want to commit at the beginning and then 25% of it later and then 25% of it later or something like that, or even the other way round, so like 25% first and then build up. But that was an agreement and you would know there would be further windows, so that would put everyone’s mind at ease and it would probably reduce the competitiveness between NGOs” (4O:3).

They suggested that this initial surge in funds, coupled with a lack of predictability of further funding and, as a result, the lack of ability to plan ahead, influences the way in which implementing partners fundraise and manage their grants.

### 6.4.2 Gaps

Participants reported that critical gaps often appear after the initial disbursement of humanitarian funds. While this happens in different ways in conflict contexts and after disasters, the cause appears to be the same limited humanitarian boundary set around the initial funding. One humanitarian practitioner illustrated this issue with their description of the pattern of funding for two cyclones, Idai and then Kenneth, in Mozambique in 2019. They described speaking to donors at this time who were waiting to see both the updated Humanitarian Response Plan and the long-term recovery strategy, and the challenges of supporting communities who were at different stages of recovery:

“14th March 2019 the cyclone hit. Kenneth was five weeks later in April […] They were all waiting and hesitating, and nothing was clear really, rather looking at the longer term than
supporting the immediate humanitarian. [...] only when the long-term strategy was published, even then it became clear the funding for the strategy wasn’t going to be available until the end of the year, rather beginning of 2020. That basically produced a funding gap from July until the end of the year, so half a year’s funding gap” (RH2:3).

In this case, the result was that by the time funding was approved, there were few implementing partners to fund because, over the preceding six months, they had run out of funds to keep responding to the crisis.

“Partners at that time had really started to run out of funds and agencies were leaving. In July we were down to eleven partners, in August it was only eight. They were just simply running out of funds and couldn’t continue and then the Humanitarian Response Plan was not fast enough to bring back those funds to allow them to continue working. In September I saw the dashboard and they only had five partners left with funds to continue working” (RH2:3).

Another humanitarian practitioner confirmed that these types of gaps also occur in conflict contexts as humanitarian funding runs out and is discontinued.

“Any NGO you speak to has had to reduce, pull out, change programming and the needs are obviously still high. The same cycle happened in 2008ish and it led to another cycle of conflict. I think you see it in DRC to some extent as well a lot of NGOs scaling down. It just leads to kind of very piecemeal programming” (38A:4)

A humanitarian commentator commented that in a conflict context this can also be due to the disconnect between the concept of humanitarian and the longer term at a system-wide level. Lines are drawn between responsibilities for humanitarian and development priorities, preventing a holistic view.

“After conflict there is a gap after humanitarians have left and the development money has not come in. Although the needs are still the same, the system is looking at it differently, and it’s not looking at it as a humanitarian problem solely and it’s certainly not looking at it holistically” (6WF:4).
They explained that this is partly a result of organisational boundaries around humanitarian and development teams, and expectations for the edges of their remit.

“It has been hard for humanitarians to get development folk involved because it’s outside the experience and the comfort zone of people who work on development. There’s not that many people who work in fragile contexts” (6WF:4).

A further result of these boundaries and the gaps between them is to skew the picture of funding availability. We saw in chapter 4 that funding provided in response to UN humanitarian appeals has been used as a proxy indicator for the global level of humanitarian need, and as a lever to advocate for more humanitarian funding. One humanitarian commentator made the point that some needs in crises align better with other funding types, such as development funding, and that if development funding could be leveraged the availability of funding might look more positive. They explained:

“If you look at the availability of funding, there may well be enough money is out there but it’s just in the wrong places.... actually, if you measure it differently with a more holistic view there may be slightly more money than we thought, it’s just not necessarily in the right places” (6WF:4).

In addition, since the processes for securing and reporting on humanitarian funds tend to be simpler and quicker than those for development funds, organisations may be disposed to describe their work as humanitarian assistance in situations where more humanitarian funding is available. In this way, rigidity around the territory of ‘humanitarian’ creates both empirical gaps in the continuity of funding and perceived gaps in quantity of funding.

6.4.3 Predictability and Continuity

Both the actuality of funding gaps and the expectation of these gaps affect the way in which implementing partners plan their support to those affected by crises. One humanitarian practitioner commented that in the Central African Republic (CAR) the expectation gaps undermined their ability to make commitments beyond the first grants they received, explaining that:
“it makes it quite difficult to strategically say ok we are going to support this community with this intervention and then follow on nine months with something else because you are not sure of when that funding is going to come in” (38A: 4).

Instead, they described their reality as a series of short-term responses that did not allow them to build up ongoing relationships with communities, but repeatedly ended in a lack of resources. They reflected:

“It would require donors not to say that “Our funding is limited, you must focus on lifesaving”, because if we keep focussing just on lifesaving you end up running around to the hot spots, responding to those hotspots and then leaving those communities, pulling out because there is not more funding and not really helping them recover. We are not really linking relief to development very well in those contexts unless you can get another donor to strategically come in and fund behind it” (38A:6).

One UN official described how the expectation of gaps dissuaded implementing partners from investing in a longer-term engagement in a crisis. They emphasised the importance of predictability alongside speed explaining,

“my concern is that even if they are fast at releasing the funds.... I am not sure...things are happening better. For me there is a key - the lack of predictability from the donors. .... What’s the point of building up this big response mechanism if we know that funds are not going to be coming later and we are not going to be able to sustain it [...] So, we don’t scale up enough because we know that whatever is built there will not be sustainable” (28C:1).

They went on to suggest that the lack of continuity reduces the quality of humanitarian action and that this is politically driven. They explained:

“We end up with suboptimal responses from the beginning because we know that funds will not come because it’s not based on needs, but there are so many other political considerations” (28C:1).

Where donorship has a short-term focus, therefore, this approach influences both the expectations and ability of implementing partners to address the longer term lived experience of those affected by crises. It also undermines trust in the commitment of donors to follow through on their longer-term policy aspirations.
6.4.4 Erosion of Development Gains

The limiting boundary around ‘humanitarian’ limits both donors and implementing partner aspirations to respond to the longer-term context. Implementing partners explained that this balancing process restricts their ability to aim for sustainability, even if that is what a donor also wants. This is particularly the case for supporting households to recover and stabilise their shelter and settlements, where emergency shelter solutions such as tents and plastic sheeting are not, and are never intended to be, sustainable. One practitioner discussed a particular donor and their specific policy restrictions:

“So, to me a huge limitation of [a particular donor], where I find a little bit of tension, is that you want to do things that are sustainable that will have a long-term impact and remain but their restrictions on construction and also their restrictions on responding only to displaced people, are sometimes at odds with your desire to make something more sustainable ... So those kinds of restrictions by donors are not helpful in terms of adapting to the context” (38A:3).

In the worst cases participants reported that failing to foresee the longer-term implications of humanitarian crises could create new problems and even reverse development gains. For example, one humanitarian commentator explained that while there was a good response to the 2016 flood in Nepal, “if you don’t have a good livelihoods response to follow it up... rice fields were covered in silt so a year later they can’t plant or harvest, so they take on debt” (6WF:11). A humanitarian practitioner explained what happened in the longer term in conflict contexts such as DRC and CAR, as a result of focussing humanitarian funds on ‘lifesaving’. Communities reversed course and became vulnerable once again:

“What we see is communities slipping backwards, communities that are on the path to recovery slip backwards and are open again to more conflict, there are fewer programs and there is less funding and less job opportunities for people and they end up kind of reversing course. It’s all over CAR really” (38A:4).

These examples suggest that longer windows for humanitarian funding, longer term planning and more predictability could increase development gains, rather than more funding for humanitarian crises detracting from development.

6.4.5 Summary of the Fruits of Short Termism.

Short termism creates misalignment between the recovery attempts of those affected by crises and the resources provided to support that experience. Short term funding causes specific patterns in resource availability, putting pressure on implementing partners to secure funds during the early
surge early and then manage the lack of predictability that follows. The lack of connection between different funding instruments and understandings of the purpose of humanitarian funds can result in gaps in resources for long periods of time. These gaps in connection result in lost opportunities to support the agency of those affected and a loss of development gains. The resulting lack of continuity has a negative impact on communities and their journey towards recovery and stability.

6.5 Towards Multi Year Humanitarian Funding

We saw in Chapter Four that Multi Year Humanitarian Funding (MYHF) is a key commitment of the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016), a mechanism developed by various donors over the last decade (Levine & Sida, 2019; OCHA, 2017a). The 2019 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report states that most donors understand that “multi-year funding grants were those with a duration of 24 months or more” (Thomas & Urquhart, 2020: p68). MYHF grew out of protracted humanitarian crises, such as the conflicts in Syria and DRC, where donors disbursed funds annually until it became clear the situation would not resolve in the short term. It is important as an instrument for humanitarian donorship because it represents an expansion of the territory around ‘humanitarian’ to include the longer time period associated with recovery. For shelter and settlements in particular, MYHF expands the opportunities for starting recovery earlier and widening the type of support implementing partners can provide. The difficulties faced by donors trying to offer MYHF reveals some of the drivers behind short termism in humanitarian donorship. The concept of the longer-term in humanitarian crises exists in relation to protracted crises but not yet to other contexts, such as disasters, despite evidence of their likely long duration. MYHF is currently awarded where the duration is visible in retrospect. Donors also move out of their comfort zone when MYHF requires taking the risk of raising expectations that later cannot be achieved.

Participants reported their current experience of the availability and practicality of MYHF as an alternative to the unpredictability of shorter-term grants. They reflected that while MYHF is a positive step towards the longer duration and continuity of support, it is not yet mainstream or offered consistently. One humanitarian practitioner explained that the largest donors have not yet worked out how to accommodate multi-year grants. They reported that:
“MYHF is still elusive to some of the bigger donors, I think they are trying to get there. We are very lucky to have Irish Aid to have multiyear humanitarian and even longer development funding, but [other donors] are saying that they will do it, but they are not delivering on that quite yet. I think they are trying to get their mechanisms in place” (38A:2).

This can still cause a lack of predictability in the middle of a crisis because donors aspire to give MYHF, but they are essentially at the pilot stage. They commented that:

“There is talk of MYHF, but both ECHO and OFDA in multiple countries have said to us have said to us “Yes, we are going to give multi-year funding”, and then at a later stage say actually they are not quite ready or “We don’t have the mechanisms in place”, so not to say that we are not getting any but there is more talk than actions on that” (38A:12).

Two donor officials spoke about their existing mechanisms that enable MYHF. One donor official explained a mechanism that allows for an agreement to be signed with an implementing partner for a ‘program’ of up to five years. While this allows for multi-year grants, it is mainly used in circumstances outside of a crisis, or where a crisis has been ongoing for many years. These are not yet used in the earlier stages of a rapid onset crisis, even when it is clear the crisis will not resolve in the short term, and this appears to be the approach taken by several donors. They explained,

"We are using several of them now in Syria. We are also using a five year to do urban Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) work in Latin America, using the neighbourhood approach. We hope to issue [one] soon on some DRR work in the Caribbean as well. It can be a multi-year multi sector targeting program approach. We are seeing more of its use in areas of longer crises” (8A:3).

Another donor official explained their different approach where, rather than drawing up the whole agreement at once, they make a more flexible arrangement with implementing partners. The agreement is currently in a three-year cycle, and likely to move to a five-year cycle soon. One humanitarian practitioner explained that the benefits of this approach include the ability to remain with the same community over a much longer period of time with adaptive planning.

“...our humanitarian funding is now a three-year cycle, and in our five-year cycle of more recovery and development programming. So, you can do a phased approach and you can support the same five thousand households over the five years, and you can say in the first two years this is what we are doing and as people are recovering, we are moving onto this this and this, and that’s what they want to see, and it really encourages potentially really good programming” (38A:6).
The same donor official explained that the boundaries around humanitarian and development funding and teams was becoming less rigid where humanitarian crises were likely to become long term, although the budgets remain separate. They reflected that these boundaries may disappear in future:

"The way we are going for that we may likely just converge completely the humanitarian long term chronic funding with our development funding. They are now pretty much identical in terms of processes and mechanisms. The funding cycles now are aligned so the timing, there is not much between them, but they are still separate, with separate grants contracts for them" (28M:5).

Other donor officials expressed hope that they could modify their financial and legal mechanisms to experiment with MYHF, based what their implementing partners propose.

"It has not been decided from our side. We have left it to the partners to propose the programme. [...] we have not preselected any geographical areas, but I think depending on the partner because they may be present in different areas, if they have a good project, in the sense of program, we might be willing to sign with this partner for this pilot project" (4Y: 9).

While donors and humanitarian practitioners alike hailed MYHF as a promising approach, caution was also sounded. Participants drew a distinction between multi-year funding and multi-year planning, saying that multi-year funding is only valuable where it can be flexible. Flexibility mitigates the risk where a donor or implementing partner commits to something specific early on which later cannot be achieved. A humanitarian practitioner commented that one disadvantage of MYHF is that “How you set your results framework and your expected outcomes in a context, where in theory every year things should be changing, can be quite difficult” (38A:8). Another humanitarian practitioner explained that this risk makes implementing partners reluctant to commit to multi-year grants unless the measures of success are flexible:

“When we are looking at longer term programming in Yemen and Syria that’s more about outcomes. [...] the situation is so volatile that saying at the beginning of a four-year program that you are going to achieve ‘this’ is not something you want to do if you are carrying the financial liability” (42O:5).
MYHF can, therefore, be beneficial if multi-year planning is part of the mechanism and where planning is adaptable to the changing context.

6.5.1 Summary of Multi Year Humanitarian Funding.
Of the largest donors, most are considering how to implement MYHF and some have established mechanisms. The use of MYHF is, however, mostly focussed on protracted crises where annual funding has been previously disbursed for several years. Rapid onset crises, where recovery and stability are likely to take many years to secure, have yet to attract MYHF. While MYHF provides longevity and continuity of funds, flexible planning was identified by participants as critical to the success of longer-term support, in fluid, changing contexts. Rather than being a technical fix, multi-year approaches require an attitude change towards managing risk over longer time periods and measuring success with flexible outcomes.

6.6 Motivations for Short Termism
While consideration of the long term holds benefits for those affected by crises, short termism has certain benefits for donors. It is in part this tension that feeds the disconnect between donor humanitarian policy and the mechanics of disbursing humanitarian funds which makes it difficult for donors to align their resources with longer term recovery attempts. Disbursing funds quickly allows donors to gain profile and demonstrate a leadership role in humanitarian crises, and the ability to report results quickly amplifies this. In addition, reducing the time that funds are exposed to risk lowers both the risk and the cost of oversight, and the more predictable the results.

6.6.1 The Relationship Between Risk and the Longer Term
Some donor officials were able to reflect on the reasons why their governments favoured short humanitarian grants and were reluctant to provide longer term funding for rapid onset crises. They suggested several practical and political reasons for the small temporal boundary around humanitarian funding and the reluctance to commit funds for the longer term. One contributing factor may be the perception of financial risk. One donor official explained that donors must balance the disbursement of longer-term grants with increased risk represented by the longer length of time over which something could go wrong. In other words, the longer the time taken to spend the grant the longer finances are exposed to risk. One donor official explained:
"the longer it takes the more risk for our money if at the end we discover that something went wrong and 2 years after that we lost the pre-financing. Obviously, we have monitoring in the field and if we follow up the action closely this should not happen, but you never know. We have some examples recently […] I think that was the balance between flexibility to have enough in case there are projects that take up to two years and our financial risk. That was the compromise I guess" (4Y:8).

The management of financial risk influences the plans made by implementing partners and the grants or contracts they are awarded by donors. Consequently, this influences the type of support they provide to communities and households. One practitioner explained that they manage this risk by committing to measure outputs rather than outcomes:

“You want to put output goals in because outcomes are too risky. It is tending to mean less ambition in the programming about what we are going to achieve, and in a sense less willingness to be held to the actual outcomes we want to be getting at. So that’s the biggest negative thing” (42O:4).

In addition, speed plays a part in the risk taken by a donor. The faster funds are released, the less auditing activity can take place. Most donors prequalify their implementing partners so that auditing can take place before a crisis occurs, but since crises occur in many different counties, there is not always a recent relationship with the relevant country office so further administration is often required. A key term that reoccurred in discussions concerning humanitarian funding was ‘lifesaving’. Many participants stated that, alongside other longer-term outcomes mentioned, one key purpose of humanitarian funds is to ‘save lives’. As mentioned above, humanitarian funding often benefits from a reduced level of financial scrutiny in terms of administrative procedures due to the urgency with which it must be distributed (DFID, 2019; USAID, 2018) (DFID, 2019). ‘Saving lives’ then becomes then a measure of success regularly quoted, both formally and informally, to justify this reduced financial scrutiny. Longer term funding, on the other hand, is not necessarily afforded this reduced scrutiny and consequently light administration, and for this reason some donors are yet to embrace MYHF. One donor official explained,

"[MYHF] makes sense and it’s another option but maybe we are not ready yet with our … parliament because it’s lots of people involved, and everyone would like to know how exactly the money was spent on and how many beneficiaries and how much was costed" (4Y:7).
Beyond the peak of the initial crises, donor capacity to monitor the use of their resources determines the length of humanitarian grants in relation to how long government can remain engaged. Government ministries are often under pressure to reduce their own management costs and consequently have relatively small teams. They do not necessarily have staff to remain engaged in crises for long. One donor official stated,

“We cannot have too long a ‘tail’... [the humanitarian team] has no role where it takes longer. We do the initial heavy lifting, but it takes time to establish staff capacity to deal with longer term crises. We have no capacity to do two years. Recovery is the sort of thing you could do if you were there for two years” (22U: 3 and 6).

Yet another said, “You can imagine we are chronically short staffed so the decision to adopt [long term grant] is a pretty serious decision” (8A:3). This has a direct impact on the length of grants. For instance, a year-long grant will cost a donor twice as much in staffing than a six-month grant for the same amount of funding. For donors who are increasingly under pressure to reduce overheads, shorter grants are far more attractive. One further benefit of shorter grants is that donors can report more quickly that they have disbursed a large amount of funds.

There is also a risk to donors of not acting quickly enough, because the opportunity for profile is then lost. Governments are under public scrutiny for a relatively finite amount of time in the immediate crisis while there is media interest, and public scrutiny drives speed to act. Speed is therefore understood by governments to bring profile, for both the national government affected and by donor states. One humanitarian practitioner illustrated this point with a reflection on the 2015 earthquake in Nepal:

“There is the impression that the largest influx of funding will come at the beginning of a disaster because not only are there pressures on governments to show they are supporting that country, so that might be political, if that disaster is particularly visible on the news in their nation so they need to show that they are responding to it. We also know the public will be donating more money in appeals at that point” (40:3).

As public scrutiny drops away, this political incentive drops away and with it the urgency to resource for the longer term.
6.6.2 Summary of Motivations for Short Termism

Short termism is one way that donors manage risk. The longer the length of time funds are disbursed, the longer the exposure to risk. Humanitarian funds, and especially for rapid response, are often required quickly with the goal of saving lives. This urgency influences the number of checks that can be done before funds are disbursed. The length of the grant is also influenced by the speed with which it is disbursed. Managing risk also costs. Donors who are under pressure to reduce overheads are reluctant to fund for longer periods of time which will draw on their own scarce internal resources for oversite. The emphasis on speed also provides a donor state with profile. Those who seek a leadership profile would do well to be seen to be acting quickly. Funding for longer periods of time does not necessarily have the same political value as resourcing quickly in addition to the ability to report results publicly quickly. For those affected by crises, this means that their immediate short-term priorities may be more attractive to donors than priorities which take longer to address or priorities where results appear in the longer term.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented analysis of the longer term in humanitarian funding as experienced by both donors and their implementing partners. Each section highlighted the different influences on the ability of donors and their implementing partners to take a longer-term perspective and the effects of short termism. The table below, in Figure 13, briefly summarises the findings from each section above. The concluding remarks follow this table, in answer to the question of what influences donors in their humanitarian funding decisions and the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises.
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Figure 13: Findings concerning the Longer Term in Humanitarian Crises
The recovery of shelter and settlements for those affected by crises, from the individual and household through to the community and national experience, occurs over a long period. The boundary around potential support to recovery in humanitarian crises is therefore also broad. On the other hand, for humanitarian donorship, the temporal and conceptual boundary around humanitarian resources is often small and donors subjectivise implementing partners to mediate their funds only within a small part of the overall territory which those affected by crises experience. This approach is often based on the premise of saving lives, mediated through budgets with a high profile and adjudicating using predictable measures of success. This approach can result in short and rigid spending windows and static concepts of success focussed on outputs rather than outcomes. Resourcing the short term only allows for support to immediate priorities, while funding for the longer-term allows for more detailed planning and enables the agency of those affected. Furthermore, action or inaction taken early on can have long lasting effects, and this is particularly true where households are trying to recover and secure their shelter and settlements.

While donors are tasked to support those affected by crises, they are also under pressure to reduce costs and maintain a reputation for achieving results in relatively short timeframes. For this reason, they are influenced by the need to take as little risk as possible, be able to predict results and achieve profile and leadership. Short termism is one way in which donors manage risk, because risk can be managed by reducing the amount of time funds are exposed for. Humanitarian funds for rapid response are, however, often subject to reduced checks before funds are disbursed, so the length of the grant is also influenced by the speed with which it is disbursed. Managing risk also costs. Donors who are under pressure to reduce overheads are reluctant to fund for longer periods of time which will draw on their own scarce internal resources for oversight. Speed is also valued by donors because when donors provide funding quickly it emphasises their leadership among donors and allows them to show results quickly. In this respect, funding for longer periods of time does not necessarily have this same political currency.

The impact of resourcing a long-term situation with short-term funding on those attempting to recover their shelter and settlements is far reaching. Short term funding causes specific patterns in resource availability, putting pressure on implementing partners to secure funds during the early surge quickly and then manage the scarcity and lack of predictability that follows. Support to shelter and settlements, in particular, can become piecemeal with certain outputs favoured by donors, such as temporary structures, because they provide fast and visible results. The speed at which funds are expected to be spent reduces opportunities for implementing partners to engage with communities.
and for taking early action on recovery activities that take longer to complete. The lack of connection between different funding instruments and understandings of the purpose of humanitarian funds can result in gaps in resources for long periods of time. Implementing partners skew the way they operate and how they report on success to compensate. The resulting lack of continuity has a negative impact on communities and their journey towards recovery and stability to the extent that development gains can be lost. Of the largest donors, most are at least stretching their humanitarian territories to consider how to implement MYHF and some have established mechanisms focussed on protracted crises. Rapid onset crises, where recovery and stability are likely to take many years to secure, yet conceptualised as a different territory by donors, have yet to attract MYHF. While MYHF provides longevity and continuity of funds, flexible planning was also identified by participants as critical to the success of longer-term support in fluid, changing contexts. The challenge for donors is to find ways to manage risk over longer periods of time and describe success in such a way that makes room for flexibility of outcomes.

In the following chapter the documentary data analysed in Chapter Four and the primary data in Chapters Five and Six are brought together under the extended framework of Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting to provide an overview of the current opportunities and limitations of the four roles of humanitarian donorship.
Chapter 7: The Four Roles of Humanitarian Donorship

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical discussion of humanitarian donorship by extending Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting (Miller & Power, 2013). Miller and Power state that “it is accountancy that has produced a plethora of ways to actually calculate the financial returns attached to individual decisions” (Miller & Power, 2013: p586). If it is the purpose of accountancy to calculate financial returns, then it would appear to be the purpose of humanitarian donorship to also calculate and manage humanitarian returns. This research moves from Miller and Power’s roles of accounting in general to provide an extended analytical framework which includes the broader roles of donorship more specifically. This deductive approach allows this research to reach beyond the inductive analysis of the previous chapters, which identified the key characteristics of flexibility and the longer-term in the general policy and practice of donorship, enabling more precision to identify where the opportunities and impediments to these characteristics lie, and how they interlink. The specific roles of donorship are a way to analyse how donors think, which can explain how donors take decisions which prioritise the humanitarian imperative or subordinate it to other agendas. In this way, using critical accounting as a framework enables this research to identify the economic practices of donorship, such as budgeting and evaluation, and to trace their social impact, such as support to or impediments to recovery from crises. This provides evidence on which to base a hypothesis of why such impediments exist.

This chapter presents original analysis of primary data and secondary data to build on the picture of the humanitarian system set up in the previous chapters on secondary and primary sources, by answering the first and third research questions:

1. **What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?**

3. **What impact does ODA policy and practice have on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?**

The chapter is divided into seven sections, comprising six sections of analysis plus the conclusion. The analytical discussion takes Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting: territorialising, adjudicating,
subjectivising and mediating. The next section outlines how this research extends Miller and Power’s four roles of accounting to humanitarian donorship. There follows a discussion of these four roles. First the different types of territory involved in donorship are explored, followed by the act of adjudicating. The third section analyses those agencies who are subjectivized by donors and the role that partnerships play. This is followed by an exploration of the way in which donors mediate and the instruments they use to do so. Finally, the conclusion presents a summary of the analytical findings highlighted in the chapter.

As described in Chapter One, Miller and Power’s first role, territorialising, can be described as placing boundaries around spaces of interest. The second, mediating, describes the process that happens in these territories. Thirdly, adjudicating both defines and determines the success of the action in the territories. Fourth and lastly, subjectivizing describes the relationship between the donors and their implementing partners who they have made responsible on their behalf to perform humanitarian assistance. Donors can choose territories based on the geographic locations and types of crises and vulnerable groups chosen as beneficiaries of their humanitarian assistance. Donors also draw territories around different locations, groups and moments in time, around and during a crisis. This includes reducing the impact of a crisis ex-ante and managing a crisis ex-post. Secondly, donors mediate between themselves, other states, implementing partners and those affected by crises. Mediating occurs through practices of diplomacy, coordination, and granting. Third, donors adjudicate what should be chosen to be funded, and the success of the activities resourced by their funding through assessments, monitoring and evaluations. Fourth, donors rarely implement humanitarian assistance themselves, but instead work through the affected states or implementing partners. The analytical discussion below explores how donors support those affected by crises, with respect to these four roles, and in particular how they provide flexibility and support to the longer term in order to achieve humanitarian returns.

7.2 Territorialising

As discussed in the preceding chapters, donors place boundaries around the concept of humanitarian donorship. We saw in Chapter Two that state donors think about humanitarian funding in terms of ethical decisions driven by the duty of humanity, and also economic decisions driven by perceptions of what is valued and therefore should be resourced, which often rely upon political considerations. This section explores in more detail how donors are influenced to place their humanitarian territories
around their funding according to certain locations, groups, timeframes and even outputs, and how this creates the calculable spaces in which donors mediate humanitarian action. It also explores the sub-territories inside the humanitarian territory and what makes their boundaries more rigid or flexible, short or long-term. The rise of new public management (NPM) and more quantified approaches have influenced what donors value and consequently what they include or exclude from their territories. For example, results and outputs have gained more value within the humanitarian territory as a calculable space, because they can usually be quantified more easily than outcomes and impact.

7.2.1 Balancing Ethic al and Political Drivers.

Donor states have humanitarian territories shaped by ethical drivers and political territories shaped by international and domestic concerns. The transnational transfer of resources is always a political act, even where humanitarian motives determine the territory. The transfer of resources sets up a calculable space within which support for one group rather than another is materially expressed. Donor states also often have a physical presence in countries with whom they have a political interest, such as an embassy or development office, and they may have no physical presence in other countries despite a high incidence of humanitarian crises. For these reasons, there is often tension between a donor state’s humanitarian geographic territories and their political geographic territories. Political interests exert pressure on humanitarian teams and can reduce the extent to which they can be flexible about the affected countries they engage with, and how long they may remain engaged. Political territories will often override humanitarian territories, and this is illustrated with the examples below.

As discussed in Chapter Two, literature on donorship in general, and humanitarian donorship in particular, pays attention to the countries which state donors support in crises (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Drury et al., 2005; Macdonald & Hoddinott, 2004; Stromberg, 2007), and how this attention is derived from the ethical principles of impartiality and independence in humanitarian action (OCHA, 2012b). The geographic territory of donorship is often used as a proxy indicator for the extent to which the choices of donorship are based on political, commercial or ethical drivers. Purely ethical territories include countries which require support during humanitarian crises, whereas political territories might include countries that have colonial ties to the donor state but do not necessarily require resources, who may be favoured by states with whom the donor state wishes to be allied.

Donors determine humanitarian territories by assessing the risk of a crisis happening and the likely level of support required. This process determines the vulnerability of those affected by crises. In
Chapters Two and Four, vulnerability was identified as a criteria which indicates which countries, communities or households need resources to support their recovery from crises (Stromberg, 2007), commonly used in donor humanitarian policy. Donors rely heavily for their understanding of the risk of humanitarian crises and the level of likely humanitarian suffering on data collected by other humanitarian organisations, including donors themselves, for instance INFORM\textsuperscript{26} and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)\textsuperscript{27}. The level of risk to humanitarian crises and the level of likely humanitarian suffering within certain countries are communicated through formally prepared country level Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)\textsuperscript{28}.

There is evidence that humanitarian teams tactically maintain their territory while keeping the pressure of political gain at bay. Humanitarian teams use such quantitative data above to defend their humanitarian territory against responding to crises, or not, for political gain. One donor official explained:

“The application of a more critical use of data and absolute measures such as the INFORM index have made the process a lot more objective and given us as humanitarians a set of tools that enable us to debate and argue a humanitarian position when there are other political or communications pressures to act in a certain way” (14C:2).

Some flexibility seems possible when funding is kept ‘under the radar’. Two donor officials used the example of Venezuela (22U and 22T), where resources were transferred but not publicised because they wanted to avoid attracting too much political attention, raising expectations of a larger response. This example illustrates why donors are often reluctant to expand their humanitarian territory, because setting up a new calculable space generates additional budget lines which in themselves demand human and financial resources to manage them. One donor official described balancing the humanitarian imperative with the practical implications of commencing a new relationship with a country: “[We] sent a modest aid package in a low-key way to multilateral partners. [We do] not want to set up a Venezuela department” (22U:5). This example also provides a clue to why long-term humanitarian funding is difficult for some donors: because a long-term relationship ties in resources and raises expectations.

Additionally, donors described funding directly through multilaterals such as the UN and Red Cross, in sensitive political contexts such as the Ukraine and North Korea, to keep their engagement low key.

\textsuperscript{26} INFORM - Global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters [europa.eu] visited on 23.06.21.
\textsuperscript{27} Global Humanitarian Overview 2021 | OCHA [unocha.org] visited on 23.06.21.
\textsuperscript{28} Strategic response planning: Overview | HumanitarianResponse visited on 23.06.21.
(8A and 6O), to avoid political attention. Donors also contribute to pooled funds as a way to dilute donorship as a political expression. For a single donor state, using pooled funding designed for forgotten emergencies such as the CERF, the START Network or Country Based Pooled Funds, keeps both the amount of funding and the profile of the political gesture low (6O, 8E).

At the sub-national level of crisis, donors draw up geographic territories once again. Participants reported a certain level of coordination when it comes to funding different implementing partners to work in different geographical areas. At the national level, these geographic territories often intersect with territories bounded by vulnerabilities. Data is collected by implementing partners and national governments to establish which geographical areas are the most affected. This is often cross referenced with criteria of marginalisation and poverty to establish those groups most urgently in need, and by implication, least able to support themselves. Data concerning shelter and settlements include data on the damage and destruction of infrastructure, providing further boundaries around which communities have and have not been affected. This process is by no means a straightforward as it is often complicated by practical issues such as limited funding and access issues, or concerns such as the political territories of national and municipal governments.

Sub-national geographical territories also have political value for donor states; for instance, some donors use them to establish profile. In Chapter Five, one humanitarian practitioner (4O) described where a donor had spread their resources thinly to claim they were responding across a wider geographical area. Conversely, participants also explained that donors do not share openly information of the territories they have established with their implementing partners, leading to a whole parallel process of data collection by the coordination leads of the Inter Agency Standing Committee’s Clusters29 to find out who is working where. In terms of targeting specific groups, some donors in certain types of crises have begun to draw more flexible boundaries around those who receive their resources. For example, where households are displaced, some donors will include host populations in addition to those who are displaced because they have learned that this reduces local tensions (8A, 22M).

Neither the boundaries around humanitarian or political territories are robust or static since they rely upon the changing incidence of humanitarian crises and the priorities of political interest. There will be some continuity between a donor and certain locations, for example where countries such as Bangladesh and Mozambique are regularly hit by extreme weather events, or where countries such

29 For example, the IASC Cluster for the coordination of support to Shelter and Settlements Shelter Cluster - Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter | Shelter Cluster

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as Sudan and Syria experience protracted conflict over many years. These countries require frequent humanitarian assistance. Similarly, certain political alliances have longevity, especially where they are strengthened by trade agreements or colonial history. The example of the cyclone response in Mozambique and the earthquake response in Nepal described in Chapter 6 demonstrate that the overlap between humanitarian and political territories also changes over time. Immediately after a crisis the political opportunity for profile is high, and later this wains, while the need for resources often increases as households rebuild their shelter and settlements.

7.2.2 Territories around Timeframes and Activities

The humanitarian territory breaks down further into sub-territories of temporal phases and specific support activities. These sub-territories provide clues to the possible reasons why donors may choose to shape their overall humanitarian territory in a particular way. These clues include specific approaches towards humanitarianism, and more practical considerations such as cost.

Perhaps the most divisive boundaries of donorship are created by those placed around periods of time in and around humanitarian crises. As discussed in Chapter 6, this can shape how implementing partners are able to work with those affected by crises. Humanitarian crises which involve more than one state, namely the affected state and the donors state, are large scale and as a result they take a long time to address (Devictor & Do, 2016; Platt, 2018). The period of time taken to address humanitarian crises has traditionally been broken down and understood in ‘phases’ (World Bank, 2014). These phases are derived from the tradition of disaster management starting before a disaster has occurred, followed by a consecutive series of time periods related to different forms of funding, illustrated in Figure 14 below (Harris & Swift, 2019)

![Figure 14: Phases of support to those affected by disasters (C. Harris & Swift, 2019: p5).](image)
This model of consecutive phases suits conflict contexts rather less, where the relationships between vulnerability, exposure and risk are far more dynamic. While those affected have no choice but to experience the whole range of ‘phases’ of humanitarian crises, those who seek to support are able to pick and choose. Donors in particular have a certain freedom to choose where they place the temporal boundary around their humanitarian territory, and how robust or flexible they choose to make it. These schematics imply a certain amount of continuity in the humanitarian system, but this continuity is not the experience of participants reflecting on responding to crises.

Participants conceptualised these phases as sub-territories within the overarching territory of ‘humanitarian’. Perceptions of the territory of ‘humanitarian’ itself shift depending on which of the humanitarian approaches discussed in Chapter Two is emphasised. Although these approaches were not named explicitly by participants or in donor policy, analysis of the data revealed their relevant characteristics. This emphasis causes the boundary around ‘humanitarian’ to grow to include these phases or push them outside. For instance, emphasis on Solidarist or New Humanitarianism (Donini, 2010; Wheeler, 2017) is more likely to accept the later phases of recovery and stabilisation as a humanitarian endeavour. By contrast Dunantist humanitarianism focusses more on the saving on life and alleviating immediate suffering (Donini, 2010; Stoddard, 2003; Terry, 2013). Figure 15 below shows these theories in comparison.
Within donorship, the humanitarian territory takes on a practical form within the boundaries of the financial resources and human resources donors have at their disposal. In other words, they are bounded by budgets and teams (22T:3). With budgets and teams comes accountability. Overlaying the concept of phases are the two territories of humanitarianism and development, so when phases are understood to sit outside of humanitarianism, this generates responsibilities for development colleagues and a draw on their budgets. Those who believe humanitarian teams should have a broad remit seek to increase the spend windows for humanitarian funding in order to allow for longer term planning (Cabot Venton & Sida, 2017; OCHA, 2017a). Those who believe the boundaries of humanitarianism should be kept tightly around response seek to reduce the diversion of principled humanitarian funds and to protect them against being used to address chronic needs, and to encourage development actors to fill this space (Levine, Pain, Bailey, & Fan, 2012; B Ramalingam et al., 2015). This is especially since humanitarian funds tend to be easier to access, for instance, in terms of the detail required for a proposal and the time taken to approve a proposal. One humanitarian practitioner illustrated this point, recalling:
“we are seeing more contexts where humanitarian programming is being used to address development needs and South Sudan would be one example of that. Arguably the actors on the ground are humanitarian actors and are delivering humanitarian assistance, within an environment that is really in need of development assistance and engagement from development actors who are not there, and this means that humanitarian actors are filling gaps by design” (60:5).

The perception of accountability for supporting those affected during each humanitarian phase also varies. Chapter Four and Chapter Six discussed the differing levels of comfort different donors demonstrate around accountability for these longer-term phases and their understanding of the scope of their humanitarian territory (8A, 22U). For ‘response’ accountability is generally perceived to be with humanitarian teams, and they often include ‘anticipation and early action’. Whether humanitarian teams accept accountability for disaster risk reduction (DRR) is less clear cut, DRR being a concept linked to humanitarian crises yet one which translates into support that can occur before or during a humanitarian crisis and an outcome that is linked to developmental causes of vulnerability. Similarly, accountability for ‘recovery and reconstruction’ stretches the territories of some humanitarian teams.

Reaching back towards addressing the causes of vulnerability to humanitarian crises has stretched the humanitarian territory even further for donors. One concept which has been used to address this is ‘resilience’ (Barrett & Constas, 2015; Mosel & Levine, 2014). Although resilience emerged as a unifying concept intended to bridge territories of humanitarianism and development, donors and their implementing partners have struggled to incorporate it across the rigid institutional territories demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six. DRR and resilience have been at least fostered, and in some cases adopted by both humanitarian and development teams, in particular DFID and the Australian government. Where resilience emerged mainly from work in disasters, more recently the concept of the ‘Humanitarian Peace and Development Nexus’, or ‘Triple Nexus’ emerged from conflict contexts (OCHA, 2017b). This concept describes a space, or territory, where actors can mediate, rather than an outcome for which actors are responsible. It is perhaps for this reason it appears to have gained more traction with donors, exemplified in the OECD DAC Recommendations (OECD, 2019a). These recommendations at the specific level of funding decisions advise donors to “avoid significant fluctuations in funding that could destabilise communities or countries”, “Use predictable, flexible, multi-year financing wherever possible” and to align “financing with agreed collective outcomes where appropriate – while recognising that humanitarian, development and peace actions may have priorities that also fall outside of collective outcomes” (OECD, 2019: Recommendation V, 1 and 2).
At policy level there appears to be a reasonably sophisticated understanding of the continuity and long-term nature of humanitarian crises, while during a crisis the continuity of funding is still lacking. A closer look at the ‘phases’ reveals that they in fact describe support to certain activities, and these activities do not always occur in the same periods of time. Activities require resources and resources are finite, which may go some way to explaining why there may be some reluctance to be accountable for a territory that includes certain activities. We have seen that the lived experience of those affected by crises does not necessarily happen in consecutive phases, even in the least complicated of disaster contexts. In some crises certain phases are missed completely, for instance where activities can start straight away such as reconstruction after an earthquake where construction materials markets are working and there is no need to wait for materials to be imported. In other crises households may be stuck performing the same activities for a long time, for instance refugees housed in a camp while conflict continues in their country of origin. More often, participants have reported different groups performing different activities at the same time, depending on how they have been affected by a crisis and what their priorities are. For example, 8H2 observed in Mozambique, that floodwater receded in some areas faster than others, so some communities could begin recovery before others, and 38A explained that in DRC, some households were supported to return home before others. Concepts of an ‘equitable response’ (IFRC, 1995) and donor coordination (Good Humanitarian Donorship, 2018) may introduce further complexity because this approach can be interpreted as providing all households similar assistance and at the same time. This creates a perception that the ‘most vulnerable’ households in a crisis will all be undertaking similar activities at the same time and at the same speed, when the empirical data describes a more varied picture. This variety can be difficult for donors to manage with small temporal boundaries that assume a cut off at some point.

Viewing the phases within a humanitarian territory as limited periods of time also makes it easier for donors to break continuity once a certain amount of time has elapsed, as we saw in the two examples above from Mozambique (8H2) and CAR (38A). One donor confirmed that continuity is not the rule, recounting only one example where different budgets had been disbursed consecutively:

“I don’t know of a tranche of humanitarian money being followed by a tranche of resilience money, apart from in Haiti […] where the resilience money came first and then it turned back into humanitarian because all the resilience work being done got damaged and they used all their emergency stock in hurricane Matthew and the program went back from a resilience to a humanitarian response program because they used all the stockpiles up” (14C:6).
The rise of new public management (NPM) and more quantified approaches have influenced what donors value and consequently what they include or exclude from their territories. Results and outputs have gained more value within the humanitarian territory since, as a calculable space, it requires basic units which can be quantified more easily than outcomes and impact. An example of this is how technical sectors are understood as an aspect of humanitarian action which are easy to identify and therefore measure. The most formal incarnation of this is the IASC Cluster System where different humanitarian agencies lead the coordination of different technical sectors. The ‘siloed’ nature of splitting humanitarian action into sectors is attractive to donors as a simplistic way of cutting the pie between donors, but it has also been criticised as encouraging a lack of coordination, proliferating the number of actors affected households must deal with and leaves some households with partial support. For shelter and settlements, urban crises such as the Haiti Earthquake of 2010 and the Nepal Earthquake of 2015 challenged territories around technical sectors, because vulnerable groups were not confined to specific geographical locations in cities and technical sectors proved to be too simplistic for addressing at the complexity of urban life. Approaches such as the ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘area based’ approach were developed and supported by some donors as a result (Mohamed & Kennedy, 2020; Sanderson, 2017). In addition, some technical sectors are more attractive to fund than others, particularly where they allow donors to claim they have supported many beneficiaries and very quickly. For instance, the immediate per capita cost of an emergency food distribution intervention will likely cost less than an emergency shelter intervention and take less time to demonstrate outputs. As a result, food security interventions are more often funded then shelter interventions.

7.2.3 Summary of Territorialising in Humanitarian Donorship.

Humanitarian donorship is traversed by a myriad of territories and these are generated by ethical and political drivers. Their boundaries exist in geographical locations, around chosen groups, specific timeframes and technical sectors, stretching and contracting as the tensions between humanitarian principles, as these other organisational drivers play out. Territories often generate teams and budgets, splitting humanitarian action into many pieces. The drawing up of these territories is an act of adjudication since it involves making a decision about what is to be included and what is to be excluded. As donors decide what should and should not be funded, and therefore valued, so this creates sensitivities between different teams and advocates of different humanitarian approaches. As a result, the boundaries of these territories are often disputed, particularly where they confer responsibility on certain actors for action. Where territories overlap, for instance humanitarian and development, there can be disagreement over resources. Conversely there can be gaps in resourcing.
where no actor steps up to take responsibility, as is often the case for ‘recovery’. The adjudication of what territories include or exclude is discussed in the following section.

7.3 Adjudicating

Adjudicating is the most instrumental of Miller and Power’s accounting roles since it is with adjudication that value can be assigned. Miller and Power explain that to adjudicate is “to pronounce on and to evaluate the performance of individuals and organizations” (Miller & Power, 2013: p562). Adjudication is therefore a process of performance measurement “as a basis for evaluation and accountability” (Miller & Power, 2013: p583). There are two main aspects of adjudication of concern to donorship. The first is accountability of donors to those affected by humanitarian crises, and the second is accountability of those who have been subjectivized to donors themselves. First, the aid effectiveness initiatives described in Chapter 4 provide examples of the humanitarian community thinking in terms of collective adjudication of donor performance. Second, donors themselves adjudicate using policy when they assign value by choosing certain territories over others, and then judging the success of what happens inside their chosen territories. The value of the performance of those who donors subjectivized is judged as a result, for instance implementing partners. Chapters Five and Six provided examples of how donors attempt to monitor and evaluate the work of their implementing partners to ensure their funds are accountable.

7.3.1 Defining the Problem and Measuring Success

In drawing up a territory within which donors are prepared to provide resources, as described in the preceding section, they define the boundaries of the problem to be solved and the humanitarian assistance to be resourced. The process of drawing up territories is, therefore, in itself an act of adjudication. Judgements are made concerning what donors should fund and what should not be funded, or in other words, what is a priority that has value and what does not. Drawing up territories is, rather than describing the problem to be solved, a process of choosing which problem or parts of the problem should be solved. To place this logic in the context of humanitarian crises, those affected by the crisis have a whole and ongoing experience of the situation, whereas those supporting them focus on just a part of this experience. Through adjudicating the territory in which their implementing partners will act, they choose the part in which they share. Adjudication is, therefore, far from a neutral activity, but one which actively assigns value from the start.
During a humanitarian crisis, there currently exist key steps in the adjudication process that are recognised by both donors and humanitarian practitioners alike. The granting and contracting process is at the same time a method of transferring resources and a way of adjudicating the use of those resources, using the language of outputs and outcomes, risks and assumptions. Put simply, the key steps in the adjudication process include defining the chosen part of the problem and measuring the success of the solution. Defining the problem includes judging what should be funded and how by collecting data about the crisis and measuring the success of the solution through establishing indicators of success against which to evaluate humanitarian action. The problem is often defined through a process of needs assessment and context analysis, and success measured through a process of donors monitoring and evaluating the work of their implementing partners. This process has become gradually more formalised as the humanitarian system has professionalised and the level of funding has risen, which can be seen in the evolution of the Global Humanitarian Assistance reports (Development Initiatives, 2006; Thomas & Urquhart, 2020). Both the way the problem is defined, and the way success is measured have become more rigid with the trend towards quantitative measurement and managing risk with bureaucracy.

Donors use assessments to inform the shape of the problem to be solved through the collection and analysis of data about the nature and scale of the crisis. While the shape of the problem may be treated as finite so that success may be measured against it, it is in fact dependant on who makes the assessment and how. Such is the concern that multiple assessments may create duplication, overburden those affected or that assessments may be biased, the improvement of joint and impartial needs assessments became a commitment of the Grand Bargain (WHS, 2016). Humanitarian assessments are made by a range of actors presenting information in different ways. Assessments are either carried out before a crisis occurs, describing what is likely to happen based on a calculation of the level of risk, or they describe retrospectively after the peak of the crisis what has happened, based on empirical data. Assessments include more formal annual assessments at a country level, such as the UN Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP). One donor official described this process:

“We basically put the list of priorities and what we would like to spend money on next year. This is based on the needs-assessment by operational colleagues [...] We base this on [...] sources that are gathered from the field network, we have our desk officers for each country we are working in. Then this information is then combined by each different [department] and that’s how they show the budget” (4Y:2)
More rapid assessments in the wake of a disaster or spike in conflict are performed jointly or by individual agencies. Donors may also use their own staff to make an assessment. Some donors will rely more on the assessments of implementing partners, as one donor official explained:

"The UN consolidated appeals give a good assessment of the needs to begin to come to a view. We will also take into account what others are trying to do. We will invite proposals. That feeds into our understanding and assessment of where to target funding "(22U:1).

Assessments go on to inform the funding appeals made by implementing partners. Appeals documents not only establish the problem to be solved but also suggest the solution which can introduce bias. One humanitarian commentator warned against appeals as a measure of the success of humanitarian action, particularly because different agencies involved in their compilation have different agendas:

"Appeals coordinated by the UN is your best aggregate measure, but it’s very incomplete and very partial and certainly doesn’t tell the whole story. It’s very problematic as a single measure of the success. The appeals that are constructed are not necessarily an accurate representation of what needs there are, they are a compilation of different agency project proposals [...] As a measure of success it’s the best we’ve got. But it tends to focus on the volume which is not necessarily the problem" (6WF:)

A donor official further highlighted the conflict of interest represented by appeals, particularly from single mandate UN agencies representing certain technical sectors. They explained:

“You are determining what the problem is and you are then putting a figure on what it costs to respond to that, you are using that information as power as the basis on which to put an appeal out to donors, donors fund those and the agencies get their donations directly, those agencies then spend that money, they deliver the response and then ultimately they mark their own homework. The undertake monitoring and evaluation, they report back to donors on how well they spent that money” (6O:9).

Konyndyk illuminates here the conflict of interest represented by large organisations both describing the problem and evaluating their own performance:

“At each step along the way, discrete response-wide processes—the sector’s strategy, funding priorities, program delivery, oversight, and impact evaluation—effectively rest in a single organization’s hands” (Konyndyk, 2018:p2).
These points highlight one problem of adjudication in donorship, namely that assessments intended to represent the situation of those affected by crises can be manipulated to serve the needs of others. The assessment of the problem depends to a certain extent on what those in the position of measurement intend to do with the measurement of success.

As the level of humanitarian funding has risen globally and gained profile for doing so, assessments have focussed more heavily on quantitative data to describe a problem that can be costed, rather than qualitative data that describes a wider range of considerations. The result is more appetite for the assessment of need rather than analysis of context, including capabilities that exist locally. Donors are interested not only in the detailed description of the problem on the ground, but also the size of the problem in monetary terms, to inform their decision about the resources to commit. For this reason, assessments are often organised around data that can be counted. This skews the approach to the problem to be solved towards a transaction, where there is a deficit that donors fill with resources to solve the problem, rather than a more nuanced partnership with those affected focussed that may shift and change. This is reflected in the change in terminology used in tools for monitoring and evaluation, for instance the shift from measuring ‘impact’ through measuring ‘outcomes’, to measuring ‘results’ (Valters & Whitty, 2017). In Chapter Five we saw how this quantitative focus can begin to override a qualitative understanding of success, where concepts such as ‘efficiency’ and ‘Value for Money’ are heavily relied upon as indicators of value (6WF:8,4O: 7, GP2:2).

During humanitarian crises donors must balance the cost of measuring success with the capacity of their implementing partners to report on it. Some donors favour detailed adjudication processes to manage risk, commonly in the form of multiple monitoring reports, but they must balance this with the overhead cost this produces for themselves and their implementing partners. Donors usually adjudicate the performance of their implementing partners against the description of the specific humanitarian action they have provided in the appeal or proposal, alongside their own humanitarian policy. These documents are used as a basis for indicating what success should look like. Some donors have their own specific indicators that they require implementing partners to use, including for specific technical sectors such as shelter and settlements (ECHO, 2016; USAID, 2018). Where funding is earmarked, donors can request detailed reporting down to specific budget lines. Where funding is unearmarked a general final report about the humanitarian action, often prepared for the attention of more than one donor, can be accepted. For this reason, implementing partners tend to prefer unearmarked funds which can be used more flexibly.
The administration burden produced by earmarked funds has become understood as a symbol of inefficiency and a draw on resources that could otherwise be spent on direct humanitarian support. Considering the complexity of grant management required by implementing partners, and described in Chapter 4, reporting to donors can easily become a burden. One donor official explained that this burden is exacerbated when donors have not coordinated their measures of success with each other. They recalled:

“What we hear a lot from UN agencies [...] is the burden of donor requirements in reporting how money is spent, what was the impact, the level of accountability and the level of transparency. The requirements of one donor may not be the same as the requirements of another donor, and the way in which that can become a burden, but also the way in which donor requirements might conflict with one another because as donors we are not perfectly aligned at all” (6O:11)

Concern about an excess of paperwork associated with earmarked funds inspired Commitment 8 of the Grand Bargain, to reduce earmarked funds.

### 7.3.2 Accountability to Those Affected by Humanitarian Crises

Adjudication of the performance of donors themselves tends to take place outside of humanitarian crises, either through collective action by implementing partners, by donors themselves or by taxpayers. In Chapter Four aid effectiveness was discussed as a way of publicly adjudicating the success of donorship. The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative has produced rare examples of research into the actual practice of donorship, including attention paid to the part funding mechanisms play in the success of humanitarian action. For the World Humanitarian Forum, where the Grand Bargain was agreed, various implementing partners and donors were invited to submit papers shaping the problem and suggesting solutions. Adjudication by taxpayers is understood by donors as an important process since the bulk of humanitarian resources still comes from tax-payers in OECD countries (6WF:6). Communication of success to taxpayers has a strong influence on not only the data which donors collect but also the way in which they describe success to their public. One humanitarian practitioner explained that "... the humanitarian world is still 99% focussed on outputs. It is still the overwhelming way in which public communication is conducted" (22M:6). AS discussed in Chapter Two, the data which is prioritised has an impact on the way in which humanitarian assistance is provided by implementing partners.

During humanitarian crises there is a direct dialogue between implementing partners and those affected by the crises, and between implementing partners and donors, but rarely between those
affected and donors themselves. In this way implementing partners are often in the position of advocates for those affected. The largest donors attempt to ensure accountability to those affected by reference to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)\(^{30}\) in their humanitarian policies, which focuses on those affected by crises and dialogue with communities in particular. Some donors require assessments to be based on primary data collected from households (4O), but the time allowed to do this is often short, especially when there is pressure to respond quickly (38:A). In this way the temporal territory of a short-term rapid response grants restricts the ability of implementing partners to achieve success that would align with donor policy.

7.3.3 Summary of Adjudicating in Humanitarian Donorship.

The adjudication process begins when donors and their implementing partners place boundaries around what they will and will not fund. This usually includes support to just a portion of the whole experience of those affected by crises, conferring value to that portion, for instance the immediate experience rather than the longer-term experience. In the adjudication process donors use the granting and contracting process to form a framework against which they can both transfer resources within certain boundaries, and then evaluate the use of those resources. The trend in adjudication has been for this process to become more formalised, quantitative and burdensome as donors attempt to manage risk using adjudication processes, rather than other approaches such as increasing in-country staffing or more frequent communication with partners. Since the process of adjudicating has a cost in both time and money, so donors have been called upon, most recently through the Grand Bargain, to find a balance. The process of adjudication has also been seen to be easily influenced by those who select which part of the problem to resource, choose which data to collect and how to communicate success. Donors are not always in complete control of these processes.

7.4 Subjectivising

The donors included in this study rarely implement humanitarian assistance themselves, but instead think of themselves as the adjudicators of those who will receive resources. They must ‘subjectivise’, or ‘responsibilise’ implementing partners to perform humanitarian action on their behalf, and invite these actors into their territory. In this way donors delegate direct responsibility for achieving policy objectives to implementing partners, while maintaining the power to adjudicate the value of their provision.

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\(^{30}\) The Standard - CHS (corehumanitarianstandard.org) visited on 13.07.21
implementing partner’s actions. Miller and Power describe accounting as “a profession that is defined in large part by its endeavour to exact responsibility from individuals rendered calculable and comparable” (Miller & Power, 2013: p586). Donorship performs a similar and broader function when implementing partners are given responsibility and their actions rendered calculable.

7.4.1 Choice of Partnerships

Donors can choose from several different types of implementing partner, with the majority of funds going to agencies of the United Nations (UN), Red Cross Societies and International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) (Thomas & Urquhart, 2020). The decision to use one type of implementing partner rather than another and to use one type of relationship rather than another depends on two main factors. The first is a practical decision, such that the sub-territories of the implementing partners must overlap with the territory inside which the donor wishes to provide resources, such as geographic location or technical sector. The second factor is a political decision, where implementing partners are subjectivised with respect to where they are placed within the political economy of the humanitarian crisis. In other words, implementing partners are chosen both for their expertise and for their political value. As described in Chapter Five, donors tend to fund several different types of partner in any one crisis, for reasons that will be expanded below, to maintain a balance between practicality and political advantage.

Like donors, implementing partners understand their mandates in terms of geographic, temporal and sectoral territories. Donors need partners who can operate in the geographic location where people have been affected by the humanitarian crisis, who are able to provide support at the right time and who can provide the technical expertise that complements the expertise of the affected and host community. Since implementing partners are free to place their own boundaries around their work, donors are often faced with a complex and moving target when it comes to choosing partners with the relevant mandate to match the crisis in question. The splintering of humanitarian territory discussed above presents itself in the implementing partners available to support different phases of humanitarian crises. For example, some implementing partners prefer to focus on the immediate response where others focus on longer term engagement. Implementing partners also work with different types of local partners. NGOs may work directly with communities in the response phase, while development banks may work directly with national and municipal governments in the reconstruction phase. One humanitarian practitioner explained that in the response to cyclone Idai in Mozambique there was a “complete disconnect” (8H2:”) between agencies working on emergency response and those working on reconstruction. Both groups were working in parallel with few
members of these groups aware of each other. Since each implementing partner sets their own territories, this can impede the continuity of actors which donors can resource.

An example of this complexity can be found in the IASC Global Shelter Cluster (GSC). It has two lead agencies because no single humanitarian agency has a broad enough mandate to cover all the territories required to support those who have lost their shelter in humanitarian crises. Both agencies specialise in shelter and settlements by way of their mandates for refugees and disasters, but since UNHCR covers mainly conflict contexts while IFRC covers disasters, the two organisations split the responsibility to lead depending on the type of crises. Neither organisation has a mandate to remain coordinator beyond the first six months of a response, so this responsibility is often handed over to another agency which must negotiate a separate funding agreement with donors at that point. INGOs on the other hand are often ‘multi mandate’, with capacity in a range of technical areas and often with teams responding in both humanitarian and development contexts. This can make INGOs attractive to fund where donors are seeking partners able to respond more broadly and flexibly to the context, particularly when they want to keep overheads low by keeping the grant process simple.

“The idea of them consolidating their funding through fewer partners has enabled them to give more without increased transaction costs, but the transaction costs have effectively been pushed down the chain and led to other issues….They can increase the amount of money that they give without increasing the amount of work they have to do to manage it” (4L:4).

While donors have a choice of a range of implementing partners, there are clear cost incentives for reducing the number of partners they work with.

In Chapter Five we saw examples where donors make funding decisions based on maintaining relationships with other states and other actors, while balancing these political priorities against the humanitarian imperative (GP2, 8A, 22U). For instance, funding UN agencies can be a way of bypassing an unstable government while still addressing a humanitarian crisis. In certain situations, UN agencies may have little operational capacity and simply transfer funds to NGOs, but at the same time, it may make political sense for donors to strengthen the role of the UN in that specific country, or signal support for and solidarity with the more formal international humanitarian system. Conversely, channelling resources through independent NGOs may be more desirable for donors if the UN has a sensitive relationship with national government of the affected state. Having a more distant relationship with operational partners by channelling resources through an intermediary alongside

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31 Shelter Cluster - Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter | Shelter Cluster visited on 07.07.21

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other donors can also enable support to be resourced in situations where “Beneficiaries can be persecuted by being associated with a certain donor” (GP2:6). Similarly, donors can use intermediaries to manage grants for crises that have little political currency for them, and they therefore do not require the political profile. For example, DFID contributes to the START Fund, “because it can respond if there is a natural disaster which is bad locally in and of itself but not enough for DFID to respond itself” (22U:3).

Donors use three main types of partnership to resource humanitarian assistance, aside from bilateral funds to the affected state. The first and most traditional is a direct bilateral relationship with a grant or contract holder that is also the operational partner who will directly perform the humanitarian action. An example of this is where a donor funds an INGO, Red Cross society or UN agency directly. The second type of relationship is where a grant or contract holder (who could be an INGO, Red Cross society or UN agency) manages the administration and also some of the operational aspects of humanitarian action, but further operational aspects are delegated to another operational partner or partners. One example would be where a donor funds UNHCR, responsible for camp management, and UNHCR then transfers funds to other organisations who take on responsibility for a range of technical sectors in the camp (Levine & Sida, 2019). Another example would be where a donor funds an INGO who both transfers funds to other agencies and works alongside those agencies performing their own humanitarian action. The third is a relationship where the grant or contract holder is an intermediary who manages the administration only and where the operational aspects of humanitarian action are delegated to a further operational partner or partners. This covers several different scenarios including where donors provide resources to an INGO or UN agency who delegates operational aspects to other NGOs, including local NGOs, or where donors provide resources to a managed fund alongside other donors, for example to ECHO, CERF, CBPF or the START Fund.

7.4.2 Risk and Accountability

Even when donors fund implementing partners directly, the relationship can be close or distant. For example, donors such as Irish Aid maintain a close ongoing relationship with their main humanitarian response partners through regular contact and repeat funding (28M, 8A). This enables them to draw up multi-year funding agreements with their partners based on cumulative and detailed information about how their partners perform. Other donors such as ECHO and DFID tend to have a more distant relationship, managing their financial risk through the prequalification of partners through an in-depth auditing process (4Y) (Mowjee, 2001). While this information is detailed it is a snapshot rather than an ongoing relationship, which means further information gathering is necessary during the period of the grant or contract in the form of monitoring reports and evaluations to manage the financial risk.
In this way, subjectivizing via a distant relationship would appear to create a heavier administration burden. The management the financial risk is also a barrier to donors subjectivising local NGOs (LNGOs), even as subcontractors to INGOs, as discussed in Chapter Five (38A, 6WF). The use of financial risk management as a measure of success ultimately excludes LNGOs without substantial capacity to manage the financial administration burden or demonstrate a track record of reliable financial management.

Subjectivizing or responsibilising an implementing partner can enable donors to exert control over that entity, but that control depends on the extent to which the relationship is exclusive. For some implementing partners, their dependency on donors for resources provides donors with control, particularly as donors often have so much flexibility in how to channel their resources. Donor officials seemed aware that they were part of a collective of donors, and that NGOs in particular have other sources of income such as public donations. One donor official stated that “it’s just not really our business to ensure that an NGO has a financial stability strategy, right?” (14C:8). ECHO in particular frames its funding as a joint venture with its implementing partners. An ECHO official described the approach: “I like your project and it’s in line with my policy so I would like to contribute. So, all the properties stay with you because it’s your project, but we give you some co-financing and finance some result” (4Y:3).

The perception of this resource dependency on donors influences the dialogue between implementing partners and donors. For instance, it can restrict opportunities for implementing partners to hold donors accountable (38A, 40). Conversely, where implementing partners such as UN agencies have their flow of resources protected in part by international treaties, and this flow is shared among several donors, the ability of donors to hold their implementing partners to account is reduced. This is related to the point made above concerning conflicts of interest (Konyndyk, 2018).

7.4.3 Summary of Subjectivising in Humanitarian Donorship.

The ability of donors to responsibilise their implementing partners provides them with great flexibility in how to approach humanitarian crises. They can choose between types of implementing partner and types of partnership agreement. This flexibility allows donors to act with more alignment with their role as a state or with more disinterested altruism depending on how they think about their role and their relationship with implementing partners and affected states. Donors can express more solidarity with other states or individual leadership depending on how they view each particular crisis. Donors do not have ultimate control over those partners they subjectivise, and this will depend on whether other partners are also resourcing them and how much knowledge of the partner the donor has.
accumulated over time. Related to adjudication above, the practice of subjectivising implementing partners can render the actions of donors themselves invisible. This can be especially during humanitarian crises where the resource dependency of implementing partners is high, restricting opportunities to hold donors to account, or where partner project reports are the main source used by donors to evaluate their own performance.

7.5 Mediating

In describing their humanitarian territory donors set up accounting structures with which to manage it and give it purpose. In other words, donors place boundaries around their humanitarian territory and sub-territories, and inside these boundaries they invite certain actors and provide resources for them to enable certain actions. This, in the words of Miller and Power, is ‘mediating’, which “links up different actors with a common narrative and may constitute a network of relations within and beyond the boundaries of the enterprise” (Miller & Power, 2013: p581). Mediating in humanitarian donorship can be understood as linking up different actors with the common narrative of support to those affected by crises. When humanitarian donorship occurs, different actors formally accept direct responsibility to support those affected, and this humanitarian narrative exists alongside a donor’s political and commercial narratives. Miller and Power explain further that the act of mediating is where accounting is exposed as more than a technical exercise, because it sets up process inside calculable spaces to achieve outcomes from a particular narrative. They state that “accounting is of such interest because it is both agent and outcome, both idea and practice, in its mediating role, a role in which diverse arenas and levels can be linked (temporarily) together via accounting and mutually expand” (Miller & Power, 2013: p582). Donorship, in a similar way, requires mediation to achieve its goals.

7.5.1 Mediating with Funding Instruments

The main mediating activity for humanitarian donors is the translation of policy into practice. Donor policies publicly state ideas and intentions in an act of adjudicating the priorities they value, and these policies are translated into actions when they are resourced. The main space where mediation occurs is within the implementation of humanitarian action. Implementation involves relationships, in varying degrees, with certain actors such as the affected state, other donor states, implementing partners, tax-payers and those affected by crises. Funding instruments represent the main formalised way in which donors mediate their humanitarian territories described in their policies. With the use
of funding instruments, donors co-opt implementing partners as donor agents to have a direct effect on those affected by crises. As discussed in the preceding chapters, some funding instruments are facilitated with agreements between one donor and one or several implementing partners, other instruments involve several donors ‘pooling’ funds together for disbursement by an intermediary agency. Notably there is little direct contact between donors and those affected, save for project monitoring visits. Funding instruments commonly take the form of either grants or contracts with implementing partners. Granting can be broadly understood as a call for proposals written by implementing partners and contracts can be broadly understood a project written by a donor tendered to implementing partners. The reasons why a donor may choose a grant over a contract are many and varied, including the specialist knowledge required to perform the task concerned, or the speed at which the task needs to be completed.

Mediating influences territorialising as certain accounting processes begin to dictate more precisely the shape of the support to those affected in terms of how resources are to be used. Within the broad boundaries of ‘humanitarian’, instruments are usually tailored within narrower sub-territories of ‘preparedness’, ‘response’, ‘recovery’, ‘stabilisation’, and ‘return’. As we have seen above, these narrower boundaries tend to be managed by certain teams, and the boundaries between these teams can be robust. For example, different teams have access to different budgets, and certain instruments tend to be linked to certain budgets. There are also more customary boundaries between teams that prevent flexibility even when there is some formal flexibility for budget access. One donor official explained that rigid boundaries between teams makes it difficult to collaborate and create continuity in the longer term. They stated:

“Bluntly speaking it can be very difficult for us to have one award and then it to be picked up by another part of the mission or potentially managed by a different [team]” (4E:6).

Another donor official reflected that it would be useful to use a particular rapid response tool for spikes in protracted crises, but that it had rarely been used that way:

“[This instrument] should be considered not just by [the humanitarian team] but by a ... country office, so we’d like it to be a ‘whole of [department]’ tool. At the moment it’s very niche to [the humanitarian team]” (14C:6).

In this way territories around humanitarian and development, and different activities within humanitarian crises become more robust when mediated through teams and budgets.
Miller and Power explained above that, further to being simply processes which organise, mediating “may constitute a network of relations within and beyond the boundaries of the enterprise” (Miller & Power, 2013: p581). In other words, mediating pulls in a range of concerns from interested parties. When humanitarian resources are managed by different teams and packaged into different budgets, the goal of humanitarian resources to support those affected by crises is often intersected by other concerns. This phenomenon can be illustrated with a comparison of two particular funds, namely the Central Emergency Response Fund32 (CERF) and the START Fund33. Both the CERF and the START Fund are pooled funds paid into by several donors and managed by intermediary agencies. Both CERF and START were established as humanitarian funds, within donor’s humanitarian territories and, in particular, within the narrower territory of response. The START fund is aimed specifically towards underfunded crises and the CERF has a window for underfunded crises. The START fund is primarily for immediate response within 45 days, and this can stretch to 60 days with board approval. CERF is also intended for ‘life saving’, but funds can be spent within 6 months, and thereafter no-cost extensions must be applied for. The CERF has been established for 15 years with a current budget of circa. $1bn, and START has been established for 10 years with a current budget of circa. $25m. While the CERF is managed by the UN and can only be accessed directly by the UN, the Start Fund is managed by an independent group of INGOs and can only be accessed directly by NGOs.

Alongside the practical use of these instruments, mediating can also be understood to be how donors facilitate political statements about maintaining solidarity with other donor states, reducing nationalistic influence on the geographical destination of humanitarian funds relying on humanitarian technical expertise beyond donors’ own teams. While CERF and START both allow donors to mediate support to those affected by crises, they also serve other concerns. The main impetus for the CERF was to formalise donor coordination as a statement of solidarity and as a way of maintaining the humanitarian imperative collectively, over and above individual nationalistic agendas of any one donor state (6WF). The START Fund was established partly for implementing partners to have more control over where resources are channelled, as those closer to those affected by crises, and for donors to delegate oversite for smaller grants, thereby reducing their overhead costs (8E).

Mediating in humanitarian donorship appears to catalyse new instruments but then crystalize and become more rigid as instruments become institutionalised. Once funding instruments are established, they can become inflexible. While they do evolve this can happen very slowly, and more commonly new instruments are established to address the shortcomings of existing instruments. For

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32 [Home | CERF (un.org)](https://www.un.org/en/cerf) visited 28.06.21
33 [Start Fund | Start Network](https://www.start-network.net) visited 28.06.21

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instance, the CERF has never opened up to be directly accessible to non-UN agencies, rather other instruments have been established to fill this gap, such as Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF). The CERF is also known for slow disbursement, so other instruments have been established to fill the gap such as the Start Fund and DFID’s Rapid Response Fund (RRF).

One effect of this gap filling approach is that mediating begins to dictate the shape of the support that is resourced, over and above those affected by humanitarian crises. The length of a humanitarian grant, namely the time by which the funds must be spent, becomes dictated by the shortcomings of the administrative system rather than best practice for supporting humanitarian action. This phenomenon was discussed in Chapter Five (4Y, 8E) and is explored in more detail below.

While the CERF is intended for immediate response, the administrative processes involved in disbursement can take up to six weeks. A donor official described this process:

“From when the money is received by the CERF to when the money is received by the agency, in order to get to that process you will have had quite a bit of time lapsed, not only from when the emergency occurred but when the UN agency has done needs assessments and pulled together a response plan and development a proposal, and submitted it to the CERF and the CERF has come back with some questions, and some challenges: even that timeframe can be weeks. That presupposes that you start the clock from the time the emergency happens” (60:1).

This administrative burden represents, perhaps, the cost of managing the risk collective risk for $1bn over a six-month period of exposure. Other bilateral grants can also take over one month to reach implementing partners (USAID, 2018). One donor official explained that the forty-five day window for spending START funds was dictated by this administrative burden and also the small amount of funds available, rather than the type of support required by those affected by crises:

“I think the forty-five day window was actually part of the average time that other funding needs for other donor needs to reach the organisation. CERF might need forty-five days or two months for the funding to actually reach and for the organisations to be able to respond. So initially in the design phase of the START Fund that was the most important factor. Another factor was the size, because although the SF has been activated for large crises, normally it is not activated for large crises because £300,000 will not have any significant impact. So again, forty-five days allows as well for the limited amount of money that can be allocated to have a bigger impact in this type of crises” (8E:3).
This phenomenon of gap filling also exists internally within some donors who have created new instruments to accommodate the time taken for administrative processes. One donor official explained the administration that takes three months to trigger their larger humanitarian grants, and that for this reason they have a quicker, smaller grant to fill the gap.

“This ‘three months’, was probably decided internally here because it has to be long enough to process all this... first we collect the needs from the directorate, then we go to [the] budget, they have to request from other [team] where they have other needs before they decide, it has to come back. Then they have to go to the accounting system to put the money on our budget line. So we say that 3 months is what has been decided internally” (4Y:4).

In neither of these cases is there any formal link between an implementing partner receiving the quicker, smaller grant and securing the larger slower grant, even from the same donor. Each instrument crystallises as a separate mediating process.

Mediating can be understood, therefore, as both an enabling and restricting action. Mediating enables the use of resources yet the way in which mediating is employed can restrict humanitarian outcomes. Three restricting effects can be produced where administrative processes begin to dictate the shape of funding instruments. First, funding instruments cannot easily translate certain aspects of policy into practice where there is a trade off with financial risk, for instance donors may either achieve risk speed or longevity, but rarely both. Secondly, funding instruments do not easily flex to accommodate the specifics of unique contexts in humanitarian crises where the interests of multiple parties are managed. Thirdly, the lack of evolution of funding instruments both restricts continuity of support to those affected and generates more administration through the proliferation of more grants, albeit for implementing partners rather than donors.

7.5.2 Flexibility in Mediation

Chapter Five discussed several ways in which donors manage flexibility in mediation. Despite the fluid nature of humanitarian crises, the approach to flexibility in humanitarian donorship is quite traditional. For instance, it is common for donors to approve a budget with fixed line items while allowing for a small percentage change between budget lines (22M). In addition, in certain circumstances ‘change orders’, ‘modification requests’ or ‘no-cost extensions’ are often allowed with additional donor approval. These changes take time to approve and are often viewed as a failure on the part of the implementing partner rather than an expected result of working in a fluid context. For
shelter and settlements this approach is a contrast to the type of contract management employed in construction work outside of humanitarian crises, for example by architects and civil engineers.

There are a range of construction contracts available for different types of project that allow for budgets with a contingency for unexpected costs, or ‘variations’, and project timeframes are tailored to each specific project. Humanitarian funding instruments dictate one timeframe no matter what the activity being resourced, rather than being flexible to the likely timeframe to achieve different outcomes.

One reason mediating can be understood as both an enabling and restricting action is because mediating has a dual function. Mediating enables the use of resources, and in parallel mediating enables the management of risk. Chapter Six touched on the relationship between risk and resources. Where more risk is perceived, such as disbursing funds with little notice, and presumably less consideration, donors seek to reduce exposure by limiting both the timeframe and the amount of funds. This can be seen in the establishment of instruments such as the START fund and the RRF. Where more exposure is required, such as a longer time-period in which to spend a grant, donors tend to require more administration which slows down the disbursement process. As discussed above, this can create a mismatch between a donor’s humanitarian territory set out in their humanitarian policies, and the humanitarian outcomes they can achieve. Donors can request that their implementing partners be accountable for outcomes such as timeliness of response or sustainability in their policies, but without providing sufficient time or continuity to accomplish them. For example, one donor requests “prompt assistance to alleviate human suffering” (OFDA, 2015: p2) yet cannot disburse funds in less than six weeks. Another donor requests that camps should be planned as “integral extensions of cities, to become self-sufficient or even sustainable” (ECHO, 2017:p19), yet requires funds to be spent in six months.

7.5.3 Summary of Mediating in Humanitarian Donorship.

Mediating in donorship allows donors to translate their policies into practice, but the actual processes of mediating, such as granting or contracting, can increase the rigidity of donor territories as they dictate the shape of the support to be funded. Despite the fluid nature of humanitarian crises, the approach to mediating in humanitarian donorship is quite traditional, and funding instruments can become inflexible once they are established. This results in a proliferation of different instruments

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34 The Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) visited 29.06.21
35 FIDIC | Which FIDIC Contract should I use? | International Federation of Consulting Engineers visited 29.06.21
accessible by different implementing partners or serving different contexts to match the different territories that have been established. Mediating processes can also shape humanitarian assistance over and above the context of the crises, for example by dictating timeframes. The dual function of mediating, to enable the use of resources, and in parallel enable the management of risk, can also create tensions when the adjudication of humanitarian action takes place.

7.6 Conclusions

The four roles of humanitarian donorship provide a framework with which to illustrate the effects of ODA on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises by identifying how the economic and ethical decisions made by a state donor are interlinked. This chapter has discussed certain aspects of these four roles which enable or restrict the ability of donors to achieve flexibility in resourcing humanitarian assistance and maintain a longer-term approach. The use and extension of the critical accounting framework has allowed the analysis to go beyond the limitations of the relatively inductive ‘flexible and longer-term’ approaches of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Depending on the culture of a donor, they may place a more rigid or more flexible boundary around their humanitarian territory and sub-territories. Certain donors align their geographical humanitarian boundary with their political and commercial interests, while other donors focus on the humanitarian imperative independently. Donors with smaller budgets and less profile are often more able to maintain a more principled approach. Mechanisms which evidence the global spread of humanitarian risk and likely needs can be used by a donor’s humanitarian team to counter political influences on humanitarian funding decisions. Donors are more likely to take a longer-term view in geographical locations where they have established political or commercial territories, although this is not always the case. Where rigid internal separation exists between a donor’s humanitarian and development territories, the teams responsible may not coordinate or communicate.

Adjudication of what to include in a donor’s humanitarian territory establishes their priorities, but once this is set up it assigns institutional resources such as budgets and teams which can be difficult to change. This can create impediments to the continuity of funding over the longer-term. Donors inform their adjudication of the priorities for humanitarian funding with data collection processes including needs assessments and context assessments. While these often rely on primary data, the
way in which they are used can be sensitive to bias. Donors are not always fully in control of these processes, nor do they have direct oversight of the situation of those affected by crises. In a similar way, adjudication by donors of the humanitarian action of their implementing partners does not always focus on adjudication of what was best for affected households. The measurement of the success of donorship is influenced by the messages donors wish to send to their domestic and international constituencies. Donors may prefer short term funding and short-term results to multi-year humanitarian funding in settings where a long-term political situation is uncertain. In an attempt to manage risk with bureaucracy, the process of disbursing grants can become also become weighed down with administration which costs in terms of time and money, reducing the flexibility to adapt to the changing situation in humanitarian crises. Between humanitarian crises, implementing partners can experience resource dependency on donors which can compromise their opportunities to hold donors accountable on behalf of those affected by crises. This may be one reason why humanitarian agencies think in terms of collective action to hold donors to account.

The ability of donors to responsibilise a range of different implementing partners with different capabilities in different locations provides them with great flexibility in how to approach humanitarian crises. Donors can manage political sensitivities with the type of partners they subjectivise and tailor the number of partners and type of partnership agreement to their commercial needs. The control donors can exert over their partners, however, depends on whether other donors are also resourcing them, and how much knowledge of the partner the donor has accumulated over time. Donors also have a flexible choice of funding instruments with which to mediate humanitarian resources. Certain donors approaches to mediating in humanitarian donorship can, however, be quite traditional and funding instruments can become inflexible once they are established. This is sometimes due to assumptions made by conservative programme teams, rather than the rigidity of finance teams. Mediating processes themselves can also restrict certain aspects of humanitarian assistance such as timeframes and cost. The dual function of mediating, to enable the use of resources, and in parallel enable the management of risk, can also create tensions when the adjudication of humanitarian action takes place.
Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter draws together the findings of this research to answer the central research question:

Why is it challenging for donors to align Overseas Development Aid (ODA) with the experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

With reference to existing literature, secondary documentary data sources and primary data sources this research has extended knowledge of humanitarian donorship, and in particular the impact of donorship mechanics on the recovery attempts of those who have lost their shelter and settlements. Where existing literature focuses mainly at a macro level on what influences donor states to support specific countries in humanitarian crises, this research goes further to trace the causal links from political and structural influences through to their effects on the process faced by those attempting to recover and those seeking to support them.

The following sections summarise the conclusions drawn from the analysis detailed in previous chapters to set out the main findings of the research. The first section answers the question of how donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises and their experience of recovering shelter and settlements. The second section answers the question of what influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions. The third section answers the question of the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. Lastly the chapter summarises the answer to the central research question above and the implications of this research for those who seek to support those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises.

8.2 How do ODA donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises and their experience of recovering shelter and settlements?

The research answers this first sub-question by identifying how ODA donors conceptualise their target group, namely those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. This involves the overlap of the boundaries which donors place around the concepts of ‘the most vulnerable’,...
‘humanitarian’ and ‘shelter and settlements’. Pinpointing this understanding is key to understanding the decisions donors make when allocating resources because it is a process of adjudication. In other words, certain activities are valued as ‘humanitarian’ and certain groups are valued as ‘vulnerable’ and therefore given resources to recover their shelter and settlements. Those aspects of shelter and settlements which are valued are therefore those aspects which fall inside donor territories of ‘vulnerable’ and ‘humanitarian’.

Chapters Four, Five and Six explained the extent to which donors’ perspectives of shelter and settlements overlap with their understanding of humanitarian assistance. For some donors with a broad humanitarian territory, the full recovery of shelter and settlements is a legitimate cost under a humanitarian budget, usually if their humanitarian territory includes the sub-territory of recovery. Where donors limit their humanitarian territory to response, their understanding of shelter and settlements can be truncated to temporary assistance such as tents or transitional shelters and excludes any permanent reconstruction on principle.

Chapter Four illustrated, using analysis of donor policies and aid effectiveness initiatives, how difficult it can be for donors to place a boundary around their target group for humanitarian funding. Boundaries around the most vulnerable and humanitarian crises are, in fact, constantly moving and shifting. Humanitarian crises rarely have a single cause or a single effect, they rarely last for a predictable and finite period of time or happen to a neatly isolated group. The location and context where vulnerable groups are found varies enormously from one crisis to the next. This means that donor humanitarian policy must address a notional and generic vulnerable group broad enough to encompass the most likely eventualities.

Chapter Four analysed data from the Global Humanitarian Assistance reports to illustrate how as each humanitarian crises unfolds, the precise criteria for being vulnerable shifts depending on the context, for example the type of hazard which caused the crisis or the economic status of the country, when comparing displaced households in a Middle-Income Country with disaster affected households in a Lower Income Country. Examples in Chapter Seven demonstrated how donors use mechanisms which evidence the global spread of humanitarian risk and likely humanitarian needs to define the most vulnerable, such as INFORM, OCHA and rely upon data from their implementing partners specific to that specific crisis.

Chapter Five detailed how the relationship between donors and the most vulnerable can vary in alignment, depending on their proximity. Where donors have staff close to the geographical location of the crisis or when they subjectivise those in the location, funding decisions tend to align more
closely and flexibly with the recovery attempts of those affected by the crisis. This phenomenon can be found in examples such as Country Based Pooled Funds or the START Network where funding decisions are delegated to those closer to the affected region.

Chapters Five and Six explored how placing a narrow boundary around what can be considered ‘humanitarian’ can be problematic since humanitarian crises are rarely neatly bounded but interlinked with ongoing development concerns specific to the context of the location where the crisis occurs. For instance, humanitarian crises rarely have a single cause or a single effect, they rarely last for a predictable and finite period, and they rarely happen to a neatly isolated group. In their attempts to manage the fluid and landscape of humanitarian crises, donors and their implementing partners were found to conceptualise the territory of ‘humanitarian’ as both an overarching territory with sub-territories. Chapter Seven discussed how different organisations include different sub-territories in their understanding of their humanitarian territory. For instance, ‘humanitarian’ can be broken down into ‘anticipation’, ‘response’ and ‘recovery’. These sub-territories form parts of the overall lived experience of those affected by humanitarian crises, so where donors have a narrow understanding of humanitarian territory, they will only engage in a partial alignment with the recovery efforts of those affected.

The recovery of shelter and settlements for those affected by crises, from the individual and household through to the community and national experience, occurs over a long period of time. The territory around support to recovery in humanitarian crises is therefore also broad. On the other hand, in humanitarian donorship, the temporal and conceptual boundary around humanitarian resources is often small and donors subjectivise implementing partners to mediate their funds only within a small part of the overall territory which those affected by crises experience. The way in which donors pay attention to those affected by humanitarian crises is determined by their attempts to address the fluid landscape of crises and the extent to which they choose to engage in the longer-term lived experience of those affected households. This often results in a notional, and generic, criteria for vulnerability based on the immediate aim of saving lives, mediated by donors through budgets with a high profile and adjudicated using predictable, and therefore limited, measures of success.

8.3 What influences ODA donors in their humanitarian funding decisions?

The research answers the second sub-question by identifying how donors are influenced by both exogenous and endogenous sources. For instance, donors are influenced by their exogenous
relationships with others, including their domestic constituencies, implementing partners, the affected states, and other donor states. Endogenous influences emerge from a donors’ own institutional culture, including financial processes, organisational structures, and conceptualisation of success. Certain influences cause a powerful knock-on effect to create further layers of influence. These influences include the complexity of granting to implementing partners and trends in quantitative measurement.

Donors are influenced by their domestic constituency in a range of different ways. State governments which task the donor ministries in this study rely upon their domestic constituency to retain governance, and there are three key characteristics of this government to ministry relationship which influence humanitarian donorship. Firstly, the governments in question only have a short, guaranteed term once they are voted in. Secondly, domestic constituencies cover a wide demographic, so government messaging must have a broad appeal. Lastly, ministries responsible for humanitarian donorship are just one of many ministries in the portfolio of the government so the humanitarian imperative is only one of many domestic and international priorities.

Humanitarian donorship can be very attractive as domestic political currency because it offers the opportunity for the government in question to demonstrate qualities such as international leadership and altruism. There can create considerable pressure for donors to fund at scale and speed, for instance “bigger, better and faster” (DFID, 2017). The short governing term dictates that the requirement for the political currency humanitarian assistance can provide must be short term, so short term rapid action within humanitarian crises often fulfils this requirement. In addition, the need for simple, black and white messages that are easy to understand influences the way in which humanitarian donorship is measured and communicated. Outputs and results are found to be favoured over more complex outcomes because they translate more easily into public communications. Messages that communicate government achievements are found to be favoured over the achievements of those attempting to recover, for instance the speed and scale of humanitarian assistance, rather than the more nuanced aspects of the success of affected communities as they recover. The short-term approach is also linked to the management of risk. Government ministries are tasked to reduce costs and maintain a government’s reputation for achieving results in relatively short timeframes. This requirement influences donor ministries to take as little risk as possible, to be able to predict results and achieve positive profile and leadership.

Larger scale humanitarian crises where it is clear at the outset that recovery will take a long time can counter the negative influences of short-term governance systems. In addition, where there is a high
level of media interest which triggers a high level of public donorship, this can place pressure on
government donors to respond even where little international political currency is gained. Certain
events are so large that domestic concerns to provide humanitarian assistance override the above
inward looking domestic concerns. Examples of this phenomenon include those crises which have
affected many households and often several countries at once, including the South Asian Tsunami of
2004, the Haitian Earthquake of 2010 and the ongoing Syrian Crisis. Some donors even have
mechanisms to ensure that they are seen to be responding at a commensurate level to public interest,
for instance where the British Government often matches donations to the Disasters and Emergencies
Committee36.

Donor states are also influenced by their relationship with the affected state. This includes where the
affected state is demonstrably in an extreme crisis as discussed in the examples above, or where there
are other political advantages for the donor state to provide support. These political advantages were
discussed in Chapter Two, for instance maintaining relationships based on colonial history and the
desire to continue current political alliances such as proxy associations. Certain donors align their
geographical humanitarian boundary with their political and commercial interests, while other donors
focus on the humanitarian imperative more independently (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). Donors with
smaller budgets are often more able to maintain a more principled approach because this brings them
less international scrutiny. It is likely, however, that without this political currency, countries can elicit
humanitarian support from donor states if they have an existing presence of the humanitarian
community who can lobby alongside the affected government (Olsen, Carstensen, & Høyen, 2003).

When a donor behaves within a group this can either generate influence for that donor or cause that
donor to be influenced by others. This was found to be the case in three main scenarios. First, where
there are incentives for several states to act in alignment with each other, albeit with different
incentives, a single state may be able to use solidarity with others to leverage their own agenda or
even demonstrate leadership within a group. The way in which donors work within the same
territories as other donors can also create coordination and therefore predictability. Where several
donor states sign up to a particular course of action in advance of a crisis there may be pressure on
others to follow suit, for example humanitarian aid effectiveness initiatives such as the Good
Humanitarian Donorship initiative and the Grand Bargain. Aid effectiveness initiatives have produced
common concepts to rely on for adjudication, for instance, donor coordination, flexible funding and

36 For example: UK Government matches another £5 million of donations for coronavirus appeal after huge
public response - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) visited 27.09.21

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supporting national responders. Second, drivers such as political opportunity and allegiances can counter this, bringing rigidity. Donors can be influenced by competition with other states to show leadership and direct their resources towards their own ends. One example of this was seen following the Haiti earthquake of 2010 where many donors were interested in resourcing the recovery attempts due to the high profile of the crises, which caused competition between donors (22M). Thirdly, where few other donor states are present, donors may be able to have more influence over the affected state where they are struggling to secure resources (22M).

The donor-implementing partner relationship contributes another level of influence over humanitarian donorship. While the resource dependency of individual implementing partners weakens one to one partner-donor accountability (38A, 40) implementing partners can still have influence over humanitarian donorship in three main circumstances. First, individual implementing partners can influence donors if they have control over the data used for the adjudication of which groups, locations and technical sectors require support, for example the infrastructure for needs assessments feeding into annual or crisis specific appeals (Konyndyk, 2018). Second, solidarity between several implementing partners can be used to influence donors either individually or as a group, for instance with aid effectiveness agendas. Lastly, where individual implementing partners are funded by multiple donors this can afford them more influence over an individual donor than that donor has over them. They may use this influence, for instance, to block other organisations accessing certain types of grant such as the Central Emergency Relief Fund. This type of behaviour causes increased complexity in the mediation of humanitarian donorship, in this case the multiplicity of instrument types, which has a knock-on effect on those affected by crises.

Without the creation of calculable spaces, such as humanitarian budgets, resources could not be disbursed through funding instruments, so these calculable spaces are key. It would seem to follow then that donor decisions about the shape of their humanitarian territories, set up in their policies, would have a direct influence on the shape of the channels for humanitarian resources. This research found that the reverse is more often true. For instance, while donors aspire to achieve resilient recovery from crises, the shape of their humanitarian instruments do not necessarily allow for this aspiration to be implemented. Certain characteristics of donor institutions themselves such as organisational cultures, structures and processes have influence over humanitarian donorship. These influences can be powerful, partly because they are not necessarily on public display or explicit in an organisation’s internal dialogue. A lack of innovation in the culture of government ministries can restrict the ability of a donor to flexibly adapt its funding instruments. For example, the characteristics of humanitarian finance instruments are often passively inherited from historical decisions rather than
intentionally informed by adjudication processes, such as project evaluations (8A, 6WF). Innovative processes were found to happen sporadically and sometimes despite the ministry’s hierarchy rather than guided by it (8A, GP2). Governments aiming to secure another term of governance are less open to taking risks and may therefore be less open to self-reflection and learning, and this culture of maintaining the status quo may de-incentivise innovation and change.

The structure of government ministries often includes rigid divisions between different teams, for instance humanitarian and development teams. Chapter Six explained how donors set up calculable spaces by creating territories in which they can mediate their resources and implementing partners, and these spaces are managed by teams with budgets. A positive effect of demarcating a territory for ‘humanitarian’ is to allow for specific funds and expertise to be assigned to address a specific requirement, allowing for funds to be calculated against ‘humanitarian’ as an economic activity. Adjudicating what to include in a donor’s humanitarian territory establishes their priorities, but once this is set up it assigns financial and human resources which can be difficult to change. A negative finding is that financial and technical teams often have rigid boundaries, with a lack of connection between these teams. Budgets are often attached to teams who decide how they are spent and as a result teams can become territorial over their resources. Negative influences of this territoriality can be seen, for example, in the reluctance of some humanitarian teams to cover the costs of what they see as developmental activities and similarly the reluctance of development teams to cover activities they would describe as humanitarian (Ramalingam & Neal, 2015; 6WF). Discussions concerning linking relief and development (Mosel & Levine, 2014) or forming a Nexus (Poole & Culbert, 2019) are therefore far from purely ideological; they involve institutional resourcing decisions so they are deeply entwined in existential sensitivities for humanitarian and development teams. This may be attributed to institutional cultures where a hierarchical, structured and therefore siloed ways of working are valued over a flatter structure and more collaborative culture.

The processes of mediating resources during a crisis were also found to be influenced by the rigidity of institutional structures and culture. Mediating has a dual function, to enable the use of resources and, in parallel, to enable the management of risk. This dual function influences humanitarian donorship in several ways. Grant management is one area of mediation which has retained traditional practices with few examples of innovation. USAID’s crisis modifier discussed in Chapter Five and Multi Year Humanitarian Funding discussed in Chapter Six are two notable exceptions. Rather than grant management practices being influenced by the fluid nature of humanitarian crises, grant management often relies on project management models with limited ways to manage risk. As a result, change
mechanisms such as change orders and no-cost extensions tend to be viewed by donors as measures of failure to deliver rather than tools to manage change (38A, 28C). The conservative risk management of the mediating function of donorship also challenges the use of humanitarian funds for longer periods of time when resilience could be fully realised because financial risk is perceived to increase with exposure over time. Similarly, aspirations for speed of disbursement are often thwarted by a lack of rapid administrative practices.

The reliance of donors on quantitative measurement over the past two decades, discussed in Chapter Two and Four (Cabot Venton & Sida, 2017; Stoddard et al., 2017; Valters & Whitty, 2017) has become a strong influence over humanitarian donorship. This is linked to two influences previously discussed above, namely the domestic and international relationships which donor states manage. The requirement by donors and their implementing partners for figures to describe simple concepts to public audiences (6WF, 4O, GP2, 22M), such as scale and speed, efficiency and Value for Money, combined with the growing perception that there is not enough funding to address the growing scale of humanitarian crises (HLPHF, 2016; Stoddard et al., 2017; E. S. Swithern, 2018) have contributed to this trend. A quantitative approach to measuring the success of humanitarian donorship has limited the type of activity that implementing partners can propose to donors and the way in which they communicate their successes to donors. In Chapter Six we saw humanitarian practitioners explain that there is a difference between the empirical reality of how those affected by crises are supported and the way in which this is communicated to donors. There is a difference between “your ideal program design vs what your program design has to look like under a grant” (38A:4), and that reporting on the grant involves “playing the game” (4O:8).

Donors are influenced in their humanitarian funding decisions by both exogenous and endogenous sources. These sources include domestic and international relationships, their own institutional structures and culture, plus recent trends in quantitative measurement. Together, these influences can result in positive effects, such as ensuring high levels of funding and specialist resources for large scale crises and opportunities for collective action between donors and implementing partners. Donors can also be negatively influenced by these sources to restrict funding to short term results and to geographical locations of political interest, and to create complexity and rigidity which prevent flexibility and a longer-term perspective.
8.4 What is the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises?

This research answers the third sub-question by identifying the impact of the policies and practice of ODA donors on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises. While this research identified positive impacts such as setting up calculable spaces to channel resources for humanitarian assistance and delivering resources quickly and at scale, it also identified negative impacts such as the oversimplification of measures of success, increasing complexity, the weight of administration and the erosion of development gains.

As discussed above, there is considerable pressure for donors to fund at scale and speed, for instance “bigger, better and faster” (DFID, 2017). Funding faster often means pressure to fund for shorter periods. This pressure is derived from the short nature of government terms and from the need to manage risk in unpredictable environments. Short termism provides donors with a quick turnaround from publicising their support to evidencing their successes. Short termism is also is one way in which donors manage risk. In humanitarian crises, where large amounts need to be disbursed quickly, shortening the spending window reduces the amount of time funds are exposed for.

The impact on those attempting to recover their shelter and settlements of resourcing a long-term situation with short term funding is far reaching. Chapter Six discussed the impact of short termism on the recovery attempts of those affected by humanitarian crises. Emphasis on speed for results can create early funding surges followed by gaps and discontinuity in funding. In addition, the time implementing partners have to discuss recovery with those affected can be truncated, leading to a lack of support for their agency and an emphasis on what they need rather than what capabilities they have (38A, 40, 420). Fast response may be one measure of success, but continuity is equally valuable for those faced with a recovery journey spanning several years. Discontinuity and unpredictability result in lost opportunities for supporting the agency of those affected and can erode development gains (Pallas, 2016; E. S. Swithern, 2018) and (38A, 6WF). For those attempting to recover their shelter and settlements in particular, short termism can result in piecemeal support from implementing partners, especially when donors are narrowly focussed on lifesaving or will not fund permanent construction. It can also limit discussions about acting early on to start recovery efforts if the process is perceived to take longer than the spending windows available.

Pressure to communicate success quickly and to a wide audience creates the need for simple messages. The impact of the desire for simple messages creates a disconnect between donors and the
humanitarian assistance they resource because implementing partners do not feel able to propose more nuanced activities and they understand that they must simplify description of their activities in donor reports. As simple, reportable aspects of humanitarian assistance become valued over and above those aspects which involve more nuance and complexity, this changes the nature of what a donor values as the success of humanitarian assistance. Success has more recently become described as ‘Results’ and ‘Outputs’ rather than ‘Impact’ and ‘Outcomes’. As a result, donors may become far less aware of what works on the ground if they are not asking for this type of information. In addition, accountability of both donors and their implementing partners is reduced because a truncated picture is being produced. The true success or failure of donorship can be masked by these simplified adjudication processes. For those recovering their shelter and settlements it can be difficult to describe the more nuanced support they require in terms of the process of recovery, such as legal advice for housing, land and property rights, or technical advice for disaster risk reduction, over and above the more quantifiable products such as tents or houses, especially if completion of those products they eventually need are outside of the short timeframe of available humanitarian grants.

With respect to funding ‘bigger’, pressure for widespread coverage of a large number of affected households has an impact on how donors spread their resources geographically. In Chapter Five we saw one donor pushing an implementing partner to spread out their operations to several locations so they could claim wider coverage. The recovery of shelter and settlements is somewhat disadvantaged in terms of coverage. Given the perception of a high per capita cost, discussed in Chapter Four, support to the recovery of shelter and settlements provides figures of lower numbers of households for the same amount spent on other sectors, despite a wider range of positive long term outcomes (Kelling, 2020; Sheppard & Hill, 2005). There can, however, be advantages in certain situations where there is an extreme level of suffering and where shelter and settlements have been lost on a massive scale. Where extremely large crises occur, such as the South Asian tsunami of 2004, the Haiti earthquake of 2010 or Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines in 2014, and funding levels are unusually high, shelter and settlements can provide a way to demonstrate spending of funds on a large scale because the high per capita cost allows funds to be spent quickly. For longer-term grants to be considered, households need to be in crises already for several years. When protracted crises gain media attention, often due to their longevity, this attracts funds. There is currently a lack of attention paid by donors to empirical evidence of how long recovery from humanitarian crises actually lasts (Devictor & Do, 2016; Platt, 2018) and this evidence is unlikely to be promoted while there remains a perception of a lack of humanitarian funds overall.
Rigidities in institutional culture are another key influence on the ability of donors to respond flexibly and in the longer term. This rigidity results from a combination of a perception that the financial, legal and risk management aspects of mediation are rigid and a lack of opportunities to create change in donor institutions. The lack of flexibility between budgets and lack of collaboration between teams creates gaps and delays in support for those affected by crises as humanitarian teams attempt to maintain their narrow territories. The conservative nature of institutional donor culture creates risk aversion. Risk aversion in turn generates an administration burden as donors seek to manage risk through auditing rather than developing lasting relationships with their implementing partners. This administration burden has a direct impact on the level of funds available for maintaining quality because it draws funds away from technical oversite and towards the fulfilment of compliance requirements (38A, 8R). It also prevents some local organisations from receiving funds because the risk management thresholds are so high (38A, 6WF).

Rigidity in institutional culture also reduces the ability of donors to innovate. This reduces the opportunity to improve the sophistication of donorship practice including grant management processes, contributing to a multiplicity of funding instruments. Where traditional grant management practices cause delays, rather than tackle the weight of administration new instruments are created, adding to the multiplicity and complexity of the humanitarian donorship system as a whole. The CERF and the Start Network as used to illustrate this in Chapter Five. As discussed in the previous section, traditional approaches to grant management practices consider changes to grant agreements as failures. There are low incentives, therefore, for implementing partners to be responsive to changing needs of those affected by crises and to request changes as a result. This approach makes implementing partners reluctant to ask for changes (28C).

The dominance of quantitative measurement lends itself both to the simple messages required by donors above for public communication and presents a simple way to calculate risk. Certain efforts under the Grand Bargain have been reduced to quantitative targets, such as increasing of funds to localisation and reducing earmarking of funds. These quantitative targets focus away from the detail about why earmarking may improve quality in certain circumstances or how local organisations might develop the capabilities necessary manage a rapid and massive increase in funds.

More widespread is the increasing dominance of the notion that efficiency in the humanitarian donorship will increase the level of funds available. While this may be the case, emphasis on the notion of efficiency is overriding the humanitarian imperative in certain aspects of donorship, and especially where efficiency is conflated with low cost (GP2, 38A). The practice of efficiency can begin to erode
the quality of humanitarian assistance and become an obstacle rather than a benefit. Donors who are under pressure to reduce their own overheads, in an attempt to be efficient, are reluctant to fund for longer periods of time which will draw on their own scarce internal resources for oversight. For the recovery of shelter and settlements, high initial capital costs during the initial period of humanitarian crises and long trajectories before successes can be demonstrated can be unattractive to donors seeking to demonstrate cost savings.

The impact of the policies and practice of ODA donor on the recovery of shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises was found to be positive in principle, but overlapping negative influences create substantial rigidities in funding processes and as a result funding flexibility and for the longer-term remains a challenge. Donor policies set up calculable spaces that allow for financial and technical resources to be channelled towards humanitarian assistance and the high profile of some crises allows for those resources to be delivered quickly and at scale. The same influences can lead to the oversimplification of measures of success where the humanitarian imperative competes with the need for political profile. Complexity and the weight of administration increase where the rigidities of institutional culture prevent innovation and create organisational competition. Together these negative impacts result in the erosion of development gains.

8.6 Conclusion and Implications

It is challenging for donors to align ODA with the experience of those who lose their shelter and settlements in humanitarian crises because exogenous influences incentivise short termism, restricting longer-term approaches and endogenous influences create rigidity in funding processes, preventing flexibility. Together the lack of longer-term approaches and the lack of flexibility contribute to insufficient support to the agency of affected households over the lived experience of the recovery of their shelter and settlements. Rigidity and short termism in humanitarian donorship also reduce the accountability of donors for their funding approaches because the influence of affected households is minimised by other stronger influences.

The implications of this research comprise a range of future possibilities within the four roles of humanitarian donorship and these are detailed below. The territories of humanitarian donorship can be rigid and narrow in terms of the temporal and social spaces which they include. Due to the strong influences which create these boundaries, changing these to make them more porous and broader to respond to the fluid landscape of humanitarian crises is challenging. One way to ensure that
humanitarian donorship is aligned with the recovery attempts of those affected by crises is to create opportunities for links between donor territories such as ‘humanitarian’ and ‘development’, for instance between institutional teams and budgets. For instance, conditional budget flexibility, as exemplified by USAID’s crisis modifier is one example of a link that can occur between development and humanitarian territories that can be triggered in a precise moment and under certain conditions. Closer attention to the context in a humanitarian crisis and to those affected by the crises also closes gaps between institutional territories. For instance, monitoring the implication of humanitarian crises on gains made by development teams such as costing the loss of development gains may contribute to illustrating the importance of the continuity of resources.

The current approach to adjudication in humanitarian donorship conflates communication aimed at promoting government reputation with the evaluation of the success of humanitarian donorship for those affected by crises. Separating these out and acknowledging their different purposes can contribute to both more efficient data collection, greater accountability of donors and improved outcomes for those affected. The promotion of small examples of innovation such as Multi Year Humanitarian Funding, and especially the associated cost savings, serves to encourage more progressive attitudes to flexibility and the longer-term. Cost saving can also be achieved through closer and longer relationships with implementing partners as an alternative to heavy auditing processes. Through the adoption of more sophisticated grant management approaches donors can move from reliance upon fast and quick but rigid funding to more responsive, adaptable, and longer-term funding. Practices such as variation clauses, contingency budget lines and accrual techniques exist in other industries and allow for more flexibility while preserving accountability for risk management purposes.

Longer-term approaches to humanitarian donorship and more flexibility are key characteristics which increase the agency of affected households in their lived experience of recovering their shelter and settlements. These characteristics of humanitarian donorship also increase the accountability of donors for their funding approaches because they strengthen the influence of affected households. Where there are political and commercial incentives to be flexible and to take a longer-term perspective, humanitarian donorship will more readily align with the recovery attempts of affected households.
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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Research Participants

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# Appendix B: Ulrich’s Critical Systems Heuristics Boundary Tool

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<td>Key problems (Stakeholding issues)</td>
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<td>1. Beneficiary Who ought to be/is the intended beneficiary of the system (S)?</td>
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<td>2. Purpose What ought to be/is the purpose of S?</td>
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<td>5. Resources What conditions of success ought to be/</td>
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<td>5. Resources What conditions of success ought to be/are under the control of S?</td>
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<td>knowledge</td>
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<td>6. Decision environment</td>
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<td>7. Expert Who ought to be/is providing relevant</td>
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<td>8. Expertise What ought to be/are relevant new</td>
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<td>10. Witness Who ought to be/is representing the</td>
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<td>interests of those negatively affected by but not</td>
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<td>involved with S?</td>
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<td>11. Emancipation What ought to be/are the opportunities</td>
<td>11. Emancipation</td>
<td>11. Emancipation What ought to be/are the opportunities for the interests of those negatively affected to have expression and freedom from the worldview of S?</td>
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<td>for the interests of those negatively affected to have expression and freedom from the worldview of S?</td>
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<td>12. Worldview What space ought to be/is available for</td>
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<td>reconciling differing worldviews regarding S among</td>
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<td>those involved and affected?</td>
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Appendix C: Typical First Phase Participant Questions

1. Who benefits from humanitarian financing and has this changed over time?

2. Who provides the knowledge and skills to design funding instruments and has this changed over time?

3. What are the measures of a successful funding instrument?

4. Who controls the success of humanitarian financing and has this changed over time?

5. What is the relationship between rapid onset funding and other funding instruments?

6. How does funding for rapid onset crises influence recovery?

7. How has the resourcing of humanitarian financing changed over time?

8. How has the context of humanitarian financing influenced its success?

9. How does deliberate change happen within the humanitarian financing system?
Appendix D: Typical Second Phase Participant Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of government funding? (What are the effects of government funding?)

2. Most grants end in the first year. What could be done earlier on that would prevent a crisis becoming protracted or would improve recovery or resilience prospects? (Are decisions connected across the post crisis timeframe)

3. What determines what instruments you choose? Especially small grants. Scale, timeframe? (Response grant, APS, non-government, crisis modifier, MYHF)

4. How effective are government funding instruments for building resilience during recovery from crises? Are there any instruments particularly well placed for recovery e.g. pooled funds? Why? (Is the nature of recovery recognised as specific)

5. Are there any instruments particularly well placed to enable ownership e.g. pooled funds? Why? (Is the nature of ownership recognised as specific)

6. What effect do ideas like VfM, Efficiency and Reducing the Budget have on recovery? (Are objectives hierarchical or interchangeable)

7. Is anyone able to measure whether more people are surviving into the recovery phase by spending money in a shorter timeframe? (What evidence is driving this decision)