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The times they are a-changin': prevention and humanitarianism

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Zusammenfassung

Seit dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts haben Prävention und humanitäre Hilfe deutlich an Attraktivität gewonnen. Vor allem die Idee der Prävention wird allseits als vielversprechender Lösungsansatz zur Bearbeitung gewaltsamer Konflikte gepriesen. Darüber hinaus hat aber auch der Bereich der humanitären Hilfe einen signifikanten Schub erfahren. Der Wandel dieses speziellen Politikfelds ist einerseits abhängig vom übergreifenden normativen Wandel im internationalen System. Andererseits ist er bezogen auf die Zunahme innerstaatlicher Gewaltereignisse und komplexer humanitärer Katastrophen. Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Elemente des Wandels stellt sich die doppelte Frage, wie die strukturellen Veränderungen im internationalen System einzuordnen sind und inwieweit die Herausbildung einer ‚Kultur der Prävention' und die Weiterentwicklung von Menschenrechtsstandards Teilordnungen wie das Politikfeld der humanitären Hilfe berühren. Normativ betrachtet sind Prävention und humanitäre Hilfe verwandte Konzepte, die beide auf die konstitutiven Normen internationaler Ordnung bezogen sind und auf die Regulierung gewaltsamer Konflikte bzw. ihrer Folgen verweisen. Auf der operationalen Ebene jedoch ist der Beitrag der humanitären Hilfe zur Prävention gewaltsamer Konflikte begrenzt – zumal der Missbrauch humanitärer Hilfe als ein Instrument der Politik bzw. der Prävention die humanitären Prinzipien gefährdet. In diesem Sinne steht sowohl die Analyse der normativen Ebene im Mittelpunkt, die die Verknüpfungselemente zwischen Prävention und humanitärer Hilfe aufzeigt und in den Kontext des normativen Wandels stellt, als auch die operationale Ebene, die alles andere als unproblematisch ist.

Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War both preventive action and humanitarian assistance have become exceptionally attractive. Especially prevention has widely been praised as the solution to the various forms of violent conflict. In addition to the shifts in prevention, humanitarian aid has experienced a significant boost. The re-definition of this particular issue-area is dependent on both the global normative transformations after the East-West conflict and the change of central contextual conditions, i.e. the spread of internal violence and complex humanitarian emergencies such as refugee flows or hunger. Given these dimensions of change today the question arises whether the structural transformations within the international system represent a paradigmatic change and whether the rise of a 'culture of prevention' and human rights standards challenge the normative foundations of partial orders such as the humanitarian sphere and affect their normative standards. Normatively and conceptually, humanitarian aid and prevention are related concepts. Both depend on the constitutive norms of international order and point to the regulation of violent conflicts and/or their most disastrous effects. On the operational level, however, the contribution of humanitarian aid to the prevention of deadly conflicts is limited since humanitarian aid has its special advantages in providing relief to the victims. Moreover, the use of relief aid as a palliative for the missing political will or as a tool of prevention and dispute resolution jeopardizes the humanitarian principles. The paper focuses, thus, on normative and conceptual linkages of prevention and humanitarianism as well as on operational and structural boundaries in concrete situations.

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War both preventive action and humanitarian assistance have become exceptionally attractive. The causes are multiple and intertwined: First, with the end of the East-West conflict new interaction opportunities for states and non-state actors have emerged. While the danger of super power confrontation had essentially vanished, a 'culture of prevention' and the humanitarian imperative in international politics seemed possible. Second, the changing interaction opportunities are linked to general shifts in normative patterns of international order (consensus concerning minority and human rights, diffusion of democracy, erosion of the non-intervention norm) as well as to shifts in the organizational structure of international politics (relationship between state and non-state actors, importance of transnational advocacy networks). Third, a high amount of violent internal conflicts in weak or failed states and complex humanitarian emergencies (see for example Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone) represents, additionally, pivotal contextual challenges for both issue-areas.

Especially prevention has widely been praised as the solution to the various forms of violent conflict by governments, international organizations and the nongovernmental sector (cf. Lund, 1996; Väyrynen, 2000). Prevention is an attractive concept for scholars alike, due to its promise for a more peaceful future and its integrative potential for a multidisciplinary approach. The idea of prevention has become highly institutionalized with distinctive rules and norms – embedded in the UN-system and other regional organizations such as the European Union, NATO and OSCE. The postulate of a new 'culture of prevention' finds its expression in the final report of the 'Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (CCPDC, 1997) and, more recently, in the report 'Prevention of Armed Conflict' presented by the Secretary-General stressing "that conflict prevention lies at the heart of the mandate of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, and that a general consensus has emerged among Member States that comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies offer the greatest potential for promoting lasting peace and creating an enabling environment for sustainable development" (Annan, 2001:35).

The use of the term 'conflict prevention', however, is contested within the community of conflict research. Several decades ago Karl W. Deutsch (1957) and Lewis Coser (1956), among others, have argued, that conflict as such is crucial for the integration within and between societies and, therefore, an integrating and positive element of social change as long as violence is absent. If, however, violence is used collectively within or between societies conflict has the potential to be destructive and disruptive (cf. Eberwein/Chojnacki, 2001a). As a

consequence, such a theoretical understanding of conflict affects our definition of prevention. Since it is neither possible nor desirable to prevent conflict as such, the term 'conflict prevention' is, indeed, a misnomer, as Miall et al. (1999) have argued elsewhere. Thus, we use the term 'prevention' in the more narrow sense of preventing violence or armed conflict from occurring or, if this is not possible, preventing armed conflicts, once started, from escalating to full-scale warfare or regional diffusion. The first statement includes the prevention of the recurrence of violence after a war has stopped – usually defined as post-conflict peace building. The principle presumption behind the concept of prevention is that violence could be minimized and that the recourse to war would become less frequent. Normatively, the hope and promise of prevention is consistent with the cardinal mission of the Charta of the United Nations, formulated in the aftermath of the Second World War, to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

In addition to the shifts in prevention, humanitarian aid has experienced a significant boost. The re-definition of this particular issue-area is dependent on both the global normative transformations after the East-West conflict and the change of central contextual conditions, i.e. the spread of internal violence and complex humanitarian emergencies such as refugee flows or hunger. A further dimension contributing to the new attractiveness of humanitarian aid is, at least partly, a result of the superpower's disengagement from the geopolitical periphery after the end of the Cold War. Given the proliferation of protracted internal armed conflicts the major powers have no vital interest in running risky interventions with own casualties. In other words, the declining political will to intervene has led to governmental strategies perceiving humanitarian aid as a favorite means of response to armed conflict or state failure (Shearer, 2000; Curtis, 2001). These developments have both normative and conceptual implications. Normatively, these changes have profound consequences with respect to the humanitarian principles. More precisely, the use of relief aid as a palliative for the missing political will or as a tool of prevention and dispute resolution jeopardizes the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality and entails the politicization of humanitarian aid (cf. Leader, 2000; Curtis, 2001). It is faced with the problem, as Miall et al. (1999:145) have noted, whether its core activities such as refugee relief, food aid or medical assistance prevail as a coherent and effective response to human suffering in zones of violent conflict. Furthermore, the issue arises whether humanitarian assistance should play a new role in conflicting situations, i.e. whether the humanitarian role in the frontlines should contribute to prevention (conflict resolution) and development. The nexus between preventive (security) action and

humanitarian assistance has become a major topic in the communities of conflict resolution (Leatherman et al., 1999; Lund, 1998; Miall et al., 1999) and humanitarian aid (Leader, 2000; Macrae, 2001; Curtis, 2001).

Fundamentally, today the question arises whether the structural transformations within the international system represent a paradigmatic change and whether the rise of a 'culture of prevention' and human rights standards challenge the normative foundations of partial orders such as the humanitarian sphere and affect their normative standards. Following Finnemore (1996b) and Cronin (1998), among others, I argue, that the prevention of armed conflict and the provision of humanitarian assistance cannot be understood apart from the contextual challenges, i.e. the changing normative structure of international order and the shifts in the dynamics and structures of violence. Therefore, evaluating the conceptual challenges and potential linkages of prevention and humanitarian action requires both scientific knowledge about the normative foundations of international politics and a systematic understanding of contemporary conflicts. Theoretically, I choose an institutional approach emphasizing the role of institutions and institutionalization in the understanding of conflict and order within and between societies (see March/Olsen, 1998:948). Normatively and conceptually, the problem is how a 'culture of prevention' which is essentially a norm-driven activity affects the humanitarian sphere and how prevention, i.e. security concerns, and humanitarian concerns are interlinked.

Following this logic, this paper is subdivided into different parts: in the first section I address the normative dimensions of change; then I turn briefly to shifts in the patterns of internal armed conflict; lastly I identify the potential conceptual and operational linkages between prevention and the humanitarian sphere. At the end of the day, I draw some preliminary consequences and conclusions for future research.

2. Normative change: the 'culture of prevention' and humanitarianism

The proposition that international politics is characterized by shifts in the normative structure of the international system is neither new nor particularly inventive. Nevertheless, a discussion of prevention and humanitarian concerns without focusing on norms would be, at best, incomplete – actually, however, grossly negligent. In principle, the end of the East-West conflict has triggered new debates about international relations theory in general, about the change and impact of international norms and institutions in particular. Given the great variety of these approaches, it appears important to introduce some principal theoretical considerations concerning norms and institutions in international politics before discussing the normative challenges with respect to the 'culture of prevention' and the 'new humanitarianism'. In order to accurately understand the dimensions of change, it is an analytically important question whether and how preventive action and humanitarianism are related to the normative order of the inter-state system. In principle, the concept of order reflects a society of collective actors bound together by international institutions and norms which guide their interactions.[1]

According to March and Olsen, an "institution" is defined as a "relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations. Such practices and rules are embedded in structures of meaning and schemes of interpretation that explain and legitimize particular identities and the practices and rules associated with them" (March/Olson, 1998:948). Whereas institutions emphasize the way in which behavioral rules are structured and interrelated, the concept of norms refers to single standards of behavior. Within the community which is interested in the study of international norms and institutions (neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism) there is general agreement that norms are collective, intersubjectively shared expectations about standards of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity (Jepperson et a., 1996:54; see also Finnemore/Sikkink, 1998; Risse, 2000). Sovereignty as the constitutive institution of international order is structured by a 'bundle of norms' (internal authority, territorial integrity, equal-

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[1] In accordance with Hedley Bull (1977), international order is understood "a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains those goals of the society of states that are elementary, primary or universal" (1977:16). The goals are as follows: "First, there is the goal of preservation of the system and society of states itself. [...] Second, there is the goal of maintaining the independence or external sovereignty of individual states. [...] Third, there is the goal of peace" (1977:16-18). And finally there is the goal of "limitation of violence resulting in death or bodily harm, the keeping of promises and the stabilization of possession by rules of property" (1977:19).

ity, joint recognition, non-intervention) which have changed significantly over time (cf. Barkin/Cronin, 1994; Finnemore/Sikkink, 1998:891).[2]

Conceptually, liberal institutionalism and constructivism discern 'constitutive norms', which constitute the identity of actors and interests, and 'regulative norms', which regulate the interactions and constrain behavior (cf. Finnemore/Sikkink, 1998; Risse, 2000). More precisely, constitutive norms generate expectations about the proper portfolio of identities for a given context (establishing expectations about who the actors will be), whereas regulative norms prescribe or proscribe behaviors for already constitutive identities acting as standards for the proper enactment or deployment (Jepperson et al., 1996:54). The human rights arena, for example, consists of both regulative norms (protecting citizens from state interventions) and constitutive norms which define what it means to be a 'civilized' member of international society, rather than a 'pariah' state (Risse, 2000).

Additionally, the 'humanitarian' issue-areas such as the human rights arena or humanitarian aid point to some serious shifts in the organizational structure of international politics. Both international organizations and transnational advocacy networks have an important function as socializing agencies formulating standards of appropriate behavior and serving as 'norm-teachers'. To what extent such norms will be actually institutionalized in the international system depends quite substantially on the so-called norm entrepreneurs[3] engaging in the spread of a particular norm (cf. Finnemore/Sikkink, 1998). If organizations act as norm-entrepreneurs, they help develop existing norms, help establishing new norms and play a pivotal role in arbitrating normative claims and structuring the discourse over international norms (Finnemore, 1996b:185). The normative context of international politics, in turn, shapes the interests of both state and non-state actors. On the basis of this institutional perspective, the international order is not static but changing and generally norm-based (cf. among other Barkin/Cronin, 1994; Cronin, 1998; Wendt, 1999). As specific norms change, "so does the nature of international responsibility. These responsibilities are reflected by the international commitments toward specific populations and institutions" (Cronin, 1998:173).

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[2] In principle, the modern (Westphalian) international system has been constructed on the basis of sovereignty, which remains the foundation of international politics and international (humanitarian) law (see among others Thomson, 1995; Keohane, 1995; Hasenclever et al., 1996).

[3] Norm entrepreneurs "attempt to convince a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace new norms (Finnemore/Sikkink, 1998:895). They "are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even 'create' issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them".

The sole presence of a norm, however, does not dictate norm-compliance neither in preventive nor in humanitarian interactions. Norms may be violated by collective actors or be used selectively. As the selectivity of action reminds us (see cases such as Burundi, Sudan, Chechnya or the last-minute intervention in East-Timor) norms create only permissive conditions for human interactions but do not *determine* preventive or humanitarian action (Finnemore, 1996b:158). Additionally, the emergence and establishment of international norms and institutions are historically contingent, but not pre-determined. Thus, since the promise of prevention and the idea of humanitarian principles may be universal, the implementation and enforcement are contingent on the design of international order and the relationship between state (political) and non-state (civil) actors. New or changed norms, then, enable not only new types of action, they also compete with existing norms[4] pointing to different opportunities during the political process or produce substantial norm conflicts (cf. Barkin/Cronin, 1994).

With this preliminary theoretical considerations in mind, we will now turn to the normative challenges accompanied with the concept of prevention and the issue-area of humanitarian assistance. Theoretically, preventive and humanitarian action collide with the prevailing interpretation or practice of the institution of sovereignty and its derivative, the norm of non-intervention. In principle, preventive action and humanitarian interventions pose no problem as long as all the parties involved agree. The problematic cases, however, are internal wars and state collapses where the context becomes unclear (see chapters 3 and 4 below).

2.1 The 'culture of prevention'

The 'culture of prevention' narrative is a direct expression of the changing interaction opportunities since the end of the East-West conflict and of the international community's understanding that gross human rights violations and internal violence no longer belong to the realm of internal sovereignty, but are rather a question of international security and, therefore, multilateral engagement. Since prevention is defined as the external manipulation or transformation of inter-state or intra-state armed conflicts (Chojnacki/Eberwein, 2000) both prevention and (humanitarian) intervention belong conceptually together.

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[4] As Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 897) have noted, "new norms never enter a normative vacuum but instead emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest".

With the violent dissolution of political entities (Somalia, Afghanistan, Liberia), the genocide in Rwanda, 'ethnic cleansing' on the Balkans, to give the most significant examples, states have become increasingly under pressure to intervene militarily. In contemporary international relations, preventive actions have taken different forms and perform to different functions (cf. Finnemore, 1996b): efforts to alleviate starvation and introduce externally political order in Somalia, the enforcement of protected areas for Kurds and no-fly zones in the Iraq, disarmament and society-rebuilding efforts in Cambodia, military actions combining humanitarian relief with security interests in the Balkans (Bosnia and Kosovo). Political engagement, as Roberts (2000:695) analyzes, has been observed not only in situations of armed conflicts or uncontrolled violence, but also in cases where authoritarian governments tyrannize civilians (Rwanda, Haiti) or where the implementation of a peace agreement has been requested (Kosovo, FYROM). These events raised the question of the normative foundations of the international system in terms of enforcing human rights norms and of the development of a 'culture of prevention'. The concerns found their expression in the re-definition of the non-intervention principle, among others in a growing number of UN Security Council resolutions concerned with domestic affairs of some UN member states. The justification for this fundamental change, at least in conceptual terms, is based both on political as well as on normative arguments: on the one hand interference in domestic affairs is considered to be a legitimate means for the maintenance or reestablishment of international stability, on the other it is seen as an issue of global order in which major human rights violations (which may not necessarily represent a threat to global stability) are no longer viewed as acceptable. Thus, in the political domain internal and international violence are no longer viewed as two separate problems given the erosion of the sovereignty respectively the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state. The motives are, at least partly, related to the normative domain indicating that a process of normative change is under way.

Preventive engagement in terms of humanitarian intervention is, however, not new. In a detailed analysis Finnemore (1996b) has examined the role of humanitarian norms in shaping humanitarian military intervention over a time-span of 150 years. She shows that humanitarian interventionism, in general, shifts in state behavior and in the definition for appropriate ends and means for military intervention, in particular, correspond with changing patterns of the normative structure of international order. Moreover, her analysis makes clear that norms and justifications for humanitarian interventions are manifestations of the changes of a larger

set of humanitarian norms, such as the norms of decolonization and self-determination reflecting, thereby, the universalization of 'humanity' and changes in the institution of sovereignty.

In contrast to preventive action before 1989/1990, in most interventions nowadays only weak geostrategic interests are at stake. They are also organized multilaterally which shows that the norm of 'multilateralism' is a standard for appropriate state behavior in contemporary international politics.[5] In other words, to be legitimate, humanitarian interventions must be multilateral (cf. Finnemore, 1996b, 1998; Cronin, 1998). Furthermore, interventions require action under UN auspices or, at least, consent of the UN member states. As a consequence, multilateral interventions in domestic affairs transform and redefine the institution of sovereignty, in particular the principle of non-interference. As Bruce Cronin notes, "the line that divides domestic from international issues appears to have shifted" (1998:167). Both state obligations and frames of reference defining appropriate behavior for sovereign states internally and externally have changed. The respect for human rights and democratic rules are now prerequisites for the definition of a legitimate state visible in the recent criteria for recognition of new states in the international system (cf. Cronin, 1998; Finnemore, 1998). Normatively spoken, the interpretation of the source of legitimate sovereign authority resides in a stage of transition.[6] Practically, this leads to modified responsibilities and commitments for international actors vis-à-vis the societies – and in a case of internal violence to the 'duty to intervene' protecting citizens from highhanded regimes (cf. Czempiel, 2000). In other words, the combination of complex humanitarian emgergencies and state failures creates visible normative justifications and permissive conditions enabling multilateral humanitarian interventions: "Instead of violating sovereignty, interveners can claim to be promoting and protecting the powerful norm of self-determination" (Finnemore, 1998:188).

In the real world, however, the norm of multilateralism and the changing justifications for prevention and intervention compete with other normative claims and with the willingness to act, i.e. power considerations and unilateralism. Thus, the focus on norms does not mean at all that motives and justifications for prevention (intervention) are only directed to the norma-

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[5] The combination of changing humanitarian claims in world politics and human rights norms "has led states to attempt interventions in places, using means and for reasons that previously would not have been compelling, inviting, or even conceivable" (Finnemore, 1998:188).

[6] The development of new principles concerning the recognition of states (by the OSCE or the EU) suggest a normative consensus about *popular sovereignty* as the legitimate and accepted source of internal authority. "A consensus that sovereignty resides within the citizen rather than the state or the ethnic community also has been indicated by commitments made by multilateral bodies to human rights" (Cronin, 1998: 170). Analytically, this particular change illustrates a shift from *state* or *national sovereignty* towards *popular sovereignty* (cf. Barkin/Cronin, 1994; Cronin, 1998).

tive domain. Frequently, state behavior is affected, to use the terms introduced by March and Olson (1998), by both the 'logic of appropriateness' reflecting norms of appropriate action in a specific situation *and* by the 'logic of consequence' which refers to the expected utility for given actors and to the material structure of national and international politics. This reminds us, that a 'culture of prevention' and humanitarian norms do not signal automatically the end of power politics in the sphere of international relations. Whereas conventional realist approaches cannot explain the shifts in the normative structure of international order, institutionalists and constructivists are faced with the problems of selectivity of action and of the enforcement of specific norms.

2.2 Humanitarian concerns

How is normative change described with respect to humanitarian concerns, i.e. in the policy field of humanitarian aid, and how is this domain interrelated to other normative claims such as the 'culture of prevention'? Similar to the issue-area of preventing armed conflict, humanitarian assistance has become a well institutionalized area in the international system – including national, international and transnational linkages within the humanitarian sphere (transnational advocacy networks), change in the complementarity of state actors and non-governmental actors and the intersection of this issue-area with other policy fields such as development and, much more profound, security politics, i.e. the prevention of armed conflicts.[7]

Conceptually, humanitarian concerns are embedded in the wider concept of international order. Following March and Olson (1998) I argue, that the humanitarian sphere is a partial order that resists, however, on the constitutive norms of the international system (see also Eberwein, 2001).[8] The constitutive norms of humanitarian aid are embedded in modern international humanitarian law and, therefore, related to the 'rules of war'. In other words, the humanitarian sphere is contingent on the broader set of the rules of the game. The presumption is, therefore, that specific humanitarian norms change over time as the rules of warfare and the structure of international order change. Additionally, humanitarian assistance is related to the fundamental human right standards of man's dignity and the right to life respec-

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[7] For a more detailed analysis on the structural characteristics of the policy field of humanitarian aid see Eberwein (2001).

[8] March and Olsen (1998) assume that partial orders became permanent and institutionalized features of the international sphere.

tively the protection of life. This includes, at least normatively, the responsibility of the states for the protections of the humanitarian sphere respectively for the prevention of potential victims. Thus, the purely humanitarian aspect becomes intertwined with the human rights and prevention dimensions. Similar to the concept of prevention which is directed towards the maintenance of international peace and stability, humanitarian concerns relate to the limitation of war and its dreadful consequences (cf. Leader, 2000). The primary goal of humanitarian assistance, however, is victim-based, i.e. to bring relief to individuals who find themselves in a situation they cannot overcome by themselves – irrespective of age, color, ethnic origin or religion.

Historically, the humanitarian norms were developed on the basis of humanitarian international law in the 19th century. Starting point was the "humanization" of the consequences of interstate wars, particularly the protection of wounded soldiers (combatants) and the 'management' of the most dreadful consequences. More recently, humanitarian actors have become visible players in the international response to internal armed conflicts such as Somalia, Bosnia or Kosovo. The proliferation of actors and demands represents a striking change in the organizational structure of the international system providing new tools with which humanitarian concerns could be addressed (cf. Finnemore, 1998:188). Humanitarian advocacy networks acting transnationally are, at least in theory, able to mobilize information strategically and, thereby, influencing strategic choices of governments. By introducing, establishing, articulating, and transmitting norms humanitarian actors can influence the interests of states and, therefore, can have a security-enhancing function and policy implications (cf. Barnett/Adler, 1998). As empirical evidence reveals, humanitarian actors such as the International Red Cross have shaped state interests and preferences and, hence, serving as agents of agenda-setting and norm-change (see Finnemore, 1996a).

Within the partial humanitarian order and its institutional context the states themselves are largely responsible for the development and extension of the humanitarian norms as a prerequisite for humanitarian action. Only the state actors can set and enforce the norms required to bring relief to the victims. While states are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of international norms, humanitarian actors are logically part of the political sphere. This becomes particularly obvious with respect to the regulative norms of humanitarian aid, neutrality and impartiality, where political implications and normative changes are profound. In principle, neutrality and impartiality as the basic humanitarian regulative norms reflect "a shared understanding between humanitarian organizations, politicians and the mili-

tary of the political function of aid in conflicting situations, and can be seen as part of the deal between these different actors" (Macrae/Leader, 2000:9). In practice, compromises are necessary because the humanitarian actors are not able to enforce the humanitarian principles unilaterally. This is especially true with respect to situations of internal violence or complex humanitarian emergencies where the access to victims and protection of victims is jeopardized by various fighting factions.[9] But where the norms of internal sovereignty (internal authority, territoriality) erode, humanitarian principles such as neutrality or impartiality gradually lost their function and significance. Additionally, the regulative norms of humanitarian action are jeopardized by state interests to use relief as a palliative for the missing political will or as a tool of prevention and dispute resolution. Especially in cases of humanitarian interventions, i.e. in cases including the political and/or military engagement of state actors, humanitarian concerns are conceptually bound to security interests of states. With respect to these developments, non-governmental actors run the risk of becoming subcontractors for foreign policy goals respectively serving just as a substitute for preventive action. In other words, an inevitable politicization of humanitarian concern is under way which is related to a) the predominance and the contextual shifts in the dynamics of internal violence, b) the new interaction opportunities for state actors after the end of the Cold War, and c) shifts in the normative foundation of international order as expressed in the 'culture of prevention' and the 'duty to intervene' in cases of systematic human rights violations. Thus, it becomes clear that both humanitarian concerns and security or foreign policy interests, i.e. the decisions whether preventive actions or interventions are suitable or not, are related to normative considerations and structures – and thereby linking both domains (cf. Eberwein, 2001).

The humanitarian domain is, therefore, confronted with a fundamental and inevitable politicization which is, to a large extent, the result of general normative changes. Since humanitarian concerns are embedded in the global normative structure, regulative humanitarian norms are not independent from the constitutive norms of international order but rather related to these more fundamental norms structuring and reproducing international interactions in principle. But if humanitarian concerns are related to the state-system and to the deep structure of international order, normative changes in the international system will affect specific humanitarian norms. And if, for instance, prevention is accepted as a universal norm of appropriate behavior, it will also affect and guide humanitarian concerns. Thus, as the normative

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[9] Relief aid has become "a political position because the environments of complex emergencies are increasingly predatory" (Bryans et al., 1999:30).

structure of international order changes and new opportunities of action arise so are shifts in the regulative norms of humanitarian assistance likely. But how these norms ultimately change will be a consequence of the actors' identities, their interests and preferences. Basically, changes in the normative structure of international politics are the intended or unintended product of the behavior of collective actors (states, international organizations, transnational NGOs). Minor or major normative transformations, in turn, may have implications for the different groups of actors (state and non-state) opening or restraining opportunities for different kinds of action.

The future of humanitarian concerns and norms is therefore dependent on the changes in the normative foundation of international order and the political strategies chosen by state actors and non-governmental actors. A central question for both types of actors is how to make the humanitarian concerns, embedded both in the partial humanitarian order and in the constitutive norms of international order, effective.[10] Since the establishment of norms and the 'protection' of some basic principles need some kind of organizational platform as well as advocacy, as argued above, and since humanitarian aid is, to be effective, dependent on the willingness of the society of states to enforce existing norms or to introduce new norms and mechanisms for the regulation of internal violent conflicts, the humanitarian domain has to bring in their concerns to the arena of international politics. In this sense, humanitarian concerns reflect, as Leader has noted, a permanent "compromise between military-political necessity and the dictates of conscience and humanity" being re-negotiated constantly (2000:11). Since this process is fundamentally related to the predominance of internal violence, the issue of changing patterns of internal armed conflicts will be addressed in the next section.

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[10] With respect to recent developments and challenges of the humanitarian principles, Nicholas Leader identifies and conceptualizes three 'humanitarian responses' reflecting different positions: first, the elevation of neutrality by minimizing the manipulation of humanitarian action by political actors through operational rules; second, abandoned neutrality arguing that humanitarian action should be subordinated to political objectives; and, finally, a 'third-way humanitarianism' seeking a middle way by emphasizing the humanitarian function for prevention, development and post-conflict peace building (Leader, 2000:2). For a more detailed discussion on this issue see Eberwein (2001).

3. Changing patterns of domestic violence

Several decades ago Quincy Wright (1965) has reminded us in his monumental *Study of War* that the analysis of international war – or of violence, to put it in more general terms – is too important to be left to the intuitionists. In addition, Karl Deutsch (1965:xii) wrote in his introduction to Quincy Wright's study that "war, to be abolished, must be understood. To be understood, it must be studied". Thus, almost by definition, research on war within and between societies is simultaneously relevant for academics and practitioners. Since interstate wars are declining in occurrence and duration, internal armed conflicts become the major challenge for both preventive and humanitarian action. These new conflicts represent a political and normative challenge to international politics (state and non-state actors, international organizations etc.) and to the scientific discipline of international relations in general, conflict research in particular.

In general, the contemporary international system is characterized by two contradictory trends: integration and disintegration. In Western Europe the norms of prevention and constructive conflict resolution are embedded in the political culture of liberal democracies constituting a collective identity of a security community among democracies (see Risse-Kappen, 1996; Adler/Barnett, 1998). Specifically, the North Atlantic Alliance represents a highly institutionalized pluralistic security community characterized by common values, democratic norms and decision making rules contributing to a zone of stable peace. Since the end of the Cold War the Western Alliance has been strengthened. It has adjusted to the new international environment in form and function which includes both new mechanisms for internal coordination and international responses (organizational enlargement, rapid reaction corps for 'out-of-area' purposes, subsidiary role in UN-sponsored international peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions).

In contrast to the processes of political integration in Western Europe, other regions are characterized by the implosion of many political communities. The post-Cold War period, therefore, combines both zones of stable peace and zones of war clustered by states disintegrating and clashing. In other words, while some regions like Europe benefit from the 'democratic peace', other regions are characterized by the spread of violent conflicts, population displacement and the breakdown of internal authority, i.e. by an increase of anarchy within states. On the one hand, the new type of war involves the decentralization and fragmentation of a particular state. On the other hand, new wars are a strong signal pointing to the regionalization and fragmentation of the international system at large, since we can observe regional

clusters indicating a spill-over of violence, cross-border refugee flows and transnational war economies.

Several empirical observations and conceptual considerations point to a new type of internal war (Kaldor, 1999; Berdal/Malone, 2000; Holsti, 1996). Whereas Clausewitz saw war as a 'continuation of politics by other means', the new wars could be interpreted as the 'continuation of economics by other means' visible in spread of war economies (cf. Kaldor, 2000; Keen, 2000). Violence is the means for the appropriation of resources to finance the fighting, but it is also the goal in terms of enrichment (cf. Berdel/Malone, 2000). Thus, economic calculations (resource capture, plundering, taxation, relief aid) shape, to a large extent, the calculations of the parties and their actual conflict behavior. War economies are not only controlled by rebels or warlords[11] but often intertwined with international trading networks. Smuggling of resources or trading with them such as timber (Cambodia, Myanmar), drugs (Peru, Colombia, Afghanistan) or diamonds (Western Africa) are recent structural features of many civil wars thus prolonging the fighting and reproducing the structures of violence. Additionally, the formation of war economies contributes to a shift in the dynamics of internal conflict – as compared to 'conventional' civil wars in the 20th century. The changing dynamics are responsible, at least to some extent, for the long duration of internal wars. And as long as the parties involved benefit from the economic agendas in civil wars winning may not be desirable and, thus, transforming the basic structures of violence and ending internal wars becomes almost a mission impossible (Keen, 2000). Theoretically, the economic agendas in 'contemporary' civil wars – not to use the term 'modern' since some important elements of the new wars appear rather 'medieval' – affect both our scientific study of war and the practitioners in the issue-areas of prevention and humanitarian aid. The open question then is how to include this new category into the theoretical framework of conflict research in general. The various conceptualizations offered thus far are certainly important first steps (cf. Holsti, 1996; Berdal/Malone, 2000; Kaldor, 1999; Sarkees/ Singer, 2001), the implications are, in contrast, less than clear (see Eberwein/Chojnacki, 2001a).

From an actors perspective, the conflict process involves warlords, clans, private security forces or mercenaries. Whereas conventional internal wars are fought by regular and highly organized troops with political objectives (anti-regime wars), the new kinds of warfare

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[11] A warlord can be defined as a "leader of an armed band, possibly numbering up to several thousand fighters, who can hold territory locally and at the same time act financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state in which he is based" (Mackinlay, 2000:48).

are characterized by factionalized struggles (cf. Holsti, 1996) and fluid strategic interests. As Mary Kaldor has noted, „[t]ypically, the new wars are characterized by a multiplicity of types of fighting units both public and private, state and non-state, or some kind of mixture“ (Kaldor, 1999:92). This implies the difficulty, if not the impossibility, to differentiate between civilians and combatants: „regular armed forces lose their character as the legitimate bearer of arms and become increasingly difficult to distinguish from private paramilitary groups. [...] The most common fighting units are paramilitary groups, that is to say, autonomous groups of armed men generally centered around an individual leader“ (Kaldor, 1999:93). Conceptually, inter-related phenomena like the evolution of civil war economies and the privatization of violence are closely related to the structural problem of weak or failed states (see among others, Holsti, 1996). In other words, the decline of internal authority and dissolution of political order goes hand in hand with an increase of privatizing violence used by warring factions to cumulate profits. Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia are outstanding examples for the collapse of political entities, for the privatization of violence and for the economic function of violence in recent times.

The civilian populations became the most prominent targets in Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, Angola, Sierra Leone or the former Yugoslavia among others. In these wars civilians are placed at core of the hostilities constituting up to 90 percent of those killed (cf. Chesterman, 2000).[12] As a consequence, the discrimination between innocent civilians on the one side and combatants on the other, i.e. the combatant non-combatant distinction, becomes blurred or nearly irrelevant (Shearer, 2000; Leader, 2000; Curtis, 2001). Civilians are more and more strategic targets of warring factions, rather than being part of the ‘collateral damage’ in violent conflicts (cf. Chojnacki/Eberwein, 2000; Kaldor, 1999). Additionally, the new kind of conflict is also often multidimensional. In complex humanitarian or political emgergencies, as Holsti (1997) calls the multidimensional crises, cycles of violence are characterized by refugee flows, long-term natural disasters such as droughts or human-made disasters such as famine (cf. Chojnacki/Eberwein, 2000). As a consequence humanitarian strategies require a complex mixture of refugee aid, food assistance and protection of civilians. In sum, the changing nature of armed conflict has an impact on international response strategies. New characteristics of internal wars such as the economic agendas in civil wars present not only a challenge

[12] The proportion of civilian victims rose from five percent at the beginning of the 20th century up to nearly 90 percent in the nineties (cf. Miall et al., 1998; Kaldor, 1999).

to preventive action but also to humanitarian aid – and lead, therefore, to the question of linkages and/or boundaries between both issue-areas.

4. Prevention and humanitarian concerns: linkages and/or boundaries?

With the contextual challenges in mind, we will look in this section on potential linkages between prevention and humanitarian aid. Conceptually, with respect to the outbreak of violence both the prevention of the escalation of armed conflicts as well as humanitarian aid are reactive. Moreover, prevention and humanitarian assistance mean manipulation or, in more neutral terms, intervention in ongoing conflict processes. Apart from these similarities, however, both concepts bare some important differences. Whereas even immediate prevention resp. intervention is related to the *political* causes and consequences of violence, humanitarian aid remains a short-term activity dedicated exclusively to the *human* consequences of natural or human made disasters. Furthermore, structural prevention like developmental strategies and peace building efforts such as the strengthening of civil society or democratization require by definition a wider time horizon. Thus, understanding similarities and differences of preventive action and humanitarian aid adequately requires at least some knowledge on the time dimension and on the function of the instruments used in specific situations. In other words, since both internal violent conflicts and external responses to violence are essentially dynamic activities a process perspective is necessary. Without bringing the process dimension (back) in, the determination or assessment of preventive measures and humanitarian engagement would be impossible or ineffective.

Theoretically, process can be defined as "interdependent outcome of two or more actors choosing policy options from a menu of opportunities or possibilities that constrain their choice" (Most/Starr, 1989:4). Structural conditions may be important by structuring some opportunities, but they alone can hardly explain why violence breaks out. Certain background characteristics such as socio-economic or political asymmetries within a society are "a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the outbreak of violence" (Leatherman et al., 1999:46). Structural explanations do at best account for the predisposition of collective actors (national leaders, elites) to use force but they can not explain the decision to wage war. Thus, the escalation of conflicts is not predetermined but rather a dynamic process characterized by a series of stages, i.e. best considered by discrete steps denoting distinct levels of violence, decisions and actions by the parties involved. The process notion implies that wars do not necessarily

start as wars in the first place. They begin usually at lower levels of conflict and result from the interaction process between at least two parties. In this sense, escalation is neither causally predetermined – as Bremer (1996) has suggested, nor is there a single path to war and peace. An important first step and a prerequisite for the specification of preventive strategies and instruments is, therefore, a conceptualization of different stages of conflict, i.e. levels of hostility. From a theoretical point of view the answer is easier than the operational decision: when one party threatens to use force, a critical conflict-threshold has been crossed. It can no longer be excluded that this threat triggers an escalatory process which may (or may not) end in serious armed combat. A second important threshold is the initial and actual use of force. If one party uses force, the escalation to full-scale warfare is very likely (cf. Bremer, 1996; Eberwein/Chojnacki, 2001a).[13] Furthermore, conceptually, the escalation process encloses two dimensions of conflictual behavior: *vertical escalation*, i.e. the increase in the intensity levels of violence, and *horizontal escalation* defined as the geographical contagion or regional diffusion of violence (intervention, third party involvement). Whereas 'conventional' civil wars refer more to the puzzle of vertical escalation, new internal wars (Kaldor, 1999) or 'wars of the third kind' (Holsti, 1996) pose the problem of both vertical and horizontal escalation and, thereby, expanding local conflicts to regional zones of war. Thus, a major characteristic of new wars is the "possibility of 'extreme' – total and widespread – war" (Ruffin, 1999:17).

Given the types and levels of violent conflict presented above, prevention has to deal, at least conceptually, with three different stages of conflicting behavior: first, preventing the outbreak of violence, i.e. the use of force (threats to use force are, thereby, a critical indicator); second, containing further escalation in terms of intensity (*vertical escalation*) and local or regional diffusion (*horizontal escalation*); and, third, preventing the recurrence of violence in the aftermath of armed conflict and war, often termed as post-conflict or peace-building phase (cf. Leatherman et al., 1999). Similar, Boutros-Ghali's ambitious 'Agenda for Peace' identifies and distinguishes different stages of conflict and preventive actions: preventive diplomacy is defined as "action to prevent disputes between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:11). The elements of preventive diplomacy are peacekeeping (limiting and containing violent conflicts), peacemaking (preventing the escalation) and peacebuilding (post-violent-conflict reconstruction). Preventive actions are, thus, located along the entire spectrum

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[13] This has been recognized by the Correlates of War Project (COW) with the concept of the 'Militarized Interstate Disputes' (MID) referring to threats, display of force, actual use short of war and, finally, war (cf. Bremer, 1996; Jones et al., 1996).

of conflict and reflect significant departures from past practices of preventive actions in international politics. Conceptually, preventive action requires, therefore, information about important structural background conditions of conflict localized on the state-level, dyadic-level, regional-level, and/or system-level on the one hand, *and* about the escalatory dynamics on the other hand. These elements refer to the capacity to act. In practise, however, preventive action is a function of both capacity *and* willingness (interest) to react in a given violent conflict (cf. Eberwein/Chojnacki, 1999).

The differentiation between structural background conditions of conflicts and the escalatory dynamics finds its expression in the two concepts of prevention. Whereas 'structural prevention' is long-term oriented and deals with contextual attributes, for example with the strengthening of local, regional or international institutions and capacities for conflict resolution, short-term or 'operative prevention' (*escalatory prevention*) is directed towards the transformation and manipulation of deadly conflicts referring, thus, to preventive measures in the face of serious disputes or immediate crisis (cf. CCPDC, 1997; Leatherman et al., 1999).[14] In other words, one could argue that prevention is subdivided into a process conception, i.e. a micro-level approach looking at the specific ongoing activities of the various parties, and a structural perspective, a macro-level approach looking at the structural configuration conducive to the different levels of violence.

Since the prevention of violent conflicts is essentially a concern of security politics, the states are both responsible for the enforcement of norms fostering a 'culture of prevention' as well as for the implementation of preventive measures. As argued above, legitimate preventive actions such as humanitarian interventions in on-going violent conflicts require a consent of the society of states and a multilateral execution. In general terms, international organizations such as the OSCE have an important function for the different kinds of preventive action: first, due to the promotion of political consultations and transparency (multilateral diplomacy), the exchange of information and the setting and diffusion of liberal norms and rules international organizations contribute to prevention in general; second, the development of practices for the peaceful settlement of disputes such as third-party mechanisms, monitoring

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[14] Other scholars, in turn, differentiate between 'light and deep prevention'. While 'light prevention' is directed to prevent threshold conflicts from becoming severe violent disputes, the term 'deep prevention' aims to address the structural background conditions and the domestic, regional or international capacities managing conflictual behavior (Miall et al., 1999:97). Michael Lund, in contrast, has adopted a broader definition of prevention. He defines prevention as "action taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle the political disputes that can arise from destabilising effects of economic, social, political, and international change" (Lund, 1996:34). But "pre-conflict prevention is", as Väyrynen (2000:32) has noted, "to a large extent, a pipedream".

agreements and arms control regimes refer to the prevention of armed conflicts and the prevention of further escalation; third, international organizations support the building of democratic institutions and provide post-war rehabilitation measures – and played, therefore, a pivotal role in the peace-building and transformation phase promoting a security community, such as the OSCE in the region from Vancouver to Vladivostok (cf. Adler, 1998).

But as past experiences reveal, preventive action by the UN-system or regional organizations (OSCE, ECOWAS) is characterized by some stories of success (the Baltic states, FYROM so far), but also by selectivity (Rwanda), failures (Somalia) and quasi-failures (Cambodia, Angola). The recent failures of preventing the escalation of violent conflicts as well as the problems of coordination between and within different groups of actors involved in these disputes have raised the issue of cooperation among states, international organizations and non-governmental actors. While working in zones of violent conflict has become "a complex process of balancing coercive inducements with positive inducements, of supplementing military containment and humanitarian relief roles and of promoting civic action to rebuild communities economically, politically and socially" (Miall et al., 1999:144), the actual 'preventive' design and function of multi-sectoral approaches is everything but clear. Most notably, with respect to humanitarian relief roles the question arises, whether and how humanitarian assistance could contribute to preventive action in cases of domestic violence at all. Coordination is not an end in itself, but dependent on principle goals (*why?*), topics (*what?*) and procedures (*how?*).

International organizations – either being part of the UN system or representing specific regimes such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – try to integrate humanitarian relief strategies in the broader context of preventive diplomatic (security) and economic (development) strategies. They argue that humanitarian actors can a) enhance information by monitoring severe crises (early warning function), b) provide access to the parties in conflict, c) mobilize the political willingness to act, and d) improve the comprehensiveness of response and, thereby, contribute to a broader strategy of preventing deadly conflict. As the last report of the Secretary-General concerning the 'prevention of armed conflict' has noted, humanitarian actors can, among other issues, "contribute to conflict prevention by implementing targeted projects to avert recurrence of conflicts"; additionally, "humanitarian agencies have a responsibility to develop an effective capacity for data collection and analysis so as to identify those countries that are at risk of being affected by humanitarian crisis" (Annan, 2001:25). Advocacy, public informa-

tion services and the setting of consolidated appeals are "primary examples of humanitarian action to raise awareness of a particular conflict and its consequences" (Annan, 2001:26). The collection of information and monitoring function as well as advocacy are, however, necessary prerequisites for preventive action, but they are not sufficient. On the one hand, the quantity of information must be structured along vital indicators (cf. Leatherman et al., 1999; Miall, 2001). On the other hand, early warning and advocacy must be transformed into detailed analysis and political response which obviously is highly political and, thus, contingent on the willingness to act. To be effective both international and transnational actors have to bridge the warning-response gap.

If the international community widens the notion of 'humanitarianism' from the more short-term oriented provision of emergency relief for physical deprivations in violent conflicts to the objective of preventing further steps of escalation and re-building war torn societies (cf. Miall et al., 1999), then elements of humanitarian aid are embedded in the concept of prevention. In principle, humanitarian core activities such as refugee relief, food aid and medical assistance are pivotal elements preventing innocent civilians from forced displacement, hunger or disease leading to death. Health care, for instance, such as national immunization programs, is by itself a means of preventive action. More important, however, is refugee relief. Internally displaced persons are not only periled in situations of military action but they are also vulnerable to recruitments in refugee camps by belligerents, as the Rwanda experience revealed. Food aid, finally, could prevent the most innocent civilians, women and children, from suffering. Since famines rarely exclusively result from climate changes (see Eberwein/Chojnacki, 2001b) but more often relate to the strategic and political interests of actors which use it as a means to famish civilians or to wage war, the linkage of conflict and hunger becomes obvious (cf. Macrae/Zwi, 1994; Macrae, 2001). Thus, food supplies for the victims is a principal task preventing the people concerned from suffering. Or, to put in more general and structural terms, the provision of food aid, by the World Food Program (WFP) for instance, in zones suffering from natural disasters and/or from political humanitarian emergencies (hunger, refugee flows) can help prevent the violent outbreak of conflicts of interest that are related to disputes over scarce resources.

Since humanitarian assistance is potentially useful as a preventive instrument which contributes to some degree to the paths to peace, humanitarian aid cannot by itself prevent violent conflicts from escalating. Refugee relief or food aid are not solving the root causes of conflict or the immediate effects of violence. And with respect to highest violence level, i.e.

war, humanitarian aid may be misused or even dysfunctional. While humanitarian aid has its objectives in mitigating the disastrous effects of complex humanitarian emergencies it also may have an impact on social and political processes such as war economies (cf. Macrae/Leader, 2000). Thus, humanitarian aid can also contribute to the structures and processes of armed conflict and war by freeing local resources for the war efforts or by lending legitimacy to local warlords (cf. Slim, 1997; Shearer, 2000, Keen, 2000).

The most serious problems arise in those situations where sovereign statehood remains contested or weak and where the legitimacy of the state is in question (Macrae, 2001). Given the structural characteristics of internal conflicts such as war economies, maintaining neutrality and the distribution of aid is difficult when the warring factions are not interested in alleviating the suffering of civilians. Particularly, if the elimination of innocent civilians is a strategic goal of local warlords, humanitarian actors are faced with a serious dilemma. In such cases, as noted earlier, the enforcement of the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality is contingent on the interest of the warring factions protecting the health and security of innocent civilians (cf. Macrae/Leader, 2000:14). But as the battle-fortune of the fighting units changes so does their strategic interest change with respect to the delivery of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian actors may become themselves targets due to their possession of vital resources, if the benefits from gaining access to relief are perceived as high enough by the warring factions. In these circumstances food, medical and/or refugee aid become a potential if not actual asset manipulated by the warring parties. Especially the stealing or taxation of relief aid represents a major risk (cf. Keen, 2000; Shearer, 2000). As a consequence, humanitarian actors become a party to the underlying conflict, either in being used by the conflicting parties for the provision of aid, and/or in their role as advocates for the actual and potential victims. The missions became thereby more dangerous, at the same time the duration of humanitarian assistance is prolonged.

As a consequence relief workers and victims need protection, the humanitarian actors themselves are unable to provide. In practice, there are several examples (Somalia, Rwanda) where international or transnational actors requested for military intervention in a crisis situation to protect humanitarian missions (see Roberts, 2000). Since humanitarian NGOs are involved in zones of violent conflict, they should be interested in preventive actions undertaken by the international community. If the functions of violence change, as noted earlier, this will have serious implications for humanitarian assistance taking into account the interests of both the internal actors (warring parties) and international actors being responsible for prevention

or intervention. Internally, the delivery and distribution of aid is dependent of prior assessments concerning the basic structures of war zones. Internationally, humanitarian assistance is embedded in preventive measures. The mere existence of different groups of actors involved in violent conflicts (humanitarian actors, human rights activists, peace enforcement troops), however, is not a guarantee for preventing escalatory processes. As the Rwanda evaluation revealed both the international community (UN system) and the present non-state actors (NGOs) failed to draw adequate conclusions from the monitoring of risky political developments and linking gradual changes with contingency preparedness (cf. Adelman/Suhrke, 1996). Additionally, the Rwanda experience highlighted failed coherence between and within the humanitarian domain and the security approach (Borton, 1996). These shortcomings combined with a lack of vital security interests by the major Western states are an essential part of failed prevention and missed opportunities. A more recent example is the Kosovo crisis pointing to the unintended directions and consequences the 'new humanitarianism' has taken. In this case humanitarian action has been conceptually converted into a political instrument and, vice versa, the military has been raised into the role of a humanitarian player (cf. Roberts, 1999). This leads to the problem of credibility for both military actors (in the case of preventive action) and humanitarian agencies which will be enhanced by poor planning and coordination (cf. Byman, 2001).

In sum, the prevention of armed conflicts and humanitarian concerns are interrelated. *Normatively* and *conceptually*, humanitarian aid and prevention are related concepts and opportunities for the regulation of violent conflicts. Both on the conceptual and normative level the humanitarian sphere cannot ignore the aim of prevention and, thereby, decoupling humanitarian concerns from the security domain. On the *operational* level, however, the contribution of humanitarian aid to the prevention of deadly conflicts is limited since humanitarian aid has its special advantages in providing relief to the victims. Moreover, humanitarian aid appears to have no essential impact on the escalation of violent conflicts – but probably minor effects on the strategic choices of the fighting parties; in parallel, the absence of aid is not a significantly limiting factor to the spread of violence, as recent research on this issue revealed (Shearer, 2000:194-196). The escalation process, thereby, is not a humanitarian issue as such. Escalating conflicts are political issues directly related to security activities such as crisis management and third-party mediation. And as Shearer has noted correctly, apart from information-gathering and monitoring functions the "success or failure of an aid intervention […] should be measured not by its ability to shift the policies of warring parties but by its ability

to reach those victims" (Shearer, 2000:200). The success of prevention, in contrast, should be measured by the ability of the society of states to prevent the outbreak or escalation of violent conflicts politically as well as by the willingness of the actors involved to preserve if not strengthen the partial humanitarian order.

5. Concluding remarks and implications

Almost four decades ago, Bob Dylan wrote the famous line: *the times they are a-changin'*. Since he is generally more interested in the changing patterns on the societal level, the proposition is also appropriate and consequentially grasping the 'culture of prevention' and the 'new humanitarianism' on the international and transnational levels. The new opportunities for collective action after the collapse of communism, the fortification of 'humanitarian' norms by both state actors and non-governmental actors and the spread of internal violent conflicts in weak or collapsed states which pose the issue of multilateral humanitarian intervention denote to different but interrelated dimensions of change in the contemporary international system. With respect to these shifts, one can argue that international politics is nowadays characterized by two reverse trends: On the one hand, states and none-state actors have stimulated preventive and humanitarian norms and strengthened, thereby, the 'humanization' of international politics. On the other hand, new forms of violence, the trend toward a 'culture of prevention' and diffuse linkages have jeopardized or blurred regulative humanitarian norms. Generally, pivotal contextual changes are underway pointing to normative and conceptual linkages of prevention and humanitarianism as well as to operational and structural boundaries in concrete situations.

Theoretically, as I tried to show, the 'culture of prevention' narrative and the debate about a 'new humanitarianism' are deeply related to the normative foundation of international order. Moreover, prevention and humanitarianism are normatively interrelated since both depend on the constitutive norms of international order and point to the regulation of violent conflicts and/or their most disastrous effects. But since the interference in domestic affairs is considered to be a legitimate means for the maintenance of international peace and stability in cases of state failures and systematic human rights violations, humanitarian norms are under constant assault. Thus, if prevention – including multilateral interventions – is accepted as a universal norm of appropriate behavior, it affects not only the constitutive institution of sov-

ereignty (norm of non-interference) but also the regulative norms of humanitarian action. While the 'culture of prevention' seems to be a motor of change with respect to humanitarian norms, it is, however, not entirely clear to what extent prevention is itself a result of the overall transformations of international order (human rights norms, global governance, multilateralism). Future research on normative change and conflicts between different partial international orders can benefit from institutionalists and constructivists conversations (cf. Jepperson et al., 1996; Risse, 2000).

In more practical terms, the general political issue is how risks can be reduced with respect to the occurrence of violence and to the potential consequences (refugee flows, hunger etc). If armed conflicts and complex humanitarian emergencies can not be prevented the obligation is to reduce both the damage and the ensuing consequences. The humanitarian issue is, in contrast, how to make the inevitable process of politicization productive with respect to humanitarian concerns. In order to protect the humanitarian ideas and intentions, Joanna Macrae (2000), for instance, argues in favor of strengthening politics by inventing effective methods of political interventions. Given the debate concerning the conflict between the humanitarian principles and preventive action, however, there is a common "belief that humanitarian aid should not be a substitute for effective political action (Curtis, 2001:17). In principle, the current debates on a 'new humanitarianism' are driven by the search for new structures of coherence (see Leader, 2000; Curtis, 2001). But since an essential part of the current problem is a 'muddling through strategy' in crises situations, the 'search for coherence' by humanitarian actors and scholars alike (Macrae/Leader, 2000) is only as successful as the governments realize the current tasks and convert them into adequate policy strategies.

Last not least, the study on prevention and humanitarian issues has implications for the conflict research community. Given the predominance of domestic violence the time seems to be ripe to reconsider our theoretical strategies. If the patterns of armed conflict are changing and if new sets of actors are gaining in importance, then we need new categories including new conflicts in failed states.[15] Of course, conflict research has come a long way pointing to considerable progress and cumulative knowledge. Unfortunately, the available datasets on internal armed conflicts bare some serious defects. As our own comparison of data on violent domestic conflicts shows (Eberwein/Chojnacki, 2001a), the datasets portray different worlds of violence. These substantial discrepancies among the datasets can not be ignored, since they have nontrivial consequences both for academic research as well as for practical concerns.

[15] COW's revised typology of war is, for these purposes, a step in the right direction (Sarkees/Singer, 2001).

Moreover, most of the datasets are limited in their use for the analysis of the dynamics of violence. But for the study of preventive and humanitarian action we need both knowledge on structural 'deep' preventors (see Miall, 2001) and on process indicators. Thus, we are faced with serious challenges both in the 'real' world of international and transnational politics and with respect to our research community.

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