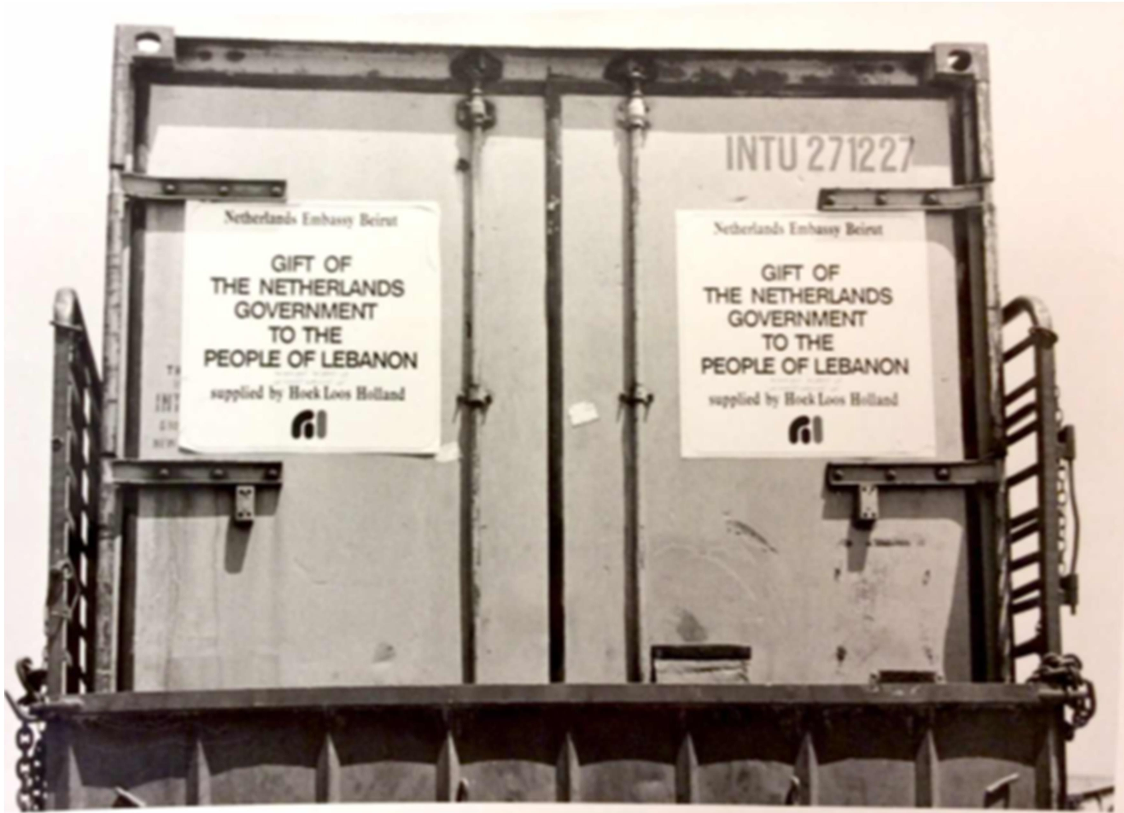
The Three Funnels for International Aid:

Humanitarian Assistance during the Lebanese Civil War



A container filled with medical equipment for the Ghossein hospital provided by the Dutch company Hoek Loos Holland and paid for by the Dutch government.[1]

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[1] Nationaal Archief Den Haag, Ambassade Libanon , inv.nr. 210.

Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.

Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave, eats a bread it does not harvest, and drinks a wine that flows not from its own wine-press.

Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as here, and that deems the glittering conqueror bountiful.

Pity a nation that despises a passion in its dream, yet submits in its awakening.

Pity the nation that raises not its voice save when it walks in a funeral, boasts not except among its ruins, and will rebel not save when its neck is laid between the sword and the block.

Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox, whose philosopher is a juggler, and whose art is the art of patching and mimicking.

Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpetings, and farewells him with hootings, only to welcome another with trumpetings again.

Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years and whose strong men are yet in the cradle.

Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation.

Khalil Gibran *Garden of the Prophet (1934)*

Introduction

Even before Lebanon descended into a horrific civil war, the Lebanese state was weak and unable to take care of the needs of its citizens and people residing within its borders. It was a night-watchman state *par excellence* which did not provide adequate housing, education, health-care, agriculture and employment for the Lebanese let alone for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees that lived in the country since 1948. As a result, a number of these policy areas were taken over by private organisations that either had the aim of making a profit or aimed to provide much needed assistance without the pursuit of profit. The need for private organisations to step up and take care of the state's negligence towards its citizens only increased after its services virtually collapsed during the war. In a fifteen-year lasting conflict (1975-1990) Lebanon witnessed atrocious episodes of violence during which between 100,000 to 150,000 people died, a million people left the country and more than 800,000 people (a third of the population) became internally displaced.[2]

The suffering of the Lebanese and Palestinians during this war received a lot of international attention and combined with the failing state institutions this resulted in an even higher presence and activity of both international and national humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Lebanon, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC).[3] Three years before the war started the Najdeh Association (or Najdeh) was established in southern Lebanon which suffered from social and economic deprivation. After the war broke out public services collapsed and Najdeh increased its social and medical activities.[4] During the conflict additional NGOs were established, such as the Amel Association (or Amel) – established in 1979 by Dr. Kamel Mohanna in Lebanon – which still exists today, providing medical support to the victims of the violence regardless of their background.[5] A characteristic of these organisations is that they claim absolute impartiality and neutrality in executing their activities during armed conflicts. This can be more straightforward in the case of a conventional war between states, but how is this claim substantiated during civil wars with multiple non-state armed actors?

These international and national NGOs are mostly funded by national governments and intergovernmental organisations, such as the World Bank, United Nations (UN) and the

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[2] Dima de Clerck,'Government-sponsored resettlement and reconciliation in post-war Lebanon', in ed. Eleanor Davey and Eva Svoboda, 'Histories of humanitarian action in the Middle East and North Africa', *HPG Working Paper* (September 2014) 49.

[3] 'History of Lebanese Red Cross,' *Lebanese Red Cross.* 2008, http://www.redcross.org.lb/SubPage.aspx?pageid=169&PID=154 (29 Oct 2018).

[4] 'لمحة تاريخية [Historical Overview],' *النجدة الشعبية اللبنانية* [*Secours Populaire Libanais*] 2009, http://splibanais.net/details-53.html (14 Apr 2019).

[5] 'History', *International Amel Association*. 2017, http://amel.org/about-us/history/ (29 Oct 2018).

European Economic Community (EEC) – the forerunner of the European Union. The EEC provided humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the form of agricultural goods such as, for example, in 1984 when the Commission of EEC decided to send 8,000 tonnes of grain and 600 tonnes of milk powder.[6] The focus, however, of this thesis is not the role played by international and intergovernmental organisations in the provision of humanitarian aid to Lebanon. I have chosen to use the example of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a Dutch NGO called Novib – which was largely financed by the Dutch government – to illustrate how international actors try to provide humanitarian assistance to a country embroiled in sectarian violence and to study their motives in providing this aid.

While a lot has been written about the Lebanese Civil War, there is not much academic literature written on humanitarian assistance and the role NGOs played during the conflict.[7] A welcome exception is a study done by André Roberfroid on the role of UNICEF in negotiations with different factions to provide humanitarian assistance in Lebanon during the conflict. He concludes that the success of negotiations does not only depend on 'being neutral' but also on convincing the warring parties that the humanitarian assistance serves their objectives. The purpose of humanitarian negotiations is that the respective factions accept that humanitarian action takes place in the areas under their control or jurisdiction.[8] What is lacking in this study is the role played by national governments and international NGOs and, additionally, Robertfroid focussed only on the last three years of the conflict.

As for the role of the Dutch government and Novib there is some more general literature, but to date there is nothing published on the involvement of these two actors in the Lebanese Civil War with regard to humanitarian assistance. The most publications on Dutch foreign policy – when discussing the Middle-East before 1990 – focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the Dutch contribution to UN missions.[9] Likewise, there are publications on Dutch developmental aid in which the two main objectives were contributing to the economic self-reliance of developing countries and improving the lives of the poorest people, but there is not much written on how Dutch actors provided humanitarian aid to victims of widespread

[6]Nationaal Archief Den Haag (NA), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Code-archief 1975-1984 (BuZa), inv. 16201, Decission VIII/D/1 of the Commission of the EEG.
[7] For one of the most comprehensive accounts of the civil war see Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation* (Londen 1993). A shorter but equally informative account is given in Georges Corm, *Le Liban contemporain: Histoire et société* (Paris, 2012) 119-224.
[8] André Robertfroid, 'Negotiating for results in the Lebanon' in Larry Minear and Hazel Smith, *Humanitarian Diplomacy Practitioners and Their Craft*, (New York, 2007) 105-106.
[9] See for example: Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld: Beeldvorming en beleid in Nederland 1950-1990* (Den Haag, 1994) 178-208. Ben Schoenmaker, 'The Debate on the Netherlands Contribution to UNIFIL, 1979–85', *International Peacekeeping* 12:4 (2005) 586-598.

violence.[10] One exception is a study commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs on humanitarian aid to Somalia in the early 1990s. However, this study only deals with the effectiveness of the intervention and not the motives for the intervention in the first place. It only states the general aims of providing humanitarian assistance: 'to alleviate human suffering, restore human dignity and to enable people to make their environment a decent place in which to live.'[11] As for Novib there is a study, done by Rudolf Scheffer and Esther Benning, which concludes that during the first fifty years of the organisation's existence the support of local partner organisations has been central to its development philosophy, which sees these local organisations as the prime actors in the struggle against poverty and injustice in these countries.[12] What is missing in this study is a focus on humanitarian aid, as well as specific attention to the case of Lebanon.

The complexity of the Lebanese conflict with its variety of different actors who regularly changed their alliances and the division of the country established by their use of violence made this period an extremely hazardous context for NGOs to operate in. What is missing in the literature is how these humanitarian NGOs interact with the wide array of armed and unarmed actors in a context of widespread violence during a civil war and why these actors allow humanitarian NGOs to perform their operations. Most NGOs proclaim to be impartial and neutral during their operations, but one has to question the feasibility of this strategy when dealing with an array of actors that are engaged in an armed conflict with one another. These national NGOs are very important for the people benefiting from their aid and services, while at the same time the warring factions and international actors have an interest in the existence of these NGOs.

The main gap in the literature that this thesis aspires to fill is how and why national governments and international NGOs (INGOs) funded national NGOs operating in Lebanon during the conflict. The national NGOs received financial and logistic support from foreign governments, international organisations and INGOs. In other words, a foreign government could make use of three funnels to deliver its humanitarian assistance: a bilateral, international and trilateral funnel. With the trilateral funnel I mean a specific construction in which a national government funds a NGO which in turn supports another NGO in another country (e.g. Novib funding Amel). In the Dutch case this was the so-called co-financing

[10] Neil Middleton*, Netherlands Aid Reviewed: An Analysis of Operations Review Unit Reports, 1983-1994* (The Hague 1996) 3-4. See also: L.J.H. Janssen, *Management of the Dutch development cooperation,* Enschede 2009.
[11] Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Te Velde, *Humanitarian Aid to Somalia* (The Hague, 1994) 15.
[12] Rudolf Scheffer and Esther Benning, 'Oxfam Novib & Partnerships: A Historical Perspective', *Oxfam Research Reports* (May 2018) 17.

system in which a select group of Dutch NGOs could apply for co-funding of projects with the Dutch government. Besides the Dutch state, the government of the receiving country also had to give its approval to the project that would be executed in its national territory.[13] The case-study chosen for this thesis is the humanitarian support given by the Dutch government and Novib to national NGOs, such as the Najdeh and Amel associations. The main question of this thesis is why did the Dutch government and Novib support national humanitarian NGOs in a context of widespread sectarian violence during the Lebanese Civil war (1975-1990)? This main question can be divided in two: why did the Dutch government and Novib send humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the first place and why did they support the organisations and projects were funded?

With the proliferation of humanitarian assistance around the globe – in reaction to both manmade and natural disasters – it is important to take a step back and question the intrinsic reasons for providing this assistance in the first place. Is compassion with the suffering of fellow human beings the only reason or are there additional motivations for providing much needed humanitarian aid? If there are ulterior motives then what does this mean? On the organisational level this thesis provides explanations for why certain NGOs got support while other did not. This is important because – especially in situations of wide-spread violence – NGOs often provide much needed humanitarian assistance to people in distress for which they need funds which are more often than not provided for by actors operating outside of the country. Humanitarian assistance throughout history and the world has frequently been underfunded (if funded at all) while the need for it only grew. When one knows what drives donors, both on a fundamental and organisation level, to give money it potentially is easier to convince these donors to start, keep on or increase the funding of projects and organisations with a humanitarian mission.

Theory

Before I try to answer these questions it is important to get an idea of the context in which this conflict took place. Which different actors can we discern and what are their motives for supporting, or at least accepting, humanitarian NGOs being active in Lebanon during the conflict? With regard to the humanitarian NGOs key questions are what do they, how do they do it, why do they do it and who funds their activities? A number of explanations could be given for the fact that humanitarian NGOs receive support from national governments and

[13] Scheffer and Benning, 'Oxfam Novib & Partnerships', 5.

international NGOs. In order to answer the main question of this thesis I made use of three hypotheses: the mixed motive game, humanitarian discourse and 'going local' theses. As will be shown below all three hypotheses are to a certain degree confirmed.

Humanitarian NGOs cannot exist without support from donors, but what are the motivations for giving support and how is it given? Kevin O'Sullivan et al argue that the reasons for giving official aid range from the buying of influence to the pursuit of social-democratic principles on the world stage.[14] Heins characterises the humanitarian diplomacy between the ICRC and states as a mixed motive game, 'in which the orientations and values of actors are partly harmonious and partly in conflict.'[15] The relationship between states (and/or state like actors) and humanitarian NGOs is a complicated one. Farah Salam claims that humanitarian NGOs operating in developing countries often established an asymmetrical relationship with national governments in which these NGOs fulfil the responsibilities usually performed by the state. Salam uses as an example the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in the Near East (UNRWA) which was initially established to provide emergency aid to the Palestinian refugees but still exists and facilitates activities ranging from education to health services.[16] With regard to the case-study of the Lebanese Civil War the questions are what motives did the Dutch government/Novib have in supporting national humanitarian NGOs and where did motives align and/or conflict with the motives of the national NGOs that were supported by the Dutch?

A lot has been written about NGOs and their humanitarian discourse in which they claim to be impartial and neutral when providing their aid and services. David Chandler wrote that the ICRC epitomized the values of humanitarian universalism, such as humanity, impartiality, neutrality and universality. These principles were supposed to separate the humanitarian sphere from the political one.[17] Büthe et al concluded that the deeply rooted humanitarian discourse within and among NGOs is one of the prime drivers for aid allocation.[18] This thesis will assess whether the humanitarian discourse hypothesis is valid in the case of the Dutch and Lebanese Civil War. Did the Dutch government and/or Novib support national NGOs

[14] Kevin O'Sullivan, Matthew Hilton and Juliano Fiori, 'Humanitarianisms in context', *European Review of History – Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 23(2016) 3.
[15] Volker Heins, 'Democratic states, aid agencies and world society: What's the name of the game?', *Global Society* 19:4 (2005) 364.
[16] Farah Salam, *The Limits of Humanitarian Aid: An Examination of NGOs, Neutrality, and Impartiality* (Hanover, Hampshire 2017) 24.
[17] David Chandler, 'The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights NGOs Shaped a New Humanitarian Agenda', *Human Rights Quarterly* 23: 3 (2001) 679.
[18] Tim Büthe, Solomon Major and André de Mello e Souza, 'The Politics of Private Foreign Aid: Humanitarian Principles, Economic Development Objectives, and Organizational Interests in NGO Private Aid Allocation', *International Organization* 66 (Fall 2012) 599.

operating within Lebanon because of the humanitarian discourse they produced in their correspondence, reports and promotional material?

Oliver Waltson explored how national NGOs forge alliances with state actors, non-state actors, non-governmental actors, donors, media, political parties and the public in order to ensure their survival in conflict and post-conflict situations.[19] According to Waltson, a development orthodoxy emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in which values of sustainability and local ownership were emphasised. As a result national NGOs entered into new and subtle political roles as well as into relations with other NGOs, 'often couched in the ambiguous language of "partnership"'.[20] INGOs increasingly relied on national NGOs and reduced direct implementation of their own projects. The great advantage of national NGOs is that these organisations already have a grassroots connection with a country. They have to oscillate their energy and attention between their beneficiaries, INGOs and donors, as well as dealing with the state and other domestic political actors. The national NGOs claim to address issues on a local level and this makes them attractive to INGOs and international donors because they see the combination between local and national level as an opportunity to maintain influence (or at least claim to do so). However, the majority of the national NGOs in reality only work in a more limited geographical area within the country and are, therefore, not truly *national* but rather *local*.[21] I choose to use the term national NGO to mean both. From these theoretical considerations we can discern a 'going local' hypothesis which entails that international donors prefer to funnel their humanitarian through local NGOs. This thesis will try and establish whether the mixed motive game, humanitarian discourse and 'going local' hypotheses is most appropriate for my a case-study.

Method and Material

In order to contextualise humanitarian action during the Lebanese Civil War I make use of a wide array of different American, English, Irish and Dutch newspaper articles. I found 107 articles through the *Proquest* and *Delpher* online newspaper databases.[22] I found an additional selection of 58 articles in French and English in the archive of the Dutch foreign

[19] Oliver Waltson, 'Conflict, peacebuilding and NGO legitimacy: National NGOs in Sri Lanka', *Conflict, Security & Development* 8:1 (2008) 134.
[20] Waltson, Conflict, peacebuilding and NGO legitimacy, 137.
[21] Ibid, 137.
[22] https://www.proquest.com/ and https://www.delpher.nl/.

correspondent Jan Keulen for the *Volkskrant* (a progressive Dutch newspaper).[23] A disadvantage to these articles (which were collected in 1984 and 1985) is that the titles of the newspapers are missing which means that the origin of them is unknown. However, for the purpose of this thesis it does not matter whether we know which newspaper published these articles, because the main function of these sources is to distinguish events in which humanitarian NGOs came into contact with the other players in the conflict, how these events evolved and what the outcome of these events can tell us about the reasons these NGOs were able or allowed to operate. By doing this I will show that the Dutch and the national NGOs they supported did not operate in a vacuum but were part of a complex situation with a variety of actors which often had conflicting interests. At the same time, there is a limited amount of information that can be derived from these newspaper articles for a number of reasons. First of all, the actors involved in the conflict used the media and tried to influence its reports to enhance their own reputations and to sully those of their opponents. It is therefore necessary to critically assess the information given and what the source of the information is. Secondly, what is said during negotiations and what the demands were was frequently not disclosed at all. Thirdly, the amount of journalists operating in Lebanon during the civil war drastically diminished as the conflict lingered on and intensified which obviously had a detrimental effect on the quality of the reporting. I hope to partially overcome these deficiencies by using other types of sources as well.

In other to assess the motives of the Dutch government and Dutch INGOs, I made use of the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Embassy in Beirut and Novib. The archive of Novib covers the whole period of the conflict, but the other two do not for different reasons. The archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is only publicly available until 1984 and the embassy staff left the country in 1986 war because of the increased number of westerners that got abducted. From 1986 until 1996 the Dutch Embassy in Damascus looked after the Dutch interests in Lebanon. At the time of writing, despite multiple requests, the archives of the Dutch embassies in the surrounding countries, as well as the archive of the Ministry of Foreign affairs after 1984 have not yet been made public. Therefore, the motives of the Dutch diplomats given in this thesis only cover the period until 1986 which means that future research must be done in order to test and challenge or confirm the findings of this thesis.

[23] International Institute of Social History (IISH), Jan Keulen Collection (JKC), inv. No. 80, Newspaper clippings concerning refugees, 1985. IISH, JKC, inv. No. 85, Newspaper clippings concerning medical aid, 1984-1985.

In the archive of Novib are documents on approved and rejected requests by NGOs for projects worldwide.[24] A particularly informative source in the archive is a study commissioned by Novib in 1987 by Annemiek Boersma called *The Lebanese Crisis and the Netherlands* which assessed attitudes to the Lebanese crises among political opinion leaders and relevant groups in the Netherlands and put forward recommendations on how Novib could improve its policy towards Lebanon.[25] Within Novib a limited amount of employees (at least two) were responsible for the implementation of the policies toward Lebanon and, likewise, there were a few persons per national NGO responsible for the communication and interaction with Novib personnel. The bulk of the material was produced in the 1980s, but there is also material preceding this era such as promotion folders of the national NGOs that were sent to Novib as an attachment to request for funding in order to show what kind of organisation was requesting financial support. In addition, there are documents such as constitutional texts of national NGOs that give an insight into the organisational structure of and philosophy behind these organisations. With all the material originating from these NGOs one should be aware that they try to sell their activities as meaningful and beneficial for those who are targeted for humanitarian assistance in order to get funding for their organisation from their international partners, such as Novib. Nevertheless, one could argue that these humanitarian NGOs are one of the more neutral sources for information that were active in Lebanon during the war as they had no vested interests in the conflict itself. Only the most pessimistic of observers could argue that these organisations had an interest in the continuation of the violence because that would mean they could get funding and, more fundamentally, have a right to exist. This line of thought can be easily debunked because most of the national NGOs were already active before the violence began and continued to operate after the violence subdued with the end of the civil war in 1990.

The archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Embassy in Beirut are similar in content, but the archives of the ministry are more extensive. All these three archives have a number of issues in common. Firstly, they all contain Dutch, English, French and Arabic documents that were both meant for internal as external use. For example, there is correspondence between different departments within the respective organisations, as well as correspondence between Novib, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch companies, Dutch and international NGOs, and national NGOs in Lebanon. Secondly, all archives have files missing

[24]NA, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingssamen-werking (NOVIB), inv. No. 2.19.066, Organisatie Projecten, 1964-1992.
[25] Annemiek Boersma, *The Lebanese Crisis and the Netherlands* (NOVIB 1987) 41.

and, while sometimes the documents within a folder were chronologically ordered, more often it was structured around a theme, for example emergency aid. For this reason I chose to work with themes rather than build a chronological narrative of the Dutch involvement in humanitarian action during the civil war. Thirdly, what became apparent while reading the archival material is that when speaking of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Novib one actually refers to a limited number of people employed by these organisations. While the people working at Novib responsible for Lebanon remained the same, the people working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Embassy in Beirut changed regularly. Lastly, the 'voice' of the Lebanese themselves is very rare in these archives. Occasionally there is some correspondence with Lebanese working for the organisations supported by the Dutch government and Novib or Lebanese diplomats, but generally speaking it is the voice of Dutch diplomats, Novib employees and Dutch civil society that can be discerned. Therefore, the main question of this thesis is focused on their motivations instead of those of the Lebanese actors.

Although the above mentioned sources provide a lot of useful information that can substantiate some claims made on the functioning of humanitarian NGOs during the civil war, it also became clear that there is still a lot that is more difficult to claim. For example, I did not find any first-hand sources that showed how negotiations between NGOs and non-state armed actors took place and what was discussed. A little more was found on negotiations between NGOs and states but also here there are crucial sources missing, such as the minutes of the meetings of the representatives of both sides. Therefore some of the explanations given in this thesis are partially based on speculation rather than historical material as such.

In the first chapter the context of the Lebanese Civil War is given with special attention to the actors that were involved and their motives. In addition, this chapter explores how the state and non-state actors related to one another during the conflict. The final part of this chapter is a brief overview of the risks taken by humanitarian NGOs on the ground which is followed by an analysis of a number of activities that forced humanitarian NGOs to deal and negotiate with (inter)national armed actors, such as evacuations of besieged urban areas and delivering emergency aid. The second chapter deals with the question why the Dutch government and Novib gave humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the first place. While humanitarian concern appears to be the main motive, other motivations can be discerned. The last chapter analyses why certain organisations and/or projects were supported by the Dutch government and/or Novib while others were not.

1. The Lebanese Civil War

Nobody wins civil wars. The losers lose, the winners lose.[26]

The Lebanese state in many respects was, became and, to a great extent, still is a weak state in which sectarian belongings, whether real or perceived, play an important political role. Lebanon is a religious mosaic with 18 officially acknowledged sects since the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 by the French. No sect had an absolute majority which resulted in a specific form of power-sharing that found its origin in the National Accord – an unwritten agreement conceived in 1943 that distributed the high positions within the state between Lebanon's major sects (Druze, Sunni, Shia and Christian). The division of power was based on the census of 1932 which allocated a political advantage to the Christians who formed a slight majority back then. However, no new census has been taken place since and the demographic reality has changed due to a high fertility rate among Muslims, an influx of Palestinians after 1948 and emigration of Christians out of Lebanon. The breakdown of the political consensus that was based on the National Accord led to civil conflict in 1958 and 1975.[27] The weakness of the Lebanese state is not some tragic coincidence but the result of a concerted effort by big political bosses called *za'im* (pl. *zu'ama*) – who derive their influence and authority from popular support of their sectarian base – and commercial lobby groups who both aim to operate without the least possible amount of governmental oversight.[28]

The civil war was the result of a number of complicated tensions between internal and external political and sectarian actors. The war started in 1975 with clashes between the Christian Phalangists (an ultra-nationalist political party and militia) and Palestinian armed groups. Because of the Palestinian raids into Israel launched from Lebanese territory the Israel Defence Force were ordered to execute deadly repercussions which did differentiate between the Lebanese and Palestinians. However, after the first few years the conflict turned into a fight over the Lebanese state and its political system. Although the war is often portrayed as a conflict between Christians and Muslims the reality was more complex. The underlying causes of the fighting were more political than religious. During the different episodes of the conflict the largely Sunni Syrian army fought against Sunni Palestinians, Shia Hizbollah

[26] Druze sheikh Husayn Talhuq on the '1860 events': a bloody civil conflict between the Druze and Maronite Christians in Mount Lebanon. Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (Londen 2012) 25.
[27] Imad Salamey and Rhys Payne, 'Parliamentary Consociationalism in Lebanon: Equal Citizenry vs. Quotated Confessionalism', *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 14:4 (2008) 453-455.
[28] David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (London 1984) 11-12.

battled against Shia Amal (not to be confused with the Amel Association) and the mainly Christian remnants of the Lebanese army clashed with the Christian *Forces Libanaises*.[29] During the civil war Lebanon's territory was divided between armed political parties – under the leadership of their respective *za'im* – who established public and social service institutions in the areas under their control. These institutions challenged the legitimacy of the national state and frustrated attempts at disarmament, stabilization and reconstruction.[30]

Besides divisions between internal armed actors, what also should be taken into consideration is that both Syria (1976-2006) and Israel (1978, 1982-2000) occupied parts of the country while, at the same time, supporting their respective allies in the conflict.[31] Syria at first supported the Palestinian and Sunni militias but when these grew too powerful and did not readily serve Syrian interests the regime in Damascus gave its support to their Christian opponents. However, when these Christian militias started actively objecting to the Syrian presence and interference in Lebanese affairs they fell out of grace in Damascus, which started supporting a number of its old allies again.[32] After Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978 they joined forces with local Christian militias and after their retreat under international pressure a security zone was set up where a militia called the South Lebanese Army was in control and actively supported by the Israelis. The inability of the South Lebanese Army to secure Israel's northern border against further attacks prompted another Israeli invasion in 1982 with a wider scope than the previous one which resulted in a war that lasted untill 1985. Afterwards the security zone was re-established which would be active until the Israeli Defence Force abandoned it in 2000.[33] The difference between the Syrian and Israeli invasions lies in the nature of their motives to intervene: Syria's involvement in the conflict was driven by a desire to establish its hegemony on Lebanese soil while Israel's motives were more security driven with the ultimate objective being the expulsion of all the Palestinian guerrillas from Lebanon.[34]

Not only Israel and Syria had boots on the grounds during the civil war. After Israel's invasion in 1978 a seven-thousand-man strong United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was dispatched to patrol the southern border area and by doing so another armed

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[29] Florence Gaub, 'Lebanon's civil war: seven lessons forty years on', *European Union Institute for Security Studies* (April 2015), 1.
[30] Anne Marie Bayloumy, 'Born violent: Armed political parties and non-state governance in Lebanon's civil war', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25:2 (2014) 352-353.
[31] Gaub, 'Lebanon's civil war', 2.
[32] Jean Sarkis, *Histoire de la guerre du Liban* (Presses Universitaires de France 1993) 13-14.
[33] Ben Herzog, 'The road to Israeli citizenship: the case of the South Lebanese Army (SLA)', *Citizenship Studies* 13:6 (2009) 576-577.
[34] Sarkis, *Histoire de la guerre de Liban*, 19-20.

actor was added to the mix.[35] The Dutch also contributed to the UNIFIL mission from 1979 until 1985. The Israeli invasion in 1982 prompted a military intervention on the request of the Lebanese government by the Multinational Force in Lebanon (MFL) – consisting of American, British, Italian and French troops – which was set up after a cease-fire agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel in 1981. After being stuck in the middle of the warring factions for almost two years and suffering hundreds of casualties, the MFL left Lebanon in 1984.[36] Furthermore, Iraq supported local militias in order to fight its enemy Syria and Iran established Hizbollah in order to fight Israel, the US and the 'West' in general.[37]

The civil war ended with the Taif accord in 1990 that slightly altered the arrangements of the National Accord of 1943. The powers of the Muslim prime minister were increased and those of the Christian president were reduced. Nevertheless, the political system of confessionalism, one of the causes of the conflict, remained intact. Robert Fisk, one of the few Western journalists who stayed working and living in Lebanon throughout the conflict, classified the accord as follows: 'Instead of carrying out major surgery to save the life of their dying nation, the Lebanese parliament prescribed a few pills and sought promises of good behaviour.'[38] In other words, the roots of the political and sectarian tensions leading to the civil war were only marginally addressed and it is only a matter of time before the life threatening disease returns to torment those living in Lebanon.

What one should get from all this is that the Lebanese civil war was an extremely complicated conflict with alliances shifting all the time and a wide array of armed factions. Therefore, in order to get access to those in need and deploy their activities, NGOs had to deal with a number of different actors with conflicting interests which, to make matters even more complicate, also changed over time.

1.1 Humanitarian Assistance during the Lebanese Civil War

As for the humanitarian NGOs during the civil war I distinguish between INGOs and national NGOs. The interaction between the two is very important to understand because to a large extent they depend on one another for moral support, funding and networks. I will first introduce the ICRC (defined as an INGO) and its national societies active in Lebanon: the

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[35] Sandra Mackey, *Lebanon: Death of a Nation* (New York 1989) 173.
[36] Sarkis, *Histoire de la guerre de Liban* 107-111.
[37] Najib Alamuddin, *Turmoil: The Druzes, Lebanon and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London 1993) 199.
[38] Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (Oxford 2001) 638. The title of Fisk's book refers to a poem of Khalil Gibran quoted in the beginning of this thesis.

Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRC). In the final part of this chapter a brief overview is given of the operations of humanitarian NGOs during the conflict and the associated risks.

Before turning to these self-proclaimed neutral and impartial NGOs a few remarks on these types of organisations in Lebanon in general are in place. First of all, because of the pre-war weakness of the Lebanese state – and the collapse of the minimal state services that did exist during the war – NGOs tried to fill the vacuum in especially the health and education sector. This resulted in a variety of NGOs being established and operating both before and during the conflict.[39] This thesis is only taking into account those NGOs who have a humanitarian mission. Secondly, most of these NGOs were clearly serving the interests of those establishing and funding these organisations. Take for example the Hariri Foundation – named after its founder Rafiq Hariri the prominent post-war prime minister who rebuilt the country after the civil war and was assassinated in 2005. This foundation was established during the war to provide scholarships and health care, but mainly served as an 'instrument of patronage within the Sunni community'.[40] Similar organisations were established and controlled by the variety of different non-state actors and usually only looked after 'their' own. In this thesis only NGOs who proclaim to be neutral and can more or less rightly be assumed to be so are taken into account.

The archetype of humanitarian NGOs is the ICRC which was founded in Geneva in 1863 – with Henry Dunant as its spiritual father – to protect human life, ensure respect for all human beings and alleviate human suffering.[41] Initially the ICRC was funded by the same philanthropists that were involved in its establishment.[42] Later on, the ICRC was funded based on voluntary contributions from states, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, supranational organisations and private donors.[43] Before the First World War the ICRC was focused on the victims and prisoners of war. Afterwards it broadened its scope to victims of famine and refugees. It also started campaigns for public health and hygiene.[44] The activities of the ICRC are many and address a diverse number of issues: educational and health services, prisoners, missing persons, emergency aid and evacuations.

[39] Gilmour, *Lebanon,* 17-19.
[40] Andrew Arsan, *Lebanon : A Country in Fragments* (London 2018) 159.
[41] Irène Herrmann, *L'Humanitaire en Questions: Réflexions autour de l'histoire du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge* (Paris 2018) 30.
[42] Ibid, 36.
[43] 'The ICRC's funding and spending', *ICRC.* 2018, https://www.icrc.org/en/faq/icrcs-funding-and-spending (27 Nov 2018).
[44] Herrmann, *L'Humanitaire en Questions*, 71-72.

During the civil war two national societies of the ICRC were active in Lebanon: the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRC). The LRC was established in 1945 and joined the ICRC in 1947. Who funded the LRC is not clear but one might assume that a similar mix of donors provided the funds for this organisation as for the ICRC – based on the fact it was modelled after this organisation. Three years into the war the LRC started developing new projects besides their first relief efforts. The three key words were awareness, teaching and training: raising awareness among the general public on the organisation itself and its activities, teaching – especially young people – on public health and the humanitarian principles, giving training on first aid, sewing, social psychology and literacy lessons.[45]

The PRC was founded in the late 1960s and in 1969 the PLO gave it the responsibility to provide medical facilities for all Palestinians. Not long after it became apparent to the PRC that other Arabs also needed its assistance so it opened the doors of its clinics for everybody. Like the LRC it is not clear who funded the PRC – one might assume a comparable mix of donors as with the ICRC and LRC – but in the 1970s it also used handicrafts made in Palestinian refugee camps to boost its funds maybe either because of a deficit in their budget or to expand their activities. The activities of the PRC are similar to those of the LRC and both cooperated closely with each other. For example, both organisations jointly operated emergency centres and hospitals in Lebanon before and during the civil war.[46]

The ICRC and its national societies acknowledge that in order to provide assistance and protection to those in need during a conflict situation humanitarian NGOs and their activities have to be accepted by both state and non-state armed actors, in addition to the communities that are being targeted by their activities. Therefore, all stakeholders have to perceive the NGO as a neutral, independent and impartial provider of relevant humanitarian services. Trust and respect has to be gained and sustained which will contribute to increased acceptance of the NGO's activities.[47] The seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality) shed a light on how the above should be achieved. In a context of violence the principles of *humanity*, *impartiality*, *neutrality* and *independence* are of particular importance. *Humanity* entails the desire to alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health, and to ensure respect for human beings. In its ultimate form humanity means

[45] Marilys Ezzedine, 'The Lebanese Red Cross today', *International Review of the Red Cross* 21 (1981), 36-39.
[46] 'The other face Palestinian Resistance', *The Guardian* 15-5-1976, 13.
[47] O'Callaghan and Leach, 'The relevance of the Fundamental Principles to operations', 291.

cooperation and lasting peace amongst all people. *Impartiality* means no discrimination based on nationality, race, religious belief, class or political view. Only the needs of those who are suffering can make a difference: those who need help the most are the first to receive it. The principle of *neutrality* means that a Red Cross organisation will not take any sides in a conflict in order to continue enjoying the trust of all parties involved. *Independence* entails that a Red Cross organisation tries to maintain the autonomy to act upon the Fundamental Principles at all times.[48]

Obviously the ICRC and national societies work closely together and aspire to achieve the same ideals. The ICRC has a dominant position in comparison to the national societies with regard to the Red Cross ideology, size, political influence and funding. Nonetheless, the ICRC actively supported a bigger role for the national societies by, for example, appealing to them to contribute texts and photos to the *International Review of the Red Cross*.[49] In addition, the ICRC provides financial and material support to the national societies.[50] When the president of the ICRC, Alexandre Hay, visited Lebanon in February 1985 and met with the president of the LRC and members of the Central Committee they raised their concerns with him in regard to the financial position of the LRC.[51]

The above mentioned organisations were not the only humanitarian NGOs that were active during the civil war, but they give us an insight into the provision of humanitarian assistance in conflict situations. All these organisations have similar ideals and are involved in similar activities. As we will see later on, there was also intensive cooperation between all these organisations which is not that surprising since they share the same ideals and goals.

1.2 Risks and Activities of Humanitarian NGOs

Humanitarian NGOs played an important role in the alleviation of the suffering of the ordinary Lebanese and Palestinians who were caught in the middle of a horrifying violent conflict. There were a number of activities that forced humanitarian NGOs to deal and negotiate with (inter)national armed actors. In this part of the chapter I analyse the evacuations of besieged urban areas and delivering emergency aid. Before analysing these activities, the risks taken by the humanitarian NGOs themselves have to be taken into consideration.

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[48] O'Callaghan and Leach, 'The relevance of the Fundamental Principles to operations', 293.
[49] 'Lebanon', *International Review of the Red Cross* (1977) 154.
[50] 'Lebanon', *International Review of the Red Cross* 30 (1990) 84.
[51] 'The President of the ICRC in Lebanon', *International Review of the Red Cross* 25 (1985) 96.

To say that providing humanitarian assistance in situations of widespread violence is not without risk would be an understatement. During the 1980s the LRC lost 11 of its volunteers during missions and the Lebanese Civil Defence lost at least 32 of its members.[52] In 1982 a centre of the ICRC in the coastal city of Sidon got shelled by the Israeli navy and was destroyed.[53] In the same year the headquarters of the ICRC and other buildings marked with Red Cross flags were bombed by the Israelis during the siege of West-Beirut.[54] In 1986 the building hosting an Amel office was hit by a car bomb which killed 22 people and wounded many others.[55] The already dire security situation became even more perilous because some militias made use of the symbols of the Red Cross during their attacks resulting in a growing suspicion towards those symbols. Ambulances of the Red Cross organisations got stolen on a regular basis.[56] One of these vehicles got used in 1985 as a car bomb in southern Lebanon at a checkpoint of an Israeli-supported militia. After the attack Red Cross officials established contact with this militia in an effort 'to re-establish the link of trust and relation of confidence that existed before'.[57] Sometimes the situation was so bad that the humanitarian NGOs had to stop working in certain locations that were considered too unsafe. Usually the ceasing of activities was followed by a public statement calling on all warring parties to cease targeting civilians, humanitarian workers and their facilities.[58]

Crucial to the provision of emergency aid and execution of humanitarian evacuations of besieged areas was access. These endeavours were more dangerous than other activities of humanitarian NGOs because it brought the personnel of these organisations in situations of randomised and indiscriminate violence. The siege of the Palestinian UNRWA-administered refugee camp Tel al-Zaatar from January untill August 1976 was a clear example of how complicated and dangerous humanitarian relief operations during the civil war could be.

Tel al-Zaatar was a collection of sixteen camps with a population of around 50,000 located north-east of Beirut. Right-wing Christian militias wanted to cleanse the camps of its Palestinian guerrillas and, ultimately, its Palestinian inhabitants.[59] On multiple occasions the ICRC tried to access the camp but was not able to do so because of the continuous violence

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[52] Nora Boustany, 'Lebanon's Special Breed of Warriors', *The Washington Post* 16-4-1989, 29.
[53] 'Israeli Shelling Is Said to Hit Red Cross Center in Lebanon', *New York Times* 9-6-1982, 19.
[54] Jonathan Randal, *The Tragedy of Lebanon: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers and American Bunglers* (Charlottesville 2012) 288.
[55] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1162, Amal Request for Additional Financial Support, 1986.
[56] David B. Ottoway, 'Stolen Ambulances Mark City's Decay', *The Washington Post* 30-4-1984, 17.
[57] 'Lebanon Blast Worries Red Cross', *New York Times* 18-7-1985, 3.
[58] 'Le bilan du CICR', *Unknown* 26-5-1985.
[59] 'Thousands of victims of Tel al-Zaatar massacre still missing', *Al-Araby*. 13-8-2016, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2016/8/13/thousands-of-victims-of-tel-al-zaatar-massacre-still-missing (4 Dec 2018).

between both sides.[60] After six months since the start of the siege, a first Red Cross delegation was able to visit the camp during a two-hour truce. The Palestinian factions asked them to evacuate the wounded as soon as possible. During the truce radio communication was established between all stakeholders to coordinate the visit.[61] A week after the visit a written agreement was drafted that guaranteed the safe passage of a convoy to evacuate the wounded and was signed by most of the commanders of the principal militias. However, a number of Christian militias refused to sign the agreement for unknown reasons.[62] In the end these militias also decided to grant access to a humanitarian convoy. The agreement achieving this was brokered by Hassan Sabry al-Kholy, special envoy of the Arab League, and Jean Hoefliger, head of the ICRC mission in Lebanon.[63] Shortly after the evacuation was in full swing, the ICRC was forced to cancel it because one of their drivers had been shot and wounded by a sniper. In a communiqué the ICRC stated that it would postpone further evacuation operations until the safety of its officials was guaranteed.[64] Again the role as neutral and impartial mediator becomes clear and scenarios such as these would be repeated multiple times during the conflict, such as for example the siege of Zahla in the Bekaa valley by Syrian troops in 1981 or the siege of Deir Qamar, a Christian village, by Druze militias in 1983 (to name but a few).[65]

Time and time again the pattern is the same. Fighting erupts and access is initially always denied or the fighting is so intense that any humanitarian operation would be too dangerous. At a certain moment there is a tipping point when one of the parties involved calls on a humanitarian NGO to step in and provide medical aid or to evacuate the wounded and if possible all civilians in the area. Subsequently, contact is established between the NGO most likely to perform the humanitarian emergency operation and all actors involved in the fighting. Sometimes a commander of a militia who was not directly involved in the fighting played a mediating role as well.[66] Once contact is established the negotiations start and it is here where things get murkier. What is clear is that the humanitarian NGO wants security guarantees for its personnel and equipment, but what is in it for the warring factions? The

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[60] ‘Beirut Battle Stops Red Cross Convoy’, *New York Times* 6-7-1976, 6.
[61] Henry Tanner, ‘Red Cross Officials Enter Beirut Camp’, *New York Times* 24-7-1976, 49.
[62] Henry Tanner, ´Lebanese Rightists Block Palestinian Camp Rescue´, *New York Times* 1-8-1976, 1.
[63] Henry Tanner, ‘Lebanese Agrees on Camp Rescue’, *New York Times* 3-8-1976, 5.
[64] Pieter Niesewand, ’Red Cross calls off Beirut mercy mission after convoy attack’, *The Guardian* 6-8-1976, 3.
[65] James MacManus, ‘Red Cross fights a secret war in the suspicious streets of Lebanon’, *The Guardian* 19-5-1981, 6.
David B. Ottoway, ‘Negotiations Intensify in Lebanon’, *The Washington Post* 11-9-1983, 1.
David B. Ottoway, ‘Relief Finally Arrives in Lebanese Village’, *The Washington Post* 13-9-1983, 1.
[66] Richard Homan, ‘Firing Bars Red Cross At Camps’, *The Washington Post* 25-5-1985, 1.

besieged factions of course could use a break from the fighting or may even have genuine humanitarian concerns about the wounded and civilians affected by the violence. However, why would the opposite side agree to a cease-fire in order to let humanitarian NGOs perform their duties? Could it be that they also want a break from the fighting or that even they have genuine concerns about the wounded and civilians (sometimes this claim was explicitly made)?[67] Or is it a good opportunity to do some public relations management? We can only speculate what the real motives are for warring factions to grant access to humanitarian NGOs but it is likely a mix of those mentioned above.

Another dimension of the humanitarian operations is the delivery of emergency supplies. The humanitarian NGOs actively seek donors to finance their activities, as well as emergency supplies, such as blankets, medicine, food etc. The fighting impeded not only the evacuation of the wounded and dead, but also the delivery of emergency aid. Also this provision of emergency goods was not without risks. For example, in 1982 a ship of the ICRC was shelled and damaged in the harbour of Beirut.[68] For the most part these goods were brought in via Cyprus (either by boat or plane) but when this route was blocked emergency goods sometimes entered Lebanon via Israel.[69] The role of Israel in this was an ambiguous one: sometimes goods entered via Israel and sometimes Israel actively blocked emergency supplies from entering Lebanon.[70] Also Syria was sometimes used to get emergency goods into the country.[71] Both Israel and Syria used the delivery of emergency goods as a tool in the conflict. They could deny access whenever it did not fit their direct interest and when it was in their interest they allowed these goods to pass through their borders with Lebanon. The motives for this were possibly humanitarian in some cases but more likely is that they used the granting of access as a way of improving their international reputation or if it served their interests in Lebanon. These are clear examples of the mixed motive game hypothesis in which the interests of the relevant actors sometimes align and sometimes they do not.

What is still missing in this discussion is how the NGOs interacted among one another during the conflict. Generally speaking we can say that there was a lot of cooperation between NGOs, for example the Amel Association received financial and material support from a number of INGOs and used educational methods of INGOs in their training programmes.[72]

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[67] 'Camps Siege Continues In Lebanon', *The Washington Post* 14-12-1986, 49.
[68] 'Relief Ship Gets to Lebanon', *New York Times* 12-8-1982, 6.
[69] Alistair Lyon, 'Red Cross aid impeded', *The Irish Times* 14-6-1982, 6.
[70] 'Israel Turns Back Relief Ship, Citing a Mine Threat at Sidon', *New York Times* 20-6-1982, 10.
[71] 'Red Cross Says It Despairs Of an Effective Cease-Fire', *New York Times* 12-8-1982, 16
[72] Organisations like UNICEF, UNHCR and Save the Children. NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1079, News Bulletin Amel no. 5 Jan-Feb 1984, 3-4.

The LRC and PRC worked closely together in the Beirut area operating ambulance services, collecting blood and distributing emergency supplies.[73] There are also numerous examples of volunteers from INGOs performing activities for national NGOs. In 1985 personnel of *Médicins sans Frontièrs* were working in an Amel centre in the Beirut neighbourhood of Chiyah.[74] On a national level NGOs cooperated in committees that coordinated medical and social centres, one committee specifically concerned with activities for handicapped people, and a committee for employment.[75] On an international level, conferences were organised to coordinate the relief works by variety of NGOs such as the Cyprus conference in 1987 where representatives of INGOs and Lebanese NGOs met with a growing cooperation as a result. In a Novib report this Cyprus meeting was called a success because 'the donor-agencies realized that the local NGOs were playing a more and more important role due to the absence of any governmental services. The local NGOs felt their work was strengthened by the interest of their international supporters.'[76]

In conclusion, humanitarian NGOs were very active during the civil war and were forced to cooperate with armed actors with different and conflicting interests. Their ability to provide humanitarian assistance was, to a great degree, out of their hands and depended on the good will of the warring factions, as well as the benevolence of their international donors. One can only admire the men and women who put their own lives at risk to ameliorate the suffering of others. In the following chapters the focus shifts to the motives of the Dutch government and Novib for supporting national humanitarian NGOs operating in Lebanon during the civil war.

[73] Kathleen Teltsch, '2 Agencies Collaborate to Aid Lebanese', *New York Times* 18-7-1982, 10.
[74] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1079, News Bulletin Amel no. 10 Nov-Dec 1985, 2.
[75] Ibid, 5.
[76] Boersma, *The Lebanese Crisis and the Netherlands*, 1-2.

2. Why Provide Humanitarian Aid in the First place?

The Dutch government directed its humanitarian aid towards Lebanon through three funnels: multilateral, bilateral and trilateral – meaning through co-financing organisations, such as Novib. With multilateral I mean the Dutch contributions – both in kind and money – for humanitarian aid that was distributed through UN organisations and the EEC. The motivations of these international organisations for providing humanitarian assistance are outside the scope of this thesis. On the motivations of the Dutch government to contribute to the multilateral humanitarian programmes I will be brief. It was a combination of trust in these international institutions to adequately provide assistance, as well as a feeling of obligation to contribute in order to maintain a positive international reputation. The bilateral funnel was used to directly support – through the relevant ministries in The Hague and the Dutch Embassy in Beirut – those organisations and projects which were deemed to be trustworthy and effective in ameliorating the suffering of those civilians affected by the civil war. Through the trilateral funnel the Dutch government gave financial contributions to co-financing organisations (CFOs). The CFO would get requests for funding of projects, which could either have developmental or humanitarian aims, from national NGOs in countries around the globe. The focus in this thesis is on the bilateral and trilateral funnels. It should also be stated that these three funnels, as described below, often work in tandem with each other and sometimes one big project receives funds through all three funnels, albeit not always simultaneously. The question central to this chapter is why did the Dutch government and Novib decide to provide humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the first place?

2.1 The Motivations of Providing Humanitarian Aid

The motivations of the Dutch government – embodied by the civil servants in The Hague and the Dutch diplomats in Lebanon – are the first to be assessed and the motivations of CFOs – exemplified by Novib – are considered subsequently.

The interest of the Dutch government in Lebanon was, at least in part, connected to the Dutch contribution to the UNIFIL mission from 1979 to 1985. However, Ben Schoenmaker found that the Dutch never really believed in the mission's objectives and only contributed to the mission in order to enhance its international standing (in particular within the UN).[77] Maarten Kuitenbrouwer sheds some light on the more general motivations of the Dutch state to contribute to development cooperation in the so-called Third World. Kuitenbrouwer states

[77] Ben Schoenmaker, 'The Debate on the Netherlands Contribution to UNIFIL, 1979–85', *International Peacekeeping* 12:4 (2005) 596.

that human suffering, in particularly due to the poverty in the Third World, played an important role and humanitarian concern was the prime motive in the design and execution of Dutch policies with regard to development cooperation.[78] During the Lebanese Civil War the Dutch government was not really involved in developmental cooperation in the country and the Dutch contribution was almost solely in humanitarian aid. A distinction was made between emergency relief which followed directly after the various episodes of violence and rehabilitation initiatives which aimed to restore the possibility of a normal daily life after the fighting had ceased.

The Dutch Embassy in Beirut played an important role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese and Palestinians. In cooperation with the civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assessments were continuously made of the humanitarian assistance policies in Lebanon and the role the Dutch could play within these policies. One of the first things that Dutch diplomats and civil servants did was to assess the situation in Lebanon, which actors where involved in the conflict and, more importantly, which actors could assist the Dutch government in providing humanitarian aid. In practice this meant that target groups were determined, advice was given on the feasibility of individual projects, so-called Little Embassy Projects (*Kleine Ambassade Projecten* or KAP) were prepared, implemented and evaluated, running projects in the country were supervised and reported on, and assistance was provided by sending experts, goods, and money for aid projects.

A preliminary conclusion made by a civil servant at the beginning of the conflict was that because the country would receive a large amount of international aid and the Lebanese still had funds themselves, especially in the capital Beirut, Dutch aid should be targeted at 'a category of people that was poor, economically not interesting and in desperate need of extra help'.[79] The poor and those in the most dreadful situation would remain the preferred targets for humanitarian aid. There is enough archival material – both in internal documents and documents for public use – to claim that there was a genuine concern among Dutch civil servants and diplomats with regard to the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. Therefore, the main reason the Dutch government gave humanitarian aid to the Lebanese was as a sincere token of compassion. This became especially clear after renewed rounds of fighting erupted which of course had detrimental effects on the lives of the population. For example, after the Israeli invasion in 1982 a memo was written that argued that the seriousness of the situation

[78] Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld*, 109.
[79] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 33616, Memo: Hulpverlening Libanon, 23 november 1976.

warranted additional funds to be made available for humanitarian operations in Lebanon.[80] Similar memos were written after and during renewed violent clashes between the warring factions which confirms that the humanitarian concern was genuine and continuous.

Nonetheless, there were also some less altruistic motivations for providing humanitarian assistance to the war-battered population which became apparent while assessing a bilateral project concerning the purchase of the private Ghossein hospital in the northern city of Tripoli in 1977. This project was a clear example of a rehabilitation initiative that aimed to enable the people living in Tripoli to pick up their lives once again (not knowing that the violence and suffering would become more severe and continue for over a decade). During the first rounds of fighting in 1975 and 1976 large parts of the city's infrastructure were destroyed, including its only public hospital at the time, which left the poor in particular without proper healthcare services. After the acquisition of the Ghossein hospital by the Dutch government it would be given to the Lebanese state for free on the condition that it would be transformed into a public hospital accessible for everybody and especially for the 'poorest of the poor'.[81] In addition, a neighbouring plot was bought for the purpose of expanding the hospital, medical equipment was donated, and the future management of the hospital was to be trained in the Netherlands.[82] Besides the genuine humanitarian concern for the people living in and around Tripoli, there were additional motivations behind this project. In the first place this project also served to promote the Netherlands and, in the second place, to promote some of the Dutch companies that were all too eager to do business in Lebanon. These interlinked interests are represented in the photo on the front page of a shipping container containing medical equipment for the Ghossein hospital donated by the Dutch government and delivered by a Dutch company called *Hoek Loos Holland* which also was in charge of the renovation of the Ghossein hospital. Dutch diplomats actively promoted the project in the Lebanese press and the results were meticulously collected, translated and forwarded to the ministry in The Hague.

In a confidential report written by a Dutch diplomat – about his trip to Lebanon in October 1982 to check on a number of organisations that were (partially) funded by the Netherlands – he gave what, in his view, was one of the benefits for the Dutch government to give humanitarian aid:

> It is generally acknowledged that the deployment of foreign forces has had an important psychological significance. At a time when Lebanon felt completely abandoned by the

[80] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 33616, Memo: Noodhulp Libanon via ICRC, 14 juni 1982.
[81] NA, Ambassade Libanon (AL), inv.nr. 205, Press release, 11 March 1977.
[82] NA, AL, inv.nr. 205, Memo: Ziekenhuis Tripoli, 2 december 1977.

rest of the world, at least a number of people were willing to assist the Lebanese (and Palestinians).[83]

The subtext here is that the Lebanese (and Palestinians) would not easily forget what the Dutch have done to reduce their suffering and, therefore, the reputation of the Netherlands in Lebanon may be enhanced in the eyes of those who needed all the help they could get and those who witnessed the alleviation of some of the suffering of their companions. In other words, to give additional humanitarian aid in the future will only further enhance the reputation of the Dutch in Lebanon which might have positive outcomes in the future.

Dutch companies were often involved in the humanitarian operations of the Dutch government or those operations that were, at least partially, funded by the Dutch government. In some cases this was because of their expertise in a certain domain, such as *Hoek Loos Holland* which was specialised in medical equipment. Another example is a company called *Bouwcentrum* from Rotterdam which was invited by the Lebanese Chamber of Commerce to write a report on the reconstruction of the destroyed centre of Beirut (this company was involved in the rebuilding of Rotterdam after it was almost completely destroyed by a German bombardment during the Second World War).[84] Other companies just wanted to expand their business in Lebanon and benefit from all the funds earmarked for reconstruction. In 1977 the Lebanese Ministry of Planning established the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) which was made responsible for preparing a general plan and programmes for development and reconstruction. Shortly after the founding of the CDR, the Royal Adriaan Volker Group (a Dutch contracting company) appealed to the Dutch Embassy to introduce the firm and its services to the CDR.[85] In November 1982 the Lisman & Lisman construction company wrote a eight page long letter to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on why they should be assisted by the Dutch government in their effort to assist in the reconstruction initiatives in Lebanon (coincidently they would also earn a lot of money and get access to the Lebanese market where they could build up a network).[86] Although promoting Dutch businesses in Lebanon was not the main motivation for giving humanitarian aid, it certainly was a positive side effect that, for understandable reasons, was not discouraged. The expertise and experience of these companies could potentially make an important contribution to rehabilitation efforts in the war-torn country while at the same time these companies would

[83] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 29550, Memo: Verslag bezoek Plv. DGIS aan Beiroet, 6 t/m 9 oktober 1982, 12 oktober 1982.
[84] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 142, Report from Bouwcentrum: Rebuilding of the Destroyed Centre of Beirut May, 1977.
[85] NA, AL, inv.nr. 150, Letter to Dutch Embassy from Royal Adriaan Volker Group (Rotterdam), 19 juli 1977.
[86] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 29550, Letter from Lisman & Lismant to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9-11-1982.

gain access to the Lebanese market and, therefore, expand their network and possibly do lucrative business in the country.

An even less flattering motivation for providing humanitarian assistance is what we nowadays would call providing shelter in the region. This concept revolves around the notion that a refugee should be provided with shelter and basic services as close to the place from where he or she was forced to flee from. An internal memo on emergency aid from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned that the Scandinavian countries had stated that they were willing to take in a number of wounded Palestinians for medical treatment. The possibility of a similar request to the Netherlands with accompanying costs should be taken into account: 'Incidentally, this care should only apply in those cases that cannot be helped locally, due to the high Dutch hospital costs and the risk of asylum applications.'[87] In other words, only in the most extreme cases would a humanitarian intervention involving the transport of the wounded for medical treatment to the Netherlands be considered. Where the fear of 'the risk of asylum applications' by Palestinians came from is not exactly clear. Especially when one considers that the number of asylum requests from 1980 till 1982 by Lebanese – so not only Palestinians from Lebanon – was 26 in total.[88] However, there were an increasing number of Palestinians refugees from Lebanon arriving in Europe during the 1980s, especially in Sweden, Denmark and West-Germany. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the so-called War of the Camps (a sub-conflict between Palestinian guerrillas and the Shi'ite Amal militia) from 1985 until 1987 led to an increased number of Palestinian refugees.[89] This affair shows the limits of providing humanitarian aid: it should not cost too much and the victims should preferably stay where they are. A possible additional explanation why Palestinian refugees in particular were seen as unwanted can be read in a classified security report from the *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst* (Domestic Security Service):

> There is clearly radicalization among various Arab and pro-Palestinian groups, expressed in the search for new forms of organization and cooperation and in the desire for the re-use of the terror weapon.[90]

As for the trilateral funnel for humanitarian aid the Dutch government gave funds to so-called co-financing organisations (CFOs) that assessed which organisations and projects were worthy of a financial contribution. During the Lebanese Civil War there existed four of these

[87] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 33616, Memo: Noodhulp Libanon, 26 augustus 1982.
[88] NA, Algemeen Rijksarchief, Beleidsarchief IND (AR-IND), inv. nr. 3147, Letter from the deputy head of the Department of Asylum Affairs of the Dutch Ministry of Justice to Mister H. Glimmerveen, 29 April 1985.
[89] Kamel Doraï, 'Palestinian Emigration from Lebanon to Northern Europe: Refugees, Networks and Transnational Practices', *Refuge* 21:2 (2003) 24.
[90] NA, AR-IND, inv. nr. 323, Addressed to the Dutch Minister of Justice, 3 Augustus 1977.

CFOs in the Netherlands: Cebemo, ICCO, Hivos and Novib. The background of these organisations reflected the phenomenon of pillarisation – the political and religious segregation of Dutch society – that was starting to fall apart in the 1970s and 1980s. Cebemo had a Catholic background whereas ICCO claimed to operate on the basis of their Protestant values.[91] Both Hivos and Novib did not have a religious background but claimed to adhere to humanitarian principles. These four organisations collectively formed a consultative body which dealt with the Dutch government, but each organisation also communicated with the government and its institutions directly with regard to the projects they wanted to support.[92]

In 1956 Novib was established as the first Dutch NGO for development aid. The aim of Novib was to help those in need wherever they may be. The organisation provided projects around the globe with funding, lobbied governments and organisations, and ran awareness campaigns in the Netherlands.[93] By far the biggest part of the funds of Novib during the 1970s and 1980s was provided by the Dutch government. The rest of the funds came from the EEC and donations from the Dutch public.[94] Novib displayed international solidarity with less-fortunate countries and people as their prime motive for providing aid. In addition, it spoke of a need for global justice because extreme poverty and global inequality would only pose a threat to world peace and security. In contrast to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the organisation was against showcasing its own contribution to projects and preferred to put the national NGOs executing the projects in the spotlight with Novib merely performing the role of the benevolent funder.[95] Novib had been supporting relief and development work in Lebanon since 1979. The motivation for Novib to support humanitarian aid clearly stems from the humanitarian principles the organisation was founded on and, therefore, is not as layered as that of the Dutch government.

Whereas the motivation for Novib to provide humanitarian aid was straightforward, the motivations of the Dutch government were more diverse. However, for both Novib and the Dutch government a genuine concern for the dire humanitarian situation in Lebanon was one of the prime motives to get involved. As for the Dutch state, the other motivations ranged from promoting the Netherlands/Dutch companies and reducing the amount of refugees making their way to the Netherlands.

[91] http://www.protestant.nu/Encyclopedie/tabid/359/Page/Cebemo/Default.aspx & https://www.icco-cooperation.org/nl/Over (26 May 2019).
[92] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 31582, Brief aan heer Verkaar, 18 mei 1983.
[93] 'Oprichting van Oxfam Novib [Founding of Oxfam Novib]', *Oxfam Novib*. Date Unknown, https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/oprichting-van-oxfam-novib (27 Nov 2018).
[94] 'Geschiedenis van Oxfam Novib 1971-1986 [History of Oxfam Novib 1971-1986]', *Oxfam Novib*. 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhwTM2FWOv0 (27 Nov 2018) 2:20-2:48.
[95] Scheffer & Benning, "Oxfam Novib & Partnerships", 4-5.

3. The Why and How of Supporting Humanitarian Action during the Civil War

In this final chapter I will analyse why and how the Dutch government and Novib supported certain organisations and/or projects while other requests for financial contributions were declined. In brief, the motivations for support were based on the belief that [1] the organisation should not be involved in the fighting, [2] it should be based on the principle of non-confessionalism, [3] it should have a good (inter)national reputation and track record, [4] it should cater to the needs of those who needed it the most, and [5] it should be effective, responsible and reliable in the execution of its activities and projects. Before dealing with these motivations more in depth it is necessary to introduce two national humanitarian NGOs that gained the trust and support of both the Dutch government and Novib: the Amel Association and Najdeh Association. Subsequently, the reasons for why the Dutch government funded the projects and activities of international organisations are analysed, followed by a case-study of the so-called prosthetics project which serves as good example of how the three funnels for humanitarian aid can come together in one project. Before putting forward the final conclusion, the role of the Lebanese state in the motivations for international actors to support certain organisations and/or projects is assessed.

The Amel Association was established after the Israeli invasion of 1978 by a group of doctors, journalists and intellectuals. It claimed that its objectives were not limited to one field, but concerned all aspects of human life. Particular attention was given to health as well as social, economic and educational problems.[96] Amel received funds from NGOs such as the ICRC and Médecins sans Frontières from a variety of countries (among others Belgium, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Switzerland, and France). In addition, they received financial support from the Dutch and Canadian embassy, as well as UN-organisations such as UNICEF.[97] With the funds that it received the Amel Association could deploy their activities, such as vocational training, health education, first aid courses and health services.[98] During the civil war Amel organised a number of emergency programmes to assist those who were particularly hit hard by the violence.[99] Regarding the provision of emergency services the members of the Civil Defence were of great importance. These were the first responders after the occurrence of violence and they retrieved the wounded from the battlefield or from under the debris of shelled buildings and brought them to a hospital or medical centre. Usually these men were being paid by the government, but Amel maintained its own units of the Civil

[96] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, The AMEL Foundation – A General Presentation, January 1983.
[97] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, List of donors Amel, 1983.
[98] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1161, News Bulletin Amel no. 1 May-June 1984, 2.
[99] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, News Bulletin Amel no. 5 Jan-Feb 1984, 5.

Defence with a fleet of ambulances.[100] The number of Civil Defence members on the payroll of Amel differed per area, but ranged from three in Chiyah to seven in Wadi Abu Jamil – both are neighbourhoods in Beirut.[101]

In contrast to Amel, Najdeh was established before the war in 1972 but in many respects these organisations are very similar in their ideology and activities. Najdeh aimed to deal with the health and social problems of the Lebanese population. Due to the fact that the civil war resulted in a serious shortage of medical care – especially in rural areas – this organisation started focusing more on health issues and according to Najdeh its clinics and medical centres provided thousands of citizens with medical treatment, at first mainly in the south of Lebanon and later also in other parts of the country.[102] Like the Amel Association, Najdeh received funds from governments and NGOs in a number of Western countries, as well as international organisations such as the Commission of European Communities and UNICEF. From 1977 until 1984 Najdeh received almost 80% of its financial support from Europe and the remainder from the Middle East – particularly from Kuwait – and North America.[103]

The support these organisations got from the Dutch government was mainly thanks to their self-confessed neutrality and adherence to the principle of non-confessionalism. Dutch officials tried everything to make sure to not support one faction in the conflict. Organisations who claimed to be impartial and non-sectarian were the ones whose pleas for financial contributions had a chance of being honoured. Therefore, one can safely assume that a humanitarian discourse would have resonated with Dutch diplomats and civil servants. In order to check whether these organisations were indeed neutral an assessment was made based on the reports of diplomats, INGOs and the national NGOs themselves. In an internal memo in 1984 Amel was characterised as 'an organisation with which the Netherlands has cooperated extensively and well in the past. Its personnel consist only of Lebanese and it works a lot with volunteers. All its hospitals and medical centres are open for all.'[104] In other words, Amel had won over the trust of the Dutch officials and its activities were meant for everybody which meant that 'the poorest of the poor' would also benefit from the aid the Netherlands gave to this organisation. An additional reason to support Amel was that it closely operated with the Lebanese Ministry of Health and, in cooperation with the ministry, a national committee was established which included all the operating health organisations in

[100] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, News Bulletin Amel no. 6 March-April 1984, 5-6.
[101] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1079, Justification sheets for Emergency Programme, 1985.
[102] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1079, The Program of the Lebanese Popular Relief, March 1982.
[103] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1161, Association Najdeh: Annual Report, 1984,
[104] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 295510, Memo: Noodhulpvoorstellen: UNRWA, AMEL/Ambassade, Cebemo, Rode Kruis en ICRC , 1984.

Lebanon. Dutch civil servants considered this as evidence that the Amel Association had a good national reputation.[105] The same arguments are valid for the Dutch support directed to Najdeh which consisted of contributions on a project basis, such as in 1982 when the embassy paid for an x-ray machine that was to be used in one of Najdeh's clinics in the south of Lebanon.[106]

The choice of partner organisations in Lebanon by Novib was made on the basis of the principle of non-confessionalism. Although Novib had contact and sometimes funded a project for a number of national NGOs, Amel and Najdeh stand out due to the fact that they were consistently supported and enjoyed the confidence of the Novib personnel responsible for the granting of financial support. Novib supported Amel throughout the 1980s and besides granting an annual amount of money it also provided funding for projects, such as the emergency programmes. The reasons for this continuous support were that Novib considered the Amel Association an 'effective and trustworthy channel for relief aid' and saw that Amel helped those most in need without discrimination.[107] In assessing the trustworthiness of Amel advice was asked by Novib from the Medical Committee Palestine, a pro-Palestinian NGO in the Netherlands, which recommended that Novib should financially support the projects of Amel.[108] There was also regular contact between both organisations: in 1987 the founder of Amel, Kamel Mohanna, visited Novib in the Netherlands and a delegation of Novib visited Lebanon.[109] When assessing the reasons why Najdeh received support from Novib a similar picture emerges. For example, when in 1984 a financial contribution was made to a Najdeh emergency relief program because of the effectiveness it had shown in providing humanitarian aid previously (Novib had at this point already contributed three times before). The adequate justification in reports related to how the funds were spent and highlighted that it was a neutral organisation that was active in the whole of Lebanon.[110]

With regard to the multilateral funnel similar motivations as mentioned above, as well as additional ones can be discerned. In the first year of the conflict the Dutch government provided aid (both in cash and kind) through contributions to the ICRC with the Dutch Red

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[105] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 295510, Memo: Noodhulpvoorstellen: UNRWA, AMEL/Ambassade, Cebemo, Rode Kruis en ICRC, 1984.
[106] NA, AL, inv.nr. 187, Telegram from the ambassador to the Minister of Development in The Hague, 3 Dec 1982.
[107] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, Internal Novib memo, 7 November 1985.
[108] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, Note of Medisch Komitee Palestina to Novib, 7 July 1983.
[109] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1161, Letter from Kamel Mohanna to Novib, 9 November 1987.
NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1161, Extract from duty visit report, August 1987.
[110] NA, NOVIB, inv. no. 1079, Project Budget Novib, 25-4-1984.

Cross as the intermediary.[111] The ICRC would remain one of the most important partners of the Dutch government because 'the Red Cross remains a pre-eminently important and efficient channel for assistance in all parts of Lebanon.'[112] Besides the fact that the ICRC was considered to be a trustworthy partner, it was also efficient and able to deliver aid in all parts of the country. The concern of efficiency and reaching all parts – and all layers of the population – played an important role in deciding which organisations received support and which did not. Other international organisations that received financial support from the Netherlands were UNICEF, WFO and UNRWA. With UNICEF one of the considerations made by Dutch civil servants was the track record of this organisation during the conflict in Lebanon which provided emergency aid, as well as rehabilitation programmes throughout the country and conflict. In addition, their projects were well received by the targeted population and UNICEF closely operated with national organisations in the target areas. Another aspect that pleased Dutch officials was the fact that UNICEF documented their activities and supplied evidence of how the financial contributions of international donors were spent in a more professional manner than the national NGOs did (or were able to).[113] In other words, the motivation for using the multilateral funnel was based on the desire for reliable, responsible and effective humanitarian action. An additional advantage was that the activities and projects from international organisations required little input from the Dutch government. In a sense, Dutch policymakers only had to decide how much of the budget for humanitarian aid was to be allocated to these organisations and they would do the rest. Novib did not contribute to the projects international humanitarian organisations and preferred to work with national NGOs because this was more suitable to the post-colonial ideology of the organisation in which the Western countries and organisation should remain in the background. According to Novib the local partners were the drivers of development because of their superior knowledge of the culture and political reality of their country.[114]

An example where all the above mentioned motivations for the three funnels come together is the so-called prosthetics project which, with intervals, ran throughout the conflict. This project was clearly aimed at the rehabilitation of the victims of the violence in order to give them the ability to carry on with their lives. It was a joint effort of the ICRC, Dutch government, Amel (partially funded by Novib), the Middle-East Council of Churches

[111] NA, AL, inv.nr.189, Letter to the Dutch Ambassador H.C. who was residing in Cyprus at the time of writing from M. Nahas (a Lebanese working for the Dutch Embassy), 30 November 1975.
[112] NA, BuZa, inv.nr. 33616, Memo: Noodhulp Libanon via het Rode Kruis, 2 augustus 1982.
[113] NA, BuZa, inv.nr 33616, Memo: Noodhulp Libanon, 26 augustus 1982.
[114] Scheffer & Benning, "Oxfam Novib & Partnerships", 7.

(MECC, partially funded by ICCO) and other local organisations. The fighting resulted not only in an increased number of casualties, but an even higher number of wounded people and some of these injuries would be permanent which created a demand for prosthetics. However, the material and expertise for providing prosthetics was in short supply and not everybody could afford a prosthetic. In the spring of 1977, the Dutch government noticed the high number of amputees and decided to send 16 Dutch prosthetists with equipment and 1,500 kilograms of plaster to Lebanon in order to take the measurements of the amputated limbs. A few months later they returned with leg and arm prosthetics for almost 400 people. This time the prosthetists were accompanied by Dutch physiotherapists and occupational therapists that provided aftercare to the patients for three months. The ICRC, Amel and other local organisations offered their network and medical centres.[115] After the violence flared up again during and in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of 1982 a new operation to provide prosthetics was prepared and executed in 1983 and 1984. What was different this time around was the fact that the Dutch government tried to remain in the background. Whereas in 1977 the Dutch government had provided aftercare, in 1983 and 1984 it called on the ICRC, Amel and MECC to provide assistance during the rehabilitation of the patients. The overall coordination of the operation was handed over to the ICRC which, in turn, made the LRC responsible for managing the project.

What attracted the Dutch in this project was the fact that it provided humanitarian assistance to a group of war victims that was often forgotten in most parts of the country. The fact that this type of aid was rarely provided made it a unique project and the predominant role played by the Dutch made this project a public relations success. Like with the Ghossein hospital in Tripoli the coverage of the project in the Lebanese press was collected, translated and forwarded to the ministry. One of the motivations for repeating the project in 1982 was the fact that the first time in 1977 had proven to be successful and the experience gained could be employed in executing the project in a more efficient way the second time. The notable difference was that the second time around the Dutch government relied more on local partners than the first time which seems to confirm the 'going local' thesis. However, during the sequel of the prosthetics project a number of the Dutch prosthetists refused to participate stating personal reasons and a heavy workload in their clinics in the Netherlands as

[115] NA, AL , inv.nr. 199, 'Nederlandse Prothesen voor Libanese Oorlogsslachtoffers', *Internationale Samenwerking,* 20 January 1984.

justification.[116] Therefore, the going local option was maybe not so much because of the idea that local partners had a superior knowledge of the situation on the ground in Lebanon, but was rather due to a lack of willingness from the side of the Dutch prosthetists to participate another time.

Before discussing the role of the Lebanese state in the process of international actors providing humanitarian assistance, some brief remarks on why certain organisations and/or projects were *not* supported are necessary. The reasons were broadly the same for both the Dutch government and Novib. For the most part it is the opposite of the reasons why certain organisations/projects received support. To give only one example, when an organisation clearly was sectarian in its composition and ideology, it conflicted with the desire for supporting non-sectarian actors and, therefore, it would not get any support. However, there were also additional reasons for not supporting certain organisations and/or projects. One of the most important reasons was if there was no urgent need that required financial assistance from funds earmarked for emergency aid. The key word here is urgent because sometimes it was acknowledged that the organisations and its projects served a certain group of people that clearly needed help, but as soon as it was rather *development* aid instead of *humanitarian* aid the request was often rejected. For example, in 1984 there was a discussion about whether Amel should continue to get financial support from the Dutch government because its program became more focused on developmental goals – they instigated activities for the emancipation of women, vocational training and education for toddlers – than on the 'minimal medical services'.[117] Furthermore, when an organisation was not able to justify the requested amount of financial support in a satisfying way by providing detailed plans or when an organisation initially did receive support but could not explain afterwards how the financial support was spent, any successive requests were denied. Another reason to not offer any assistance was when a project was not deemed to be realistic or viable. The most telling example of this was a project called *the driving village* by an organisation called the Arabian West-European Info Centre which was based in Ermelo, the Netherlands. The project was based on the idea that in the years after the fighting which destroyed vital institutions – such as hospitals, but also bakeries – there was a need for services but the rebuilding of these institutions would take time. Therefore, these services would be performed by 'mobile structures' and for this purpose the organisation wanted to purchase old buses and transform

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[116] See for example NA, AL, inv.nr. 29552, Letter from the director of the St. Maartenskliniek to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs 8 February 1983.

[117] NA, AL, inv.nr. 29552, Memo: Rehabilitatiehulp t.b.v. oorlogsslachtoffers Zuid-Beiroet, Libanon, Novib/AMEL (Cat. IIIb) 9 November 1984.

them into mobile hospitals, bakeries, pharmacies etc. Sadly, the civil servants in The Hague did not see any merit in this project.[118]

Despite the *de facto* partition of Lebanon between the various warring factions, the Lebanese state did still play an important role with regard to the provision of humanitarian aid. Although for most of the conflict the state was not able to assert full sovereignty over its institutions and territory, the NGOs and most foreign states still considered it to be legitimate while they acknowledged its problematic composition. When the president of the ICRC came to Lebanon in 1985, he first met with the president and a number of ministers in order to 'strengthen even more the excellent relationship that exists between the ICRC and the Lebanese Government'.[119] It was the Lebanese state who gave the NGOs the legitimacy to work on Lebanese territory, but at the same time the state had an interest in the existence of these NGOs because they filled the void in social services that the state could not fill. In 1980 the Amel Association sent a testimonial of their organisation to Novib from the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in which it stated that they were authorised as a NGO by the Ministry of Interior since 1979.[120] A similar testimonial was forwarded to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs and Novib by Najdeh. These testimonials were necessary because in order to get projects funded through the co-financing system the government in the country where the funding went must give its approval.

The attitude of the Dutch government towards the Lebanese state changed over time. At first, the preferred course of action was to provide humanitarian aid through international and national NGOs because these organisations were considered to be the most effective and reliable. In doing so the Lebanese state was effectively bypassed and its already feeble sovereignty was weakened further. It appears that the Lebanese state was either too weak or just did not care to get actively involved in the coordination of humanitarian aid towards Lebanon. However, this quickly changed after a new Lebanese government was formed in the wake of the Israeli invasion in 1982 and the Dutch government started to actively cooperate with Lebanese officials who demanded to have a say in the humanitarian operations that were taking place in Lebanon. The Lebanese Ambassador to the Netherlands requested information from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on their financial support for NGOs like Amel. He said that he wanted to make sure that Dutch humanitarian aid 'to Lebanon should preferably be channelled through the neutral and non-sectarian government services of Lebanon rather

[118] NA, AL, inv.nr. 29552, Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Arabian West-European Info Centre, 2 July 1982.
[119] 'The President of the ICRC in Lebanon', *International Review of the Red Cross* 25 (1985) 96.
[120] NA, NOVIB, inv. No. 1079, Attestation Ministère du travail et des affaires sociales, 23 September 1980.

than through sectarian NGOs.'[121] Novib wrote to Amel that if they did not provide any information it could lead to problems for the organisations concerned. In the end a compromise was made: none of Amel's own documents were sent instead a Novib presentation in Dutch on an emergency project in the south of Beirut managed by Amel was sent. What this, once again, shows is that the Lebanese government had mixed feelings towards humanitarian NGOs: on the one hand it filled a void in the delivery of basic social and health services, but on the other hand in the end it wanted to regain full sovereignty over the country and provide for these services itself.

However, although officially the Dutch government supported the legitimacy of the Lebanese state or, at least, acknowledged that the Lebanese officials had a point in demanding information on activities that were funded by foreign states and entities in Lebanon, there were different views among Dutch civil servants on the subject. On the one hand, they feared that keeping the Lebanese government informed on the organisations (partially) funded by the Dutch government or – as the Lebanese officials preferred – to channel humanitarian aid through the Lebanese state institutions would negatively affect the speed and effectiveness of humanitarian action in Lebanon. An additional concern was that the Lebanese state would – because of the animosity towards the Palestinians residing in the country – only supply 'their own' with humanitarian aid while those who were most affected could be left out because of political reasons.[122] On the other hand, there were advocates for working through and with the Lebanese government because in this way an 'unwanted proliferation of sectarian private aid organisations could be prevented'.[123] If humanitarian assistance would exclusively be provided through 'private, regionally limited, organisations' the Lebanese state would never be able to recover and be sovereign in all of its territory.[124]

As stated above, at the time of writing I only had access to the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until 1984 and although the archive of the embassy was available until 1986 the given motivations for supporting or not supporting the Lebanese state could have changed after this period, particularly if we take into consideration the historical context in which these views were expressed. Taku Osoegawa characterised Lebanon from 1975 until 1988 as a 'semi-anarchy' in which the central government lacked the monopoly over the use of violence and non-state actors were armed and struggling for power. Nevertheless, a 'unitary'

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[121] NA, AL, inv.nr. 29552, Memo: brief Libanese ambassadeur , 19 January 1984.
[122] NA, AL, inv.nr. 29552, Memo: Reaktie op uw vragen op memo CD/598/83 inzake noodhulp Libanon 5 September 1983.
[123] NA, AL, inv.nr. 179, Brief Tijdelijk Zaakgelastigde (M.R. Jochems) aan Minister BuZa, 22 Augustus 1984
[124] NA, AL, inv.nr. 179, Brief Tijdelijk Zaakgelastigde (M.R. Jochems) aan Minister BuZa, 23 Augustus 1984

government continued to exist formally and 'sustains efforts to restore order, unlike in anarchy'.[125] This 'unitary' national government disappeared in 1988 when, till the end of the conflict, there were two governments who claimed to be the legitimate government of Lebanon. The question then is what was the position of the Dutch civil servants and diplomats after this date? The two governments had both their own international backers and, therefore, the Dutch government had either to choose sides or go back to funding national NGOs. Further research should be done on this question and to test the other findings of this thesis.

In conclusion, it is clear that both the Dutch government and Novib were actively involved in the provision of humanitarian aid towards Lebanon. The reasons why certain organisation and/or projects were supported while others were not were more or less the same for both. The humanitarian discourse of the national NGOs played an important role, but at the end of the day both the Dutch government and Novib wanted to see results.

[125] Taku Osoegawa, *Syrian and Lebanon: International Relations and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Londen, 2015) 23.

Conclusion

The Lebanese Civil War killed, wounded and scarred many people who – because of the violence and disintegration of already weak state services – were at the mercy of not only the warring factions but also of the international community. National humanitarian NGOs were for a great deal dependent on foreign funding for the execution of their activities and services. Working as a humanitarian NGO in a conflict situation is extremely difficult and the risks are many. During their operations these organisations have to deal with states, non-state armed actors, UN organisations, INGOs and other NGOs. The ideals of the humanitarian NGOs are admirable and their activities valuable, but they can only exist if it is in the interests of others. This thesis started with the question why did the Dutch government and Novib support national humanitarian NGOs in a context of widespread sectarian violence during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)? In order to answer this question I divided it in two: why did the Dutch government and Novib send humanitarian aid to Lebanon in the first place and why did they support the organisations and/or projects that they did? Besides this subdivision of the main question, I wanted to test whether the mixed motive game, humanitarian discourse and going local hypotheses were applicable to the case of the Dutch and national humanitarian NGOs in Lebanon. However, the explanatory value of these hypotheses is not equal and a certain hierarchy can be discerned. The humanitarian discourse hypothesis is valid for the motivations of both the Dutch government and Novib but the other two are not. Evidence for the mixed motive game hypothesis can be clearly discerned with regard to the Dutch government but not so much with Novib. The 'going local' thesis is supported by the case-study of Novib but the Dutch government only 'went local' when there were no other options. The Dutch government preferred 'going international' over 'going local'. In addition to these hypotheses, I found additional reasons for why the Dutch government and Novib supported national humanitarian NGOs during the civil war.

As for the motivations to provide support in the first place, evidence for the mixed motive game can be found with regard to the motivations the Dutch government had in providing humanitarian aid to Lebanon. The Dutch government had without a doubt a genuine concern about the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and remained committed to doing something in order to ameliorate the suffering of the victims of the mindless violence that affected so many. The emphasis on reaching the 'poorest of the poor' fitted in the Dutch foreign policy of the time. Nonetheless, there were also additional motives to fund and support both international and national humanitarian NGOs. The promotion of the Netherlands certainly played a role in the decision to provide humanitarian aid. It was seen as way to gain the goodwill of the local

people which may have benefitted the Netherlands later on and it was also beneficial for its international reputation. The participation in the UNIFIL mission can be seen as an additional incentive to be more involved in supporting humanitarian action in Lebanon because the Dutch were somewhat invested in the situation on the ground. Moreover, Dutch companies were eager to jump on the bandwagon and participate in humanitarian operations, as well as the reconstruction efforts that would follow after. I believe a distinction should be made between those companies which had a certain expertise and/or a genuine interest in providing humanitarian assistance and those companies which only had the aim of making a profit out of the misery of others. An additional motive for the Dutch government in funding humanitarian action was to discourage and maybe even prevent Lebanese and Palestinian refugees from making their way towards the Netherlands. The national NGOs did not share most of these motivations with the Dutch government except the genuine humanitarian concern. However, one has to question to what degree these organisations would have opposed the Dutch contributions if they would have known of these secondary motivations. In the end both sides shared an interest in relieving the suffering of the ordinary Lebanese and Palestinians that were caught in the middle of violence and destruction. As long as the motivations of both sides did not conflict, the national NGOs could probably not care less whether some Dutch company would enter the Lebanese market. The motivation for Novib to provide humanitarian aid to Lebanon was more straightforward. It is the core business of Novib to contribute to developmental and humanitarian ideals by funding and supporting organisations and projects around the globe. The conflict in Lebanon is a good example where these ideals could be put into practice. It is noteworthy that Novib did not support any projects that had a developmental character but rather funded projects that delivered emergency relief. The case of Novib did not provide evidence for the mixed motive game hypothesis.

The reasons for supporting certain organisations and/or projects while others were not are more diverse but, in general, the Dutch government and Novib shared the same ideas on which standards should be met before a contribution could be made. First of all the organisation should not be a party in the conflict and secondly it should display a sincere commitment to non-confessionalism. Thirdly, the organisation should have a good reputation and track record –both international and national. Fourthly, the activities of the organisation should be aimed at those who were in the direst need for humanitarian assistance and the distribution of this aid should be non-discriminatory. Lastly, the organisation should be effective, responsible and reliable in the execution of its activities and projects. The activities that these national NGOs employed were hugely influential in the decision process in the

Netherlands whether to provide a financial contribution. One of the key arguments in favour of supporting these organisations was their track record of effective humanitarian action. An important aspect to this was that the organisation should have been able to provide evidence to the international donors of the results of its endeavours.

In a sense we can detect a mixed motive game within the dealing of the Dutch government with the national humanitarian NGOs because the Dutch policy was to provide emergency aid and not to contribute to projects that had more developmental objectives until the conflict would be over (a similar logic was maintained by Novib). However, in practice this meant that the humanitarian situation should be bad enough that these national NGOs start providing emergency aid which would be easier to get funded by international donors. As soon as the situation improved and these NGOs started projects, for example, to enhance the emancipation of women then it would no longer be eligible for aid from the Dutch government.

As for the humanitarian discourse hypothesis which claims that this type of discourse was instrumental for donors in order to make a financial contribution, this case-study provides enough evidence to support it. Both the Dutch government and Novib would only support organisations and projects that were impartial and neutral in their composition and outreach. The humanitarian discourse that was used by the national NGOs struck a chord with civil servants, diplomats and Novib employees who did not want to appear to support on party over the other during the civil war. While it was not only reason for supporting a national NGO without the humanitarian discourse serious doubts would have risen and the support would probably not have been given.

As for the going local thesis a more mixed picture emerges. Whereas Novib for ideological reasons was clearly in favour of supporting national NGOs, the Dutch government seems to have made use of a variety of different ways to provide humanitarian aid. By doing this it did not have a bias towards national NGOs but was rather practical in its assessment of how it could provide relief in the most effective way. Sometimes the going local option was the only one available, such as with the sequel to the prosthetics project in 1983 and 1984. When possible the Dutch government preferred to support and fund international organisations and projects because they were considered to be more reliable, effective and better documented. If anything we can discern a 'going international' hypothesis with the case of the Dutch government and humanitarian assistance in Lebanon.

As discussed above, the Lebanese state was not able to secure the safety and health of its citizens during the civil war and humanitarian NGOs stepped in where the state institutions

were not able to. By doing so the NGOs performed the responsibilities usually ascribed to the government. However, in the end the state wanted to be able to assert its authority and sovereignty in the whole of Lebanon and part of this meant that it wanted to take control over, or at least be informed on, the humanitarian operations that were occurring in the country. The Dutch government was to some degree inclined to agree with this logic because it recognised that the Lebanese state had to regain its former standing. Nevertheless, there were also concerns among Dutch civil servants and diplomats about how this would affect the effectiveness and speed of humanitarian action. Due to the fact that not all archives were available at the time of writing it remains unclear if this stance changed after 1986 and, especially, after 1988 when there were two rival governments in Lebanon which each claimed to be the legitimate representative of the Lebanese people. Further research should be done in order to fill this gap and to test the findings presented in this thesis. Additionally, the contributions of other foreign countries and INGOs should be studied, as well as the interaction between the armed factions and the national NGOs in order to get a better and more comprehensive understanding of humanitarian NGOs operating in Lebanon during its dreadful civil war. The findings of this and future research with regard to this subject can contribute to a better understanding of the provision of humanitarian assistance during other conflicts in the Middle-East, such as the current Syrian Civil War and the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq (to only name a few).

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