Chapter

WAR IN THE CITY: LESSONS LEARNT FOR THE NEW CENTURY OF URBAN DISASTERS

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ABSTRACT

The challenges encountered by the humanitarian system in Port au Prince (Haiti) after the 12 January 2010 earthquake and in Lybian and Syrian cities in 2011/2012 underlined the difficulties to work in urban settings. Not only are urban setting complex, multi layered and often dangerous, but they are also alien to mainstream humanitarian agencies. Technical solutions are often not at hand, and urban lenses are lacking to a system largely rooted in its rural and camp origins. In view of the challenges arising from the accelerated global urbanization, the author call for a paradigmatic shift in order to ensure relevance of humanitarian aid in cities affected by war.

INTRODUCTION

Rampant urbanization is without doubt one of the major challenges of our century. Cities are increasingly the scene of conflicts, and extreme violence.

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Therefore humanitarian aid in urban settings will count for much new challenges for the humanitarian actors. The war in Mogadishu, the crisis in Abidjan and the war in Libyan and Syrian cities have helped to draw attention to one of the greatest issues facing the contemporary world: its fragile cities and the conceptual and technical difficulties humanitarian actors face to operate in these very specific contexts.

The first chapter is an attempt to bring in some historical elements to put the future into perspectives. Chapter 2 uncovers some of the key features that make urban setting so specific. In chapter 3, some of the most critical sectoral paradigmatic shifts will be explored. Chapter 4 will elaborate further on the challenges to come.

1. A BIT OF HISTORY

The stories of cities (Braun, 1617), wars and natural disasters have been inextricably linked since the earliest days of civilization. Increasing population density and wealth accumulation, two of the features of urban life (see Box No. 1), exacerbate the risk factors. The memory of humanity is full of images of ravaged cities. Centuries before modern history, natural phenomenon have hurt cities so strongly that civilizations have vanished (Babylon) or have been dramatically shaken (Lebanon[1]). As the growing urbanization of the planet and increasing numbers of mega-cities accentuate the concentration of the human population in and around cities, it is a matter of urgency to look at these "fragile cities", which will soon accommodate over 80% of the world's population and to the way the humanitarian sector can intervene and operate in these situations. War and cities have been long associated in human history, through different ways though (see box N° and).

The anti-colonial wars and conflicts of the Cold War were largely rural. As were most of the post cold war so-called "ethnic" conflicts. The last two centuries have reflected a picture of rural conflicts, pushing urban vulnerability to the margin of the frame. Whether in Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan), Africa (Somalia, Angola, Great Lakes Region, etc.) or Central and Latin America (Nicaragua and El Salvador), wars, disasters and humanitarian intervention have often taken place in natural backdrops. Guernica, Dresden, and Hiroshima were soon forgotten. Even when besieging

[1] During the Byzantine period in 551 A.D a devastated earthquake destroyed Beirut and many coastal cities of Lebanon (known as Phonecia). It killed an estimated 30.000 people.

cities was part of the war was wagged, as seen in Cambodia (siege of Phnom Penh) in the 70s or in Angola two decades after (siege of Huambo), the center of gravity of the wars were rural. However, with the shift in the demographic, political and economic centres of gravity of the conflicts towards the cities, urban wars made their comeback at the top of the agenda (Grunewald et Levron, 2004). The media showed us images of Mogadishu, Sarajevo, Grozny and Kabul, cities with ruins pointing skywards, displaced people surviving in buildings ravaged by bombs, streets lined with debris and combat helicopters flying overhead. Photos of the martyred cities of London, Dresden or Nagasaki come to mind. After it is destroyed, a village in the bush, made of earth and plant matter, will either be engulfed by the powerful tropical forest or quickly rebuilt with local materials. Conversely, after a war or an earthquake, the scars on a city will remain visible for a long time. Yet the aid system has until very recently not been able to "visualize" that urban contexts are of a specific nature and require specific approaches. It is interesting to review both the old texts on urban warfare and the growing body of literature emerging from more recent situations (Hopkins, 2010) and their humanitarian consequences. Urban warfare is a subset of military doctrine, characterised by the use of snipers and heavy artillery (a display of force aimed at redressing the balance towards the conventional army as urban warfare is very much in favor of mobile small groups knowing the terrain) resulting in an extremely dangerous situation for civilians (Vautravers, 2010). The capacity to display force is a critical element of urban strategy, not only to win battles, but also to limit the numbers of casualties among one's own military. Urban warfare can have major consequences for civilians: the fighting takes place in the middle of densely inhabited neighbourhoods rather than on a battlefield and combat tactics combine heavy shelling and street-to-street or even apartment-to-apartment search and kill operations. When armed clashes occur in cities, people's daily lives are directly affected, forcing them to take refuge in cellars, with fear of going out to get water or food. The resilience of city dwellers is often extraordinary, but their suffering can also be extreme as seen in Misrata (Libya) and Homs (Syria)

1. THE FEATURES THAT MAKES CITIES SO SPECIAL

This chapter explores how the characteristics of urban settings and of crises in cities affect the operational responses of aid agencies and challenge a lot of the methods and tool at hand.

Box N°1. Cities at war and wars in cities: a historical perspective

History is not linear. However, it is possible to distinguish several principle phases of the relationship between "cities at war and wars in cities".

WARS BETWEEN CITIES: "Go tell the Spartans, passerby, that here, by Spartan law, we die". From the Trojan War to the defender of the Thermopylae pass, the first centuries of the history of humanity in Europe is full of stories of battles between cities, the seats of power and wealth. Wars were waged between cities… at least in Europe and the Middle East. We have less information as to events on other continents during this period. However, the Angkorian cities of South-East Asia, the Inca and Mayan pyramids and the monuments on the banks of the Nile show signs that also point towards wars being fought between cities,. Urban archaeology in Sub-Saharan Africa is still in its infancy and the traces of unknown cities that have been revealed by satellite imagery appear to show a new geography of the city in Africa. How the draining effect of slavery slowed down urbanisation dynamics linked to the main commercial flows across the continent would be a fascinating area of research at a time when Africa is beginning to be affected by urbanisation.

WARS FOR CITIES: The second paradigm of city-based wars is related to the fortified citadels that were built in the period from several centuries B.C. till the Middle Ages. Fortified towns often had the role of protecting the rural population who would take refuge there when enemy armies and pillaging gangs began to ravage the countryside. The accumulation of wealth in cities and the power that this represented became sufficient reason for attacking and pillaging them; to conquer a city was to seize power. The history of Europe is tragically full of such events: glory for the winners and humiliation, burnt cities and desolation for the losers.

WAR BY MEANS OF THE CITY: The third paradigm of the relationship between cities and conflicts, that of conducting wars in cities as a means of winning wars outright, also gradually established itself as a method of conducting hostilities. Caesar's victory over Vercingetorix, following the famous siege of Alesia, is an example of this. Central to the German offensive and Soviet resistance during the Second World War was the issue of who would control Stalingrad. The same equation was present in the bombing of London by the Nazis, the destruction of Dresden by the Allies and the dropping of the two atomic bombs on the martyred cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

WAR AGAINST CITIES: The Maoist ideology and its various offshoots led to the appearance of the fourth paradigm, that of war against cities. For certain ideologues, cities were the source of all that was wrong with human societies, the place of perverse trade exchanges and consumerist ideologies, entities which were responsible for sullying an original rural purity. As such, cities were places which needed to be destroyed and represented socio-cultural forces which needed to be wiped out. Just how many Chinese and Cambodian city dwellers were forced to move to the countryside only to lose their lives there, is not known. In its struggle against the MPLA in Angola, Joseph Savimbi's UNITA regularly used the rhetoric of the rural African population against the mixed-race elite of the cities.

WAR IN CITIES: A whole series of conflicts in recent years has led us to the fifth paradigm, that of the city as a place where confrontation takes place. The battlefields of certain contemporary civil wars have quite simply, and almost inadvertently, been urban contexts. The main phases of the Congo-Brazzaville conflict took place in the city of Brazzaville itself, bringing death and destruction to its neighborhoods. But another phenomenon, that of population displacement, increasingly brings war to the heart of the city. Armed conflict leads to major exoduses, which create very complex refugee and IDP situations in or around urban centres. Whole areas are changed in the long term as a result, creating new relations between cities and the countryside.

Box N°2. The multiple dimensions of urban contexts

"Demographic" dimensions: Cities are places where there is a high concentration of people looking for protection and work. Cities are central to migration flows, whether internal (rural to urban movement) or external (the majority of international migration passes through networks of cities).
"Historic" dimensions: The creation and maintenance of the City has been subject to contradictory tensions between immutability and transformation. Archaeology, and notably the use of satellite imagery, has helped us to become aware of the accumulation of urbanity on individual sites, often over a long period, and the changes which may have affected them: displacement, fission, osmosis, etc. Maps of the history of cities are rich in lessons about the adaptability and the inertia of societies.
"Environmental" dimensions: heightened population density, pressure on resources, difficulties in terms of managing waste, etc. – cities are affected by a wide range of environmental factors and will be subject to major challenges in the future.
"Economic" dimensions: Cities lead to the acceleration of social differentiation, heightened specialisation in professional activities and an increased flow of products being extracted from the countryside. Urban-rural exchanges have been one of the most powerful motors of societal change.
"Social" dimensions: Poor migrants from rural communities and young people hoping for greater opportunities move to urban areas, only to find that in the shanty towns of the mega-cities or in the often insalubrious suburban tower-blocks they quickly lose touch with their village roots. The loss of social ties and the breakdown of family-based solidarity can be partly balanced by other social mechanisms such as the creation of neighbourhoods based on people's origins or the sending of remittances back to home villages.
"Societal" dimensions: At the same time, new urban cultures are created, mixing elements related to social ties from villages and new dynamics related to the new centres of power: neighbourhood administration, political parties, gangs, etc. Cities are often characterised by their mixture of ethnic groups and clans, something which is a source of fragility in certain civil war contexts.
Political dimensions: "Paris is well worth a Mass". This declaration by King Henri IV of France summarises the political issues related to controlling cities. National capitals, provincial capitals and regional metropolises are all the seats of political and administrative power, competition over which can lead to armed conflict.

1.1. The Demographic Weight

In a city, everything is "big". Population figures often run into six figures. The impact of disasters or wars can be huge, overwhelming local capacities. The scale of all urban variables (demography, density, etc.) combined with politics can make cities very explosive. The evacuation of part or all of a city as part of a preventative measure can have such important political, logistical and security implications that national and town authorities often hesitate before engaging in such actions. Contamination scenarios in urban settings are often frightening in view of the risk of rapid spread of epidemics in urban contexts. The quantities of assistance required to respond to urban needs are enormous while the logistical constraints are often very difficult. The cost of reconstruction is far beyond the capacity of most agencies and often over and above the national budget of the affected country

1.2. Electricity, Telecoms and the City Hall: The Urban Character

Cities are very special set ups, offering both constraints and opportunities. In differentiating rural and urban contexts, three of the characteristics of cities are interesting to analyze in view of their possible impact on aid strategies.

The city lights is the vivid expression that city means more and more frequently "electricity". Since the beginning of the 20th century, city life is often largely depending on electricity. The first power plants, were build in the 1920ies to supply electricity to the towns. National companies developped the engine-powered electricity generation and are often exploring options for hydro-power (Nembrini, 1998). While power production became a strategic strategy for the States in many developed countries, the production capacity was, in many developing countries, overwhelmed by the demand and power cut started to be regular. In addition, with street lighting rapidly in near complete decay, the multiplication of generators became necessary to supply lightening and energy for houses, hotels and shops and energy for water pumping. Indeed, the complex pumping systems with submersible pumps in the water field productions as well as the house level wells are totally depending on electricity. During many city wars, plants would have ceased functioning without support from aid agencies. Special attention was given by ICRC and MSF to ensure that the hospitals kept a certain level of autonomy in that sector, so they could remain operational in the case of total collapse of the

electricity system. The private sector invested also in the energy sector and managed to keep electricity running in parts of the city despite the inter-factional confrontations: keeping city lights and house level energy supply functioning was seen as critical for the survival of the city. IDP however rarely benefit for these services as they are relatively costly.

The desire to access information rapidly is also one of the characteristics of city life. Telecommunication, radios, local press, access to TV networks have been critical issues in most cities. Cellular telephones networks developed rapidly in the last 20 years and are fully part of the daily life, including for specific economic exchanges linked to money transfer systems and for keeping links with relatives in the Diaspora. Installation to sell airtime, to recharge cellular phone batteries or to access Internet connection is also more and more available in many parts of the cities. This represents a key asset for the aid system as it allows local actors to report and communicate, to set up crowd sourcing mechanisms to triangulate information, etc. This relatively sophisticated telecommunication set-up represent a still largely untapped mechanism for alert, for communication with disaster affected populations (both communication "in" with information about aid programmes and communication "out" with information on needs and difficulties) and for the dissemination of health and hygiene messages.

The municipal authorities are key players but have been by and large left aside in most cases: Fear of politicization, risks of corruption, but more largely ignorance of their roles have triggered this disinterest, if not reluctance towards these nonetheless essential urban actors. Studies in Kabul, Huambo, Mogadishu, Port au Prince, etc Grunewald and al, 2011). Show that urban planning is much easier in areas where the military and security situation is safe and where aid agencies have an interlocutor than in war torn or devastated city, where the urban institutions are either absent or disenfranchised by the crisis.

1.3. Constraints in the Cities at War: Access, Security, UXO and Booby Trapping

War in the city affects directly the capacity of the population to survive. When getting out of the house or the protective shelter becomes a risky endeavor (especially during phases of active military operations), access to basic resources, such as water, wood, food is immediately limited. This can have very serious repercussion on the health and well being of the population.

In the phases of active military engagement in Sarajevo, Grozny, Mogadishu, the population tried to reduce the risks to a minimum. Each time or in each area when risk reduction was seen as not possible, the population immediately reacted by moving to less at risk areas. This is the history of many internal displacements within besieged cities or from the city to its peri-urban or rural neighborhood. In the same time, each opportunity to fetch water, fuel wood or food between military operations and periods of heavy fighting is used to its optimum to make stocks in order to last until the next peaceful episode.

A second critical is the issue of unexploded ordnances and booby trapping. The specificities or urban warfare leads indeed to high intensity carpet bombings by the classic armies which often induce a significant presence of unexploded ammunitions. Urban guerilla warfare is often made of a mix of slight ambushes, snipers (both inducing the presence of UXO) and systematic booby trapping and mining of the areas, either as a defensive element or to make the progress of the army more difficult, dangerous and painful.

The final result is a high risk situation for both the population of rescue/humanitarian teams. It means that even punctual interventions will have to be supported by decontamination teams in rder to ensure safe progression and setting up of emergency posts. The experience of the Licorn operation in Ivory Coast, but also the difficulties faced by the inhabitants of Grozny or Mogadishu show how essential it is to have very rapidly deployable decontamination squads able to clear mines, UXO and booby traps and thus to facilitate the return of the population in its neighborhood.

Supporting the population in this type of situation would mean that aid agency be very agile, flexible, opportunistic. Current operational modalities which require lengthy planning and sophisticated accountability does not work in these contexts.

It also affects the capacity of the aid actor to work and reach out the affected populations. In many war torn urban contexts, access remains the one most difficult option. Grozny during the first and second war, and most recently Misrata in Libyan and the Syrian cities under siege underlined that point dreadfully. In Mogadishu, and during the initial decade of the crisis (1991-2000), access was possible, even if at a cost. The aid agencies accepted in 1991-92 to work under the protection of armed militias from clans or wealthy political actors and could not move out of this system. It became both a modus operandi of humanitarian action in Somalia and a very juicy business. The launch of the “War on terror” in the early 2000’s drastically changed the situation. Western aid actors were seen as part of the WoT and therefore

potential enemies. The multiplication of incidents in many contexts (Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, etc.) lead to a progressive reduction of physical presence (Stoddartd A, Harmer A et al, 2009).

Yet, negotiating distribution of key items indispensable for survival but also implementing these distribution was still done until the mid 2000ies with a limited number of actors who had the capacity and the credibility to do so. ICRC and MSF (MSF, 2011) have for long been among the very few agencies who managed to keep a presence in these difficult urban contexts, together with an handful of very dedicated " Dunantist" NGOs.

With the radicalization of the discourse, remote management, either through local NGO or through National staff of international agencies became the main operating modality. These limitations of access to the field have been exacerbated by the confrontation linked to irredentism and fundamentalism. Confrontation between Taliban and the NATO ISAF, or between the Shebbab on the one side and the Ethiopian/AMISOM troops are making Afghan and Somali cities more at risk than ever. Until recently, most of the visits by aid actors in Mogadishu were limited to the airport and to the AMISOM base accessible only with heavy escorts. For the few agencies who remained involved in aid in Mogadishu, the only information was coming from local staff, who were contacted by Internet, by mobile phone or invited to come to Nairobi. Similarly in Kabul or Kandahar, the aid community lives entrenched in a bunkerized environment. This indeed means that need assessment, targeting, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation are currently done with either indirect control mechanisms (video, photos, triangulation with different sources) or totally delegated to local actors.

1.4. Cities Rapid Changing Conditions

It was fascinating to observe post Shebbab Mogadishu or post Gbabo Abijan. Urban systems have such dynamism that after a crisis, they react very rapidly to improvement: The rapid changes which were observed in Abidjan few days after the final fall of President Gbagbo were as well clear in Mogadishu streets:

- rapid cleaning of garbage, linked with critical question mark on where to dispose the quantities collected,
- quick resumption of basic private services and economic activities,

- Many tentative to clean the debris of the war, with many difficulties linked to the complexity of battle area clearance (BAC), UXO management and booby trap diffusion.

Yet, in a minute, this sense of "heading back to normalcy" can be annihilated by a blood bath and additional street bombs? What kind of access the aid agencies will be able to negotiate and for what types of programmes?

2. METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL ISSUES FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTION

In urban settings, the aid agencies are confronted to a wide range of methodological and technical issues to identify needs and affected populations as well as as to respond to these needs in the different sectors. They are explored in this section.

2.1. Civil Protection and Urban Search and Rescue: Dealing with the Living and the Dead in the Middle of Rubbles

For long time, the main intervening actors in urban disasters were fire brigades, civil protection teams, especially the very specialized Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. More and more trained and equipped, mixing fire fighter techniques (in managing pure fire combat, extraction and first aid know-how), engineering competences (to enter in destroyed buildings and to organized search in area full of instable debris), specialized capacity in detection (canine brigades, infra-red and micro camera searching devices, etc.) and interaction with deeply affected and worried populations, these USAR have been able to save many people and to retrieve body remains to facilitate mourning. In developed countries, the specialized civil protection teams represent the first line of intervention in urban disaster. In many developing countries, these bodies exist but are far less trained and equipped. Several mechanisms have emerged to provide support to them, assist in rescue operations and to coordinate the international response. The United Nations Disaster, Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is one of them: based on a solid methodology (Guidelines developed by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Groupe or INSARAG), on a robust information

management system based on the Virtual On site Operational Coordination Center, (V-OSOCC) and on a capacity to deploy rapidly stand by staff from Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) and UNDAC member countries, UNDAC is often able to provide assessment and coordination mechanism to support national disaster management agencies and international deployed teams (Larson, 2011).

Yet UNDAC and INSARAG have not been really tested in war affected urban contexts. Search and rescue activities are hard to carry out under fire. Search of people under shelling or just after is made even more difficult by the possible presence of UXO and non exploded bumbs, as well as the risk of booby trapping. The V-OSOC is potentially a source of information for search and kill commandos and snipers, or for planning of carper bumbing.

2.2. Identification, Quantification and Targeting

Working in urban contexts such as Sarajevo, Huambo, Mogadishu, Kabul is a constant call for humility in front of the number of variable we either totally ignore or know only superficially and with a significant margin of error[2]. By and large, the size of the urban population is known with at least 10 to 20 % of error: We do not know how many inhabitants were living in the city before the war or disaster, how many died, how many left? We know with little precision the magnitude of the movements in and out, as well as within the affected cities. The best we can have is an extrapolation of limited observations and working hypotheses.

Even the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FNSAU) one of the most sophisticated mechanisms to follow one given context, fails to properly acknowledge this limitation. The size of Mogadishu population is thus unknown. Ratio, malnutrition rates in the city are at best rough extrapolation of limited knowledge and patchy information. One of difficulties is to ensure proper disaggregation of the data by population strata. In cases marked by the existence of different waves of displacements to, from and within urban settings over an extended period, variations can be huge and need to be analyzed.

[2] The recent debate on the number of slum inhabitants in Nairobi (Kenya) a place where the access to the field to generate data is by far much greater that in Mogadishu, shows how complex and sensitive these issues are.

The last study on malnutrition rates in Mogadishu IDP population does not discriminate between old (linked to early phases of the Somali crisis in the 90ies) and new IDP displaced by the war and drought of 2011 and 2012). The aggregation of the two populations in one single rate is methodologically fraud as the two categories are "different categories" with different situations and needs. Yet, despite some methodological hic-ups, FNSAU is the best assessment tools available currently available in the absence of proper access to the field and it produces useful planning assumptions for programming exercises.

Various tools have been used to try to map and quantify the population: among others, the use of remote sensing data, including very precise satellites images to count the huts in Afgoye supported with some efforts in "ground truthing"[3] have been so far some of the best attempts.

Targeting the populations which can benefit from the aid response is another extremely difficult exercise in urban contexts and a simple error can rapidly become a security issue.

"Self targeting" is often seen as one option, especially for food and cash for work. Only those who would need it would come to such low paid job. Several agencies are fully engaged in this strategy in Mogadishu. The most frequent approach to targeting in the context of the current crisis is "area and site targeting". It is very frequent to see that instead of time consuming and sensitive socio-economic targeting, aid agencies chooses a IDP site and then covers its entire population.

2.3. Health

This section will explore the key challenges of health in war torn and devastated cities as it represents a key element of the response, but also of the existing and future challenges

2.3.1. Health Issues in an Open Conflict

Open conflicts in urban settings have several health consequences. Significant number of people are wounded. Managing bullet and shelling wounds requires a certain skill and an appropriate surgical set up including surgeons, anesthetists, nurses supported by the proper supply of energy, blood and capacity to provide the required care and keep basic aseptic conditions.

[3] Validation in the field of observations made from satellite images.

This is historically mainly done through the work of ICRC and MSF in a limited number of hospitals which remained accessible during the confrontation. In fact, the key element of the strategy here was to ensure that any single opportunity to replenish stocks was used to ensure that a minimal capacity remains in place to cope with difficult times. Blood was however often crucially missing. Large scale military operations in urban settings bring about another set of challenges: the magnitude of the needs (wounded are often counted by thousands), the fight against time to get people out of the rubble or wounded in the streets, the fact that these situations immediately induced complex triage and treatment (crush syndrom), etc. The experiences in Bosnia, Palestinian and Libyan cities) underlined some key challenges.

The capacity to save wounded people is directly linked to the time required for them to access a suitable caring capacity. This often requires stabilization skill and evacuation capacities: both are crucially missing during each of the period when cities become active battle fields or are devasted by a large scale disaster. It is also linked to blood availability, which is often very limited due to the absence of a functioning blood bank. The result of that is either high rate of mortality or people arriving at the surgical ward with aggravated levels of infection. Amputation is sometimes been the only option.

2.3.2. Impact of the War on the Structure of the National Health System

The health system is by and large structured around a truncated referral system from the village level health post to the national references. Larger towns, especially capital cities, are the normal central reference. They are normally well equipped with functioning theatres of operation, obstetric wards, laboratories, curative systems. With wars, especially the protracted ones, these equipments are often partly destroyed, badly maintained and suffers from limited supplies.

The higher level of the reference pyramid is therefore dramatically affected an unable to render the services it aims to: The top of the public health pyramid in Mogadishu comprises the ICRC supported Keysaney hospital for war traumas, and the SOS hospital for children and mothers. This hospital hosts several services: OPD (200 consultations/day) , obstetric surgery, nutrition and TB. Well kept and supplied (DG ECHO financial support), it plaid a critical role as one of the few facilities that could manage a high turn up of war surgery cases. An impressive work was done in the early 2000 by a group of 4 Italian Nuns with a team of dedicated and competent Somali medical and paramedical staff. The total or partial destruction of these functioning services has often significant repercussion to the overall heath

sector nationwide. The main laboratories for diagnosis, the principal surgical units, the top of the reference pyramid in obstetric care are missing and limiting the capacities of the health system to respond to needs.

2.3.3. Health Issues in Congested Environments: Protracted Urban IDP Crisis

The sanitary conditions in the war affected city or in urban settings affected by a natural disaster, especially when it comprises a multitude of IDP camps of all sizes and shapes and high density areas represent a major threat. and the public health dangers that can affected the population are numerous and with potential severe impacts due to overcrowded living conditions, poor to extremely poor sanitation and ineffective protection against climatic aggressions offered by most shelters. TB is likely to have a high prevalence, due to the way tarpaulins are used to build temporary shelters and even more when they are erected in overcrowded locations; Diarrhea is a frequent problem sometime rising to cholera level; This is of course directly linked to the appalling sanitary conditions in which many IDP and urban populations live in destroyed cities. Cholera epidemic is a high risk. Malaria is also a recurrent problem, probably with a lot of seasonal and geographic specificities. Measles is one of the most deadly child killer in the cities. The very high prevalence of immediate post-natal death of both children and mothers is the direct repercussion of the absence of capacity to take care of complicated delivery. In the past, IDP in camps have been often the main targets of the public health programmes of the aid agencies. This is still happening with for instance the programmes of the Turkish and Emirati Red Crescents Societies (Grunewald, 2011) in the new IDP camps in different parts of Mogadishu. Yet, when health assistance is being provided to IDP, there is often a need to extend it to the surrounding population. Indeed the multiplication of health infrastructures for the camps when nearby urban population is totally deprived from any access to health structures can both be unfair and a source of security problems. Can this repartition of health services be made more structured with the development of an “urban health map”?

2.4. Food Aid and Resource Transfers

War on the cities has often been wagged using the hunger weapon. Besieged cities have been forced to surrender through food blockades.

Shortages of food or speculation on the local markets can cause rapid rise of food prices.

- In war torn situation, people are trying to stocks food each time a quiet time spell occurs.
- In drought affected contexts, the net deficit itself induces price increases which is often further enhanced by speculation;
- Both situations can induce losses of weight for the adult populations and dramatic deterioration of the nutritional status of children, specially the Under 5 category.

In the last 20 years, , several strategies have been used in many urban contexts, each of them having their pro and cons

Classical food aid distribution (dry rations): This modality of food aid has been and is still by and large the most frequently used. In many contexts, however, this proved to be extremely difficult in both targeting the right populations, insuring an efficient logistical system from point of loading to distribution sites. The "losses" along the roads, the high price to pay to the "gate keepers" who control the logistical hubs (especially the ports and airstrippes) make the whole process feasible and the difficulties to identify the proper beneficiaries, to ensure that they receive their entitlement and to monitor the final impact of the these programmes. Even a shortened chain with an air bridge does not fully limit all the risks. The difficulties to have a balanced ration (with cereals, beans and oil) are immense most of the time, and beneficiaries of dry rations often get only maize, rice or Corn-Sorghum Blend (CSB). In specific contexts, such as Former Yugoslavia, specific food parcels have been designed to meet the specific food cooking and eating habits of urban populations, comprising canned food and food easy to prepare in urban apartments, etc.

Distribution of cooked meals (wet rations): This approach was central to the concept of operation of ICRC in the early 90ies in Somalia, but also in cities if the Caucasus and in the Balkans. This type of food aid is indeed much more difficult to rob than dry rations. Who would dare to steal a 200 liters drum full of boiling porridge? Who would come to raid an urban cantine for elderly ?

Subsidized bakeries: As the key factor is often the differential of cost between what people can pay and what they have to pay due to food shortage and speculation, it has been regularly attempted to interfere with the value chain of basic food items such as bread through subsidies (either free or

reduced cost for the flour or through cash support to the costs of production). The production and distribution of bread in the subsidized bakeries in Kabul has been key to the survival of the city inhabitants during the whole siege of the city.

Food vouchers and cash transfers help to enhance local purchasing power and encourage local traders to bring in more food at affordable prices. Indeed, cash transfers and vouchers in Somalia have already been proven to empower families to access food and other essential items on the local market. Families are targeted, listed and receive voucher they can exchange with items chosen in a list with specific traders. Then these traders come to the agencies and get paid. This process transfers the risk from the agencies to the traders, who are better equipped and connected to deal with it. It also limits the logistic complexities. Yet, it transfers the key difficulties much more upstream (in the need assessment and targeting) and further downstream (in the monitoring and impact evaluation).

Urban and peri-urban agriculture programmes: managing food security in urban context through urban and peri-urban agriculture is a process that can be traced in the urban workers gardens of the industrial revolution and, in time of war, in the Walker plan in Switzerland during World War II, when all green spaces were transformed into food producing places. ICRC made it an integral part of its response in the cities of former Yugoslavia, in besieged Kabul in the early 1990ies and even in African contexts such as Huambo (Angola) in its peri-urban *barrios*. Seed distributed by ICRC in Sarajevo, for instance, were grown even on the top of building and on balconies during the years of the siege. More recently NGOs started to develop ingenious programmes in slums in Nairobi after the post-electoral violence, as well as in the fast growing periphery of Juba in South Sudan.

Working through market forces: At the lowest level, with small scale vegetable retailers, to the highest level, with the large grain traders, market forces are extremely energetic in urban economies which have, from the eve of history, been monetized. Small scale trade was back in action just a few days after the earthquake in Port au Prince. Harnessing this energy is essential. The cash and voucher programmes are one part of the response by supporting the demand. The other part of the equation is supporting the offer. Facilitating the flow of goods by securing entry points is one aspect of the issue, but it is not without side effects. In Somalia for instance, the military fleet protecting the sea traffic that supplies Mogadishu is seen as an act of war by opposition forces. Convincing the business community and the traders that money is available and the demand important, so that they can make business is another

part of the equation. A few agencies are exploring the use of market mechanisms to improve the availability of goods in complement of facilitating access by cash injection.

2.5. Water and Sanitation: The Urban Bomb

High density urban systems with limited sanitation are "high risk areas" in terms of public health. Surveillance and highly reactive epidemic control mechanisms should be a must. This is very difficult in most of the disaster or war affected cities. Therefore, the most important part of the work concerns safe water supply and limitation of the sanitation risks.

2.5.1. Water in Cities: Pipes, Public Water Points and Water Trade

The main characteristic of approach of water systems in urban contexts are three: The density of population make the instant demand of water very high, requiring a supply that often overpass the capacities of local traditional wells. Cities have an organization and an economy that make cost recovery feasible and water something people would be ready to pay for. The production and distribution of water by systems which would satisfy the demand requires energy (electricity, thermic engine pumps) and an organization, which either be public or private or a mix of both. Pubic water services, water boards, private companies and small business are the key actors in this sector.

The simple but extremely costly option chosen to supply quality water to urban populations is often water trucking. In Port au Prince, as in many other urban contexts, norias of water trucks have been supplying water to bladders or all kinds of other reservoirs. The quality of the water treatment is under strong scrutiny and is in most instances well controlled. In many war or disaster affected cities, local surface or drilled wells are part of the solution. Many of these wells are critical components of the water offer in Kabul, in Mogadishu, in Kisangani. But the fact remains that ensuring that the city water system can function is by far the most effective option.

But this option often entails solutions are often technically complex, as it is not the simple technology for surface or even deep well digging which is at stake, but the support to distribution systems involving long distance pipes, system to pressurize the water in the pipe system, elevated tanks, etc. The typical profile of a Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) staff woking for a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) worker is often not appropriate and it is

necessary to explore other rosters offering civil electrical and engineers, water network specialists.

The key stumbling blocks in the functioning of the water system are often to be found in the energy supply (electricity cut often means no water), in the availability of spare parts to keep the engines functioning and in the availability of chemicals to properly manage water quality. These issues are not only present in affected cities: in fact they are common to all cities. But in time of war or disaster, they should receive high priority by the aid agencies. ICRC has developed since its early work in Sarajevo and Mogadishu in the early 90ies a large experience which has been but into additional testing in Bagdad (Nembrini, 2004) and Lybia. Supply of chemicals and spare parts was for instance the first things demanded the day after the war in Abidjan by the water company, in order to resume water supply in the city and ICRC supplied a large quantity of chemicals to make sure that potable water could be rapidely avaiblabe in a city so prone to cholera epidemics

2.5.2. Sewages, Latrines and Paper Bags: Managing Urban Back Waters

The sewage system created in many cities often date back to the colonial periods, if ever it exist. It has often been upgraded but rarely to the point that it can match the needs of the growing urban population. Therefore, in many cities, large part of the urban sanitation system is based on individual septic tanks in house compounds, which can be cleaned up by specialized people (the Bayakou in Port of Prince) or by private companies equipped with gully sucker trucks. Poverty, lack of maintenance and wars or natural disaster bring often these tanks in dramatic stages of deterioration and pollution of the underground water is probably highly affected by this situation.

When displaced people move to cities and set up their camps, surface latrines which have to be emptied regularly are established, representing another source of health hazard. In many IDP settlements, nevertheless, there is often no latrine at all. For the IDP who settle in former government building or in private compounds or along the road, sanitation remains the number one problem. In Port of Prince, the difficulties to dig classical pit latrine and the sheer amount of people led to the import of thousands of plastic chemical latrines which were extremely expensive to maintain. In certain parts of Mogadishu, it is very difficult to dig latrines because of the sand and the fact that the water table is very high and would be in contact rapidly with the content of the latrine. Cholera is of frequent occurrence during certain seasons (mainly the hot season). Action contre la Faim (ACF) and the United Nations

Children Fund (UNICEF) have been running in the past regular chlorination campaigns in Mogadishu wells but impact is probably limited.

New options have been developed to deal with this challenge: dry latrines or collective latrines connected to a biogas digester in Port au Prince or in the jails of Kigali, organized systems of use and collection of "peepoo"[4] bags in the slums of Nairobi. But this sector requires still a lot of Research and Development to innovate and develop option of crisis affected urban populations.

2.6. Shelter, Habitat and Urbanism

One of the characteristics of urban contexts is the density of buildings and their spatial organization along roads. Cities after a war or an earthquake look like piles of rubbles or phantom streets bordered by bullet marked walls. Recreating a protective environments in these situations is challenging.

2.6.1. Tarpaulins and T-Shelter

After a siege, a carpet bombing, a ware counterinsurgency operation or a disaster, the population of the urban affected context is often very rapidly trying to see what can be recycled from the debris of their destroyed houses to establish a kind of shelter. The classical aid response takes the form of the distribution of tarpaulins and more recently tents. This proves essential to protect the inhabitants from the sun, the rain and the dust, and if provided in sufficient quantity to create a space that can provide both protection and a bit of privacy (walls and roof). Yet, life under these tents and tarpaulins is extremely difficult: lack of ventilation creates very hot conditions, often not fully water tight, and where respiratory diseases disseminate with accelerated pace. In addition, these shelters are extremely fragile in front of strong winds and hurricanes, which are of regular occurrence. It is therefore important to get people rapidly out of these precarious shelters.

2.6.2. From a Box to Sleep into an Area to Live

The debates between the provision of transitional shelter (T-shelter), technical solutions supposed to last a few months and the construction of

[4] The «peepoo bag» system has been developed by NGO in areas where there is not sewage system. It consist of bags used to collect excreta at the family level. These bags are collected and send to a common bag disposal system.

permanent houses are among the hottest in the humanitarian sector. Very often, the T shelter strategy is based on kits, often plywood boxes which often last from much longer than expected. As transition tends to last long in the shelter sector, some agencies are trying to move straight from the emergency plastic sheeting to the seed of what can become an evolutive permanent house.

But too often, social and cultural issues are not taken into account: the need for a veranda, the orientation of the T-shelter vis—à vis winds and rains, some cultural issues related to the position of the latrines or the kitchens, etc, are often overlooked.

2.6.3. Land Tenure and Utilization Rights

In cities, the overlap between modern and ancient, written and traditional, tenure rights held by communities, the State or individuals makes for what is usually an extremely complex legal situation. While the land and occupancy rights in the centers of the cities are often more or less well regulated, it is by far less so in peri-urban areas, where private speculation and the centralizing tendencies of the State regularly come into conflict, when they do not reach an accommodation, opening the door to all kinds of corruption.

As seen in Sri Lanka after the tsunami (Grünewald, 2005, TEC, 2006) and in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake (Levine et all, 2012, this is one of the stumbling blocks for aid response, disaster prevention policies and one of the thorns in the side of reconstruction strategies: who owns land ? how to grant reconstruction grants to people living in an insecure land tenure ? How to ensure that displaced will not be forcefully evicted from their camps?

3. THE EMERGING CHALLENGE: DISPLACEMENT TRIGGERED URBANIZATION

Displacement triggered urbanization process is one regularly occurring demographic phenomenon observed after crises (Jansen, 2011). Quiet villages on the Thai side of the Khmer-Thai borders absorbed aid actors and illegal refugees and became buzling towns, like Aranyaprathet.

In Darfur, The urbanization that came along with the concentration of IDP around Nyala, El Fashir, El Genina or Morley was predicted as early as 2004 (Grünewald 2004) and represents one of the most complex challenges that Darfur and North Sudanese authorities will have to deal with (Buchanan-Smith and al, 2009).

The same processes are already happening in Jordan with the Iraki refugees and, nowadays, likely to happen at the border with Libya is the crisis does not come rapidly to an end.

Yet, despite the reality of the urbanization process, some critical characteristics of a "city" are missing, both in Dadaab and in the Chad (Gallego, 2009) and Darfur IDP camps:

- In terms of urban vision: gap of city governance and real city institutions
- In terms of public based services: inexistence of real city services
- In economic terms : no proper city economy;
- In terms of city' identity: absence of history of being a city.

About governance and services: Many different types of governance issues (local, political, technical or administrative) are simultaneously at stake in camps. Camp are managed by international mandated agencies, not by a local and municipal governance. For instance, in Dadaab, (somali refugee camps in Kenya), the real governance of the camps is in the hands of UNHCR. A Kenyan district officer is in charge of refugees as the representative of the central government, but not of territory and land issues.

In most similar situations, there i are all kinds of refugee institutions which act as interface between UNHCR system and the refugees, but have no real powerMost social and technical services are delivered by aid agencies often funded by UNHCR. Health, water, sanitation, education, etc. are implemented through a wide set of International NGO and are accessible freely by the refugees and report to UNHCR and their donors. These NGO have therefore very little incentives to engage strategically with the refugees.

The economic functioning of these "quasi cities" is very complex and extremelly fragile,: In Dadaab (Horst, 2008), in Lebanon and in most similar situations involving large and protracted concentrations of refugees, the National authorities from the receiving countries put a lot of constraints and limits on the employment options for refugees. Food and non food items continue to be distributed freely to the refugees. But thhey have no right to work according to Kenyan, the Thai or Lebanese laws (Grunewald et de Geoffroy, 2008).

While the refugees are dependent on the international assistance made available to them by the aid agencies, a very active illegal but accepted "private sector" always develops, covering many of the uncovered needs, including in cultural and social sectors: Selling electronics and "air time"

(connection units for mobile telephones), managing video parlors and coffee shops, retailing all kinds of products, selling vegetable, milk and meat are integral parts of the camps' informal economy. The fuel of this system is money coming from remittances, incentives from NGO, and trade with the surrounding communities (Horst, op cit).

In Dadaab, the Somali refugees managed over the years to keep and develop very strong relation with its Diaspora (many of them having transited through Dadaab camps during the process that brought them from Somalia to a third country of asylum). Second feature of the economic aspect brought by the large scale camps set up durably is the creation of a 'specific' economy with the local neighborhood. A complex economic system indeed installed itself between the refugee populations and nearby communities the host communities (Grunewald, 1987). The selling of part of the food aid to the local population explains why prices around Dadaab are far bellow prices in other part of the Arid Land zone.

If the years of experience of many agencies in working these camps made them able to deliver to respond to the main physical needs of the refugees and IDP in camps (managing latrines, water distribution points, health posts and medical wards, they did no prepared them to face long term urban challenges linked to protected displacement close or within urban settings.

How can the humanitarian response address the vulnerabilities in an illegal but still happening urbanization process? How to deal with the inevitable social and individual "disaggregation" of a society and individuals who have no job and little future is a significant challenge so far addressed only marginally.

How to switch from the original UNHCR designed bloc system to a more subtle user friendly spatial organization allowing for societal life?: The new camps in Dadaab being established in the context of the 2011 drought triggered exodus, Camp Corail in the north of Port au Prince or the relocation camps set up int eh Philippines after Ketsana and Ondoi typhoons are all established according to the "Roman military camp grid": this system probably makes logistics easy for the aid agencies, by creating a rather inhuman setting for the camps inhabitants.

Exit strategies are most of the time missing. While the entry points for the deployment of assistance to these refugee camps are relatively obvious and well defined (war, inter-community confrontations, natural disasters) the "exit strategies" are more problematic. The long lasting displacements in Pakistan, in Chad or in Darfur have created urban habits for previously rural population. This will have long term consequences that have to be properly addressed.

4. THE POST CRISIS PHASES IN URBAN SETTINGS

Linking relief, rehabilitation and development is a critical challenge in crisis affected urban settings. Indeed, after the destructions comes the time of rebuilding and humanitarian actors are confronted to the terribly slow take off of engagement of the development institutions. The stakes are high, because the resources and policies used to rebuild these cities after disasters or wars are extremely costly, often complex and always uncertain. But the absence of the engagement or its slow pace places the humanitarian actors in a difficult situation and they often have to stay longer and engage in activities outside of their mandate and know how. In Kabul, unauthorized reconstruction with no master plan is gaining ground in the face of political indecision, corrupt managers and competition between donors. The debate, especially within international financial institutions, hinges on technocratic visions that ignore people, the diversity of human society and the existence of the informal sector. By the time everyone wakes up, there may be nothing left but a disfigured, unmanageable city.

First step in a city devastated by a armed confrontation is to ensure proper decontamination? Battle area clearance is no job for amateurs and it requires qualify teams to undertake this action properly. Unprofessional decontamination processes just put the fate of the returning population and the service deliverers in danger.

At the end of the crisis time, several phenomena are often clearly visible but attracting no attention from either the national authorities or international aid agencies. The most important one is the demographic one. The aid itself has created complex pull and push factors, thus attracting more people in urban areas. Rural exodus, which had been stemmed by conflicts (for instance by the Soviet intervention and conflict since 1979), is often reactivated during the post crisis era, while refugees return home as part of the end of war agreement. For instance, refugees coming back from from Pakistan and Iran are still packing into Kabul. They had often spent too many years in urbanized camps to be ready to "return to the land". The population of Kabul exploded, rising from barely 2 million in the mid 90ies to perhaps 4 million in 2006 (Boyer, 2007). The outskirts of the city have become covered with buildings of all shapes and sizes, with absolutely no overall planning scheme. There are winners in a crisis: the war or disaster entrepreneurs, those who managed to rent a house to aid actors or to divert part of the aid often became “big urban players”. Speculation on land is rapidly on the rise.

Reconstruction budgets are huge, political issues complex and appetites whetted. Some cities such as Beirut, Managua have rebuilt themselves with very little international aid, with practically no town-planning blueprint and on a private basis supported by the Diasporas. In many post crisis situations, the absence of proper urban planning can have catastrophic consequences: disfigured landscapes (depriving the cities of the opportunity to develop a tourist industry), disorganized services and no account taken of building standards. The reconstruction of Kabul is currently one of the stock stories of post-Taliban Afghanistan. As of early 2002, with its heavy concentration of international aid, Kabul acted as a magnet for many agencies arriving in Afghanistan. Then, at the beginning of 2003, when it was realized that aid was staying in Kabul and not contributing towards rebuilding the rest of the country, there was a massive flow of funds to the countryside. So many questions: where to find water, how to manage sewerage, rubbish collection, establishment of health and education services, collection of taxes and so on. The reconstruction of Grozny, which has begun in some areas when the conflict was not yet over (Cosgrave and Grunewald, 2005), and had taken off incredibly quickly in recent years is obviously following a political agenda. There are undoubtedly important technical and town-planning issues to consider: whole districts will need to be bulldozed because incessant bombing has weakened the infrastructure and foundations of buildings. Rebuilding things as they were would mean rebuilding the ugly barracks of socialist Grozny, but how can you consult people about what they want when they do not recognize the existing government?

The few major donors taking an interest in the subject (UN HABITAT, World Bank) have found themselves blocked by internal disputes within the municipal authorities and by the constantly changing situation, with new problems arising practically every day. Another classic phenomenon, the clash between traditionalists and modernizers, is in full swing: some want to make destroyed cities into Manhattan, with skyscrapers, huge shopping centres and motorway interchanges, while others seek to preserve the image of a city on a human scale.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARDS

As urbanization proceeds at a rapid pace, people in cities increasingly find themselves faced with the destructive effects of conflicts. The skills to cope with these situations are still in a state of development. Civil societies, NGOs,

UN agencies and institutions from the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in particular must engage actively in the debate with international donors. Several key issues are at stake:

- Insecurity and dangers are premium characteristics of urban contexts affected by conflicts. The conduct of the hostility often leave behind largely contaminated areas required intensive and costly battle area clearance (BAC). They also leave behind urban contexts with little rule of law. Managing the security of the population, the administration and the aid actors is thus "mission critical".
- As crises in the cities call for complex socio-technical, how to ensure the proper dialogue with municipal institutions and the city population in order to ensure that technocratic solutions are not to override community consultation?
- Urban contexts offer a large scope of technical and organizational challenges to classical humanitarian practices: What would be the way for the aid sector to develop its "urban lenses", to diversify the content of its tool box to ensure that the solutions we can offer to affected urban populations are technically sound, socially appropriate and would not create too significant negative side effects?
- Humanitarian aid in urban settings might necessitate that we go out of our normal ways to recruit and establish alliances: how can the aid sector engage more strategically with the urban sector, with the large constellation of cities which might have ideas, competences and even resources to allocate to their city sisters affected by crises?
- Rebuilding cities razed by earthquakes or destroyed by bombs poses a fundamental question on how better and safer should the new city be? How prepared should be the services in charge of disaster management in the city? How prepared should be the population in case another conflict or disaster occurs?

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