Rethinking the humanitarian model: from efficiency to resilience

Repenser le modèle humanitaire : de l'efficience à la résilience

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ABSTRACT

Today the humanitarian sector is experiencing a major economic and organizational crisis, leading to a refocusing on the ethics of actions through resilience. One can therefore question the current humanitarian model, its underlying principles, and its ability to provide efficient and resilient assistance to people in need. To respond to this problem, we have developed a qualitative exploratory approach employing semi-structured interviews with experts and a recipient of humanitarian aid. Our results show that resilience is currently emerging. To develop upon this reflection, it is not only necessary to apply new standards encouraging resilience, but also to take the beneficiary of the aid more into account, both in terms of the means of carrying out an action, but also in the prioritization of funding. Finally, today the humanitarian sector is crushed by the law of market forces and therefore is faced with a phenomenon of extreme competition, potentially impacting its major principles. The result is that the development of a new societal and economic model is necessary in order to fully realize ethical humanitarian aid.

Key-words

humanitarian, ethical, value, resilience, efficiency, market

ABSTRACT

L'humanitaire connaît donc aujourd'hui une crise majeure d'ordre économique et organisationnelle qui conduit à un recentrage sur l'éthique de l'action au travers de la résilience. On peut donc s'interroger sur le modèle humanitaire actuel, ses principes sous-jacents et sa capacité à apporter une aide efficiente, et résiliente aux personnes dans le besoin. Pour répondre à cette problématique, nous avons développé une approche exploratoire qualitative en interrogeant par entretiens semi-directifs des experts et un bénéficiaire de l'aide humanitaire. Nos résultats montrent que la résilience est cependant naissante. Pour développer cette dernière, il est non seulement nécessaire d'appliquer de nouveaux standards l'encourageant, mais aussi de prendre le bénéficiaire de l'aide plus en considération, que ce soit dans la façon de mener l'action mais aussi dans l*a priori*sation des financements. Enfin, le secteur humanitaire se trouve aujourd'hui écrasé par la loi du marché et par conséquent connaît un phénomène de concurrence extrême, impactant potentiellement ses grands principes. Il en résulte que le développement d'un nouveau modèle sociétal et économique est nécessaire afin de parvenir à la pleine réalisation éthique de l'aide humanitaire.

Key-words

humanitaire, éthique, valeur, résilience, efficience, marché

INTRODUCTION

A long series of complex and difficult situations in recent years have shown the limits of the international humanitarian bodies in terms of predictability, coordination, effectiveness or even efficiency (Tadanori, 2012; ACDI, 2012; MSF, 2016). To these operational problems are added a lack of funds. In its 2015 annual report, the organization Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA, 2016) indicated that in 2014 donations for humanitarian causes reached a record sum of 24.5 billion US$. Despite that, humanitarian sector needs were not fully met, which led to an unprecedented coordinated call by the United Nations for an additional sum of $19.5 billion US$. In addition, Mattei (2014) highlights the enlargement of the scope of humanitarian activities, the increasing difficulty to access victims and the need for humanitarian endeavours to involve anthropologists, philosophers and academics in the debate: "*It was anthropologists who explained and assisted in the relations between those who came to treat Ebola and the villages that took the humanitarian aid very badly…*".

Today, the humanitarian sector is experiencing a major economic and organizational crisis (Mouton, 2012). Initially direct aid has, over time, become prioritized and standardized with a goal of efficiency, rendering it counter-productive and leading to significant criticism. That is why we are currently seeing a refocusing on the ethics of actions, including one of the more explicit symptoms, which seems to be the growing attention paid to resilience. It is thus defined as the ability of a population, a system, or a society to cope with, adapt to and absorb a shock (HYOGO, 2005). In this globalized and unstable international context, one can therefore question the current humanitarian model and its ability to provide efficient and resilient assistance to people in need. To respond to this problem, we have developed a qualitative exploratory approach employing semi-structured interviews with experts and a recipient of humanitarian aid.

We first present a review of the literature designed to better understand the evolution of humanitarian actions and their representation over time, as well as the links between efficiency and the resilience of humanitarian actions. Then, we outline the adopted methodology. Finally, we highlight and discuss the results with an emphasis on the principles of humanitarian aid, the underlying market logic, and possible developments of the humanitarian model.

1. THE HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT AND PROBLEMATIC

1.1. Definition of humanitarianism

Resulting from developments in humanitarian actions, several definitions of humanitarianism have emerged over time. We can thus say that humanitarianism is defined in regard to the pressure of the context. As explained by Ryfman (2016), humanitarianism is thus shaped by spacial, historical, political, economic, legal and cultural realities of the moment. In order to synthesize these transformations, we have built upon the work of Duffe (2005), the major definitions of aid, and its major principles over time in table 1.

DEFINITIONS	CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES	TEMPORALITY
Purist Humanitarianism	• Characteristics: of a religious and intellectual order, assistance to the poorest, protection of civilian populations and relief to the victims of epidemics or natural disasters • Specific principle: **charity**	Until the 19th century
Modern Humanitarianism	***"Modern, Phase 1"*** • Characteristics: direct and immediate, saves lives. It is centred on the beneficiary of the aid. This humanitarianism is sometimes qualified as naive, disorganized, or inefficient, but also as philanthropic and emotional. (Warner 1999) and (Schroeder & Varga 2005). • Fundamental principles: **humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality**	From 1863 to the 1960s
	"Modern, Phase 2" • Characteristics: evolution of modern humanitarianism, which witnessed an opposition between the immediacy of the aid and the sustainability of the action. Change of target/objective of humanitarian action from the individual in need to the protection of human rights, to the maintenance of peace, and therefore by extension, of society (Ericksson 1996) and (Schroeder & Varga 2005). • Specific principles: **strategy (political), sustainability, responsibility** • Other principles: all the previous principles	From the 1960s to the 1980s
	"Modern, Phase 3" (or "Spectacular") • Characteristics: highly-mediatized, spectacular. It uses the media as witness and goes beyond politics. Birth of No-Borders, reaffirmation of principles • Specific principles: **strategy (political), neutrality, independence, impartiality, information and witnessing** • Other principles: all the previous principles	From the 1980s to the 1990s
State Humanitarianism	• Characteristics: instrumental to policy ("humanitarian war"), becomes the extension, the tool to act in a geo-strategic manner. It is also accused of normativism due to its density and propensity for hyper-standardization • Specific principles: **strategy (political), intervention, pragmatism, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability** • Other principles: all the previous principles	From the 1990s to present
Peer Humanitarianism	• Characteristics: Back to Basics: ethics and solidarity. "Peer-to-peerisation". This implements the conscience of each individual but also of the collective, it analyses the particularity of the situation, the approach is systematic addressing both the meaning and the issues of the aid, and affirms the fundamental principles of the aid (Mattei 2014), in opposition to political instrumentalisation • Specific principles: **resilience, sustainability, predictability** • Other principles: all the previous principles	In progress

Table 1 – Definitions of Humanitarianism over time

The development of "Peer humanitarianism" in recent years has led to a return to fundamentals with ethics and solidarity. There is often confusion between humanitarian and ethical principles. Humanitarian principles are codes of conduct intended for use by humanitarian actors, while ethics involves the taking into account of the other, of the beneficiary of the aid in the humanitarian framework. Ethics supposes that the other is not a means; neither a tool nor a way to look good, but is rather an end in and of him/herself, and one must recognize the ability of the individual to decide their own destiny.

Among the underlying principles, there is the emergence of the concept of resilience, which can take on several possible definitions. Resilience, in the humanitarian sense, found a first echo in the 1990s in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Djament-Tran and Reghezza-Zitt, 2012). It was then more officially introduced in HYOGO's (2005) action framework and defined as the ability of a population, a system, or a society to cope with, adapt to and absorb a shock. The official definition taken from the site of the UNISDR[1] is the following: "*The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organising itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures*".

Beyond the terminology, it is interesting to quote Quenault (2013) who explains the etymology and the sense that resilience has taken on, to the extent that it has been used by different scientific fields as the characteristic of "*a system to bounce back, following a disturbance*" (Tisseron, 2009). This author thus characterizes resilience as a "*polysemic and multidisciplinary*" concept. Although applied more specifically to climatology, Quenault concludes that resilience is a "*change from a technicist paradigm to an eco-systemic paradigm in the form of a processual continuous dynamic*". Châtaigner (2014) also contributes to the development of this concept in terms of relevance and limits. There are also several definitions of resilience and its perimeter in the literature where resilience-state (Quenault, 2013) and resilience alliance (Resalliance, 2015) reconcile the social and physical dimensions, and spontaneous versus generated resilience (Laissus and Lallau, 2013) distinguish its provenance.

At the level of organizations, resiliency is understood as a quality, which allows adapting to disturbances, but also as a dynamic process, which induces a symbiotic relationship within the organization and between the latter and its environment (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007). Resilience is based on the systems theory conceptual framework. In recent years, the concept of organizational resilience has experienced growing popularity due to greater environmental instability resulting in crises and challenges to be overcome (Chan, 2011).

In practice, organizations have equipped themselves with contingency plans and continuity plans to cope with environmental turbulence (Burnard and Bhamra, 2011). But, Ates and Bititci (2011) show that this is not enough because resilience is also a learning process. Only resilient firms are able to adapt quickly and spontaneously to environmental shocks, to adjust their different systems (production, marketing, administration, etc.) to confront challenges, and to integrate the new knowledge derived from these shocks. They thus continue to provide products and services to meet consumer needs. In fact, as it is not possible for organizations to accurately predict the future, strengthening their capacity for organizational resilience is therefore the key to their adaptation to the environment and to their survival (Williams and Shepherd, 2016).

Finally, even if there is still no consensus on how to measure resiliency (Winderl, 2014), it is important and necessary to see the tremendous work of formalization in progress, with for example the recent publication of the fundamental standard for humanitarian endeavours (CHS, 2015), or the ECHO project of the European Commission and it Resilience[2] marker.

1 « Terminology. » *UNISDR News*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2015. [http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology].

2 « Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection - *European Commission*. » *Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection*. Commission Européenne, n.d. Web. 15 Aug. 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/].

1.2. The major principles of Humanitarianism

The different definitions of humanitarianism set out above are based on 16 major principles (here carried over in the radar chart in figure 1) that we will test *in situ*ation. This radar highlights, by means of coloured surfaces, the different definitions of humanitarianism over time as well as the major associated principles. The radar is read in the clockwise direction, starting from the principle of humanity, and allows one to see the progression of the definition. We will use this representation as a simple model of qualification and evaluation of the action. It will render comparable different sources of information to reveal major trends.

1.3. Efficiency and resilience of humanitarian actions

The economic reality of humanitarian action and its potential development invite us to reflect on the dynamics of the sector, more particularly on the model(s) governing the interactions of its actors and affecting the quality of their activities to identify possible improvements in the area of ethics, efficiency, and resiliency of humanitarian action. Issuing from the GHA (2016), figure 2 shows the first recipients of donations and funding of various actions that are multilateral organizations (that is to say International and Intergovernmental Organizations) and non-governmental organizations. This financial manna combined with the fact that many

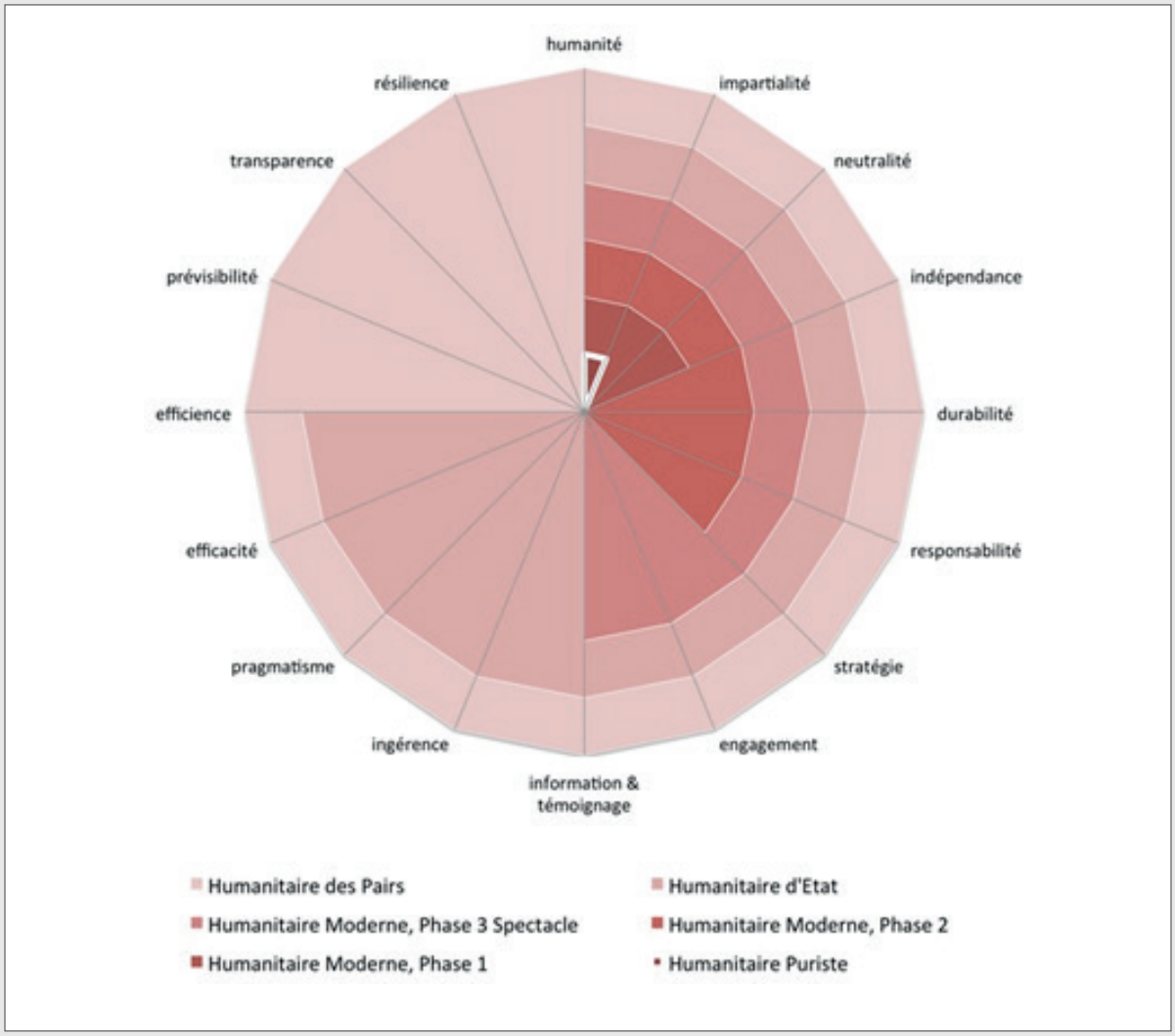


Figure 1 – Radar of humanitarian definitions & principles

All the interviews have been conducted in French. The analysis in Tropes has been realised with a French corpus. So, the outputs of this software are in French.

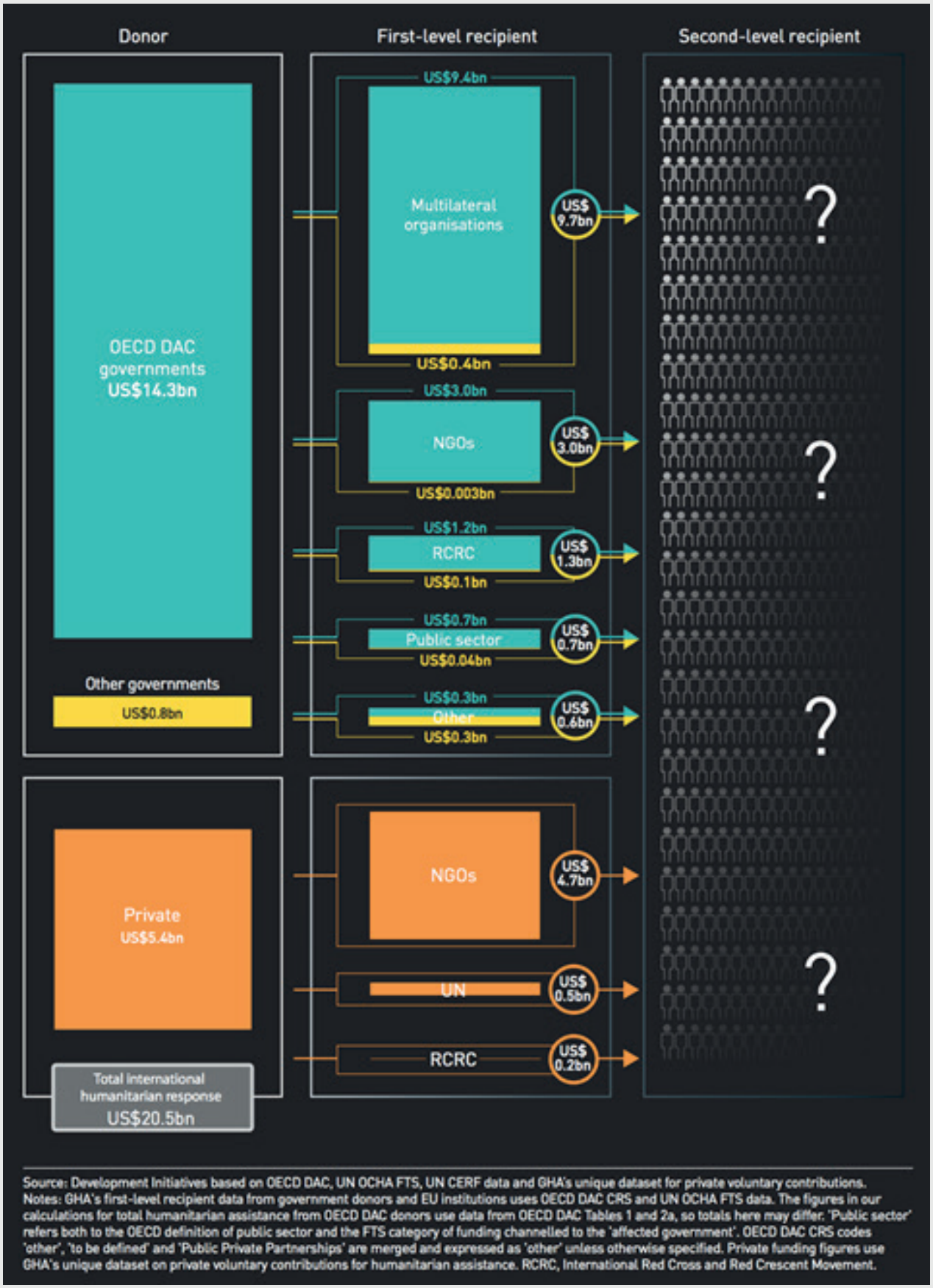


Figure 2 – Humanitarian Financing Channels, 2013

individuals wish to help on the ground, has created a real "*humanitarian market*" and generates unprecedented competition, which Ryfman (2016) confirms. Symptomatic of this polarization, humanitarian endeavours seem to be victim, according to Alagbe (2012), of a "*normative inflation*", thereby increasing the pressure and entry barriers in the sector.

NGOS and international organizations adhere to this market logic by respecting this mode of operation. While these organisations pursue non-profit goals, they are above all legal entities, sometimes even members of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP[3]), having the duty of economic efficiency in order to survive within society. These "*social enterprises*" (Sibieude & Trellu-Kane, 2011) are squeezed in what Quéinnec & Igalens (2004) call "*inside-outside*" structuring.

While multilateral organizations (and the associated PPPs) essentially depend on States, NGOS operate thanks to donations and grants they receive. All this leads to increased competition (Robyns & de Geoffroy, 2009) and they engage in marketing and communication activities (Chouliaraki, 2010). As a consequence, humanitarian organizations develop funding strategies, like companies in the private sector, using very similar techniques. For example, Scott (2015) describes how *Amnesty International* now uses new information technologies such as Big Data to optimize its donation campaigns. We also note that NGOs and international organizations operate in project mode around missions and societal objectives. Besley & Ghatak (2003) therefore propose situating NGOs in the extension of the works studying incentives outside of the traditional "*private property*" model. By analogy, the authors consider that an agency relationship exists between the mission's manager and employee(s) involved in the project. More generally, according to Johnson & Prakash (2007) "*the origins, the structure and the strategy of an NGO may be more generally and more powerfully modelled and understood by referring to theories of the firm, by taking a perspective of collective action*". Queinnec (2007) corroborates this by stating that "*the NGO may thus give rise to a reading in terms of Agency, between public donors and NGOS that can be understood in terms of "contract" or of "transaction*". According to Ainhanon (2006) among the main theories that underpin the PPP are found transaction cost theory and agency theory. Finally, the complexity of multilateral organizations also gives rise to agency relationships. That is what Versluys (2007) describes, for example, in the relationship between European member States and the European Commission, in its delegation of the humanitarian issue to the Office of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid ECHO.

These developments in the humanitarian sector, and in particular in the market logic, which increasingly underlie the actions of NGOS and international organizations (Coiteux, 2012) lead us to question the efficiency and resilience of humanitarian actions, primarily from the perspective of agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Jensen, 1994) and of transaction costs (Williamson, 1981). In this framework, we assume that humanitarian organizations can be economically and legally considered as firms, with albeit societal and non-profit goals, thus creating agency relationships between them. This gives rise to a strong contractualisation and normalization of the activities of the sector with the associated economic, competitive and qualitative consequences. The agency theory is therefore a relevant tool for modelling the field, although it is essentially a mechanistic diagram of human motivation whose only real dimension is the performance related to the remuneration of the leader. It thus allows modelling and understanding the degree of efficiency of humanitarian aid by placing the organization in a "firm" logic. It does not, however, easily represent different systems of motivation: non-monetary items such as the ideological commitment of humanitarian workers (providing agents' intrinsic motivation), or more importantly, the agent-beneficiary relationship (supporting the resilience of the aid). This is corroborated by Anson & Pfeifer (2013) at the end of their analysis of western NGOS on the African continent.

3 "Public - Private Partnerships". "Public - Private Partnerships". INSA, n.d. Web. Aug. 2015. [http://ppp.insa-rennes.fr/ppp/].

2. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTED

This section details the methodology that we have followed in our qualitative study, the formalisation of our themes and our interview guide, the collection of data, through to the methodology of data processing and the interview guide.

2.1. Methodology of data collection

In light of the exploratory nature of our research question, we decided to adopt a qualitative approach. This method enables us to gather a set of feelings, views and opinions around the research problematic and to deduce trends, something a quantitative approach would not allow in this preliminary phase. To do this, we put in place an exploratory approach employing semi-structured interviews, taking care to solicit actors from various organizations. To create our sample of humanitarian field experts we relied on our network within the World Health Organization (WHO). Although our sample may not be representative of the target population, since it is intended for a qualitative study, it is to be noted that we have tried to elicit responses from different stakeholders in the sector, whether from international organizations (IO) such as the WHO, UNRWA[4], the International Red Cross

THEME 1: DEFINITION OF THE MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIANISM	
	1. How can humanitarian action be qualified at the present time? What are its **major principles**? 2. How have you applied these principles in your activities? What are the gaps that you have identified and which must be filled? 3. The term "**resilience**" seems to have been emerging for some time. • If this term is familiar to you, what is your definition of resilience? • Does this emergence seem justified to you? Why? 4. How do you judge the **ethics** of humanitarian actions? Can we speak of a link between **efficiency and resilience**? How do you see this **equilibrium** between the two?
THEME 2: STANDARDIZATION, CONTRACTUALISATION AND ETHICS	
	1. To what extent do the current standards (CHS, ECHO, OECD guidelines, etc.) allow beneficiaries of aid to **develop resilience** (at the level of the individual, community and/or collective)? 2. To what extent do the current standards (CHS, ECHO, OECD guidelines, etc.) take into consideration the views of beneficiary populations and make humanitarian workers accountable to these same populations? 3. Should we (and is it possible to) **"contractualise" the humanitarian /beneficiary relationship** in order to assess the efficiency and resilience of the action? Are indicators to do this available?
THEME 3: DE-CORRELATION OF THE AID AND THE MARKET	
	1. What are the pressures that you perceive in humanitarian actions? • Are there differences between local, national and international humanitarian actions? • What causes these differences? 2. Is it possible to **develop an ethical model**, a balance between efficiency and resilience, **under current humanitarian market pressure**? 3. **How can international humanitarian efforts escape market logic/competitive pressure?**

Table 2 – Synthesis of Interview Guide

4 «UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. » *UNRWA*. Web. 05 Aug. 2015. [http://www.unrwa.org/].

(IRC), non-governmental organizations such as the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (SDF[5]) or Citizen of Our World (COOW[6]), or a recipient of aid to Gaza (hereafter called "*beneficiary*"). The 15 interviewees represent a variety of experiences and perspectives intended to provide diverse expert perspectives. The conducted semi-structured interviews were based on an interview guide built from the literature review. It is a list of themes in a pre-established order for which we defined a set of questions that might be addressed. It allows gradually building the framework while reducing the exploratory field. We present a synthetic version within table 2. To be able to query Anglophones, the interview guide was also translated into English.

2.2. Methodology of data mining

In order to best exploit the collected data, we decided upon analysis at multiple levels of granularity, in order to conduct an exploratory study of the phenomena related to our research proposals. This is detailed in table 3. We wished to (I) scrutinize the information to facilitate a first step of thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013) on the basis of consolidation of the words/expressions/phrases and counted occurrences. Then, in order to confirm/reject our assumptions, we (II) organized a content analysis. Content analysis is a technique of "objective, systematic and quantitative description of the content manifested in the data in order to interpret it". It is a comprehensive, methodical and, if possible, quantitative

STEPS	DETAILS
1. Transcription of the interviews	Each interview was transcribed to retain, to the greatest extent possible, the words, expressions, and original sentences put forth by the different interviewees.
2. Definition of the unit of analysis / Approach	We decided to analyse our data at different levels of granularity, micro (words) and macro (expressions, phrases and meaning), in order to extract a maximum of information and knowledge. Thus, our analysis offers several levels of reasoning, allowing us to extract the lexical trends, concepts and their interrelationships.
3. Construction of the coding model and the analysis grid	Initially based on the themes that we had introduced in the interview guide, we progressively refined our primary data according to several dimensions. To do this, we created an encoding model specific to our study. Note: *The encoding model is presented in the next section.*
4. Interview codification and grid completion	We then fed the interview transcripts into this model to constitute our initial analysis grid.
5. Contents analysis	The contents analysis consisted of a first interpretation of the analysis grid to extract the main ideas. Then our grid was analysed with "text mining" tools allowing us to record the occurrences of remarkable words and phrases. Finally, with the help of more advanced semantic tools, a final phase of analysis enabled us to extract the major ontological concepts, their interrelationships and draw conclusions in relation to our initial research proposals.
6. Quantification of results	Our results are thus quantified in terms of occurrences of words, sentences, expressions, ontological concepts and inter-concept relations. Finally, these analyses enabled us to consolidate our assumptions by real working hypotheses. Note: *The results are presented in the remainder of this report*

Table 3 – Methodology for encoding and data analysis

5 «Fostering the Appropriate Use of UAVs. » *Swiss Foundation for Mine Action*. Web. 05 Aug. 2015. [http://fsd.ch/].

6 «Want to Be a Citizen ? » *Want to Be a Citizen ?* Web. 05 Aug. 2015. [http://coow.org/].

examination of sense in relation to the objectives of the research. We performed this analysis by using the tool of inference of semantic knowledge (Molette, 2009).

2.3. Population and Sample

We formed a sample of 15 people. We initially chose to conduct semi-structured interviews from March to June 2015, of a minimum duration of 45 minutes, the syntheses of which figure in table 4.

The database consists of 40 pages of transcripts of 15 interviews, for a total of 18h02 of exchanges. One third of the exchanges were done in English and translated for the needs of the semantic analysis. The database contains 24271 words, derived from combinations of 4013 unique words, for 1998 sentences. The data collected from experts in the field are essentially argumentative. The subjects engage with, defend, explain or criticize to try to persuade the interlocutor. The setting is dynamic, they use action verbs: be, have, do, power, etc., anchored in the real. They also

ID*	Sex	Stake holder**	Position	Training	Duration (min)
R5	F	ONG	Independent Consultant	Management of International Affairs	80
R8	F	ONG	Co-Founder & Scientific Director	Mathematics	120
R2	F	IO	Project Leader	Nuclear physics	50
R6	F	ONG	Chief of Operations	Humanitarian assistance	50
R4	F	ONG	Manager and Curator, Educational Activities	Management of International Affairs	75
R7	M	ONG	Director of Projects	Management of International Affairs	75
R15	M	IO	Independent Consultant	Public Health	46
R11	M	IO	IT Directorate	Computer Science	90
R10	M	IO	Project Leader	Computer Science	50
R14	F	IO	Project Leader	Computer Science	100
R1	M	Beneficiary	Recipient of aid to Gaza	Computer Science	45
R13	M	IO	Project Leader	Nuclear physics	60
R3	M	ONG	Director of Projects	Management of International Affairs	110
R9	M	ONG	Executive Director	Medicine	55
R12	F	IO	Officer of Associated Evaluation	Management of International Affairs	67
	**Note: To respect the anonymity of the respondents, their identities will not be disclosed.*				TOTAL 18 h 02

*** Note: IO: international organization, NGO: Non-governmental organization.*
For the sake of simplicity, persons involved in aid in humanitarian situations on the ground are hereafter referred to as "Field". When they are not "Field", they are qualified as "Non-Field".

Table 4 – List and qualification of respondents

Complexity factor (Lexical Density) :	24%
Readability (Gunning-Fog Index) : *(6-easy 20-hard)*	9.2
Total number of characters :	170164
Number of characters without spaces :	79476
Average Syllables per Word :	1.61
Sentence count :	1998
Average sentence length (words) :	16.7
Max sentence length (words) :	198
Readability (Alternative) beta : *(100-easy 20-hard, optimal 60-70)*	53.9

Table 5 – Characterisation of the data base

use verbs that allow making a statement on a state, an action, as well as a large number of pronouns in the first person singular. According to the statistics provided by Textalizer (see table 5) we find an average lexical density, but a particular emphasis on certain words. The overall readability of the transcripts, at almost 54%, seems sufficiently good for the subsequent semantic analysis.

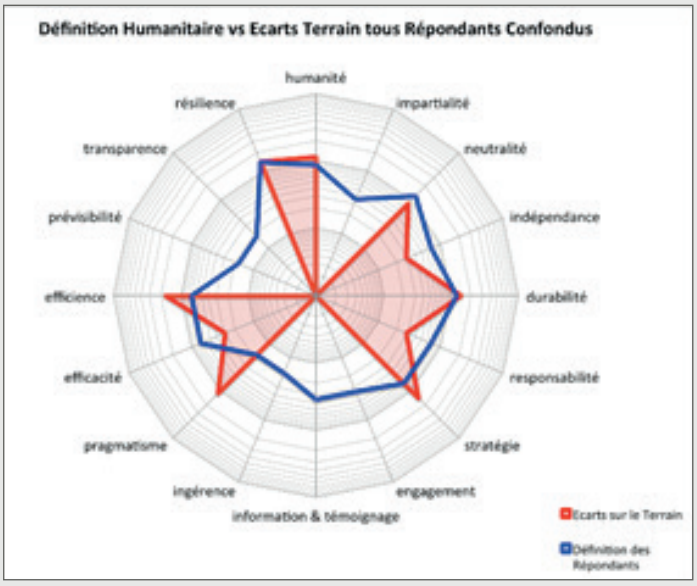
3. THE PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HUMANITARIAN AID

Our objective here is to explore the data from the interviews. Our treatments are therefore naturally structured around our initial research proposals that we analyse in more detail using the extract of the associated conceptual map and data search tools. To this end, we have used primarily XMind (Mindmap), our analysis grid in MS Excel, as well as Tropes for the analysis of semantic content. The following sections present the detailed results of the analyses that we have conducted on the basis of interview transcripts with the help of these tools.

3.1. *What are the major humanitarian principles?*

We note first of all that the 16 major principles extracted from the literature review were confirmed via the interviews. The selection that was previously carried out therefore seems relevant and allows one to establish a solid basis of comparison and an appreciation of the types of aid. As indicated in figure 3, we put into perspective the ideal definition of humanitarian aid (blue line) and variances in the situation in the field (red line).

In their definition of aid, the respondents insist mainly on resilience. Also as major aspects they then mention neutrality and sustainability. Here it is interesting to note that resilience is mentioned even before the fundamental humanitarian principles. Then comes a third cohort, but one that is nonetheless important, with humanity, responsibility, strategy, effectiveness and efficiency being mentioned in equal proportions. Engagement, the duty to inform and witnessing represent a minority. Finally, transparency, pragmatism, predictability of aid and interference in the event of need are only very rarely cited. Once in the field, it is the efficiency of the aid which is the most criticized. Resilience, sustainability and political bias (strategy) are also significantly mentioned. Humanity and pragmatism arrive in third position for the noted variances. Finally, independence, effectiveness and responsibility are the last items remarked upon.



Grands Principes	Définition	Ecarts
humanité	9%	11%
impartialité	4%	0%
neutralité	12%	9%
indépendance	7%	3%
durabilité	12%	14%
responsabilité	7%	3%
stratégie	7%	14%
engagement	4%	0%
information & témoignage	4%	0%
ingérence	2%	0%
pragmatisme	2%	11%
efficacité	7%	3%
efficience	7%	17%
prévisibilité	2%	0%
transparence	2%	0%
résilience	14%	14%

Figure 3 – Humanitarian principles & gaps in the field (global)

The analysis in Tropes has been realised with a French corpus. So, the outputs of this software are in French.

We also note the emergence of other principles. As a major trend, half of the respondents speak of dignity (in the sense of "*respect of the values of the other*") and of respect for the local populations' culture. They then mention empathy, protection, the democratization of aid, and the obligation not to cause harm ("*do no harm*"). They indicate, in last place, that confidence and solidarity are important principles to take into consideration and, to a lesser extent, the flexibility of the aid (see figure 4). In fact, the people in the field are directly in contact with the beneficiaries and are regularly conflicted with regard to ethical issues. The values that guide their actions by putting the needs and characteristics of the beneficiaries at the core of their concerns help other humanitarian principles emerge and ease their relations with beneficiaries. Values are thus an appropriation tool of an ethical approach. This approach is comparable to that of caregivers in the context of palliative care who give meaning to their practice by the values they uphold, and enhance the effectiveness of their interventions (Ntetu and Tremblay, 2014).

Still referring to figure 4, other gaps appear for the individuals in the field. Aid is largely qualified as "inappropriate in the context". Additionally, the mindset does not seem to be appropriate. The difficulty of intervention / limitations, abuse / corruption, or even of actions qualified as "neo-colonialist" represent a third group of concerns that should not be forgotten. Finally, lack of innovation, resignation and problems related to education are cited in the minority. Examining these trends in detail, the graphic radar of figure 5 highlights the differences observed between the average ideal definition of humanitarian aid and the reality in the field by respondent category (be they working for international organizations, non-governmental organizations, or other). The most notable facts that emerge are:

- For respondents from international organizations, on the left in figure 5, the ideal definition (average) of aid is fairly developed on the 16 major principles, pragmatism excepted. More particularly, the emphasis is on the fundamental principles of international conventions, but also and especially on resilience. Differences are mainly noted related to efficiency, resilience, neutrality, sustainability, strategy and pragmatism.

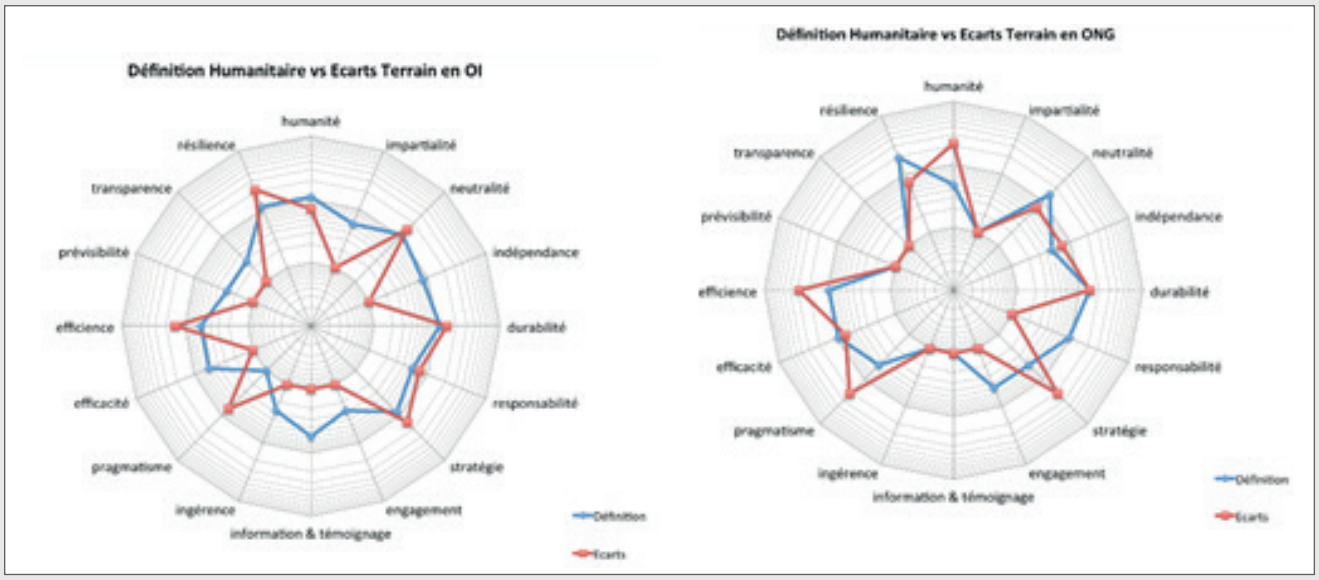
- For respondents of non-governmental organizations, on the right in figure 5, the ideal definition (average) insists more on "direct" principles of aid, namely efficiency, resilience, effectiveness, independence, sustainability and responsibility. The noted differences arise at the level of efficiency, strategy, pragmatism, humanity and sustainability of the assistance.

Autres Principes	Définition
empathie	13%
protection	13%
dignité & culture	29%
confiance	8%
flexibilité	4%
démocratique	13%
ne pas nuire (do no arm)	13%
solidarité	8%

Autres écarts	Répartition
inadapté au contexte	33%
difficulté d'intervention, limité	11%
abus, corruption	11%
néocolonialiste	11%
peu innovant	6%
résignation	6%
mentalité	17%
éducation	6%

Figure 4 – Other principles & variances

Figure 5 – Humanitarian principles & gaps on the ground (by respondent category)



- For the other respondents, the first priority is to respect the fundamental humanitarian principles and to provide sustainability and resilience to the beneficiaries of the aid. The major differences are related to resilience, sustainability, and pragmatism. Finally, for the interviewed beneficiary, the independence and neutrality of the aid, its predictability, sustainability, resilience and strategy appear as major elements. Finally, sustainability and resilience are the most criticized aspects.

Of these different points of view, it is interesting to note that the NGO respondents insist particularly on the lack of efficiency, while those from IOs are concerned by the lack of resilience. This can probably be explained by the funding, the size and the nature of the projects carried out by these various organizations, as well as their mode of operation. The following verbatims illustrate these results:

- "At a large scale, it has become a State within the State."
- "Unfortunately the international political will prevents improving the situation."
- "We cannot effect the policies if we are not on the inside, however, we can intervene locally."
- "A maximum result with a minimum effort."
- "To avoid this kind of tragedy, even in an

emergency, we really need to take the time to know where we want to go later."

- "Unfortunately we are always providing food to people who are able to cultivate it."

3.2. Ethics, efficiency and resilience of humanitarian aid

In this section, we explore in greater depth the ethical dimension of humanitarian aid and the interrelationship between efficiency and resilience from the point of view of the respondents. These individuals (of whom two thirds are active in the field) declare for the most part that the humanitarian sector is currently experiencing strong pressure. They emphasize a "*market logic*" "*extreme competition*" or "*saturation*" of the sector in terms of the number of players. They explicitly speak of an industry, a global market. Despite this strong pressure, they are unanimous on the question of ethics and its potential for future improvement. For almost all of them, it is obvious that ethics implies a form of balance between efficiency and resilience. To this end, the majority believe that a form of contractualisation is possible between the humanitarian aid provider and the beneficiary, in order to better take into account the later and to empower the relationship. In effect, the humanitarian principles are mostly directed at the actors themselves. These are principles of conduct, but they are not aimed directly at the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. The beneficiaries, who become central to decisions, are not always marked by humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. This is why the relationship must create accountability on both sides. The respondents are, however, more divided on the rest of the questions. Let us examine more closely these divisions by thematic issue.

3.2.1. Efficiency & Resilience

In this first excerpt from the Tropes software analysis, shown here in figure 6, we can see semantic proximity of the concepts relating to ethics, productivity (which is part of the concept of efficiency) and resilience in our interview transcripts. On this graph, each reference is represented by a sphere whose surface is proportional to the number of words that it contains. The distance between the central class and the other references is proportional to the number of relationships that bind them. In other words, when two references are close they have many relations in common, and when they are remote they have few relations in common. This type of graph allows one to analyse the environment of a reference or a category: here it is resilience. They are oriented: the references displayed to the left of the central class are its predecessors, those that are displayed to the right are its successors.

We also note that the terms relating to resilience have an importance approximately two times more significant than those relating to productivity. The agents speak of more pragmatic aspects related to efficiency in terms of procedure, construction, and action. We can contrast this with resilience and the realities which here are the population, the situation, and the project. These few verbatims are representative of these results:

- "I think that there is a correlation, but this is not linear between action and resilience. There is a positive correlation. The relationship is very simplistic."
- "There was a balance between efficiency and resilience."
- "This balance was not clearly established but rather was natural, logically established."
- "If you put ethics in perspective you need efficiency to develop resilience."

This result shows the current rebalancing of humanitarian action more turned toward resilience, that is to say, toward the ability to cope, adapt and absorb a shock, than toward productivity, even if the two elements are linked. The achievement of a certain level of resilience requires a certain efficiency and therefore productivity of humanitarian action. However, we also note that this objective requires a certain code of ethics for action, a redefined relationship between the humanitarian provider and the beneficiaries. It is the nature of this relationship that will finally determine the resilience and efficiency of the humanitarian action.

3.2.2. Resilience & Culture

Concerning resilience and how respondents define it, we again find that there are several possible orientations. Based on the definitions identified during our literature review we have broken down the participants'

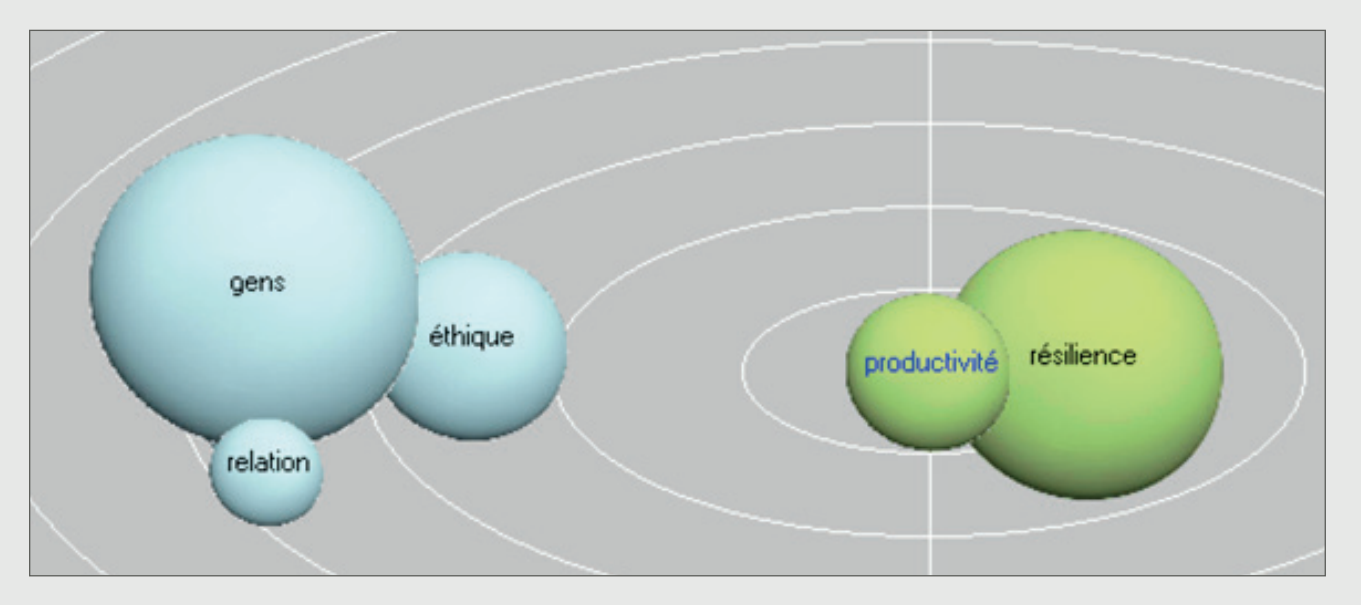


Figure 6 – Semantic interrelation between efficiency & resilience

responses according to the types of known resilience. This is shown in figure 7.

We observe that collective resilience is most often cited. Following that, reference is made to State resilience, then in third place to individual and social /dynamic resilience, and finally in fourth place, spontaneous / created resilience.

Finally, throughout the interviews, we note the recurring place given to the "people and their culture" in the definition of resilience and ethics, as shown in figure 8. The following verbatims also illustrate this reality:

- "When I made my report on the humanitarian funding, my leader was Japanese, he did not understand why the people did not take the situation in hand themselves..."
- "They are the ones who know how to handle the situations, the culture, this mustn't be forgotten. They hold the secret."

3.2.3. Standards & Résilience

On the question of standards for resilience, the respondents are divided. Thus, for half of them (of which more than a third are active in the field), the standards allow developing the resilience of the beneficiaries.

The IOs, generally stakeholders of normalization, are either neutral or negative on the question. For the

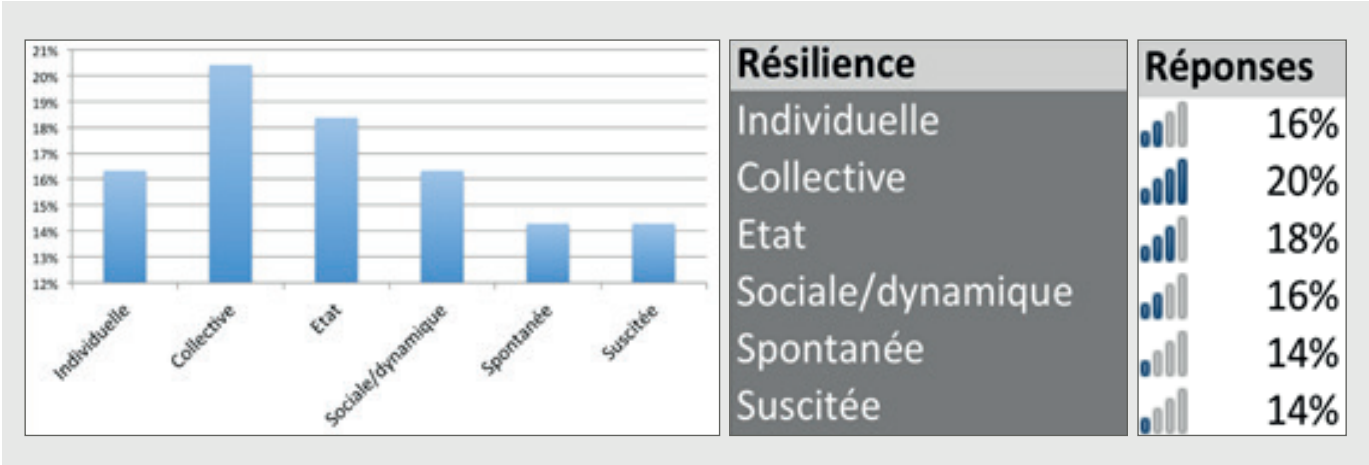


Figure 7 – Types of Resilience

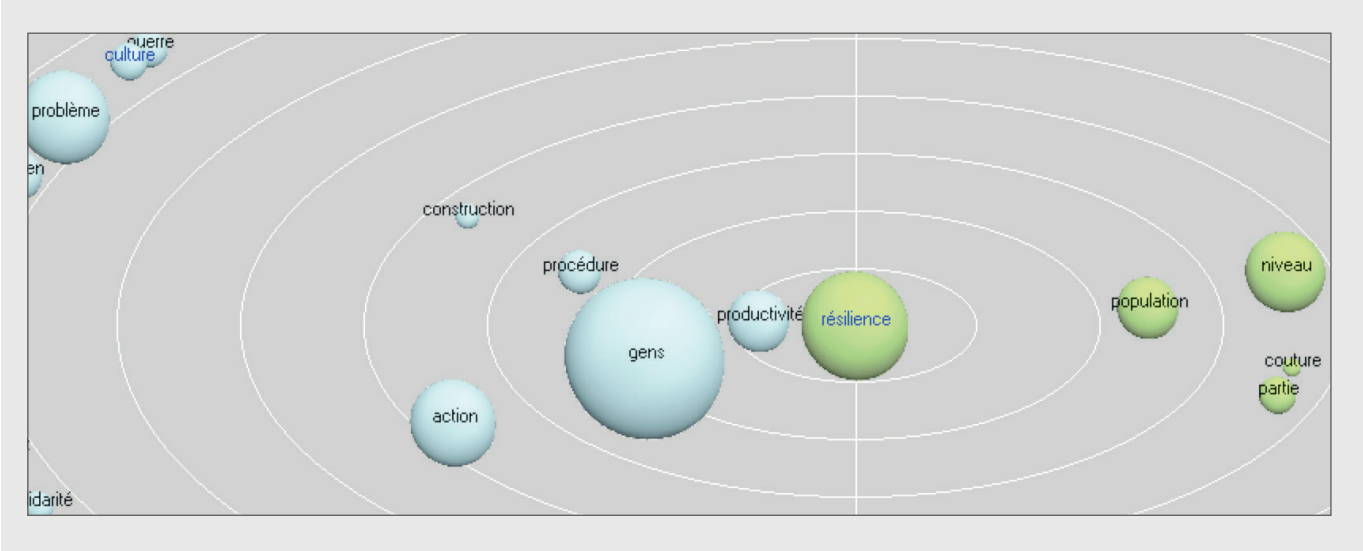


Figure 8 – Culture/People & Resilience

respondents from NGOS and in the field, the standards help in the development of resilience. The other individuals are neutral.

The respondents with managerial training are for the most part negative, even if two of them are positive. The individuals with humanitarian training are negative. More generally, respondents with field experience are for the most part neutral, even if two are positive. Our conclusions are based on the following verbatims:

- "The standards must remain as a framework to follow and not be a constraint."
- "It remains a circle of privileged (individuals). There is a lack of reality."
- "The standards are good, but the rest needs to follow."
- "In many cases, these standards are higher than what the target country advocates."
- "This professionalization allows you to say that there will no longer be a nurse, for example, who will make the diagnosis, but it will be a doctor."

The Tropes extract reported in figure 9, broadly confirms the verbatims of our respondents. Standards are thus perceived as bureaucratic elements which should primarily serve as a framework and remain flexible to better apply in the field. We thus see the ontological concepts of "*respect*", "*principle*", "*constraint*" and "*framework*" appear in the Tropes graph.

3.2.4. Standards & Responsibility

Slightly less than half of the respondents (of which a third are in concrete situations) say they know the latest standards relating to resilience. In addition, of this sub-set of respondents aware of the associated standardization effort, only a quarter believe that the opinion of the beneficiaries has been taken into consideration. In particular, the respondents from IOs are either neutral or negative. The NGO respondents are for the most part negative, with one individual as an exception. The respondents with managerial, computer, or humanitarian training are for the most part negative. Finally, respondents from the field are rather negative, except for two who are divided on the question. The "*non-fields*" are either negative or neutral.

When they are questioned about possible forms of contractualisation between humanitarian providers and beneficiaries, they primarily indicate assessment forms and indicators as the most relevant and easily applicable. They then propose a Complaints Office or a contract. Recorded testimony is mentioned in third place, and then mediation, a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU"), or coupons in last place (see figure 10). The respondents usually query contractualisation in terms of feasibility *in situ*, because it potentially generates loss of time and complexity. It also implies a judicial and legal basis that cannot always be assured. Similar to standards and their applicability in the field, contractualisation is perceived as a necessary, but not essential, bureaucratic process. It is, however, felt to be increasingly possible

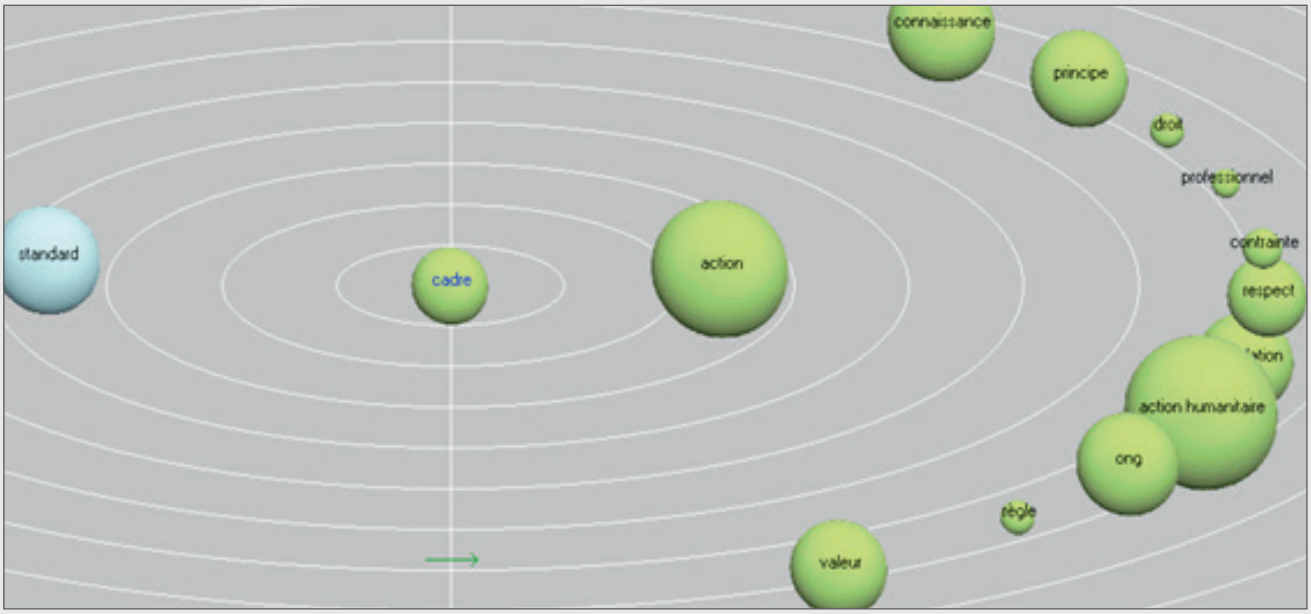


Figure 9 – Semantic Analysis - Standards & Resilience

and potentially useful, not only for the purpose of accountability, but also in terms of framing vis-a-vis the beneficiary. Indeed, several respondents used the metaphor "customer satisfaction". On this last point, several respondents also note sometimes difficult relations with the beneficiaries who, accustomed to receiving assistance from "rich" countries, have specific expectations or even sometimes inappropriate ones, as recounted by the following verbatims:

- There should be this notion of customers that one wants to satisfy, who are not our bosses or donors."
- "I offered them bicycles; they considered that this was not sufficient. They wanted a car..."
- "I have seen this at home. People who are managing to just barely get by, as soon as they do a bit better, trying to get more wives."
- "We must not have an angelic vision of the beneficiary. They sometimes have bad intentions. It can be a source of disillusionment. They are not always poor and lost. These are not at all angels. They have their own mechanisms, interests."

Formes Contractualisaiton	Répartition
Contrat	19%
Témoignage	13%
Médiation	6%
Bureau des Plaintes	19%
Confiance	6%
Formulaires, indicateurs	25%
MoU	6%
Coupons	6%

Figure 10 – Forms of contractualisation

4. TOWARD A QUESTIONING OF THE MARKET LOGIC

For the majority of respondents, in the long term, it is possible to exit market logic. Thus, for virtually all of the IO respondents (except for two of them) humanitarian endeavours will manage to extract themselves from this logic and from competitive pressure. For NGOs, the question deeply divides. The respondents are virtually identically divided between positive, negative and neutral responses. The individuals with information science training are positive. Those with managerial training are divided. Individuals with humanitarian, health and other training are either negative or neutral. Over all, whether they are in the field or not, the respondents are broadly divided. This is also confirmed by the Tropes analysis using the ontological concepts "logic", "market", "pressure" and "help", as shown in figure 11, and the following verbatims:

- "We are really in an industry that runs for itself."
- "The problem today with humanitarian projects is that there are too many."
- "To think of being able to get out of the global market logic is utopian."
- "For me now, in the humanitarian (sector), you are in the same market context as when you sell a product in the West."
- "At a large scale, it has become a State within the State."

Despite generally very mixed findings on the current situation in the humanitarian sector, respondents remain globally optimistic. Of the group of respondents confident in "*the probable exit from market logic*", each individual advocates a solution of a different nature. For the majority of them, the essential nature of the solution will be cultural. To a large extent, it will also be political. Then the respondents imagine economic, organizational, human and finally technological and spiritual responses to a lesser degree (see figure 12).

The majority of respondents indicate possible solutions which will be a new model or societal / economic change. They also advocate more financial / human / infrastructure means. To a lesser degree, but nevertheless still significant, they speak of decentralization and sharing of power and of information. The respondents also mention solutions at the level of education and of intelligence. Finally, they anticipate "*niche*" experiments and an export of concepts, as well as a necessity for multi-disciplinarity.

We summarize below some relevant verbatims:

- "We are going from a hierarchical world toward a networked world. Everything is changing. Ethics cannot be put into action unless individuals are equal to equal."
- "Like an octopus, there is a brain, but also autonomous members. We need an organizational chart. Decentralize!"
- "There must be men or women who have this intelligence."
- "The distribution of cash is the future of humanitarian endeavours."

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Our results show that in order to accompany humanitarian ethics in its progression, it is necessary to create a new organizational model to break with market logic, which appears in part in the sharing economy and common logic. We thus offer an extension of the agency theory which aims to introduce a second Principal, "the beneficiary", in order to foster emancipation ("empowerment"), but also to explain resilience in a contractual manner, balancing the implicit and current desire for efficiency. Through contracts the goal is: (1) to support the beneficiaries' point of view in the field, (2) to encode resilience in the model in order to motivate and to (re)prioritize aid accordingly, and (3) to empower/mentor the humanitarian provider-beneficiary relationship. In fact, humanitarian ethics should be the result of a reflection taking into account both the efficiency of the aid and the resilience of the beneficiary. We believe that ethics is a line of which the "slope" is relative to the culture of the beneficiary population at moment "t", which has two constants that are efficiency and resilience. Thus, the more advanced the culture, the faster the population that is victim of a natural disaster or armed conflict will rebound. This is in part what our study has brought to light. In addition, it is no longer conceivable to provide

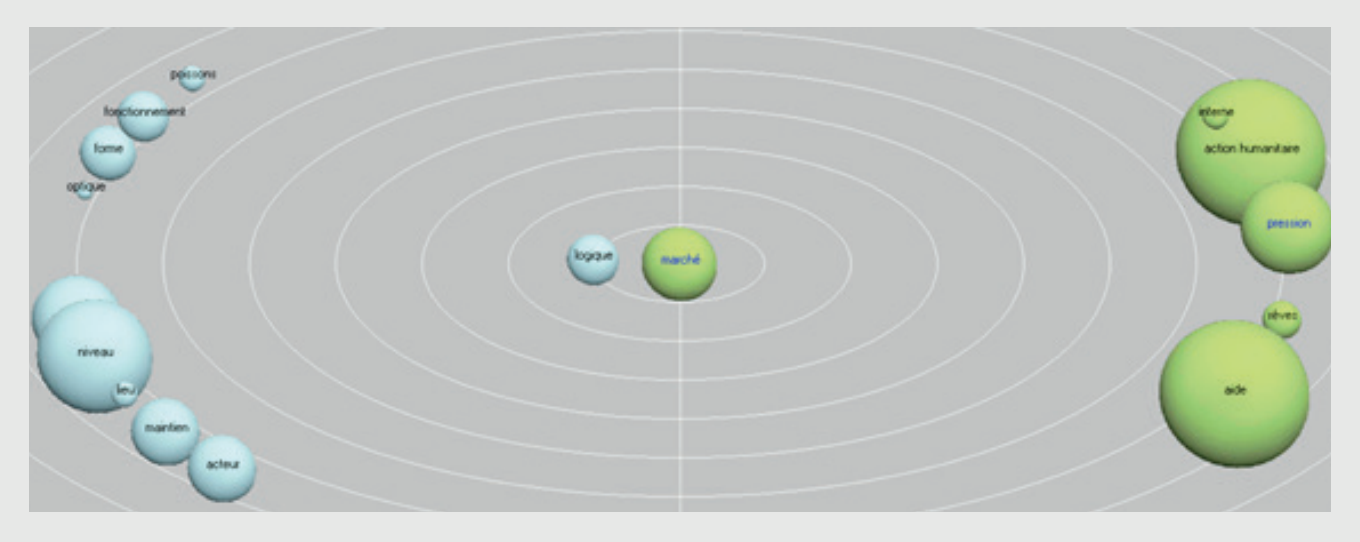
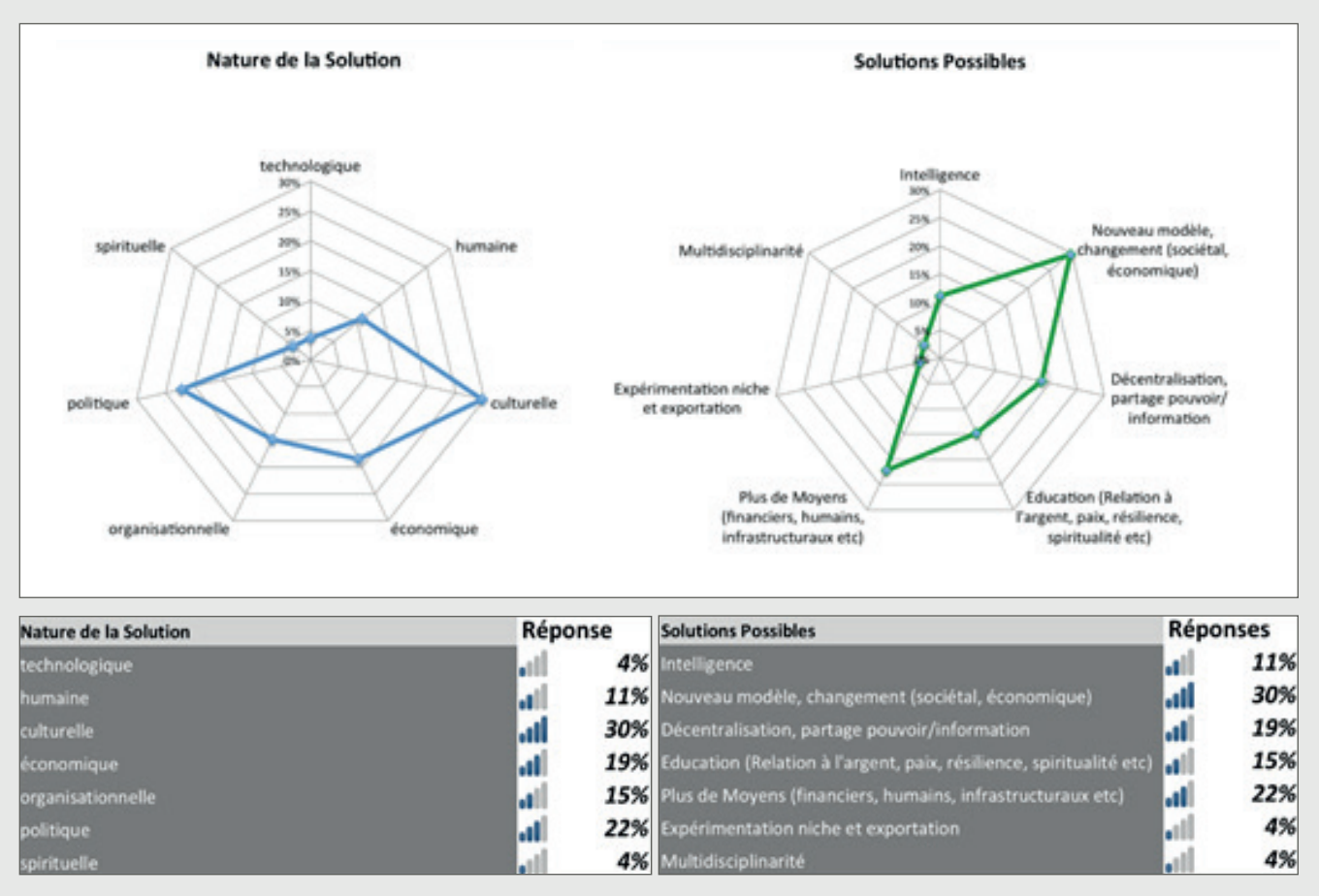


Figure 11 – Semantic Analysis - Market Logic

Figure 12 – Possible solutions and their nature



Nature de la Solution	Réponse
technologique	4%
humaine	11%
culturelle	30%
économique	19%
organisationnelle	15%
politique	22%
spirituelle	4%

Solutions Possibles	Réponses
Intelligence	11%
Nouveau modèle, changement (sociétal, économique)	30%
Décentralisation, partage pouvoir/information	19%
Education (Relation à l'argent, paix, résilience, spiritualité etc)	15%
Plus de Moyens (financiers, humains, infrastructuraux etc)	22%
Expérimentation niche et exportation	4%
Multidisciplinarité	4%

assistance upon which the beneficiary risks becoming dependent, or even where the funder risks wasting his contribution. This leads us to propose an application of the agency theory, as a possible realization of the ethical function. This is shown in figure 13.

In this new agency model, we find the Principal (the giver) to the left and the agent (the humanitarian representative) in the centre, both bound by a contract governing the asymmetry of information and their divergent interests. We also find, and this is the novel

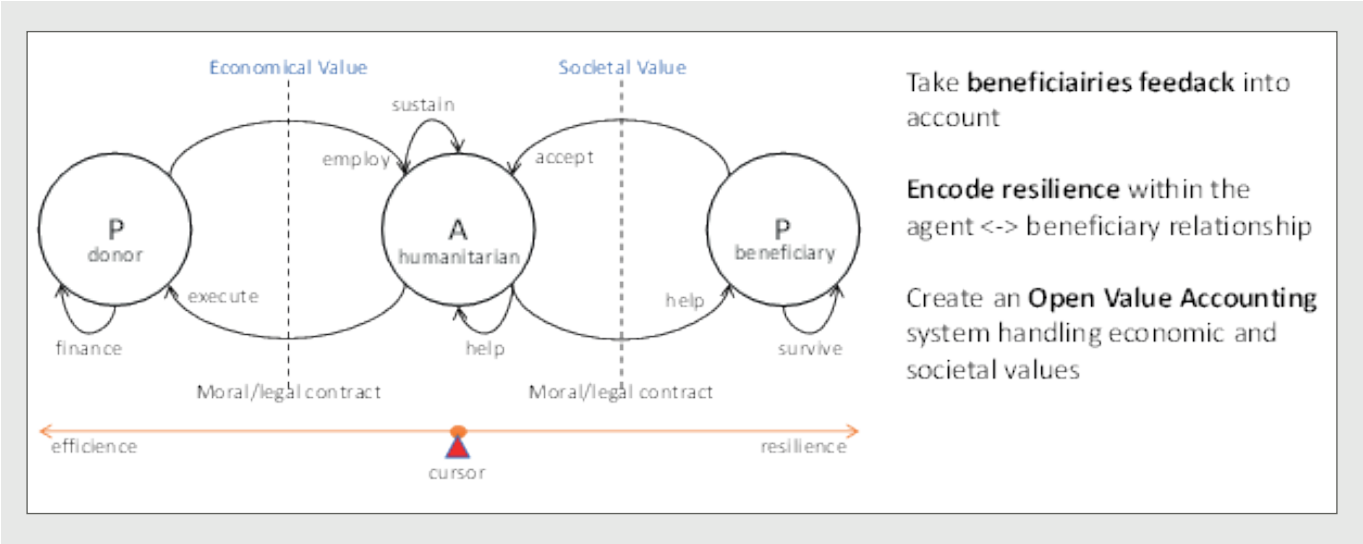


Figure 13 – A proposal of humanitarian model (The agency theory applied to the humanitarian)

aspect, a second Principal (the beneficiary) to the right, who is bound by a contract to the agent, allowing to circumscribe their divergent interests, but especially establishing a return in terms of need/assistance adequacy in the field, all in the framework of a responsible relationship. To do this, we intend to (I) create a contractual and transactional system by manipulating two flows of different types. A flow of monetary value to be used for the financing of aid, as mentioned at the top left of figure 13; and a flow of societal value to qualify, prioritize and motivate aid implementation decisions, as mentioned at the top right of figure 13, (II) underlying the management of these flows, we advocate the integration of an open value accounting system which will help to capitalize societal value as a decision-making marker to guide monetary financing and better adapt to the needs identified on the ground. Finally (III), the flows will be intermediated by a distributed information system in the form of a virtual complementary currency. It is the introduction of these different measures which will break with market logic and the increased competition in the sector, by giving the beneficiary a customized tool to access the aid, but also for marking (relevance) and tracing the mobilized aid. This system will thus evolve the cursor between efficiency and resilience as the recipient uses it, as shown at the bottom of figure 13.

The introduction of a second Principal in this model allows us to balance the relationship with a view to not only developing efficiency thanks to the agency relationship between donor and humanitarian, but also resilience through the agency relationship between recipient and humanitarian. It is, in a way, a materialization of proposals by Mattei (2014) who says: "In other words, it is not doing good to satisfy the empathy of the donor or of the lender, but to answer a need clearly expressed by the person in difficulty" and "the first concern becomes the concern of autonomy of this "other" that we want to help. This is the heart of the real revolution". In order to better understand the necessary relationship between efficiency and resilience, let us draw an analogy between humanitarian endeavours and nature. In their work on Ecological Complexity, Ulanowicz *et al.* (2009) explain that nature does not optimize the effectiveness of the natural ecosystem, but manages to strike a balance between efficiency and resilience. We therefore propose applying the same principle to the humanitarian model, as illustrated by the arrows and the red cursor at the bottom of figure 13.

Finally, it seems obvious to us that the ethics of humanitarian action is consistent with our level of collective consciousness, in the sense put forth by Durkheim (2013). It is culture, not only as a set of material and ideological phenomena, but also knowledge, which allow us a more or less precise understanding of our environment and leads us to adopt a particular behaviour in the face of adversity. The invisible hand of Smith (1776) could in this respect, materialize the direct impact on the functioning of our society in socio-economic terms at least. It would be very interesting to qualify the nature of this last idea by weighting

the data from Hofstede *et al.*'s (2010) six dimensions of the national culture model by sources of financing (Zhang, 2016), as well as by the principals (donors and beneficiaries) and agents (humanitarian representatives) to determine the current guidelines. In effect, Zhang (2016) shows how culture influences the mode of financing of organizations and the development of the private sector.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory research has helped to develop a statement on the situation of the humanitarian sector and bring forth a few important trends. We have deduced a set of 16 major principles that we have used as criteria for characterization, evaluation and comparison of humanitarian situations. These principles must now be validated on a larger scale by means of a quantitative study. These humanitarian principles are mostly directed at the actors themselves. These are therefore principles of conduct and not of ethics.

Our analysis of the interviews brought out four key results:

1. today humanitarian work is experiencing a major economic and organizational crisis. Initially-direct aid has, over time, become prioritized and standardized with a goal of efficiency, rendering it counter-productive and leading to significant criticism,

2. humanitarian aid must be designed not only efficiently but also for resilience. This interrelationship is essential to arrive at suitable, sustainable and ethical aid, as advocated by international conventions,

3. resilience is, however, emerging. To develop this last point, it is not only necessary to apply new standards encouraging resilience, but also to take the beneficiary of the aid more into account, both in terms of the means of carrying out an action, but also in the prioritization of funding,

4. today the humanitarian sector is crushed by the law of market forces and therefore is faced with a phenomenon of extreme competition, potentially impacting its major principles. The development of a new societal and economic model is necessary in order to fully realize ethical humanitarian aid.

The findings identified in point (1) relating to the competitive pressure and identity crisis in the sector reinforce our initial assumption that humanitarian actors currently interact in a dynamic market according to agency relationships involving transaction costs (like "social enterprises"). We confronted our analysis with works on Agency theory and its applicability to the

sector, although the latter is non-profit, and motivated by a societal mission (Jensen, 1994). In doing this, we have demonstrated the limits of the model, more particularly in light of the humanitarian context. This organizational model is indeed well known in management science, as we were able to detail during the course of our literature review. Thus, although it appears to be relevant from a perspective of efficiency, it does not facilitate the development of resilience in humanitarian endeavours. That is what the experience of our respondents teaches us. In addition, the mode of financing and the current functioning of humanitarian undertakings is such that all humanitarian organizations (regardless of their nature) are made dependent. They are thus caught between legal responsibilities and the need to raise funds for financing aid. However, our results lead us to suggest that resilience should be developed not only in the way in which aid is delivered, but also in the way in which it is financed and organized. Resilience implies a "bottom-up" approach to the design of the program, its execution, and conclusion.

Concerning humanitarian ethics, the conclusions of point (2) suggest a link, that at the level of actions a form of balance between efficiency and resilience is necessary. It has also been found that the process of resilience requires the involvement of the beneficiary. As a consequence, the beneficiary must become a participant in the construction of a more suitable model. Although several efforts of normalization are under way, as reported in point (3), it is unlikely that the humanitarian-beneficiary relationship will experience a more solid and empowering contractualisation in the near future, yet that is where the potential key to this development is situated, as stressed by Wagner (2014).

Finally, humanitarian work is evolving in a globalized world, which itself is in the process of evolution and profound transformation, as described by Bauwens & Lievens (2015). The relative and recent realization of a new, decentralized societal model in a network-driven world (of peers), as referred to in point (4), is neither specific, nor compartmentalized in the humanitarian world. A real paradigm change is under way behind the scenes (Helbing, 2016). The latter will manifest itself in the long term in all strata of our society. The model will certainly be contextualized, but will retain its intrinsic characteristics. The humanitarian, in its evolution, therefore seems to have arrived at a point conducive to such a transcendence. This research could be extended by querying the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid in different countries and contexts in order to better understand and then measure the societal value resulting from the moral contract between the humanitarian providers (agents) and the beneficiaries (principals) in the framework of the agency relationship highlighted in this article.

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