

Another key question is whether it makes sense to distinguish “civil” from “political” society. Different groups in civil society, from interest groups to religious organizations, are constantly mobilized for political goals. A rigid distinction between political and civil groups can be misleading. Therefore, the notion of civil society is intrinsically ambivalent as it does not make it clear when the “civil” becomes the “political” (Foley and Edwards 1996).

Beyond semantics, some see civil society, or global civil society, as a humanitarian actor itself, which is essential in order to claim a right to humanitarian assistance (Miglinaitė 2015), while others remain skeptical about the universalistic nature of the term and its propensity to make the roles, capacity, and intentions of different social groups, organizations, and other collectivities involved in humanitarian settings less evident.

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## Civil–military Cooperation

Since the 1990s, military operations and warfare organization have become increasingly bureaucratized. This shift is associated with the changing objectives of and expectations from military interventions, in terms of the desired political order, state-building, civil society formation, and so on. The new era has

inspired more ambitious political projects to deal with conflict situations, “fragile” and “rouge” states, humanitarian crises, natural disasters, or other threats to international peace and security. The international interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor in the late 1990s proved to be failures, both in terms of operationalizing coordination between government departments of the intervening nations and in their cooperation with international organizations and humanitarian agencies, in response to dire humanitarian situations and in order to establish control over the socio-political circumstances of conflicts on the ground (Macrae and Leader 2000). States, especially the US and the UK but also many other European states including Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, learned from the experiences in the Balkans and started introducing new mechanisms of coordination among ministries and government entities for effective and prompt policy response to crises, and to impose effectively the desired geopolitical order during and after the crises (Gordon 2006). The changing stance of the United Nations (UN) regarding when and how to get involved in military interventions, especially after the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was deployed in Namibia (1989), was parallel to that transformation at nation-state level.

The growing involvement of the UN in peace-building during conflicts in the 1990s reflected a new era of protracted conflicts, or a new perception of crisis situations as “chronic insecurity.” The “post-conflict” discourse then became obsolete in governing “weak” or “failed” states in the post-Cold War era. Still limited in Bosnia and Kosovo and redesigned for more sophistication in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), civil–military cooperation (CIMIC) has since become an integral part of humanitarian interventions that require intervening states’ civilian capacities to engender local consent for intervention and to facilitate humanitarian operations in conflict regions (Ankersen 2008). CIMIC activities have been transformed from conventional Western strategies of “winning the hearts and minds” of the people of occupied lands to building legitimacy among local communities for occupation and the implementation of highly controversial projects of reconstruction, governance, state-building, and development (Goodhand 2013). CIMIC is essentially a security-oriented notion that sees a necessity for bureaucratized and coordinated operations of various groups of military and civilian actors to achieve the desired political order and build local consent in extremely volatile and hostile circumstances of insecurity (Jackson and Stuart 2007). While the nature of CIMIC is determined by intervening nation-states’ political and military cultures and institutional capacities, the idea is to define the articulation and boundaries between military and civilian actors operating in the same conflict geography.

CIMIC has been endorsed by Western governments because it provides security and opens up and defends safe spaces for humanitarian operations during and after conflicts and other crisis situations. However, CIMIC agendas have become closely integrated with the so-called stabilization, recovery, development, and state-building programs that are highly political in their nature and might have long-term priority for the intervening armies over immediate humanitarian concerns. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan were the first extensive trial of the new CIMIC policies of intervening armies (e.g. the United States (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, Denmark) (Goodhand 2013; Jackson and Stuart 2007). The military-dominated implementation of the PRT strategies contradicted CIMIC premises about the role of civilian agencies and local communities in the narrative, and underlying assumptions about the pacifying role of aid, reconstruction, and development embedded in the narrative proved to be Eurocentric and empirically groundless (Goodhand 2013).

Military personnel and their mindset have leverage over decision-making about and implementation of civilian and humanitarian aspects of CIMIC plans, and the civilian CIMIC activities might be reduced to observation and information extraction from local communities about actual and potential signs of threats to security. This is especially relevant in chronic or extreme insecurity situations, such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. NATO and powerful national armies (e.g. those of the US, the UK, and Germany) have been particularly criticized for instrumentalizing civil–military cooperation in their operations for their military interests, and forging an image in the public imagination that confuses war-making with peace-making and soldiers with humanitarian workers (Gordon 2006; Ankersen 2008).

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## Communication

Communication comes from the Latin word *communicare*, to “make something common” or “share,” and it means to share information between people and transfer information from one place to another. Humanitarian communication refers to a specific form of communication (related to humanitarian crises, relief operations, and so on), and to communication during humanitarian emergencies.

Humanitarian communication occurs when humanitarian actors, from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to international organizations, communicate (i.e. through campaigns, appeals, and stories) to create awareness and encourage response to humanitarian crises. It is a form of communication that aims to establish emotional relationships and reactions, and its purpose is to mobilize interest and/or action. In this sense, humanitarian communication defines a form of “proxy humanitarianism” that can mobilize the use of celebrities, “humanitarian ambassadors,” and so on (De Lauri 2016). Lilie Chouliaraki defines humanitarian communication as “the rhetorical practices of transnational actors that engage with universal ethical claims, such as common humanity or global civil society, to mobilize action on human suffering” (Chouliaraki 2010: 108). She argues that it is a form of communication that creates and reproduces ethical and political relationships to distant others, and thus informs both the ways in which we witness the vulnerability of these others and the ways in which we are invited to feel, think and act towards them (Chouliaraki 2006, 2010).

There are ethical dilemmas and academic analyses surrounding the field of humanitarian communication (Nolan and Mikami 2012), especially in relation to the choice of images, texts, and sound used in such communication. Communicators have a responsibility to ensure that all narratives reflect and protect the dignity of those portrayed.

Humanitarian communication also refers to systems or ways of sharing information and collaboration and interaction during emergencies. Information