Chapter 2
National Interests and Altruism in Humanitarian Intervention

In the following chapter I will discuss in detail how realist and cosmopolitan theories approach the motivation for humanitarian intervention. The first subchapter will clarify why and to what extend realism assigns considerable importance to national/self-interests in the decision making process surrounding the question of whether to intervene in a humanitarian crisis or not. The second subchapter will make an argument for the prevalence of altruism as the primary motivation for humanitarian intervention from a moralist point of view. This chapter will facilitate the understanding of the qualitative research presented in the subsequent chapter where the motivation for post-1990 humanitarian interventions will be presented.

2.1 Humanitarian Intervention and National Interest

2.1.1 Definition of National Interest/Self-Interest

The term 'humanitarian' describing an intervention aimed at providing relief for individuals in danger grants the concept of humanitarian intervention a rather charitable, philanthropic or even altruistic connotation. However, this connotation stands in stark contrast to one widely accepted assumption deriving from realism that states in the international arena should and do base their actions on self-interest or in a broader sense national interests.[1] National interests are subject to redefinition by the policy makers and need to be defined before they can be defended. "[…] The meaning of national interest can vary widely, from increasing a state's power to a survival of a state to upholding international legitimacy […]".[2] Commonly, based on the realist notion, national interests are narrowly defined as the sum of material and security interest of a nation.

[1] Richardson (1997). (p. 1).
[2] Acharya (2003). (p. 2).

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Due to the fact that the concept of humanitarian intervention has evolved from the ethical debate about making resources available for helping others, national interests would appear to have no place as a motivation for humanitarian intervention. In particular, moralists tend to have a very low opinion of national interests, as the concept is generally based on the assumption that national interests are equal to self-interest or selfishness. Mistakenly, perhaps, self-interest and selfishness are conceived to be intertwined, causing self-interest to be often identified as self-absorption, egoism, and the disregard for the rights and interests of others.[3] The negative connotation arising from the definition of self-interest in economics is adopted by political science as a motivation based on "[…] money making, avarice and greed, materialism, hedonism, the profit motive or profit maximization […]".[4] The notion of the *homo economicus* in the philosophy of Adam Smith, however, may be appreciated since the human face of self-interest is understood as advancing the interest of all by pursuing one's own self-interest.[5] This idea only holds if one steps away from the definition of self-interest as selfishness. In fact, the pursuance of self-interest or national interests for that matter is only selfish and blameworthy if it disregards the interests of others where their interests ought not to be ignored. As long as individuals or states follow their rational drive of satisfying one's own needs first, society can work efficiently as resources are allocated efficiently.[6]

This assumption is echoed by scholars of the realist school such as Morgenthau, who introduced this notion to international relations theory. Morgenthau argued that "[…] if states pursue only their rational self-interests, without defining them too grandly, they will collide with other states only minimally […]",[7] i.e. as long as states follow their own narrow interests the world can be a peaceful place. Morgenthau's definition of national interests derives from Machiavelli's 15th century pessimistic realism, where the interests of the state are characterized as the self-absorbed definition of the interests of the state and its community. Thereby, this definition is distinctly different from earlier medieval beliefs that gave precedence to a more universal definition of the interests of the state based on moral Christian values. In a world characterized by anarchy and the Hobbesian notion of "[…] homo homini lupus […]"[8] states are allowed to take all means to protect themselves and to ensure their survival. As Morgenthau defines national interests in terms of power, the sovereign as a servant of his society is trusted with the role to preserve or even improve the state's power *vis-à-vis* other states. Nonetheless, not all national interests can be categorized as equally important. Morgenthau distinguishes between vital and secondary national interests. To preserve the former,

[3] Maitland (2002). (p. 4).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid (p. 5).

[7] Roskin (1994). (p. 2).

[8] Lat. Transation = *man is man's wolf* in Hobbes (1990). (p. 87).

which directly concern the essential survival of the state, Morgenthau does not compromise any option short of the use of force. Hence, vital national interest can be relatively easily defined as being concerned with the state as a free and independent nation as well as with the protection of institutions, people and fundamental rights. Morgenthau defines secondary national interests as those removed from the state's borders not threatening the security or integrity of the nation. Therefore, these peripheral interests can be compromised in case the expected benefits are outweighed by anticipated costs.[9]

In contemporary studies national interests are oftentimes divided into subcategories along a scale indicating the urgency of the national interests at stake. Very high urgency interests are those interests connected to the survival of the nation while vital national interests indicate only a high urgency. Moderate and low urgency interests correspond to major and peripheral interests respectively. Survival interests have a very high urgency and therefore may trigger states to mobilize all national resources to defend them. Vital interests are critical and involve the defence of close allies or strategic resources. Major national interests are less critical and only represent a moderate level of urgency since they are concerned with the protection of less important allies and non-critical resources. From a realist point of view, the degree of urgency of national interests at stake determines the extent of the effort a state is allowed to invest in defending these interests. Consequently, the higher the urgency of the interests at stake, the more costs in terms of troops, time, money, equipment, resources, political prestige or economic aid the state is willing to devote to the defence of these interests.[10] Whereas survival and vital interests necessitate the use of force, realists do not deem the use of force compulsory when defending major national interests. As low urgency peripheral national interests do not involve the protection of the nation's heartland and do not pose an immediate physical security threat to the nation, the defence of such peripheral interests may only involve humanitarian or reconstruction efforts, not however, the deployment of large numbers of combat troops.[11]

Apart from this narrow realist definition, national interests can also be defined in a broader sense as advancing more universal interests concerned with the wellbeing of mankind. Realists, though, find a dichotomy between national interest and values, disregarding the fact that the desire to assist the less fortunate is an enduring feature and underlying value of Western political culture.[12] Based on the claim that it is in the self-interest of every state to preserve global stability and care for global humanity, states may define their national interests in terms of liberal Western values such as democracy, liberalism or human rights.[13] Western states

[9] Morgenthau (1985). (p. 5).

[10] Keifer (2003). (p. 6).

[11] Slenska (2007). (p. 4).

[12] Shibata (2006). (p. 27).

[13] Walzer (1995). Op. Cit. 1 (p. 54).

assign great importance to the preservation of the legacy of Western culture and its values rooted in Graeco-Roman classical culture, the Judaeo-Christian heritage and the post-Enlightenment philosophy.[14] Though serving an ethical purpose, promoting these values beyond national borders might nonetheless serve the national self-interest. In particular American national interests are often defined as a hybrid of security related interests in the realist sense and of value-related interests comprising the intrinsic ethic and moral values that have been laid down in the U.S. Constitution. The US republic's *raison d'etat*, which in an extended way is understood to be constructed based on universal values, regards the preservation of global humanity and the proliferation of liberal human values a vital national interests.[15] Thus, despite taking into account the moral value-related aspects of national interests, the preservation and promotion of these Western values remains a self-interested undertaking. Because exporting Western values such as democracy, human rights or the liberal market economy does ultimately serve the interests of the West due to the fact that countries based on similar values are more likely to become lucrative trading partners or political allies.

In this study national interests are narrowly defined as the self-interest of a state or nation. As to be able to make a clear distinction between national interests and self-interest, the former is defined narrowly without any considerations of possible moral connotations. National/self-interest in this study will be described as a composition of narrow national interests, i.e. economic and strategic interests, and the personal political interests of the political decision makers. That is to say, acting according to national interests includes actions based on economic interests and strategic interests, as well as the interests of personal political or material gains of policy makers. Thereby, intervention motivated by the aim to seize vital mineral resources is in the same way driven by national interests as an intervention that is motivated by the policy maker's desire to advance his political interests during election times.

2.1.2 National Interest and Social Contractarianism

A strong argument for the prevalence of national interests as the prime motivation for state action including humanitarian intervention comes from realist social contractarianism. Realist social contractarianism rejects the moralist argument that humanitarian intervention must be purely humanitarian in its intend, i.e. the protection of the freedom, rights and interests of people in another state. Allen Buchanan argues that the international legitimacy of humanitarian intervention has to take precedence over the external legitimacy. That is to say, governments do not

[14] See Spielvogel (2004).

[15] William (2005). (p. 318)

only have to justify the intervention externally as humanitarian, but also internally to its own citizens as an efficient intervention in terms of a cost-benefit analysis.

The approach presented in this book so far established the external legitimacy or illegitimacy of humanitarian intervention, namely whether humanitarian intervention can be justified to the people living outside the intervening state, to the international community or its intended beneficiaries. The ethical debate, however, rarely seems to elaborate on the internal legitimacy of humanitarian intervention, i.e. if it can be justified to the taxpayers who have to pay for it or the soldiers who are sent to risk their lives in the crisis region. According to both Hobbes and Locke, the state's *raison d'être* is to ensure the security and wellbeing of the people that bring the state into existence through the social contract. That is to say, that the social contract is a construct by a certain group of people, named a discretionary association, with the primary purpose to protect these individuals from the perils and 'inconveniences' of the state of nature. Every individual in a state submits to the authority of the state in order to receive in return protection and security.[16]

> […] On this view, citizens empower their government to act as an agent or trustee for the sole purpose of promoting their interests. They […] relinquish a portion of their earnings in tax in return for this service […].[17]

The state is to be understood as the benefactor for its own citizens acting exclusively in their interests due to the fact that

> […] No one else's interests are represented, so legitimate political authority is naturally defined as authority exercised for the good of the parties to the contract, the citizens of this state […].[18]

According to Buchanan the state itself receives its legitimacy primarily from the service it renders to its citizens; hence, benefaction is what gives the state the right to rule. Quite to the contrary, states or governments do not have the obligation to serve the world at large. Further, according to realist social contractarians, the government does not have any inherent legitimacy in itself but is a sole agent of the discretionary association it represents. Therefore, for governments to engage both internally and externally to practises that do not serve the primary interest of its citizens would be morally wrong. Charles Krauthammer continues by stating that since statesmen or governments are no more than people's trustees spending the blood and treasure of others, their freedom to wage war or intervene militarily is limited to cases where it is strategically necessary or where it renders an increase in domestic benefits. Therefore, if intervention occurs in order to secure natural resources or sea ways that are of particular national interests to the intervening state, intervention is acceptable. If on the contrary invention occurs for

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[16] Dobos (2009). (p. 3).

[17] Dobos (2008). Op. Cit. 123 (p. 35).

[18] Buchanan (1999). (p. 75).

the sole purpose of pleasing international law, world public opinion or public sentiments of crucial allies, intervention is not internally justifiable.[19]

It follows that purely humanitarian intervention as envisaged by moralists and altruists is commonly rejected by realist social contractarianists for the simple reason that intervening governments invest both the lives and funds of their own people in order to save strangers who are not part of the social contract. Thereby, foreigners become beneficiaries of funds and soldiers lives that have been transferred to the state in the belief that the state will use them in the best possible manner to advance national interests and thereby the social well-being of all citizens of the state. It is believed that a state that invests in intervention for humanitarian purposes compromises the security of its own citizens in the process due to the fact that a state cannot defend strangers abroad and then still retain the funds necessary to pay for the protection of its citizens at home.[20] Thus, a state engaging in a purely humanitarian intervention violates its fiduciary obligation: to act in the best interests of the nation. If resources are directed towards a disinterested intervention these allocations are considered to be dead investments as they do not render any material returns. If intervention occurs for self-interested motives, resources are allocated to a venture that has at least the prospect of rendering material gains. Buchanan argues that even if the majority of citizens would be altruistic enough to allocate their resources to an intervention for purely humanitarian purposes, intervention would not be justified as the state would invest the funds of others that oppose this intervention.[21] Apart from the financial resources employed in a military intervention, it remains even more questionable if the state has the right to deploy soldiers, conscripted as well as professionals, to defend the human rights of strangers. Soldiers enter the military with the readiness to risk their lives for the defence of the community only. In fact the implicit moral contract between the state and its armed forces

> […] obliges military personnel to run grave risks and to engage in morally and personally difficult actions. They do these things on the basis of the implicit promise that the circumstances under which they must act are grounded in political leadership's good faith judgment that the defense of sovereignty and integrity of the nation (or, by careful extension, the nation's vital interests) […].[22]

Consequently, any armed intervention to preserve the interests of others, i.e. not national interests, but still jeopardizing the lives of the soldiers would be morally wrong. Trying to prevent or avert the loss of lives of individuals abroad by jeopardizing the lives of one's own citizens would not be ethically defendable, since according to the social contract every state should first of all care for the well-being and lives of its own citizens.

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[19] Krauthammer (1985). (p. 11).

[20] Dobos (2008). Op. Cit. 123 (p. 39).

[21] Buchanan (1999) Op. Cit. 162 (p. 76).

[22] Cook (2000). (p. 62).

Critiques of the realist social contract theory argue, however, that not only the citizens have a contract with the state but also that the state has a contract through international legal instruments with the international community at large. International law binds the state to universal international norms, which dictate the defence of human rights beyond national borders.[23] However, as international law does not impose a perfect duty on the state to intervene for humanitarian purposes, the state itself is in fact not bound by any second contract that might take precedence over the social contract. For this, the international community would need the establishment of a credible and enforceable human rights regime that does not only authorize but actually impose the duty on all states to intervene in cases of supreme humanitarian emergency. Only then, the social contract between the citizens and their state would become a subsidiary to an international contract between states to form a community that fosters the duty of humanitarian intervention. Only then, intervention for purely humanitarian interests would actually become a national interest and had to be pursued by states disregarding the willingness of their citizens to allocate resources and lives.

2.1.3 The Role of Self-Interest in Humanitarian Intervention

Based on the realist discretionary association argument, realism strongly opposes the use of a state's financial and military resources for advancing anything other than the interests of the state's citizens. Due to the fact that realism is grounded on the pessimistic world view of an international system that is characterized by actors trying to maximize their utility at the expense of others, realists find themselves in a constant perpetual security dilemma. Therefore, each state has to try to maximize its own power in relation to other players in the arena while providing primarily for the security and welfare of its own people. Committing to military activities beyond this *raison d'etat* such as helping strangers, can therefore never be justified since purely humanitarian intervention does not help to maximize a state's own power.[24] Hence, a just intervention in the realist world has to be based on a motivation according to the state's interests.

While some realists would rule out any intervention on humanitarian grounds as not to confuse foreign policy with philanthropy, others might accept intervention in order to help those in need so long as it does not challenge any core security interests of the state or impose high costs in terms of financial resources or loss of life.[25] Therefore, some realists argue that humanitarian intervention has occurred, for example in the 1990s, as a particular foreign policy tool in international relations

[23] Dobos (2009). Op. Cit. 160 (p. 5).

[24] Bellamy (2003). (p. 10).

[25] Wheeler (2004).(p. 6).

> […] in situations where it is relatively cheap, is against a militarily weak nation, operates in a location that is accessible and strategically important, where public opinion is in favour and the intervention does not interfere with other political and economic objectives […].[26]

That is to say, due to the fact that states realize that humanitarian interventions are real military operations connected to real costs, states do only what is necessary to uphold their reputation without actually focusing on what has to be done. The reason is that the benefits of humanitarian interventions are unclear or are arguably distributed mostly among free-loaders, whereas the substantial costs of intervention, as in every military operation, have to be borne by the intervening party. Therefore, leaders, in particular of democratic states, will have to invest a lot of efforts in carefully framing the costs of intervention, and the benefits as well as the probability of success in order to generate public support for the decisions taken.[27] It follows that if a certain humanitarian crisis does not affect national interests, statesmen are confronted with a dilemma of keeping costs low in order to receive internal legitimization while in the same time following an international call for intervention in order to receive external legitimization.

Some realists conclude that

> […] interventions motivated by general moral justifications or conceptual appeals to the validity of international order will either fail to occur or will succumb to half-hearted commitments (as the cases of Rwanda and Somalia showed […].[28]

Hence, according to this statement governments only tolerate the losses and costs of intervention that actually serve the national interest. The fewer the national interests involved, the more governments are inclined to either remain passive or keep the costs minimal. Realists bring forward examples of interventions such as Operation Restore Hope in Somalia 1993 to back up their claims, to show that the US public backed up the operation only as long as feeding the starving population did not cost any lives. When eighteen soldiers were killed in a single day the operation had to be terminated as public opinion threatened to harm the governments' political standing. Krauthammer argues that therefore humanitarian intervention has no future, for the simple reason that it involves the contradicting concept of bloodless war.[29] The adoption of a risk-averse strategy brings about, if at all, ineffective interventions by soldiers whose right to use force is constrained by Rules of Engagement to such an extent that the military assets deployed cannot unleash their full potential.[30] Western governments are in

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[26] Chinkin (2000). (p. 37).

[27] Boettcher (2004). (p. 333).

[28] Wesley (2005). (p. 58).

[29] Krauthammer (1999). (p. 3).

[30] Casualty averse strategies relying solely on air power without any substantial ground support constrained by altitude margins do not only cause considerable collateral damage but also make the achievement of military objectives highly ineffective. Due to changing realties in the combat theatre caused by irregular tactics and strategies employed by insurgent groups, far distance or

particular attracted to air power against technologically less advanced opponents as it allows air crews to operate under the minimal risk of being shot down. Both forms of intervention, restricted use of ground forces or the sole reliance on of air power, minimize costs at least in terms of lives for the intervener but might in fact increase the loss of lives on the side of the civilian beneficiaries. In the case of Kosovo 1999 Western interveners chose certain military strategies with the purpose of increasing the safety of their own soldiers, while in the same time making the means of warfare disproportionate since force was employed indiscriminately. In Kosovo"[…] casualty-free intervention was achieved at the expense of inflicting great suffering on […] civilians […]".[31]

In order to make humanitarian interventions more effective, realists argue that national interests must prevail in the decision to intervene. The higher the expected utility, i.e. the interest for the nation and the decision-maker, the higher the risks the decision maker is willing to take in order to achieve his objectives. If the interests in a humanitarian crisis are only peripheral, intervention will only occur in a limited nature, if at all. Therefore, self-interested motivations have to be an inherent part of humanitarian intervention. Indeed, national interests cannot be divorced from humanitarianism or altruism as according to realists, governments are rational egoists who act in their pursuit of their interests. Raising national interests during humanitarian intervention is a prerequisite for an intervention on basis of otherwise humanitarian grounds.[32]

Apart from merely stating that national interests should prevail in the decision to intervene, some realist go even that far as to state that states would never intervene unless vital national interests are at stake, a claim entirely negating the existence of altruism in international relations. Wheeler (2000) states that realism in its purest form is based on the contention that "[…] states will not intervene for primarily humanitarian reasons because they are always motivated by considerations of national self-interest […]".[33] According to this assumption states are rational actors that are not guided by emotional considerations; the fact that decisions makers, however, might be emotional in their decision-making is completely disregarded. Thus, conservative realism would argue that the results of the research conducted in this book will demonstrate that altruism has never been a

(Footnote 30 continued)
high altitude munitions have oftentimes difficulties to accurately eliminate targets. The reason is that insurgency warfare relies on highly mobile forces that can operate in disguise among the civilian population, which make it difficult for spotters and air men alike to engage a target from far distance without having the ability to identify the targets validity and exact position. Relying on far distance and high altitude munitions can cause highly disproportionate damage to civilians and civilian infrastructure without effectively eliminating valid military targets. [See Cooper (2001). (p. 85)].

[31] Atack (2002). (p. 289).

[32] Farer et al. (2005) Op. Cit 24 (p. 228).

[33] Wheeler (2000). (p. 30).

primary motivator for humanitarian intervention, but only a minor motivation secondary to national interest maximization.

2.1.4 National Interests and the Fear of the Trojan Horse

The importance of national interests in current foreign affairs has stoked the concerns in some circles that the concept of humanitarian intervention is no more than a means of powerful Western countries to broaden their influence and guarantee their access to vital resources. The fear of what scholars name neo-colonialism has been intensified by the recent experience of the usage of humanitarian rhetoric to justify the interventions in Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003. "[…] Fear of a new imperialism is particularly acute in parts of the world that have known colonization, where international interventions revive memories of the imperial past […]".[34]

Due to the fact that Western governments have promoted Western values of liberalism and democracy abroad and in the post-Cold War era have used their economic, political and military superiority to correct humanitarian grievances abroad, many in the non-Western world have come to regard the concept of coercive intervention for humanitarian purposes quite sceptically. Unlike pure peace-keeping missions that require the consent of the receiving country and lack any coercive nature, the emerging humanitarian intervention regime enables Western states to take all measures necessary to bring humanitarian crises to a halt with or without the consent of the receiving state.[35] Despite the fact that outside interventions in the last two decades have become less exploitative and abusive in comparison to 19th century imperialism, many international interventions in the post-Cold War era have nonetheless aimed at regime change and/or nation-building along Western liberal lines. While some instances such as Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti 1994 were designed to re-install a democratically elected regime, post-conflict resolutions such as in Afghanistan or Iraq have relied on the installation of local transitional governments usually closely affiliated to the intervening parties. In the cases of Kosovo or East-Timor, the international community has even taken over the role of the administrator itself by setting up an international administration.[36] Together with the creation of a political elite, Western states further support the new regimes by training security as well as administrative personnel. Thus, it seems plausible that the intervention of foreign governments into the internal affairs of another country has a tremendous impact on the sovereignty and autonomy of the receiving state. Even though the reshaping of state affairs usually occurs under the pretext of humanitarian support, the

[34] Ottaway and Lacina (2003). Op. Cit. 56 (p. 74).

[35] Ibid (p. 76).

[36] Ibid (p. 83).

adherence to national interests by Western governments creates the fear that the toleration of humanitarian intervention by most powerful states allows for a legal remodelling of state structure by foreign interveners.

> […] Given the disparity in power among states, humanitarian intervention has the strong potential of becoming a tool for the interference by the strong into the affairs of the weak, with humanitarian considerations providing a veneer to justify such intervention […].[37]

States that present a weak human rights record and are militarily inferior to the main Western powers reject the concept of humanitarian intervention out of a fear that a humanitarian rationale could be used against them to undermine their sovereignty. In particular Muslim states are under increasing pressure by Western governments as several countries could easily be targeted in the war against terror for strategic interests as well as for humanitarian considerations due to their weak human rights record. After decades of political struggle against and emancipation from Western influence in the 20th century, the West's former colonies are confronted with a reality where the responsibility to protect and other soft laws passed by the UN, have created a situation where intervention becomes practically possible also for the interests of the great powers. The concern that humanitarian interventions are "[…] noble in name but potentially spurious in intent […]"[38] was further intensified by the interventions in the post 9/11 era where the Bush Doctrine allowed for unilateral preventive intervention in case of non-immanent threat. Operation Enduring Freedom and particularly Operation Iraqi Freedom have possibly undermined the credibility of the West as a humanitarian and altruistic actor in the Muslim world. The Bush Doctrine is believed to have given the United States the right in a unipolar world to intervene in the name of common humanity.[39] Condemning the allied operation in Iraq as a form of neo-colonialism Syrian President Assad stated that he considered Syria to be the next target on the list.[40] In the UN debate surrounding the possibility of intervening in Darfur in 2004 the Arab government of Sudan objected to intervention from outsiders, refusing to see the humanitarian aspect of such an operation. Instead, the ambassador of Sudan to the UN made a statement during a Security Council meeting clearly affirming the fear that intervention might come to serve the interests of the intervening Western parties. The ambassador wondered

> […] if the Sudan would have been safe from the hammer of the Security Council even if there had been no crisis in Darfur, and whether the Darfur humanitarian crisis might not be a Trojan horse? Has this lofty humanitarian objective been adopted and embraced by other people who are advocating a hidden agenda?[41]

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[37] Ayoob (2002). Op. Cit. 8 (p. 92).

[38] Nafie (2000). (p. 1).

[39] Sid-Ahmed (2000). (p. 3).

[40] Wimelius (2009). (p. 16).

[41] Bellamy (2009). (p. 113).

The indictment of Sudanese President Al Bashir by the ICC holding him responsible for the genocide in Darfur, was conceived with a similarly negative attitude by Sudanese government officials. The genocide charge was merely understood as a political act, trying to 'obstruct' political affairs in Khartoum.[42]

Thus, it appears as if a combination of the historical legacy of colonialism and the recent experience of ostensible humanitarian interventions have created the fear in former colonies that the West employs the humanitarian argument as a vehicle to bypass the sovereignty principle in order to exploit a countries' wealth in a form of neo-colonialism.

2.2 Humanitarian Intervention and Altruism

2.2.1 Definition of Altruism

Altruism, describing a selfless and other-oriented behaviour, has a difficult standing in international relations as it does in social sciences in general. Describing the complete opposite of self-interest, altruism will be introduced in this book as a motivation entirely detached from the rational and realist notions presented before. The idea that states and political decision makers invest into ventures that will neither benefit themselves personally or the nation at large might seem to be idealistic. Nonetheless, the concept of altruism found its way into international relations, particularly since humanitarian intervention has emerged as an act with the primary purpose of helping others.

The Oxford Dictionary defines altruism as an "[…] unselfish concern for others […]",[43] thereby making both the intention and the motivation of the action other-oriented. In Zoology altruism refers to the behaviour of an animal that benefits another animals at its own expense. Thus, in this respect altruism refers to an action that is not only not self-enriching but actually self-harming while benefiting someone else. Etymologically, the word altruism derives from the Latin expression *alteri huic*, meaning 'to this other', which was merged in Italian into *altrui*, 'somebody else'.[44] According to Bar Tal (1986) altruism has to satisfy five criteria:

> […]altruistic behaviour (a) must benefit another person, (b) must be performed voluntarily, (c) must be performed intentionally, (d) the benefit must be the goal by itself, and (e) must be performed without expecting any external reward […].[45]

[42] Al Jazeera. Net (2010).

[43] Soanes and Stevenson (2005).

[44] Ibid.

[45] Bar Tal (1986). (p. 5).

Hence, Bar Tal approaches the concept of altruism from the motivation's perspective, describing altruism's inherent value as based on a clear other-oriented, self-less motivation.

For a long time social sciences, economics and even biology regarded altruism as an unrealistic concept not existing in its purest form due to the fact that it was believed that any action taken by an individual or state is always connected to a self-interested motivation. Only in recent years have scholars begun to agree that altruism is an inherent part of human nature and self-preservation, as individuals do contribute to public goods from which they might benefit little or which benefit only their offspring. One of the most prominent advocators of self-interested action and the prevalence of rationality, Adam Smith, stated himself already in the 18th century that

> […]How selfish soever man be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it […].[46]

The propensity to help others, even when suffering high costs, without receiving any benefits is a natural behaviour that can be observed among a wide range of different mostly highly socialized species in nature: birds give predator alarms, mother rats endure severe shock to save their infants, baboons help defend their troops and porpoises sustain their injured fellows.[47] Human beings in particular have obtained a strong pro-social behaviour through socialization and the development of norms facilitating social cohabitation. It appears natural to the human species to engage in cooperative social endeavours that benefit others or the community at large, even at a cost to themselves.

Despite the fact that human beings have naturally an inclination to help others and engage in altruistic behaviour, the actual willingness and propensity to do so depends according to Schwartz and Howard (1984) on the peculiarity of the individual personality and the situational context in which the action is undertaken. Generally one can state that individuals that have high self-esteem and are not in need of constant approval as well as are high in moral development are more likely to show altruistic behaviour. Nonetheless, self-less behaviour benefiting others is also strongly triggered by the social norms or socially constructed personal norms that pressure the individual, namely feelings of moral obligation to perform or refrain from certain actions.[48] The same is true for states or political decision makers since the acceptance of humanitarian norms in the international community raises the awareness that helping others in specific situations is at least morally mandatory. Another factor affecting the propensity to help or assist, playing a particular role in state behaviour, is the perception of costs of action. Research has shown that individuals and groups that perceived helping situations

[46] Smith (1969). (p. 47).

[47] Piliavin and Charng (1990). (p. 45).

[48] Schwartz and Howard (1984). (p. 234).

as more rewarding and less costly were more inclined to be altruistic. Especially individuals who are less safety-oriented (high in need for security) than esteem-oriented (high in self-efficacy, self-worth), are more likely to help others.[49]

Since even the most altruistic personalities do have limits in their ability to do good for the benefit of others without creating harm to themselves, altruistic action is naturally subject to selectivity. Due to the fact that altruism does not produce any rewards, the action takers are naturally more risk-averse than action takers that act out of self-interested motivations. Action takers that expect a return in any form will most likely invest more assets and are more likely to accept a degree of risk to attain these returns. On the contrary, altruists who by definition cannot accept any rewards for their action will try to avoid risk or at least minimize risk as much as possible. In a world where the propensity to help others first is unequally distributed among individuals, altruistic individuals face a reality where egoists not engaging in self-less behaviour seem to have a clear advantage. Therefore, "[…] the central characteristic of all forms of altruism is this: discrimination is a necessary part of a persisting altruism […]".[50] In a world where altruism is not an absolute virtue, altruists run the risk of losing ground to egoists that approach life more rationally. Taking into account the costs for altruistic actions in absence of material returns, altruists lose in terms of materialism in comparison to egoists that abstain from purely altruistic actions. As a result altruistic individuals as well as states have to make the decision to help only certain people and not others. Therefore, states selectively intervening for merely humanitarian purposes are in fact pure altruists and cannot be alleged of putting rationality over empathy.

In this book altruism describes an other-oriented action of states or policy-makers not motivated by self-interest but motivated by empathy or norms of morality with the sole purpose of helping individuals in need and who are not part of the own nation. The goal of improving the humanitarian situation on the ground for the sake of the suffering individuals has to be accompanied by an empathetic and benevolent motivation.

2.2.2 Idealist Approach to Humanitarian Intervention

The belief that humanitarian intervention has to follow altruistic motives and has to be borne by the propensity to help others selflessly derives from the cosmopolitan idea of moral universalism. Convinced that the world primarily consists of individuals and people rather than states, cosmopolitanism fostered the belief of a common humanity, i.e. a global society of people creating a community consisting of all individuals regardless of their affiliation to race, religion or nationality. This cosmopolitan community of people is founded upon a set of common shared

[49] Kerber (1984).

[50] Hardin (1982). (p. 167).

values of morality.[51] In this community the primary focus is directed towards the rights of individuals (human rights) while depreciating the rights of states (sovereignty) as secondary considerations. Even though the roots of cosmopolitanism can be found as early as the 18th century writings of Kant, the *de facto* global integration of states and individuals into an increasingly interdependent world towards the end of the 20th century, has strongly contributed to the consolidation of the concept of a world community. Through the erosion of the absolute state-centric worldview globalization is believed by cosmopolitans to have promoted the creation of a moral community of mankind, where the individual in one locality is directly connected to individuals in other, even remote, localities. Beyond the borders of the state or the realm of the nation individuals meet one another solely as humans and not primarily as affiliates of particular groups or nations. This presumably eradicates notions of the 'Us' and the 'Other', namely making concepts of 'fellow countryman' and 'stranger' obsolete. Thus, due to the fact that cosmopolitanism envisages a unitary world of equal individuals creating a community of common humanity, individuals are connected through universal norms, shared values, rights and duties. The primary universal norms are believed to arise from humanitarian law, granting individuals universal human rights that are to be protected and enforced by every sovereign to its people. The deprivation of basic human rights therefore constitutes not only a domestic problem, but a problem that concerns individuals and states all over the world. Hence, in cosmopolitanism, the notion of purely domestic affairs does not exist and for that reason everyone, including states, do have the moral duty to help suffering individuals anywhere. The motivation, however, to intervene has to be borne by altruistic considerations only, i.e. by a sort of philanthropic concern for a fellow human being.[52]

As a particular cosmopolitan ideology, solidarism is based on the notion of an international system consisting of states founded on a common world society that embraces the rights of individuals. Unlike pluralism that regards the international system as a mere accumulation of states, and emphasises co-existence, solidarism describes the international system primarily as a cooperative concert of states aware that individual rights have to be at the basis of this system. The solidarist worldview perceives the international community as a collective of shared values and norms, where each individual state is supposed to be committed to enforce these common values. Due to the fact that the international community manifests itself in the United Nations and due to the fact that human rights have a strong standing in the UN, the international community should invest highly in enforcing these universal rights of human beings. Therefore, intervention from a solidarist view point has to serve the sole purpose of advancing the common norms underlying the system. That is to say, since individual rights take precedence over the rights of states, intervention first of all has to have an inherent motive based on

[51] Fixdal and Smith (1998) Op. Cit. 82 (p. 294).

[52] Coates (2003). (p. 75).

solidarity: assisting individuals in need.[53] Solidarism brings forward a standpoint that asserts "[…] that […] strangers are a part of us, that security is indivisible, and that all human beings are members of one global family […]".[54] It follows that in a world society where divisions of any kind are absent, helping a fellow man is a duty for every individual and state. This duty cannot be undermined by claims describing humanitarian intervention as an allocation of resources of one nation for the sake of saving strangers from a different nation. As mankind belongs to one, indivisible society the life of a stranger becomes equal concern for every government.

Benevolence and other-oriented behaviour has been laid down in the tenets of several major religions, making altruism and charity a moral imperative. Various religions have developed a solidarist ideology. The roots for altruism in the monotheistic religions can be found in Judaism and were further developed in Christianity and Islam. Among the monotheistic religions, in particular Christianity has promoted a form of self-less altruism and charity that in its purity cannot be found in the other two religions. Arguing along the lines of solidarism, the Catholic Church has promoted a worldview that highlights the importance of solidarity among individuals, peoples and nations. As a response to the ongoing globalization of state affairs, the idea of the global village that emphasises the aspect of global interdependence and where nations are hardly immune from the effects of conduct of other nations. The Catholic Church has used these changing geo-political conditions in order to foster its decade-old commitment to the idea of the world family of common humanity.

> […] For decades the Catholic Church has championed the unity of the human family, the interdependence of peoples and the need for solidarity across national and regional boundaries. So we have welcomed the advances in communications, technology, economics and other secular forces which have brought people into ever closer contact with one another […].[55]

In papal and pastoral publications the Catholic Church has promoted a solidarist world view based on the concept of humanity as one family and the belief into a universal common good. As Pope John Paul II wrote, "[…] The very heart of international life is not so much states as man. […] There exist interests which transcend states: They are the interests of the human person, his rights […]".[56] Hence, as the former head of the Catholic Church put it, the major and primary concern of states in the international arena should be occupied with the well-being of individuals, thereby making international affairs benevolent and philanthropic. According to the United States Catholic Conference intervention must only occur for the sole reason of making the world a better place, which in some respect will lead to an improvement of one's own position. Self-interest, however, must not be

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[53] Welin (2005). Op. Cit. 107 (p. 47).

[54] Ibid (p. 48).

[55] United States Catholic Conference (1992). (p. 339).

[56] John Paul (1993). (p. 587).

an incentive for states to intervene as the actual philanthropic and altruistic nature of humanitarian intervention vanishes.[57] Catholicism's approach to international relations has been based on the protection of human rights and human dignity. "[…] Stronger than the appeal of sovereignty are the human rights of persons and the obligations of solidarity […]".[58] The homocentric worldview of the Catholic Church triggers an international relations' outlook that emphasises solidarity as a core principle, i.e. empathetically assisting individuals in need for no specific material interest. Interests are not a necessary incitement due to the fact that "[…] the people of far-off lands are not abstract problems, but sisters and brothers […]".[59] Thus, altruism becomes the only virtuous approach to humanitarian intervention.

Closely linked to the Catholic approach to intervention for humanitarian purposes is the approach taken by humanitarians whose charitable actions are borne by feelings of empathy, benevolence and compassion with the misery of others. Humanitarianism "[…] means helping and protecting victims irrespective of who and where they are and why they are in need […]".[60] The overarching principle of humanitarianism is the sanctity of human life and the devotion to preserve this life. Secondary principles of importance are impartiality, consent and neutrality. Hence, humanitarians are not driven by self-interested goals but by an altruistic devotion to helping individuals in need. The dedication of humanitarianism to the altruistic assistance to people in crisis regions has a long tradition in the post-1945 world and is laid down in the principles of the International Red Cross. Pure humanitarians, however, have never been confronted with the decision to militarily intervene into another state as humanitarian organizations work as charitable NGOs solely delivering humanitarian assistance rarely interfering with the internal affairs of the receiving state. Nonetheless, NGO neutrality is often challenged when NGOs despite their outsider position take sides in a conflict.[61] With the occurrence of humanitarian intervention as a form of coercive intervention involving military capacities in the post-1990 s, humanitarians often tried to project their altruistic motivation for intervention on the intervening states despite the fact that military state intervention occurs within a different highly politicised context.[62] While NGOs enter countries often with the consent of the receiving state and under a civilian umbrella, military humanitarian intervention entails the use of force and bears the risk of losing lives, i.e. the costs of intervention are considerably higher. Nonetheless, as the term humanitarian intervention describes an intervention for humanitarian ends, humanitarians are inclined to claim that

[57] Miller (2000). (p. 21).

[58] Himes (1994). (p. 2240.

[59] United States Catholic Conference (1992). Op. Cit. 199 (p. 341).

[60] Weiss (1999). (p. 11).

[61] See Dicklitsch (1998).

[62] Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1996). Op. Cit. 135(pp. 14–18).

humanitarian intervention has to meet the same altruistic criteria in order to do justice to its name.

Also in just war theory humanitarian intervention is commonly understood as a disinterested, rather altruistic form of intervention with the sole purpose of saving or rescuing individuals in need. Due to the fact that in a statist world system, where international law prescribes a strict adherence to the sovereignty principle, humanitarian intervention has to be regarded as an exceptional permission of the use of force. Using force for the sake of saving individuals must be detached from any ulterior interests of the intervener as not to confuse humanitarian intervention with a conventional interference into the domestic affairs of another state motivated by power considerations. Therefore, justifying humanitarian intervention in the international arena today requires the intervener to explicitly show his human-rights concerned motivation. "[…] The issue of humanitarian intervention is largely justified by viewing human rights as a jus cogens, thereby, seeing their defence as vital and warranted […]".[63] That is to say that humanitarian intervention as a contemporary *jus cogens*[64] has been accepted as an exceptional form of intervention for the purpose of the protection of human rights. The protection of human rights abroad, namely the protection of strangers abroad, is thus the internationally accepted justification of humanitarian intervention. Michael Walzer[65] stated in his prominent work *Just and Unjust Wars* already in the 1970s that intervention for humanitarian purposes can be regarded both morally and legally as an exception to the restrictive non-intervention principle. "[…] Humanitarian intervention is justified when it is a response to acts that shock moral conscience of mankind […]".[66] Thus, the existence of a supreme humanitarian emergency is the prerequisite for intervention, i.e. humanitarian intervention has to be fought primarily for humanitarian purposes. Walzer continues by arguing that

> […] We praise or don't condemn these violations of formal rules of sovereignty, because they uphold the values of individual life and communal liberty of which sovereignty itself is merely an expression […].[67]

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[63] Helmke (2004). Op. cit. 7 (p. 13).

[64] Jus cogens =

> […]For the purposes of the present Convention, a peremptory norm of general international law is a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted and which can be modified only by a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character […]

* United Nations International Law Commission. (1969). (Art. 53).

[65] Note: Despite the relatively solidarist or cosmopolitanist standpoint Walzer brings forward here, it is worth noting that his ideology continuously changed over the last decades. The standpoint taken by Walzer today might vary from the position expressed here.

[66] Walzer (1977).(p. 107).

[67] Ibid (p. 108).

The legitimacy of humanitarian intervention therefore derives from its altruistic nature, namely the concern with defending human rights. Therefore, both from a humanitarian and legal perspective, political interests should not be a driving force for intervention. Former UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata stated in an address that

> […] The fundamental objective of humanitarian action is to alleviate suffering and save lives. Humanitarian action focuses on people and is rights based. Political action focuses on states and is guided by national interests and respect for sovereignty […].[68]

It follows from this remark that since humanitarian intervention is considered a humanitarian action, politics must not interfere with a decision concerned with the fate of victims who have a right of protection and relief. Realistically, however, as humanitarian intervention remains a state and thereby a political decision, the inevitable merger of politics and humanitarianism will predictably lead to a situation where the fate of suffering individuals is subject to a political and therefore amoral decision.[69]

As stated earlier in this study, Verwey (1992) and Parekh (1997) probably offer the most extreme positions towards the need for altruism in humanitarian intervention. As one of the first Verwey (1992) approached the very young concept of humanitarian intervention as a coercive action "[…] for the sole purpose of preventing or putting a halt to a serious violation of fundamental human rights […]".[70] Parekh (1997) continues along these lines though attenuating the reference to altruism as a sole purpose by stating that humanitarian intervention is an "[…] act wholly or primarily guided by the sentiment of humanity, compassion or fellow-feeling and in that sense disinterested […]".[71] Both authors emphasize the importance of disinterestedness as a prerequisite for intervening into the domestic affairs of another state. In fact, the motivation of the intervener has to be guided by altruism and philanthropism. Intervention is characterized as an act of great kindness whereby the intervener puts the lives of his soldiers at risk to save the lives of strangers. Richard Miller even goes that far as to state that humanitarian intervention is "[…] a form of altruism writ large, a kind of self-sacrificial love […]".[72] For we are living in a world of common humanity, interveners should be completely other-regarding even placing the lives of strangers above the lives of own soldiers so as to ensure that intervention is determined to avert the suffering and is not solely concerned with protecting the lives of the intervening soldiers. In a more moderate way, following this argument, altruism means accepting a certain degree of risk for the own soldiers in saving strangers in need.[73]

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[68] Ogata (1998).

[69] MacFarlane and Weiss (2000)(p. 112).

[70] Verwey (1992). Op. Cit. 128 (p. 114).

[71] Parekh (1997) Op. Cit. 130 (p. 55).

[72] Miller (2000) Op. Cit. 201 (p. 17).

[73] Wheeler (2004).Op. Cit. 169 (p. 5).

Commonly, altruism in humanitarian intervention is not defined in such a narrow way as not to make intervention, an obvious political endeavour, too idealistic. Humanitarian interventions are considered to be

> […] considerably more altruistic than wars of self-defense. Such philanthropic efforts implicate few if any national interests and thus seem distant from the fiduciary duties that politicians satisfy when they marshal a war of self-defense. It is considerably easier for a national leader to garner popular support for wars of self-defense than for wars with humanitarian purposes […].[74]

Miller defines humanitarian intervention as a philanthropic effort that realistically might feature some national interests, however, altruism has to be the foremost driving force.

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[74] Miller (2008).(p. 57).

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