

## **BOUNDED ALTRUISM:**

# **INGO OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS DURING HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND US INTERVENTION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND KOSOVO**

*An NCEEER Working Paper by*

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## **Executive Summary**

This article investigates the relationship between the US government and international relief and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations during the Balkan conflicts from 1991 to 1999. As these organizations have become preferred tools in the American government's response to disasters and crises, questions have grown about the donor-partner relationship and the extent of governmental influence on international NGO (INGO) programs. Our study seeks to identify factors that shape INGO behavior and, more specifically, account for US government constraints on INGOs' scope of action in during the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Under what conditions, we ask, did INGOs have opportunities to act autonomously to pursue their goals? In examining INGO behavior in the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, our study builds upon previous work on the relationship between INGOs and the US military and NATO, and on the literature on INGO relations with American donor agencies.

## Introduction

This article investigates the relationship between the US government and international relief and humanitarian nongovernmental organizations during the Balkan conflicts from 1991 to 1999. As these organizations have become preferred tools in the American government's response to disasters and crises, questions have grown about the donor-partner relationship and the extent of governmental influence on international NGO (INGO) programs. For each side, the partnership offers great potential: INGOs are able to draw on the resources of the US government to finance rapid and effective responses to crises around the world, while the US government gains access to INGOs' capacity for quick action and their stock of information, contacts, and experiences in regions where official American presence is often small. This relationship also comes with certain risks, however, particularly in the ability of INGOs to act autonomously in implementing their missions. That INGOs have opportunities to shape and implement their programs is clear; it is also apparent that INGOs are sometimes constrained by their state donors. Our study seeks to identify factors that shape INGO behavior and, more specifically, account for US government constraints on INGOs' scope of action in during the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Under what conditions, we ask, did INGOs have opportunities to act autonomously to pursue their goals?

The role of INGOs in American foreign policy and assistance efforts has received increasing attention in recent years. While some authors point to the expanding opportunities for INGOs to shape these efforts,<sup>i</sup> others point to expanding governmental constraints on INGOs , which they argue hinders their ability to serve their overseas constituencies.<sup>ii</sup> Some question whether INGO impact on conflict and post-conflict settings has been positive at all.<sup>iii</sup> All agree that that the dynamics between INGOs and international actors and forces are complex, often

resulting in unintended consequences.<sup>iv</sup> In examining INGO behavior in the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, our study builds upon previous work on the relationship between INGOs and the US military and NATO,<sup>v</sup> and on the literature on INGO relations with American donor agencies.<sup>vi</sup> We focus on the United States to the exclusion of other donor countries because the United States was heavily involved with providing aid in both Bosnia and Kosovo and later in providing ground troops as post-conflict peacekeepers. Focusing on a single, large donor allows us to more easily draw conclusions across the cases. The American aid bureaucracy is also famously fragmented, which offers us fruitful opportunities for investigating the effects of different bureaucratic mandates and cultures inside a donor government on its INGO partners. Moreover, our analysis treats international rather than local NGOs because the dynamics of funding local NGOs differ in significant ways and during the period we examine, American aid flowed mostly to international NGOs.<sup>vii</sup>

The conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo related to the breakup of the Yugoslav state offer excellent cases for tackling questions concerning INGO interaction with the US government. As significant instances of American intervention and reconstruction efforts in the 1990s, they are situated usefully in time to study the emerging partnership between agencies of the US government and INGOs. Emblematic of the ethnic violence of the post-Cold War era and occurring at the same time as a global explosion in the number of INGOs, these two cases highlight the incipient alliance of the US government and international NGOs. Indeed, INGOs were involved in every phase of the conflict, from providing emergency relief at the beginning of the conflict to providing post-conflict reconstruction as part of the American-led post-war effort, foreshadowing the same issues that would come up again in subsequent interventions.

A preliminary look at these two cases raises both a puzzle and a paradox. Each major

humanitarian crisis of the 1990s (including Haiti, El Salvador, Rwanda/D.R. Congo, Somalia, etc.) sparked discussions both inside and out INGOs, about their response, its shortcomings, their sometimes problematic relations with official donors, and how to do things better the next time. Bosnia was no exception: the post-Dayton period in Bosnia sparked a great deal of discussion and hand-wringing both in the NGO sector and in academia, and resulted in a raft of after-action reports, “lessons learned”, and new “best practices.”<sup>viii</sup> This vast literature on “lessons learned” written after the Bosnia intervention suggests that if they were possible, significant changes in the US government/NGO relationship would have occurred between the interventions in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999, as INGOs learned from past mistakes and institutionalized on-the-ground innovations. Instead, the pre-intervention phase in Bosnia looked remarkably similar to the pre-intervention period in Kosovo, with a high degree of INGO autonomy and influence. After intervention, the relationship in both cases evolved in remarkably similar ways, with US donor agencies imposing more constraints on their international NGO partners than previously, leaving INGOs with fewer opportunities for autonomous action. How can we explain this puzzling similarity even in the face of attempted institutional learning?

In addition to the puzzle of why NGOs did not act upon their “lessons learned,” these two cases present a paradox. The end of fighting in both Bosnia and Kosovo created a boom in the number of NGOs working in the sector, as did the number and range of projects undertaken as efforts expanded from relief to reconstruction. Literature on civil society often (and problematically) uses the number of NGOs as a proxy measurement for the sector’s health. And indeed, greater numbers of NGOs would appear to bring greater strength for the sector:

Speaking as one voice for 60 agencies is a lot stronger than 4 or 5 agencies going off and doing their own thing. If you have a common position, its very powerful if you can say you are speaking on behalf of 60 NGOs.<sup>ix</sup>

Yet, this growth coincided with the sector's lows in coordination, autonomy, and ability to independently pursue its priorities. Why, we ask, did the opportunity for INGOs to act autonomously to do good appear to decline even as the sector's strength and potential for influence appear to grow?

We explain this puzzle and paradox by offering a structural analysis of factors affecting INGO behavior. We begin by defining the concept of bounded altruism and how it relates to INGO opportunities and constraints. Based on the research on the political economy of donor-NGO interactions, we identify and describe two factors that shape INGO behavior: first, supply and demand—what services INGOs can provide and what donor agencies demand—and, second, competition between NGOs which, while altruistic, need to maintain financial solvency through grant winning. Drawing upon comparative research focused on differences in donor agencies and aid policies across countries,<sup>x</sup> we add a third factor, which we call the regulatory environment (Nunnenkamp & Öhler, 2009). Regulatory environment highlights the bureaucratic entity in charge of the government's relationship with NGOs; more specifically it focuses on the different organizational cultures and priorities embodied in each of the sub-divisions of USAID. We then apply this analytical framework to the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, demonstrating how shifts from the conflict to post-conflict phase affect these three explanatory factors. We conclude with a brief discussion of what the Bosnia and Kosovo cases can tell us about INGO opportunities and constraints in other conflict settings.

## **Bounded Altruism**

Any attempt to explain the factors driving INGO behavior needs to begin with a theory of how NGOs act, specifically identifying the incentives and structural factors that they respond to.

Drawing from work done by political economists on nonprofit groups, we arrive at a understanding of INGOs as altruistic (that is, motivated by their charitable mission and not selfishly profit-maximizing), but constrained by the need for resources and institutional survival. Their “bounded altruism,” as we call it, means that international NGOs will independently pursue their conception of the good when they are able, but when their organizational survival is threatened by lack of funding, they will acquiesce to the wishes of their donors.

Cooley and Ron argue that regardless of the beneficent motives of INGOs, they will be compelled in many cases to act as profit-maximizing firms would, since they face competitive pressures that threaten their financial survival.<sup>x<sub>i</sub></sup> To do good, INGOs must first survive the fiscal year. This tension between wanting to do good and wanting to do well (enough) will be determined by the distribution of opportunities and constraints between donors and NGOs. Aldashev and Verdier show theoretically that when donation totals are fixed, as official aid budgets tend to be, the market will tend to overproduce INGOs.<sup>x<sub>ii</sub></sup> Assuming that the entry costs for INGOs are low, INGOs will enter the market and begin fundraising activities, competing for a fixed pool of money. Pairing these analyses, we argue that the frequent oversupply of INGOs creates scarcity in funding opportunities and makes INGOs dependent on the wishes of donors, especially large state donors. As Reid and Kerlin demonstrate, variation exists among American INGOs in how dependent they are on government funders.<sup>x<sub>iii</sub></sup> Nevertheless, all things being equal, if income for INGOs is very scarce, they will be less able to turn down government grants for projects they would not normally undertake, because they will need to secure enough funding to insure their organizational survival.

The literature on agency theory, concerning the principal-agent problem, can also be incorporated into our conception of INGOs and donors as pursuing differing aims while in an

essentially contractual relationship,<sup>xiv</sup> as indeed many USAID officers view their funding of INGOs.<sup>xv</sup> The funding relationship between state donors and INGOs represents a principal-agent problem, in which INGOs are funded to further the donor's interests, but at the same time act to further their own altruistic—used colloquially—interests. Donors, as the principals, impose conditions on their funding to ensure that INGOs are acting in alignment with the donors' interests. Even in the absence of overt control, insecurity about funding can cause INGOs to strategically align their work with the priorities of different donor agencies. Recent work has extended agency theory to aid bureaucracies, detailing their efforts to implement donor priorities;<sup>xvi</sup> we assume this theory can be applied to the essentially contractual relationship between donor agencies and INGOs.

Thus our understanding of NGO behavior holds that NGOs will act to further their priorities, but that they are not immune to structural constraints on their ability to act independently including the level of competition, the supply of and demand for INGO goods and services, and the regulatory environment. We understand opportunities for INGOs as the capability to autonomously set their own project priorities, while constraints consist of funding or other restrictions that limit INGO freedom of action. Before turning to our empirical investigation, we analyze briefly the ways in which competition, supply and demand, and the regulatory environment might shape INGO behavior, based on our theoretical understanding of INGO responses to incentive structures.

The first factor shaping INGO behavior is the level of competition between INGOs for US government funding. Several factors can affect the number of INGOs operating in a given environment and thus the competition among them. Conflict situations reduce the number of INGOs active in an area by making it much more costly, dangerous, and logistically difficult for

them to operate. Such situations impose high entry costs, restricting the number of INGOs and favoring large, established INGOs with the expertise to mitigate their risks and the will and money to implement security procedures, limiting the field to a small number of INGOs. As the conflict ends and reconstruction begins, the newly stable environment is easier for NGOs to operate in, both in terms of availability of funding, the lower need for special skills or experience, and fewer threats to safety. Development and reconstruction work, in contrast, opens the field up to smaller INGOs, which can do small-scale, short-term development projects but could never undertake responsibility for running something as complex as a regional refugee camp. If the stability comes after a period of fighting, available funding can spike as part of a post-conflict reconstruction phase, leading new NGOs to enter the market and seek reconstruction grants. Large increases in the number of INGOs may reduce their bargaining power as they face constraints imposed by collective bargaining problems. Competition, thus, may account for many of the unexpected opportunities for INGOs operating in violent scenarios.

### **Supply and Demand for INGO Services**

The second factor we examine is the US government's demand for INGO goods and services and INGOs' ability to supply these. When government demand for INGO services is high, INGOs are more likely to have opportunities to act autonomously and to influence government-donors. During any development or relief project, governments rely on intelligence about the situation on the ground and analysis of policy options. When demand for such intelligence is high and INGOs can supply it, they are more likely to have opportunities for autonomy and influence in their relationship with the US government. In a similar vein, INGOs have logistical capacities for arranging interviews, tours, and transportation for visiting

American officials, which may rely on INGOs to host them if the American embassy has withdrawn for security reasons. US government dependence on INGOs logistical support gives it a stake in maintaining long-term relationships with dependable INGOs and allow INGOs to influence the goals and conditions of the money they receive from the US government.

Similarly, in certain situations INGOs possess a kind of action monopoly, the ability to “do something” about crises, disasters, and the suffering caused by war. While evidence on the ability of the “CNN effect” to compel governmental action is still inconclusive,<sup>xvii</sup> images of far-off misery can certainly rouse governments to allocate greater aid to the crisis, often as a stand-in for substantive policy engagement. Without any assets on the ground, and absent a concerted diplomatic push, the palliative policy of the United States toward the conflict becomes its support for relief programs in the country. American aid agencies in this situation are unable to walk away from their relationships with the INGOs delivering this humanitarian relief, and therefore have less leverage to insist on greater levels of control.

### **Regulatory environment**

The final factor we advance as affecting INGO behavior is what we call the bureaucratic regulatory environment, signifying the level of control exerted by donor agencies over recipient INGOs. This factor is least least examined by the existing theoretical literature and so we will discuss it at greater length. Aid agencies have many means of influencing their grantees, including restricting the durations of grants, requiring competitive bidding processes, rejecting unsolicited proposals, and requiring of INGO partners everything from local partnership to gender analysis. The most significant factor affecting the regulatory environment is the donor agency in charge of interacting with INGOs in the country in question. Donor agencies differ in

objectives and organizational culture. Some agencies rely closely on INGOs for achieving their organizational mandates and consequently have developed organizational cultures that give INGOs great leeway in determining how projects are designed and implemented. Other bureaucracies are less deferential toward INGOs and use a range of mechanisms to closely regulate their INGO “partners” activities.

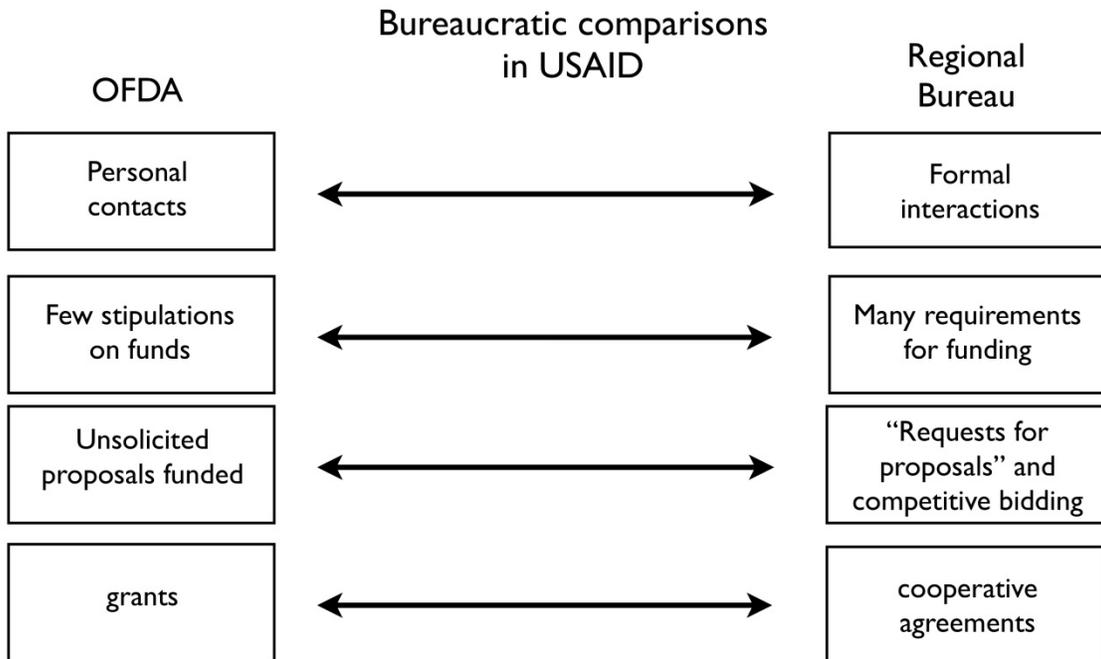
The US government entity serving as the primary contact point for INGOs is USAID, an independent agency under the direction of the Secretary of State.<sup>xviii</sup> Four USAID regional bureaus divide responsibility for regular development aid by geography. Another bureau, the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (before 2001, the Bureau for Humanitarian Response) manages USAID’s response to short- and medium-term crises. Two of the offices in this bureau are instrumental during conflict and immediate post-conflict periods. The first, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), is USAID’s rapid-response unit for natural and politically-caused disasters (it calls the latter “complex emergencies.”). OFDA manages short-term operations in a number of countries; its portfolio of countries shifts rapidly as crises emerge and die down. Since the late 1980s, OFDA has used “Disaster Assistance Response Teams” (DARTs) to coordinate emergency relief in affected countries.<sup>xix</sup> The DART will arrive in-country, and work to quantify the disaster situation and begin disbursing money.<sup>xx</sup> The second office in the bureau, the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), was founded during the Clinton administration and was first employed at the end of the war in Bosnia. OTI is tasked with managing war-to-democracy transitions, other democratization projects, and marketization efforts (Day 2003:18-20). More than any other agency, OTI works with local NGOs and civic organizations in countries undergoing economic development and political transformation.

During ongoing crises and violent situations that necessitate American relief operations, OFDA in USAID takes the lead in coordinating the US government response. OFDA brings with it a unique set of organizational practices and priorities that give the INGOs that it partners with great latitude in designing and carrying out relief projects. This approach to INGOs is the product of an organizational culture that sees OFDA's mission as supporting INGO work, and an organizational mandate that insures OFDA's reliance on a number of large INGOs operating globally.<sup>xxi</sup> Both of these cause OFDA to be very receptive to INGO wishes and to impose fewer constraints on INGOs.

The operational imperative for speed means that OFDA usually works with INGOs already working in the disaster area, especially with those with which it has worked in the past. The imperative for speed also means that most OFDA projects are funded without competitive bidding procedures and through lump-sum grants, not contracts or cooperative partnerships. Most OFDA grants are to INGOs that have submitted unsolicited proposals, outlining both a problem that USAID/OFDA might not yet be aware of and also how to mitigate it.<sup>xxii</sup> Giving INGOs the lead in designating the problems to be addressed greatly increases their opportunities to act autonomously and to influence the terms of their funding. OFDA-INGO relations tend to be informal and often on the basis of personal connections between people who collaborate again and again during disasters all over the world.<sup>xxiii</sup> The camaraderie shown by the two sides encourages informal, quick, and "get the job done" interactions.

In contrast to OFDA, the regional bureaus focus on long-term development and democracy assistance. The end of a conflict, crisis, or disaster means that responsibility for aid to that country reverts from OFDA back to the regional bureau. The OFDA mission, with its special relationship with INGOs and focus on short-term emergency work will give way to more

long-term development projects, undertaken by the regional bureau, which has no special organizational deference toward INGOs. Regional bureaus tend to disburse money through contracts and local governments, or through umbrella grants that favor local NGOs.<sup>xxiv</sup> The money usually comes in the form of cooperative agreements, giving the bureau ongoing involvement in project implementation.<sup>xxv</sup> Projects are awarded after a period of competitive bidding and are in response to “requests for proposals” to address a problem that USAID has identified.



As conditions change across conflict and post-conflict situations, they will affect the level of INGO competition, the regulatory environment, and the level of demand for INGO goods and services. In order to understand these changes, and how they shape INGO opportunities and constraints, we turn to an examination of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Both cases follow the same basic pattern, from a humanitarian crisis and conflict situation to a post-conflict reconstruction phase ushered in by military intervention.

## **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

For the purpose of studying United States government-INGO interactions in Bosnia, we can divide the war in Bosnia into two stages. The first stage consists of the fighting between 1992 and 1995, before the direct involvement of American forces. This stage was characterized by high violence and low American presence, with US policy directed toward alleviating the humanitarian crisis. The second stage began in late 1995 after the Dayton Peace Accords and the arrival of 60,000 NATO troops to oversee the agreement on December 20, 1995. Violence during this period was low, American presence high, and money and attention for post-conflict construction flowed toward the country.

During the first phase of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, from 1992-1994/5, the number of international NGOs working in the area remained very low (see figure below). Tanner and Fawcett, in an OFDA-commissioned study on its operations in former Yugoslavia, conclude that 10 to 15 INGOs were operating in Bosnia when the war broke out in 1992; of these, OFDA funded only the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an American organization specializing in emergency relief and conflict and post-conflict response, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the well-known French medical aid organization.<sup>xxvi</sup> The low number of INGOs active in Bosnia-Herzegovina was due to the extremely dangerous situation in the country; only a very few INGOs were willing and able to work in the area. Not only did paramilitary forces target local people, they also attacked humanitarian personnel. Over fifty UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) personnel were killed in Bosnia, giving the average humanitarian UN worker in Bosnia an 11 times greater chance of being killed than a UN peacekeeping soldier in Bosnia.<sup>xxvii</sup> Throughout the rest of the fighting, the numbers of OFDA-funded INGOs remained low, even after OFDA added a mechanism (the “Rapid Response Fund”) that allowed the DART

to give small “no-brainer” grants to INGOs without prior approval from Washington.<sup>xxviii</sup>

With few established INGOs working in Bosnia-Herzegovina, funding relationships remained stable. INGOs experienced low levels of competition and grant poaching, and were able to move into new areas when other areas became saturated with INGOs (Fawcett and Tanner 2000:56). There was competition among them, but according to Tanner and Fawcett, it was “healthy competition,” enough competition to keep INGOs innovating and expanding, but not enough to threaten funding.<sup>xxix</sup> A key indication of low levels of inter-INGO competition during this period is the information sharing and cooperation that occurred between different relief INGOs, both of which dried up by 1996 with the arrival of more INGOs.<sup>xxx</sup> This period of low competition increased INGOs’ ability to negotiate the terms of their humanitarian work with government officials and donors, who in were inclined to give them wide latitude in defining and implementing their projects.

The low constraints on INGOs during this period of humanitarian crisis were helped by OFDA’s leadership of US government aid. OFDA began operating in the country in 1992, the year the fighting broke out, and continued through 1996. During this period, OFDA spent between 95% and 99% of its Bosnia budget through fewer than a dozen INGOs.<sup>xxxi</sup> The majority of funding was concentrated in the largest one to three INGOs, including the IRC at the top, with the International Medical Corps and Catholic Relief Services distant runners up.<sup>xxxii</sup> Other top recipients included Mercy Corps International, and World Vision.<sup>xxxiii</sup> OFDA remained a hands-off donor, deferring to INGOs in most cases on what projects needed to be carried out and the best way to undertake them.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Indeed, during the Bosnia conflict, OFDA conducted only one project through a bidding process, preferring to let INGOs identify problems and solutions from their vantage point.<sup>xxxv</sup>

In 1993, OFDA fielded a DART for the dual purpose of gathering information and distributing grants. DART turned to INGOs as the most effective organizations to formulate, propose, and implement emergency programs because they had the best information about the sources and solutions for problems. The team also functioned as a channel for INGO concerns into the US government., bringing INGO information and analysis to a wide range of officials.<sup>xxxvi</sup> To the INGOs responding to the crisis, the DART teams in the field “were the face of Washington.”<sup>xxxvii</sup> The DART’s presence, as one of the few official representatives of the US government, gave OFDA the bureaucratic lead on the Bosnia issue, insuring that the US government was aware of the important contributions of INGOs and that it valued their role.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

After the fighting began, official US representatives in the country were scarce. American embassy and other USAID personnel were confined to the securest areas of the disintegrating country or were withdrawn altogether, making the US government reliant on other sources for information and action.<sup>xxxix</sup> The OFDA DART was operating in-country by 1992, but its 6-7 member staff was spread throughout the entire area of former Yugoslavia area, making it difficult to collect strategic information, but also difficult to micromanage its INGO partners and conduct frequent site visits and project checkups. Even the CIA did not have an appreciable presence in the country, as it was not previously considered an area of high American strategic interest. Daniel Serwer, the State Department’s Special Coordinator for the Bosnian Federation in the year leading up to the Dayton Accords, believes that the CIA was sending minimal intelligence out of Bosnia, and that the only significant sources of intelligence were his cables, the ambassador’s cables, and any information that INGOs were gathering.<sup>xl</sup> The IRC’s dispatches from Bosnia were sent to the OFDA office daily, and were shared widely with

members of Congress, the White House, State, and the Pentagon (Stoddard 2006:129-130).<sup>xli</sup> With the mobility of American and UN officials greatly curtailed, INGOs were uniquely placed as international actors with wide geographic presence and contacts with knowledgeable local people (DeMars 2005:123).

Through their role as information gathers, INGOs provided an important service to the US government thereby increasing their value and ability to define their field of action. The extent to which this increased actual influence on policy is unclear. Stoddard argues that INGO information helped rouse the US government and its military to humanitarian action in Bosnia. INGOs only collected high-quality information on the topics that concerned them (for example, number of refugees, instances of blocked roads, locations of massacres, populations threatened by poor water supplies), which was successful in raising awareness of the ongoing tragedy in Bosnia. This new perception of the conflict, however, was not enough to compel major political actors to work toward a serious resolution of the war. The Bosnian war thus became defined as a humanitarian problem, which required humanitarian action. Ultimately this “humanitarian framing” would include action against Serbs held responsible for obstructing humanitarian deliveries and, more fundamentally, for causing the crisis.<sup>xlii</sup> Meanwhile, however, it allowed the US government to avoid more substantive policy action. As one staffer put it,

‘When the President of the United States wants to know how many tons of lentils have been delivered [to Sarajevo] that day, you *know* you have no [expletive] policy’ [sic].<sup>xliii</sup>

In any case, INGOs’ ability to supply information, even if not sought, came with the opportunity to act with few constraints in pursuing their goals.

INGO logistical capabilities similarly coincided with US government demand for them. The lack of US personnel in Bosnia-Herzegovina after 1991 confronted visiting American

officials and politicians with a logistical challenge. The normal diplomatic presence was unavailable for coordinating visits, and thus the burden fell on international NGOs to host visiting officials. In December 1991, as USAID tried to anticipate the future humanitarian needs of disintegrating Yugoslavia, USAID officials undertook a joint assessment trip with IRC personnel to Croatia, Bosnia, Vojvodina, and Serbia.<sup>xliv</sup> As an immediate consequence of this visit, OFDA established its presence in-country and funded IRC as the lead organization for information gathering and as an aid distribution network in-waiting.<sup>xlv</sup> The IRC similarly hosted Richard Holbrooke, before he became the point official on former Yugoslavia for the Clinton administration, and Daniel Serwer, the State Department's Special Coordinator for the Bosnian Federation.<sup>xlvi</sup> The ability to determine what visiting officials saw was key for highlighting INGOs' useful role.

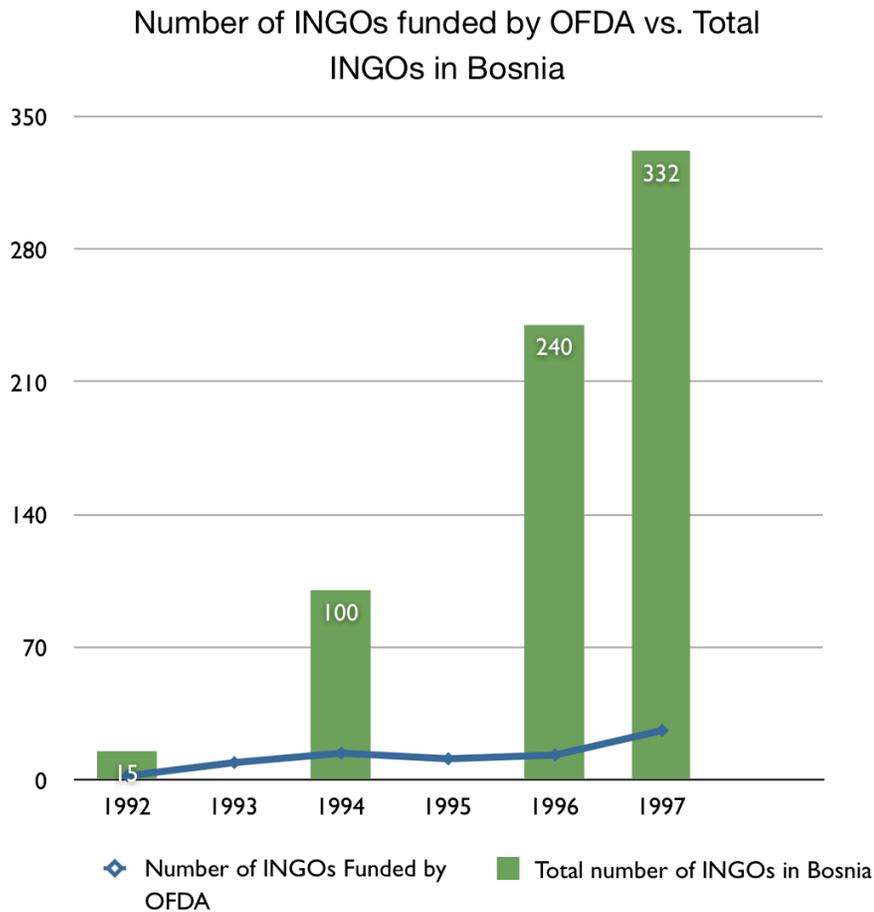
Thus, during the conflict, INGOs had high opportunities for autonomy and latitude because they possessed capabilities that were extremely desirable to USAID and the rest of the US government. Since INGO activities represented the US government's only response to the conflict, INGOs possessed an action monopoly that greatly enhanced their opportunities to act vis-à-vis the US government. Low levels of competition and bureaucratic regulation under the OFDA meant that the INGOs operating in the country could exert influence over the types of projects that were funded, and they were much more likely to receive USAID funding than an average INGO in later years in Bosnia.

## **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION**

The Dayton Accords of November 21, 1995 ended the fighting between Croats, Bosniaks, and Serbs in Bosnia. The agreement called for the introduction of a NATO-led force

(IFOR) to implement the civil objectives of the Accords and to maintain peace between the parties. Shortly thereafter, international troops and money poured into Bosnia to begin a long process of peace and state building. This transition, from conflict to a post-conflict reconstruction caused INGOs to lose much of their previous autonomy in relation to the American government even as the sector as a whole experienced a boom in total income and number of active INGOs.

When OFDA began its involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992, it funded only two INGOs. In the last year of its presence, 1996, it was funding 26, with the Office of Transition Initiatives and the regional bureau funding more INGOs on top of that (Fawcett and Tanner 2000:48). After Dayton, not only did the number of INGOs funded by the US government increase, the total population of INGOs operating in Bosnia skyrocketed. By the end of 1996, estimates of the number of international INGOs working in Bosnia ranged from 156 to 240.<sup>xlvii</sup> By the end of 1997, the number was estimated at 332.<sup>xlviii</sup> Many of these organizations, “ad hoc organizations formed in response to this crisis” and “relatively unknown in other parts of the world” fell into competition with each other, “vying for donor attention and funding.”<sup>xlix</sup> The increase in INGO population increased the competitive pressures each one experienced. Instead of a handful of large INGOs receiving all of OFDA’s funding, many more begin to receive aid, with aid more evenly distributed between them.<sup>1</sup>



The new, fierce competition for government funding, coupled with the developments described below, had drastic consequences for INGOs in Bosnia. Fawcett and Tanner argue that “1996 saw the transformation of NGOs from creative free agents into well-organized contractors bidding for as large a piece of the action as possible.”<sup>li</sup>

The NGOs felt threatened by one another. [...] many organizations concentrated on maintaining their position in the face of uncertain donor resources. No longer working together to overcome the odds of war, NGOs—IRC among them—were now hoarding knowledge and experience. They focused on their own institutional needs and began to coyly ask donors how they could best meet theirs. (Fawcett and Tanner 2000:56)<sup>lii</sup>

INGO constraints ballooned as the competition for finances grew.

The beginning of the peacekeeping phase resulted in two important changes in the regulatory environment: a change in the lead USAID bureau and the addition of a new military

dimension. First, within USAID, responsibility for aid disbursement shifted from OFDA to the regional bureau for Europe and the New Independent States (ENI). This shift, along with the addition of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), complicated the INGO-US government relationship, slowing the exchange of information and limiting INGO opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. OFDA's DART teams are the US government's best institution for collecting and aggregating INGO information. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, information was passed along informally, on the basis of personal connections, and the locus of these connections generally rested in OFDA. When the DART left in 1996, the main artery for INGO information was cut, and INGOs lost their direct information pipeline to the top. When ENI and OTI began scaling up operations, INGOs "grew confused as to the funding relationships and mandates of OFDA/DART, OTI, and ENI."<sup>liii</sup> ENI personnel were much more familiar with the regulations on grants than OFDA personnel were, and were much more accountable to USAID headquarters in Washington, with the result that ENI greatly increased the number of restrictions on INGOs receiving funding from USAID.<sup>liv</sup> At the same time, it disbursed more of its money through local governments and contractors, or through umbrella grants that favored local NGOs, restricting the portion of money accessible to INGOs even as reconstruction money poured into the country. In some cases, it even actively sought to move reconstruction efforts away from international NGOs, speaking enthusiastically about the "post-international NGO world" in which many of the functions previously performed by INGOs would be done by local groups.<sup>lv</sup> One USAID staffer praised the INGOs that had been there during the war for the high quality information they passed on, but believed that "their time was over."<sup>lvi</sup>

The second change in the regulatory environment had to do with the arrival of American military forces, which changed the point of bureaucratic interaction for INGOs. A senior advisor

to Mercy Corps International in Bosnia reflected that “what was missing was any comprehensive, coherent overall plan for maximizing cooperation between the military and civilian branches of the reconstruction effort.”<sup>lvii</sup> A vague strategy for INGO-military interactions was carried over from pre-1995 humanitarian interactions, but the techniques were not refined and were not used effectively. One technique included holding information sessions for INGOs on local security threats.<sup>lviii</sup> These sessions only reinforced the reversal of the informational relationship, as intelligence now flowed from the military to INGOs, rather than vice versa. The US military did not effectively incorporate the presence of international NGOs into their operational planning, nor was the organizational structure suited to fostering close partnerships with INGOs. This was a dramatic reversal for INGOs, which were used to working with an extremely receptive part of the US government.

The end of armed conflict obviated the high demand for and ability of INGOs to supply information, logistical support and action. The US military and intelligence services began gathering their own information once they arrived, cutting INGOs out of the information pipeline that had made them such prized partners before Dayton. In the stability that followed, INGO information also became much less relevant. These changes reduced the urgency and the uniqueness of INGO information at the same time that it became harder for INGOs to convey the information that could shape US foreign policy. Moreover, the arrival of a full embassy staff and an expanded USAID presence meant that INGOs were no longer needed to shuttle visiting dignitaries around the countryside, losing their “in” with senior American leaders. Finally, the individual INGOs that had been in Bosnia during the war, including the IRC, Mercy Corps, MSF, and Catholic Relief Services, lost their action monopoly. American policies had shifted away from the war as humanitarian crisis mindset, meaning that INGOs were no longer the only

visible face of American concern for the country. USAID still relied heavily on INGOs to help quickly and effectively spend its \$1 billion in reconstruction money, but with tighter restrictions on funding, INGOs became implementers of pre-designed projects rather than the controlling the design and execution of their own projects.

In sum, during this phase of post-conflict reconstruction INGOs faced a vast increase in the competitive pressures in a more crowded operating environment. In response, they began to consolidate their activities and worry about protecting their grant income by reducing the effort spent on local needs assessment and by more closely aligning their activities with the priorities of international donors.<sup>lix</sup> In so doing, they became more receptive to donor wishes, as ENI and even OFDA began to demand more rigid compliance with its wishes.<sup>lx</sup> Fawcett and Tanner dub this transformation “from creative chaos to coordinated contractors.”<sup>lxi</sup> In this environment, INGOs often turned to collaboration with local NGOs, not with the result of building “local capacity” but rather, they “sought—and found in local NGOs—cheap service delivery.”<sup>lxii</sup> Thus, while INGOs and OFDA fervently hoped for more substantial US involvement and the end of the war, the arrival of peace and NATO forces in the country spelled the end of their heyday. The changing situation meant that INGOs were compelled by practical necessity to acquiesce to new constraints imposed by their large governmental donors, more competition from their newly-arrived peers, and the end of deference to INGO expertise.

In response to this perceived change, INGOs and observers drew a number of lessons from the reconstruction phase in Bosnia, aimed at improving INGO autonomy and effectiveness in future interventions.<sup>lxiii</sup> First, INGOs called for greater coordination of projects.<sup>lxiv</sup> The multiplicity of donors and INGOs after Dayton meant that some regions were oversaturated with duplicated projects while other areas were underserved and some needs unmet.<sup>lxv</sup> Second, the

reliance on donors such as OTI, which favored short-term grants in order to force quick results, meant that the entire NGO sector would lurch from one priority to the next (returns, rebuilding houses, mental health, party- and civil society-building) as donors' funds shifted. An awareness grew that to achieve lasting good, INGOs would need more stable and long term funding.<sup>lxvi</sup> As this examination of how to improve INGO performance was underway, the conflict in Kosovo was heating up. This new but related conflict would presumably provide INGOs the opportunity to implement these lessons learned. However, as we shall see, US government-INGO relations in Kosovo would develop along almost identical lines.

### **KOSOVO: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

As with the Bosnia case, the period under investigation in Kosovo can be divided into two phases. The first phase occurred from the mid-1990s through the intensification of the crisis and ethnic cleansing beginning in 1999. During this period, the United States government had very limited access to Kosovo and, given the international sanctions against Serbia at the time, could only provide emergency humanitarian (that is, non-development) aid. After 1998, the situation in Kosovo was characterized by a high level of violence and a low level of official American presence, making this a humanitarian crisis situation very similar to the one in Bosnia. This phase continued through the 78 day NATO bombing campaign from March 24 to June 10, 1999, when nearly 1 million Kosovar Albanians fled to neighboring countries and the violence on the ground was at its worst. The period of the bombing campaign is a transitional period, however, as all international NGOs pulled out of Kosovo during the duration and were joined on Kosovo's borders by many more INGOs providing services to refugees and preparing to enter Kosovo after the end of bombing. The end of the bombing marks the beginning of the second,

post-conflict reconstruction scenario, when an international administration was established in Kosovo under the auspices of the UN and NATO and INGOs returned to Kosovo in significantly scaled-up numbers and with greater ambitions.

As in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the Dayton Peace Accords, very few INGOs operated in Kosovo during the interbellum period of 1995-1999. This was due to Serbian restrictions on NGO access to Kosovo, international restrictions in aid money to Kosovo (technically still part of Serbia and therefore subject to international sanctions), and growing security threats from KLA and Serbian paramilitary violence, especially after 1998. The Belgrade government granted official approval to very few organizations to operate in the country, though several others such as Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corps International, MSF-Belgium, and, after 1997, the IRC were active in the province.<sup>lxvii</sup> Through the spring of 1998, the only INGO to be officially registered with the Serbian authorities was Doctors of the World (DOW), an organization with which the OFDA had already established a close relationship.<sup>lxviii</sup>

The limited ability of INGOs to operate in Kosovo during this period created low levels of competition and favored stable, long-term relationships between OFDA and INGOs. With few choices and limited access, American government donor agencies continued funding the same few INGOs: Children's Aid Direct, Catholic Relief Services, Handicap International, Mercy Corps International, and DOW.<sup>lxix</sup> DOW received the lion's share of OFDA's funding, and OFDA maintained a special information-gathering relationship with DOW through the period.<sup>lxx</sup> These factors all supported a stable equilibrium in INGO operations, giving them many opportunities to pursue their goals and imposing few donor constraints.

Since all aid to Kosovo during this period was technically emergency aid, OFDA took the lead in disbursing American assistance money. Culturally, OFDA did not change significantly

between the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts. If anything, it became even friendlier to the interests and approach of INGOs, as the new Director of OFDA during the Kosovo conflict, Roy Williams, was hired from the IRC where he had been the vice president for operations during the period when the IRC and OFDA collaborated in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A top priority upon taking the job, he stated, was to maintain the close and collegial working relationship between INGOs and OFDA.<sup>lxxi</sup> Giving INGOs the lead on program design also remained a tenant of OFDA policy: “Typically, it was the NGOs would come forward with proposals,” rather than OFDA identifying problem areas, Williams emphasized.<sup>lxxii</sup>

OFDA’s requirements for implementing INGO partners remained common sense and fairly low-burden. For oversight, they asked INGOs to “provide indicators for assessing progress toward achievement of each objective and explain how they will be measured,” which was far less burdensome than requirements would later become.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Most grants to INGOs continued to be for unsolicited proposals coming from INGOs already working in Kosovo.<sup>lxxiv</sup> The arrival of the DART in 1998, with a mandate to “assess and report on the humanitarian situation and response,...and recommend future actions” as well as provide “the USG with a constant, on-the-ground presence” increased the ability of INGOs, especially DOW, to funnel their information to the highest policy making levels.<sup>lxxv</sup> As in Bosnia-Herzegovina, OFDA and DART culture and procedures meant that INGOs would have wide latitude in setting the terms of their work as well as influence over the disbursement of aid.

In Bosnia, INGOs met US government demand through their information collecting activities and this pattern continued during the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo.<sup>lxxvi</sup> OFDA established a similar partnership to the one that it had with IRC in Bosnia, this time with DOW, to collect information from the crisis-stricken province to which few had access.<sup>lxxvii</sup> As it

traveled through Kosovo, the DART collected information from INGOs, which reported to the DART both on areas with humanitarian need and on the areas with security problems.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Indeed, OFDA/DART even relied on INGOs to keep it updated on UNHCR's activities and policies.<sup>lxxix</sup> Eventually the information collected by INGOs came to include updates on the activities of the belligerents.<sup>lxxx</sup> International NGOs in Kosovo possessed both high-quality and otherwise-unavailable information on the humanitarian and security situation. As in Bosnia-Herzegovina, their monopoly on information meant that the US government was likely to be solicitous of INGO needs thereby increasing their ability to act autonomously.

INGOs also possessed logistical capabilities that were in high demand. When OFDA staffers visited Kosovo in 1997, they stayed in a DOW house, which was the only place that they had been cleared to stay.<sup>lxxxii</sup> DOW had been in Kosovo since 1992, running health clinics and preventative care,<sup>lxxxiii</sup> then, as the crisis worsened, aid convoys.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Long stretches of informal contact between OFDA officers and INGO workers helped to cement the collegiality between the two groups, reinforcing the sense that they were part of a larger team.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> This close relationship between staffers and INGO workers meant that the emphasis was on low-regulation, quick, and common-sense funding. It may also have brought the US to support for Bernard Kouchner, the founder of both MSF and DOW, for the first head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in 1999.

Finally, INGOs during this phase of humanitarian response possessed an action monopoly that, as Stoddard argues, resulted in opportunities to frame the conflict and to demand that the international community respond to the increasing levels of violence.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Thus, as KLA attacks and Serbian paramilitary reprisals increased and the province became increasingly dangerous, INGOs responded by shoring up the perceptions of the Milošević regime as

illegitimate and calling for action against its obstructionist behavior.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> We argue here that irrespective of actual policy influence, INGO action monopoly and framing ability also resulted in opportunities for a wide latitude of INGO action during this phase of humanitarian crisis.

In all significant ways, this phase of the Kosovo conflict mirrored the comparable period in Bosnia, vis-à-vis donor/INGO relations. Instability and restrictions on movement kept the number of INGOs operating in Kosovo very low and kept American government personnel almost entirely absent from the country. OFDA established an informational relationship with INGOs, specifically DOW. INGO monopolies on information, logistics, and action once again translated into greater operational autonomy if not influence. Low requirements and no-bid grants indicated a willingness on the part of the US government to accommodate INGOs. In this humanitarian crisis scenario, INGOs were able to behave as principled actors; US government reliance on them and low competition placed few bounds on their ability to act altruistically.

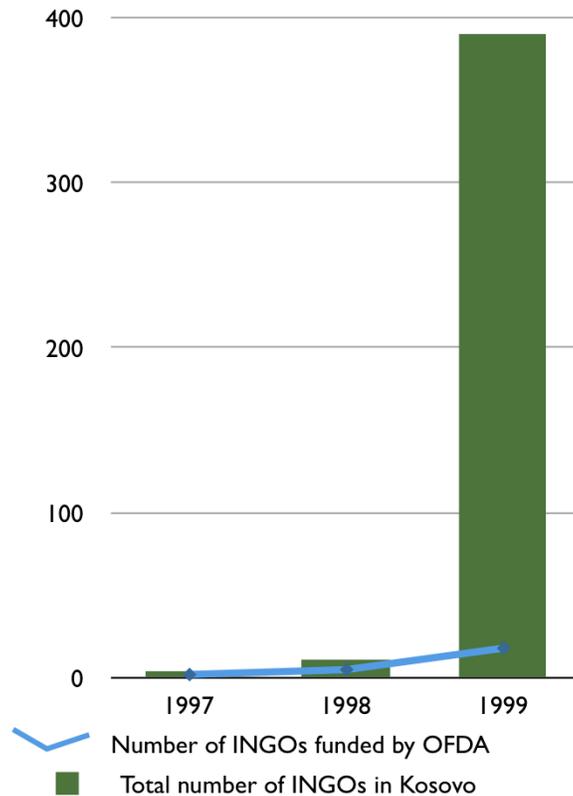
## **KOSOVO: POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION**

When the NATO air bombing campaign began on March 24, 1999, all INGOs operating in Kosovo withdrew to the Albanian and Macedonian sides of the border with Kosovo.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> The bombing campaign ended on June 10, 1999 with Milošević's capitulation to NATO's war aims and the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, enunciating the administrative shape of post-war Kosovo. On June 12, NATO-led KFOR (Kosovo Force) entered Kosovo unopposed by the retreating Yugoslav forces and established control over the province. Although violence, particularly reprisal attacks on Kosovo Serb civilians continued, the security situation in Kosovo stabilized.

The arriving NATO and UN personnel were accompanied by the scores of INGOs that

had been encamped on the border during the air campaign, some of them representing what other aid workers derisively call “briefcase NGOs,” in reference to their new arrival on the NGO scene.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> The number of INGOs operating in skyrocketed. Approximately 11 INGOs operated in Kosovo before the bombing; by the end of 1999, almost 400 INGOs were operating in the breakaway territory.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

Number of INGOs funded by OFDA vs.  
Total INGOs in Kosovo



The overcrowding of INGOs inside Kosovo after the intervention quickly led to a spike in competition in a dramatic example of what Cooley and Ron call “the NGO scramble.” In an echo of the land runs into Indian Territory in 1890s America, the INGOs dashed into Kosovo, attempting to beat out their rivals for the prime locations and projects.<sup>xc</sup> A number of factors

were at work in causing this overcrowding; all of them were related at least in part to the material interests of INGOs. First, the extensive media coverage of the Kosovo conflict and the associated refugee crisis, especially once American forces became involved, meant that private donors and the public were very interested in giving to INGOs that were involved in the crisis. Indeed, even USAID was so inundated with inquires from the public about how to help that it set up a donation hotline (1-800-USAID-RELIEF); it received over 50,000 calls in the first five weeks of the bombing campaign.<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> It also directed people interested in making donations to a list of INGOs operating in the region.<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> Given the tremendous public attention to the crisis, INGOs not present would be at a fundraising disadvantage and would face questions about why they were not operating in the most-covered humanitarian crisis of the time.

Kosovo was also a relatively secure country in which to operate once the bombing campaign ended and KFOR arrived. Compared to other crises, such as Rwanda and eastern Congo, “Kosovo was small and secure, making it significantly easier for INGOs to develop their work.”<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup> Finally, Kosovo was suddenly the recipient of hundreds of millions of official US aid, which was to be disbursed for humanitarian relief and “repatriation assistance.”<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> Given the choice between operating in a dangerous, inaccessible, and obscure area such as the Congo, and raising the flag in attention-saturated Kosovo, many INGOs opted to devote resources to where their altruistic activities could most easily and most visibly be undertaken.

The effects of this competition were to increase constraints on INGOs and make them more pliable partners for the US government. Given dozens of INGOs operating in the same area and with similar missions, US funding agencies were able to fund more selectively than in the past. Whereas CRS, DOW, and IRC had designed most of their own programs before the intervention, INGOs were now constrained by government restrictions on financing. To refuse

to comply would mean that any of the dozens of other INGOs would fill the recalcitrant INGO's place.

The transition from OFDA's control over USAID's response in Kosovo to a normal country mission run through ENI had the effect of bureaucratizing and ossifying what had previously been a free-flowing information relationship with INGOs operating in Kosovo. INGOs had a much harder time approaching USAID "country teams in an embassy," Roy Williams observes, "than the DART office that was down the street," often right next to INGOs' headquarters.<sup>xcv</sup> The ENI mission was much more willing to use requests for proposals, impose more regulations on INGOs, and award more contracts through competitive bidding processes than OFDA was. Competitive bidding procedures, which were almost entirely absent from OFDA's toolkit in Kosovo, are especially conducive to assertions of American control over INGOs.<sup>xcvi</sup> INGOs seeking grants through this mechanism are very explicitly in competition with each other for a zero-sum amount of money. This stands in contrast to unsolicited proposals, where different types of projects are weighed against each other and INGO innovation is less risky. The competitive bidding procedure of awarding grants and cooperative partnerships created an incentive for INGOs to hew closely to USAID's priorities rather than maintaining their own.<sup>xcvii</sup>

Concurrent to the establishment of the USAID/Kosovo mission was the arrival of the Office of Transition Initiatives in Kosovo. OTI, which had debuted at the end of the Bosnia conflict, was organizationally predisposed toward funding local groups and local NGOs in an attempt to build up local civil society.<sup>xcviii</sup> OTI's funding of local NGOs increased the field of competition even more for INGOs, as they now had to compete not only with their dozens of international peer organizations, but also now with local Kosovar groups.

The arrival of the NATO force also ended the US military and policymakers' interest in NGO information and logistical capabilities. The information that INGOs continued to collect on refugees and internally displaced persons remained relevant for the humanitarian response, but these assessments had little wider policy impact.<sup>xcix</sup> By the beginning of military involvement, the framing of Kosovo in Washington was well-established as a military intervention, rather than a humanitarian crisis, undermining the importance of INGO information. KFOR held twice daily security briefings for INGOs in Prishtina, disseminating its information about the locations of booby traps and other threats, as well as the locations of refugees in the mountains.<sup>c</sup> While Williams remembers them as being very useful and well-attended, they represented a reversal in the information flows from INGOs to the US government:

the NGOs who had been working in Kosovo for a long time and who at one time had been eagerly sought after for their information and opinions by military and political actors before the air strikes now found the military clearly taking over the bailiwick and not setting much store in their opinions.<sup>ci</sup>

The presence of the US military and the beginning of the post-conflict reconstruction phase ended most of the special roles that INGOs had been playing.

Thus, the shift from the humanitarian relief phase to the post-conflict reconstruction period had enormous effects on INGO opportunities and constraints in their interactions with the US government. Stability and a new wave of anticipated funding in Kosovo caused a flood of INGOs. These INGOs quickly began to compete with each other for donors' funding and attention at the same time that the donors became much less interested in the informational and

logistical capacity of INGOs. The result of this sudden drop in demand for INGO services, coupled with the changeover from OFDA to USAID's regional bureau, meant that the US government was more willing and prepared to impose its priorities on INGOs.

## **Conclusion**

The conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo brought to the fore the increasingly important relationship between INGOs and American foreign policy agencies. Bosnia highlighted how this partnership could work. It also revealed certain dynamics in this relationship and resulted in a great deal of examination of INGOs' behavior and ability to do good. An examination of INGO constraints and opportunities in the Bosnia and Kosovo case reveals opportunities and constraints on INGOs experience vis-à-vis the US government in conflict and post-conflict settings, what we call bounded altruism.

We began with the puzzle of why, despite attempts at organizational learning after the conflict in Bosnia, a similar dynamic between US government funders and INGOs prevailed several years later in Kosovo. INGOs understood the challenges that arose for the sector after the fighting ended in Bosnia but were unable to prevent them from reoccurring in Kosovo: destructive competition, donor micromanagement, and loss of programmatic autonomy. We propose that structural factors are at work in shaping INGOs' abilities to act autonomously. The first factor is the degree of competition between INGOs. In both Bosnia and Kosovo, during the conflict phase, competition was low and operational autonomy was at its height. An increased concentration of INGOs after 1995 in Bosnia and 1999 in Kosovo resulted in reduced autonomy, as INGOs faced stiffer competition for funding and the US government had wider latitude in deciding which INGOs to fund. The second factor shaping INGO behavior concerns the supply

and demand of INGO goods and services. The two cases reveal that when INGOs supplied information and logistical capacity for which there was high US government demand, they possessed greater operational autonomy. Indeed, the US government decision to forego a robust response in Bosnia gave INGOs a kind of “action monopoly,” which may have increased their value to US policy makers and decreased the likelihood that they would impose constraints on INGOs. This demand plummeted during the respective post-conflict reconstruction phases as the US government brought its own assets to bear, leaving INGOs with many fewer opportunities for autonomous action.

The third factor, what we call the regulatory environment also played a key role in shaping the relationship between INGOs and the US government. Indeed, as this study suggests, organizational cultures and mandates within USAID crucially affected how donors supervised their grantees. When OFDA was in charge of this relationship, INGOs had considerably more latitude in defining and implementing programs and priorities. When the regional bureau took over, INGOs operated under greater regulatory constraints. Thus, the ability of INGOs to act autonomously, that is altruistically, in Bosnia and Kosovo was bounded by inter-INGO competition, the changing supply and demand for INGO goods and services, and the regulatory environment.

We draw a second conclusion, which addresses the paradox we posed at the beginning: why did INGOs’ ability to act autonomously appear to decline in the post-conflict periods in Bosnia and Kosovo even as the sector expanded in size and income? An examination of the ways in which changes in levels of competition, supply and demand of INGOs services and the regulatory environment shape INGO behavior provides an answer to this paradox. In these two cases, during humanitarian crises, the low level of INGO competition, the loose regulatory

environment and high government demand for INGO goods and services gave INGOs more opportunities to act autonomously in response to escalating violence. Once peace-keeping operations and reconstruction began, the high level of INGO competition, tight regulatory environment and lower government demand for INGO goods and services gave the US government more control over INGOs, significantly constraining their independence. Thus it appears that conflict scenarios may offer the greatest opportunities for INGOs to act autonomously and influence the terms of their grants, while post-conflict scenarios with a large official American presence may place the largest constraints on INGOs' behavior.

A final conclusion has to do with the ability of this framework to travel to other settings. What can the conclusions we draw from Bosnia and Kosovo tell us about other areas of major US military involvement? The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan differ from Bosnia and Kosovo in two important ways. While violence in the former Yugoslav countries ended with or soon after the arrival of American forces, violence in Iraq and Afghanistan continued or increased as American forces stayed in the countries. Further, INGO opposition to American presence in these countries has been higher, causing many of them to forego operations there.<sup>cii</sup> On the one hand, the heavy presence of the US military could mean reduced autonomy and greater constraints for INGOs as the military seeks "unity of effort." On the other hand, as an important part of American counterinsurgency doctrine, INGOs could secure access to generous funding from agencies with little interest or ability to micromanage INGOs operating in a war zone.<sup>ciii</sup> Further study of the level of INGO competition, the regulatory environment, and US government demand for INGO goods and services will be necessary to fully map the findings from former Yugoslavia onto the counterinsurgency and regime change efforts of the 2000s. A better understanding of the dynamics of INGO-US government relations in Iraq and Afghanistan could

reveal links between the level of violence and the degree of US presence in the country on the three factors we identify in this paper as being significant for INGO behavior. Kosovo, like Bosnia, was followed by a period of INGO (self-) criticism; further work on Iraq and Afghanistan could shed light on whether INGOs were successful in learning after Kosovo.

Based on our research in former Yugoslavia, we would suspect that the best predictor of INGO behavior is not what they claim they learn, but rather the type of situation INGOs find themselves in and the three factors we identify. The attempts made by INGOs at learning and self-improvement are evidence of their altruism; their failure to substantively change is a demonstration of the bounds placed on them by the situational exigencies.

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<sup>vii</sup> A note on terminology: The term "NGO" is infamously vague and ill-defined, used at different times to indicate international charitable organizations involved in advocacy, service provision, or both; "local" i.e. non-American or Western European versions of such groups; groups that are based outside the US; and other distinctions. Others use the alternative terms "private voluntary organizations" or "civil society organizations" to refer to the same organizations. Our work focuses on international NGOs, that is, groups with bases in Europe or the United States, but which conduct operations around the world. For an early discussion of this onomastic difficulty, see Anna C. Vakil, "Confronting the Classification Problem: Toward a Taxonomy of Ngos," *World Development* 25, no. 12 (1997)..

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- <sup>xvii</sup> Jon Western, *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
- <sup>xviii</sup> The Department of Defense is a second location of interaction between INGOs and the United States government, through its Office of Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs (DOD/PK/HA) and commanders in the field. The US military rarely funds INGOs directly, but INGOs have gained increasing attention from US military planners and commanders, and missions since the beginning of the 1990s have often included working with INGOs. The office (DOD/PK/HA) makes many in-kind donations of material and transportation capacity to INGOs, but rarely makes grants. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in the State Department also interacts frequently with INGOs dealing with its area of responsibility, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross and various UN agencies.
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- x<sup>lii</sup> Ibid.
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- x<sup>lv</sup> Ibid. 25-26
- x<sup>lvi</sup> Stoddard, *Humanitarian Alert*. 126; Author Interview with Daniel Serwer.
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