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MAKING HUMANITARIAN ACTION ACCOUNTABLE: A CASE STUDY OF
HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP CERTIFICATION AND
THAILAND BURMA BORDER CONSORTIUM

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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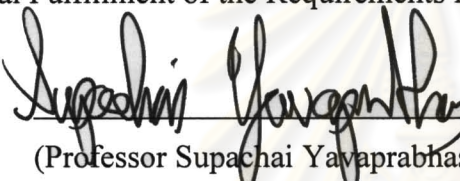Chulalongkorn University

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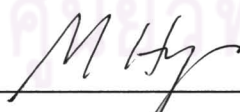
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หน่วยงานที่ให้ความช่วยเหลือและพัฒนาได้ดำเนินการสร้างความเป็นมืออาชีพทั่วไป ซึ่งเมื่อไม่นานมานี้ได้แผ้วถางทางให้เกิดกลไกใหม่ที่มีคุณภาพและสามารถตรวจสอบได้ สิ่งเหล่านี้กระทำขึ้นเพื่อให้เกิดหลักฐานของผลกระทบที่เกิดขึ้น และเพื่อแสดงให้เห็นว่าองค์กรเอกชนสนับสนุนผลประโยชน์ที่คาดหวังไว้อย่างมีเหตุผล

สิ่งที่คิดค้นขึ้นมาล่าสุดอย่างหนึ่งคือ ภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรม (HAP) โดยมีกลไกตรวจสอบตนเองในการดำเนินงานขององค์กรที่ไม่ใช่เป็นของรัฐ ซึ่งมีวัตถุประสงค์หลักเพื่อรับรององค์กรสมาชิกตามมาตรฐานที่ได้กำหนดไว้แล้วเพื่อดำเนินงานด้านมนุษยธรรม แนวคิดนี้ได้รับการต้อนรับจากบุคคลจำนวนมาก และได้รับกล่าวถึงว่า *เป็น สื่อที่มีอิทธิพลมากที่สุดในบรรดากระบอกเสียงของผู้รับผลประโยชน์*

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ทำการประเมินผลแผนงานการรับรองภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมในเชิงวิพากษ์วิจารณ์ในลักษณะของกรณีศึกษาโครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่า ซึ่งยกเลิกข้อเสนอแนะที่จะเป็นภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมที่ได้รับการรับรองด้วยเหตุผลที่ว่าผลประโยชน์ที่จะเกิดขึ้นไม่ชัดเจน การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเน้นที่การทำงานของบุคลากรในโครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่า ความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับการตรวจสอบงานที่คิดค้นขึ้นในปัจจุบัน แรงจูงใจของโครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าที่ยกเลิกการรับรองภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมในขณะนั้น และประการสุดท้ายเพื่อตรวจสอบความท้าทายและโอกาสที่โครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าอาจจะต้องเผชิญเมื่อจะต้องแสวงหาการรับรองจากภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมในอนาคต

ผลการวิจัยสรุปได้ว่าการรับรองภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมสามารถทำให้โครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าได้รับการยอมรับในระดับสากลโดยไม่ต้องเสียการยอมรับในระดับท้องถิ่น ซึ่งเป็นเรื่องที่สามารถเข้าใจได้ แต่อย่างไรก็ตาม ถ้าภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมพิสูจน์ตนเองว่าประสบผลสำเร็จมากเพียงพอจนสามารถใช้เป็นข้อกำหนดก่อนได้รับความช่วยเหลือด้านการเงินได้ โครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าก็จะตกอยู่ในสภาพบังคับที่จะต้องดำเนินการรับรองโดยเร็ว ซึ่งสามารถทำให้เกิดการตรวจสอบในระดับท้องถิ่นได้ ในปัจจุบันนี้บุคลากรของโครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าถูกแบ่งออกเป็นหลายฝ่ายตามกลยุทธ์ขององค์กร ดังนั้นการอภิปรายเชิงลึกในทุกระดับในองค์กรเกี่ยวกับผลกระทบที่เป็นไปได้ของการรับรองภาคีเพื่อการตรวจสอบความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมของโครงการความร่วมมือชายแดนไทย-พม่าอาจจะส่งเสริมให้เกิดจุดยืนเชิงกลยุทธ์ที่ละน้อยๆ และอาจทำให้เกิดการยอมรับทางด้านกฎหมายในระดับสากลเพิ่มขึ้นได้

สาขาวิชาการพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ ลายมือชื่อนิสิต ....

ปีการศึกษา 2553   ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก ....

             ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ร่วม ....

5281016024: MAJOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
KEY WORDS: HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP / THAILAND BURMA BORDER CONSORTIUM

MAC ALBERT GORDON SHAW: MAKING HUMANITARIAN ACTION ACCOUNTABLE AND THE HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP, DAN CHURCH AID AND THAILAND BURMA BORDER CONSORTIUM. THESIS ADVISOR: NARUEMON THABCHUMPON,PH.D., THESIS CO-ADVISOR:MICHAEL GEORGE HAYES,Ph.D., 65 pp.

The development and aid sector has undergone a general professionalization, which lately has paved the way for a number of quality and accountability mechanisms. These are intended to provide evidence of impact and to demonstrate that NGOs support their intended beneficiaries in a justifiable manner.

One of the recent initiatives is the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP). It is a self-regulatory NGO-initiative which has a primary focus on certifying member organisations against benchmarked standards for humanitarian action and has lately come to be known as *the loudest champion of beneficiary voices*.

This research critically assesses the HAP certification scheme through a case study of the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) who dismissed a suggestion to become HAP-certification on the grounds that it would have no clearly demonstrable benefits. The analysis looks into how the TBBC staff members practice and perceive their current accountability initiatives, the motives for TBBC to dismiss HAP certification at this time, and finally what challenges and opportunities TBBC face in relation to seeking HAP certification.

The research shows that HAP certification could strengthen TBBC's legitimacy globally without being at the cost of their local legitimacy. However, if HAP becomes successful enough to become a pre-requisite of funding, it would put pressure on TBBC to re-organize and take on the certification process at a pace that would undermine local accountability. Currently TBBC staff members are divided towards the organisation's strategic line. Therefore a deeper discussion at all levels of the organisation of what HAP certification might mean for TBBC, would be beneficial to internalise and streamline the strategic position and hereby increase internal legitimacy.

Field of study: International Development Studies	Student's signature:
	Advisor's signature:
Academic year 2010	Co-advisor's signature:

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ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC: Anti-Corruption Coordinator

AM: Administration Manager

BM: Board Member

CCSDPT: Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand

CBO: Community Based Organisation

CoC: Code of Conduct

COO: Community Outreach Officer

CRM: Complaints Response Mechanism

CMM: Camp Management Model

CMPM: Camp Management Programme Manager

DANIDA: Danish International Development Assistance

DCA: Dan Church Aid

DED: Deputy Executive Director

DfID: Department for International Development

ED: Executive Director

FO: Field Officer

FP: Founding Partner

HAP: Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International

HHR: Head of Humanitarian Response

HRD: Humanitarian Response Director

HRM: Human Resources Manager

IRC: International Rescue Committee

LoA: Letters of Agreements

NEP: New Emergency Policy

NCA: Norwegian Church Aid

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NPM: New Public Management

PSM: Programme Support Manager

PSEA: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Q&A: Quality and Accountability

RBM: Results-Based Management

RTG: Royal Thai Government

SIDA: Swedish International Development co-operation Agency

TBBC: Thailand Burma Border Consortium

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The overarching theme of this thesis is accountability. More specifically it deals with the HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International), which is a self-regulatory quality and accountability (Q&A) mechanism that certifies member organisations against benchmarked standards for good humanitarian practice. The mechanism is formulated as a rights-based approach (RBA), aimed to ensure that the best humanitarian action possible is given to the most vulnerable populations in all humanitarian situations.

The idea for this thesis emerged from an undergraduate project where the actuality of accountability in relation to HAP was discussed[1]. In order to perform an analysis grounded in reality, this thesis applies the Thailand Burma Border Consortium as a case study. HAP-certification has been recommended to the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) by some of its founding partners (FPs), who are HAP members, but dismissed the suggestion on the basis of that the certification schemes lacking demonstrable advantages in relation to their current accountability mechanisms. This research analyses the challenges and opportunities TBBC face in relation to taking on HAP-certification. The research is based on key informant interviews with TBBC staff members and FP representatives.

The following chapter will take a starting point in demarcating the research problem. The introduction broadly covers the historical developments and trends which paved way for the HAP-certification scheme and other accountability mechanism. Afterwards, it highlights some of the concerns which have been raised directly in relation to HAP-certification. These lead up to a number of research questions and objectives. The subsequent methodology section explains the research process and accounts for constraints and limitations. Finally, the significance of

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[1] To interviews from the project have been re-visited and re-applied in the research of this thesis.

research and research scope sections outline what sort of a contribution this research is expected to make.

1.1 Research Problem

NGO accountability has reached the public agenda for a number of reasons. First, the requirements for accountability can be seen as a natural follow of increased financial capabilities, power and responsibilities of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). Second, they can be considered as a response to a setback in political and public support in the wake of widely publicized scandals of NGO malpractice. Third, they can be seen as internally driven pursuits of rights-based humanitarianism amongst NGOs.

During the past two decades, the world has seen a great increase in the funding, numbers and responsibilities of NGOs, who are involved in the distribution of development and humanitarian aid (Jordan & Tuijl, 2006). Estimations run from around 35,000 large and established NGOs to "up to a few hundred thousands" (Lewis & Kanji, 2009: 2) The exponential growth rate of NGOs and the sheer scale of spending underlines their position as "actors to be reckoned with in international affairs" (Karajkov, 2007: 1). It has been estimated that in 2004, NGOs were responsible for about 23 billion USD – a third of total overseas development aid (Lewis & Kanji, 2009: 2). In 2007, spending of humanitarian NGOs amounted to 4.9 billion USD, which is equivalent to one third of the total humanitarian assistance spending. Approximately 2.3 billion USD came from DAC (Development Assistance Committee) donors and multilateral agreements, whilst 2.6 billion USD came from public and private donors (Borton, 2009: 17). The growing resources channelled into the development and aid sectors, naturally resulted in stronger obligations for governments to ensure that NGOs were managing these funds more efficiently (Lewis & Kanji, 2009: 21).

This scrutiny became stronger in the aftermath of a number of publicized scandals caused by NGO workers, who were caught up in a broad spectrum of misconduct. Their felonies covered gross mismanagement of funds, fraud for personal

gains and sexual exploitation amongst others. The NGOs were regular subjects of media criticism, who depicted them as ineffectual and self-serving business corporations (Lewis & Kanji, 2009: 21). The revelations led to political and public outrage that transformed into new requirements for more accountable aid from both governments and the public (Ebrahim, 2003). The heydayes were over and more aid-conditionality was imposed by donors. For example, some NGOs were required to perform activities that increased their public anchorage specified in framework agreements with their donors (Fejerskov, Jørgensen, Nielsen, Shaw, & Ziethen, 2008).

The historical development, arguably, also conveys a shift from an understanding of humanitarianism as philanthropic to, at least in theory, a more politicized rights-based humanitarianism (Slim, 2001). According to Slim, this shift is most clearly identified in the release of the Humanitarian Charter by Sphere in 2000. Although limited in its scope, the document laid down some ground rules and technical standards for disaster relief. It was also understood to be one of the first calls from NGOs themselves to directly manage humanitarian action by the use of technical standards. In other words, they were "pushing forward a pioneering initiative to realize rights in the midst of war, disaster and displacement" (Slim, 2001: 18). Overall, good intentions and values had traditionally been enough to ensure the basis of legitimacy for NGOs. In the new paradigm, however, these were substituted by obligations for NGOs to provide evidence of their impact and that they represented their intended beneficiaries in a justified manner (Lloyd & Casas, 2006).

All three of the above mentioned trends are conducive to the idea of NPM (New Public Management), where public and private agencies must effectively compete for the role as providers of government funds and citizens are seen as customers or clients of these service providers. Therefore, in NPM, governments take on the responsibility for 'steering' rather than 'rowing' (Miller & Dunn, 2007). In the development- and, more recently, the humanitarian sector, terms such as RBM (Results-Based Management) and 'managerialism' have especially gained a footing[2].

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[2] See Roberts, Roberts, Jones III, & Fröling (2005)

The rationale behind the RBM approaches is reflected in the British DfID's (Department for International Development), who have recently taken steps to establish an independent watchdog to monitor how and where aid is spent, and to ensure that the aid spending represents "good value for money" to the British taxpayer. The British International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, stated that this oversight of aid spending is "both morally right and in Britain's national interest", and that the British taxpayers were entitled to see "more evidence their money is being spent well" (Ford, 2010: para. 5). Mitchell concluded in stating that, "we need a fundamental change of direction - we need to focus on results and outcomes, not just inputs. Aid spending decisions should be made on the basis of evidence, not guesswork" (Ford, 2010: para. 6).

The current demand for efficiency and results, together with the advancement of RBAs in the international development and aid sector, has thus pushed concepts such as transparency, participation, efficiency, empowerment, and especially accountability, forward to the front of the stage of humanitarian missions. As Wenar (2006: 1) notes, "Accountability, it has been said, is the central issue of our time".

A response to the increased distrust from governments and the public has been for NGOs to promote self-regulatory procedures and transparency (Jordan & Tuijl, 2006). Donations and funding are especially dependent on the accountability factor now, which in effect, has become inseparable from the economic imperative (Lloyd & Casas, 2006). The Swedish International Development co-operation Agency (SIDA) has for instance recently asked agencies to sign up to Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standards in order to be eligible for funding (Mitchell, 2007).

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International (HAP)[3], established in 2003, is the first international self-regulatory body of NGOs working in the humanitarian sector and has lately come to be known as the "loudest champion of

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[3] The organization is registered as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International but is commonly referred to as HAP.

beneficiary voices" (Salkeld, 2009: 11) It is formulated as a rights-based approach, giving accountability to its beneficiaries a pride of place in its mission to ensure the dignity and rights of the victims of a humanitarian crisis. As of May 2010, it has 56 member agencies, which come from 20 different countries.[4] The overall goal is to assure to all stakeholders that the best humanitarian assistance possible is provided in every humanitarian situation. This is pursued by HAP-I through four main quality management activities, which includes the following: to provide support for the members to reach compliance with the HAP standard, to monitor the level of compliance, to accredit its members accordingly, and to finally help members overcome complaints on failure of compliance (HAP-I, 2008).

Since the HAP was introduced in 2003, only a few studies have assesed its value. In 2007, a report evaluating the HAP Complaints and Response Mechanisms (CRMs) stated that although there had been some progress with regards to NGO output[5], most of the beneficiaries did not wish to complain over misconduct despite the measures taken by NGOs (Lattu, Martin, Ahmed, & Nyambura, 2007). A follow-up report in 2010, also noted that CRMs are at the risk of increasing inequality locally by strengthening the most privileged disproportionately, although this is against their intentions (Smith, 2010). Findings like these convey some of the challenges HAP faces, which have been acknowledged by both members of HAP and those who have not been certified. Concerns have especially been raised over the weak documentation of the benefits of HAP certification and the limited possibility of implementing the HAP standards through humanitarian partnerships (Salkeld, 2009). Whether the certification scheme adds any value in comparison to other Q&A mechanisms lies at the heart of its justification and raises the question of whether this new accountability initiative is just another bureaucratic procedure, or whether it is indeed able to help NGOs become more accountable to its beneficiaries. This thesis will put these concerns in relation to TBBC (Thailand Burma Border Consortium) and some of its FPs (founding partners). TBBC consists of twelve founding member organizations

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[4] See HAP-I (2010)
[5] In the form of improved communication strategies, setting up complaints boxes etc.

where five are HAP members. TBBC was suggested certification in 2009, but remained independent of HAP certification on the basis of non-demonstrable benefits.

1.2 Objectives

- The study will examine the current practices and perceptions of accountability initiatives at TBBC.

- It will explore the motivations for TBBC dismiss the recommendation to become HAP certified. Additionally, it will describe whether the 2010 standard is likely to have any effect on these motivations.

- It will analyse the challenges and opportunities for TBBC to seek HAP-certification.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do TBBC and its founding partners practice and perceive their accountability initiatives?

2. What were the incentives for TBBC dismiss HAP certification and to what extent might the 2010 HAP-standard affect these choices?

3. What are the challenges and opportunities TBBC face in relation to gaining HAP certification?

1.5 Research Methodology

Two main research methods were applied in the case study to answer the research questions:

1. Primary research was conducted through qualitative key informant interviews with 6 representatives of FPs from DCA (Dan Church Aid), Act for Peace, the

IRC (International Rescue Committee), NCA (Norwegian Church Aid), 4 key informant interviews of staff members in managerial positions at TBBC and 3 staff members in operational positions at TBBC. In addition, a board Member from Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) was consulted. Interviews of TBBC staff members based in Bangkok and Mae Sot were conducted personally. Telephone interviews were conducted for long-distance interviews.[6]

2. Documentary research was conducted on both traditional and recent theories pertaining to accountability. Furthermore a number of documents specifically related to the case were valuable. Key documents were the HAP internal evaluation from 2009, the HAP Strategy Plan for 2009-2012, the TBBC program report July to December 2009, together with the latest HAP-secretariat and board reports from 2010.

The research for this thesis is based on a case study of TBBC. This approach was found appropriate for putting an accountability model such as the HAP-certification up against real world considerations. Although the findings cannot be generalized to other NGO partnerships, the method is valuable for narrowing down a complex field of study into a manageable topic (Shuttleworth, 2008).

In contrast to studies which aim to give a wide representation of the issues at hand, the case-study approach was furthermore chosen to gain more realistic and accurate responses to some of the deeper issues of the problem field. This gives some indications that contribute to partially answering the research questions but allow for further elaboration on the subject (Shuttleworth, 2008). The findings will thus serve as an illustrative and indicative, but they should by no means be understood as definitive nor absolute, answers to the research questions.

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[6] See appendix A

Open-ended semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate for the case study as they in comparison to closed questions are able to capture deeper data on the multi-facetted nature of accountability. As TBBC staff members work with accountability issues daily, they have an in-depth understanding of local accountability issues. The open structure was valuable in offering new understandings to accountability related issues. The open format also opened up for the possibility to 'probe' if certain questions were not addressed fully or if new aspects emerged. HAP-I was formed in 2003, but has so far only certified 8 members. Due to slow progress, it is still considered to be at an early stage of its development and is still a small player in the humanitarian sector. Awareness of the scheme is generally low within the humanitarian sector and even within HAP members as it has yet to become fully internalized. This was an additional reason to leave the format of the interviews open, as it gave the opportunity to modify questions depending on the respondent's awareness of HAP.

Nevertheless, the interviews were approached from three distinctive angles to steer towards accountability related themes.[7] The interviewed FP representatives were from NGOs who are already HAP members and therefore had a stronger possibility to answer more detailed questions on the challenges and opportunities of the HAP-certification scheme. As TBBC is currently not a HAP member, the interviews with staff took a starting point in local accountability issues before narrowing in on HAP-certification. In the beginning, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted. It was not necessary to repeat all questions to informants, so interviews became shorter and more focused at the later stages of the process. As some key informants were based in many different countries and offices telephone interviews were also conducted. Interviews were performed in TBBC's Bangkok office, TBBC's Mae Sot office, and via telephone. Arrangements were mostly facilitated via email, where questions were sent before-hand when possible. During the process, it was recognized that it was beneficial to attach the draft of the 2010 standard to a meeting proposal.

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[7] See appendices B, C and D

Up to two reminders where sent to unanswered emails within approximately one weeks duration.

The research aimed to interview subjects who were able to represent different levels of TBBC's organization in order to capture potentially different understandings of accountability depending on the informants' job function. Broadly, the themes of the interviews covered the current practices and perceptions of accountability affairs, how these could be improved, and whether HAP-certification would be a valuable means to make their humanitarian action more accountable.

The secondary research grounded the theoretical and practical concerns of Q&A mechanisms. The assessment of documents related to the case study incorporated the statute, the humanitarian accountability report, the code of conduct, the HAP standard program reports and internal evaluations. The implications and critical issues found in the literature review also guided the questions for interviews by identifying significant aspects of accountability beforehand.

1.6 Constraints and Limitations

The research, as part of a one- year MA degree, was subject to numerous constraints in time and resources. One challenge was the timeframe in which the research was conducted. A number of key informants were unavailable for longer periods of time due to holidays or leave.

The interviewed subjects were selected by recommendations from TBBC. A majority of TBBC staff members are non-internationals which meant that language barriers were a major constraint in ensuring a good representation of informants. Furthermore, interviews were often conducted in a slightly hypothetical manner as the HAP scheme was rather distant from some of the informants' job functions. Therefore, in order to capture answers related to the conceptual framework, the researcher recognizes that leading questions might have resulted in significant

misrepresentations. For example, if certain aspects of a question were unclear or not fully addressed, the researcher would give examples or put up scenarios to which informants were asked to respond. As qualitative interviews sometimes naturally offer contradictions and inconsistencies, some statement are paraphrased and compiled in order to clarify their meaning.

The topic is largely programmatic so in consideration of to ethical issues attached interviewing beneficiaries were not a valuable option. Furthermore, representatives from HAP-I, donors and CBOs (Community-Based Organisations) were discussed as valuable informants but after non-responsiveness, and complications related to arranging meetings, these were disregarded. Visiting some refugee camps and performing interviews within the camps would have been beneficial, but was not possible due to regulations of the Royal Thai Government (RTG).

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1.7 Scope of Research

This research aims to critically assess the HAP Q&A scheme through the lens of a specific case study. The intention is not to come up with alternative mechanisms for accountability, but rather, to discuss some of the dilemmas there might be for a middle-sized NGO like TBBC in connection with ensuring accountability to its beneficiaries. The critical approach has obviously steered the project in a specific direction. Although that the research has incorporated unexpected findings, it is recognized that the research design from the beginning has excluded other relevant theoretical and practical approaches.

The most profound criticism towards HAP, both internally and externally, is that its effects are undocumented. The research of this thesis does not attempt to fill this evidence gap nor give an absolute answer to the research problem. It will, however, be a partial contribution to the research problem by analysing why this gap exists and indications of what this might mean. In other words, it will not explain directly how

effective the HAP-certification is working, but highlight some of the challenges it faces through the case study of TBBC.

The data was mainly collected from HAP, TBBC and their FPs. As mentioned, it was decided not to incorporate primary data from remaining accountability stakeholders such as e.g. donors and beneficiaries. However, the primary data collected from TBBC and FP representatives will be put in relation to theoretical and secondary research that pertains to donor requirements and beneficiaries' perceptions. These are found in the broader accountability literature related to the case study.

1.8 Significance of Research

Through the interviews with TBBC and partners, the thesis critically assesses what has been broadly understood as a pioneering attempt to "make humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries" (HAP-I, 2010). Questioning a widely lauded initiative has merits in itself as a knowledge contribution to the current accountability discourse.

HAP, although enjoying considerable success, has met some challenges in reaching beyond their member organisations (Salkeld, 2009). Arguably, there is a lack of evidence supporting its impact which, in effect, might keep potential HAP members from certifying. In relation to this, the research raises some methodological concerns with regards to measuring accountability in a humanitarian context.

Although HAP actively pursues a strategic research agenda, which looks inwards through evaluations and outwards in terms of its impact, only a few external publications have so far highlighted the challenges and opportunities of HAP-certification for non-members. Assessments are often limited to single comments as part of a wider accountability discussion. Furthermore, the evaluations and implications are commonly based on the practical challenges of its implementation.

Finally, HAP-certification has scarcely been subject to meta-evaluation that puts it in a wider political context. Such a discussion can contribute to an

understanding of what strategic dilemmas HAP-certification might bring along for a middle-sized NGO such as TBBC. The goal is therefore to analyse a pioneering accountability initiative and reflect how one specific NGO, namely TBBC, deals with the accountability model it promotes. By assessing the incentives to adopt or reject HAP certification, it might thus be considered relevant to anybody interested in humanitarian accountability issues, especially for TBBC, their partners, and other external stakeholders.

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will explore a number of theories on accountability and relate them to the accountability model which the HAP framework is built upon. As common for any theoretical engagement, it takes a starting point in unravelling various traditional and modern theories and definitions of accountability. This is done to clarify the different usages of the accountability concepts and aims to problematic the terms accordingly. The usage of the accountability concept has broadly followed two lines of thinking. First, the accountability has traditionally been seen in the light of principal-agent relationship. These relationships came under criticism for favouring the interests of powerful actors in a covert manner. Second, constructed accountability models which clearly identify stakeholder obligations have emerged in an attempt to counter structural the power inequalities inherent to the principal agent relationships. The chapter will end in discussing HAP's model towards making humanitarian action more accountable. Throughout the literature review accountability theories will be put into relation with HAP in order to build a conceptual framework which is applied in the analysis chapters. The conceptual framework is outlined in the final section of the chapter.

2.1. Principal-Agent Theory

Edwards and Hulme (1996) (as cited in Roberts, Jones III, & Fröling, 2005: 1850) defined accountability as ''the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority (or authorities) and are held responsible for their actions''. The accountability concept was used as a call for NGOs to "get their houses in order" and report upwards to their donors (Edwards & Hulme, 1996: 264). The definition frequently appears in accountability theory as it sets the standard for what traditionally has been understood as NGO accountability.

The approach to accountability derives from principal-agent theory. Agency relationships begin when a principal (e.g. the government) makes the decision to bring in an agent (e.g. an NGO) to perform a service on their behalf. As the agent has more expertise and is more engaged in the field, their increased decision-making authority is expected to lead to more effective solutions. The implication of this model is that agents do not always act in the best interest of their principals. Therefore, principals must put in place mechanisms that can align the agency's interests with their own (AuditQuality, 2005: 6). Walsh and Lenihan (2006), for example, argue that many NGOs are managed by unqualified personnel which results in an inefficient management of resources. Therefore, the authors recommend organisations to look towards the for-profit sector to gain some of their skills, and to apply the models which the for-profit sectors have already developed to become accountable.

The principal agent model implies some form of power differentials that allow for answerability and enforceability. (Newell & Bellour, 2002) Answerability means that agents have to be transparent, share information about their activities and explain their actions. Enforceability is when principals have mechanisms to sanction if answerability does not live up to the principals' expectations. These components should then correct any actions which misrepresents the principal. In other words, the principal-agent theory assumes that information can reveal the truth about behaviour "thus making, corrective action or rectification possible" (Weisband & Ebrahim, 2007: 16). The principal-agent model requires a large degree of transparency from NGOs to donors in order for it to work. Gaventa (2006), however, raises concerns over the narrow focus on transparency, which has the consequence of simply reducing accountability to technical management and financial obligations. Hence, Gaventa (2006) argues that the term 'accountancy' is more appropriate. Another implication of the principal agency theory is that problems are simply understood to be the cause of mismanagement. Accordingly, the problems are attempted to be solved in a simplified manner through more regulation, sanctions or stricter conditions on funding. In other words, the claimed solutions to accountability gaps are all too often over-simplified

and misguided by linear thinking[8]. Arguably, there is a great need for more 'system-wide evaluations' that look into the more difficult but crucial questions related to accountability and "the broader political dimensions within which the humanitarian system operates" (Hoffmann, Roberts, Shoham, & Harvey, 2004: 2).

As accountability mechanisms are part of systemic relationships, they tend to result in accountability that favours the interests of dominating actors (Weisband & Ebrahim, 2007). The concept of accountability is therefore often attacked for the relativity of its usage. Cavill and Sohail (2007) assert that since accountability can mean many things to many people, the definition tends to depend on what is considered purposeful. Due to the vagueness of the accountability concept, it can be conveniently used to advance powerful interests. Fowler (1998: 140) argues that the usages of accountability concepts adhere to "terminological mystifications". In this way, explanations of what is really going on are avoided, as such attempts might reveal "fundamental differences in position and interpretation" (Fowler, 1998: 140). This argument is backed by Newell and Wheeler (2006), who recognise that the definition is taken on and influenced by a broad spectrum of international donor and academic discourses. As the concept is malleable and nebulous, its connotations change according to any context specific agenda. According to Ebrahim (2007), covert top-down driven accountability mechanisms are therefore able to thwart system-wide accountability systems. These principal-agent models of accountability are therefore increasingly understood to myopic and in need of innovation.

2.2 Constructivist Accountability

Due to the unequal power relationship between humanitarian agencies and their beneficiaries, there is often a lack of both answerability and enforceability. As a result, accountability to beneficiaries is ultimately nonexistent. The RBAs which have recently moved into the humanitarian sector have opened up for a re-thinking of

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[8] Linear thinking refers to an understanding where you believe that the input of an accountability mechanism will lead to the same output.

accountability through a constructivist approach. As the 2010 HAP standard acknowledges "Accountability is now more often understood not as an exclusive right of those with authority but rather as a right of all who are affected by the use of that authority" (HAP-I, 2010: 4). This has resulted in many alternative interpretations and usages of accountability, which seek to reverse the inherent power differentials that exist in the principal-agent relationship. The development and aid sector is now argued to be directly focusing on strengthening the accountability relationship of NGOs to their beneficiaries, who above all, provide the rationale for the NGOs' existence (Lloyd & Casas, 2006).

In order to build an alternative model, the construction of accountability takes a starting point in defining the relationship of accountability actors and their respective positions of power as to "who is obliged to call for an account and who is obliged to give an explanation" of action (Newell & Bellour, 2002: 2). A common idea is to divide accountability into numerous forms of instrumental usability such as downwards, horizontal, internal, surrogate, practical or strategic accountability.[9] Focused action on respective sub-categories of accountability is then used to construct a language of conduct and performance which is to be formalized through specific mechanisms. The principles, codes of conduct and standards are thus to "define expectations and order social relations by embedding them within a recognized and accepted framework of application" (Farkas & Molnar, n.d.: 3) Organisations are then seen as socially constructed entities that attempt to construct accountability which accommodates the requirements of different stakeholders and becomes part of the daily organizational life (Weisband & Ebrahim, 2007). From this understanding HAP's terminology of beneficiaries is rather contentious. Slim for instance argues that the beneficiary term undermines that people have a say in their own survival and that claimants would be more appropriate. The beneficiary term was indeed discussed when forming the HAP-standard. Nevertheless, it was adopted although HAP recognises that other terms might be more appropriate. As it appears numerous times

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[9] See Cavill and Sohail

in the founding documents, HAP has decided to keep it in order to avoid confusions. (HAP-I, 2008)

As mentioned, it is a common feature of academics to disseminate accountability into different sub-categories. Cavill and Sohail (2007) have for example attempted to divide accountability into strategic and practical accountability. From their terminology, practical accountability is about producing evidence of short-term outputs, meeting standards and being transparent. Strategic accountability on the other hand has a focus on reaching long-term goals such as political and societal change. Cavill and Sohail (2007) conclude in their study that international NGOs are overly focused on practical accountability at the cost of organisational learning. This could be enhanced by applying accountability strategically. The technical and managerialist approach to solving accountability gaps have thus raised concerns that NGOs are overlooking and avoiding the deeper challenges of eliminating societal inequality through an 'audit culture' (Lewis, 2007: 134). These deeper challenges are less manageable and evaluations are often sacrificed on behalf of presenting good output practices. Thus, the role of NGOs as technical managers is a threat towards the very mission these organizations were formed to solve (Wallace, Bornstein, & Chapman, 2006) Mosse (2004) in his anthropological study of participation policies critically reflects over this assumption and ends up placing himself between critical and instrumental approaches to accountability challenges. By this, he does not doubt that policies work. They just do not work in the way they are intended to. This forms the dualism of an aid project which is created by public and hidden transcripts of events[10]. NGOs and beneficiaries alike, he claims, create a space for everyday action through the hidden transcripts which works autonomous from legitimising management systems. However, at the same time they work to actively sustain them through the public transcripts (Mosse, 2004: 665) Related to this line of thinking Ossewarde, Nijof and Heyse (2008, pp. 44-45) have outlined four categories of legitimacy that international NGO's are subject to when trying to improve the life of

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[10] public and hidden transcripts are sometimes referred to as public and private accounts see Cooke & Kothari (2001)

their beneficiaries. Normative legitimacy is argued to be founded in NGO mission statements and is increasingly being understood to be insufficient in ensuring legitimacy. Regulatory legitimacy is based on whether the organization is acting within the law of its home and host country. Cognitive legitimacy is whether an NGO has the expertise to pursue their mission. Finally, output legitimacy refers to whether NGO are able to materialize their objectives. Their main conclusion is that the more external stakeholders press for increased management of international NGO work through Q&A mechanisms, the more they obstruct the NGO's ability to fulfill its mission. (Ossewaarde, Nijof, & Heyse, 2008: 51)

The complexities of managing and measuring impact in humanitarian action have led to some innovative approaches towards building more comprehensive research methodologies in order to better depict the realities of change in a vulnerable context. Such 'thick description- would arguably lead to a better evaluation of humanitarian action as it is not underutilized with regards to what works and what fails (Ebrahim, 2006; Bryant, 2007). Ramalingam, Jones, Reba & Young (2008). exceed these expectations by throwing themselves into complexity sciences from the idea that complex problems demand complex research, which in effect should lead to complex solutions.[11] However, when it comes to implementing an approach derived from natural sciences and chaos theory in the realm of social sciences, it essentially comes down to methodological discussion of cost and benefits with regards to prioritization of scientific rigor over more simplified explanations. The latter being the starting point of any form of theorizing "if you want to say anything at all other than that everything is complex, interconnected and unknowable" (Dow, 2003).

2.3 The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

HAP defines accountability as "using power responsibly" (HAP-I, 2010: para. 1). It promotes an agenda that goes beyond seeing accountability as the duty to report

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[11]Paul Currion states: "this line of research is one of the most important developments in humanitarian and development studies in many years, a potentially critical addition to the ideological foundations of our work" "(such as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership)" (Currion, 2008) The comprehensive research approach is a *must read* for anybody interested in the complexity of performing research in humanitarian situations.

to donors, by means of explaining reasons for actions and decisions to beneficiaries. Partnerships are to be based on a mutual commitment to shared values and visions, and to relationships of mutual trust and influence (HAP-I, 2007). In theory mutual accountability can be defined as "accountability among autonomous actors that is grounded in shared values and visions and in relationships of mutual trust and influence" (Brown, 2007: 95). Important to this, is that the additional requirements in the 2010 standard for partnership-based members do not require that members demand full standard compliance from their partners. The 'burden' to document how they have agreed upon standards still lies upon the membership organisation.

The HAP promotes itself as a self-regulatory initiative. Lloyed & Casas (2006) have divided such mechanism into three broad categories. The first category they name aspirational codes of principles, which do not entail any formalised mechanisms to ensure good conduct. The second category can be ascribed to organisations that pursue a certain code of conduct where more defined standards are set to be met. Finally, in the third category we find the certification schemes where compliance with clear standards is verified by a third party. HAP has gone through all three stages in its seven years of existence. The partnership started off by setting a number of principles for humanitarian action in 2003. As these was no systematic approach to monitor whether organisation were following the principles the HAP standard in Quality and Accountability Management was built in 2007 to consistently validate the management system through certification of member organisations. (HAP-I, 2007) Finally, in 2008 the HAP Code of Conduct (CoC) was introduced. According to Salkeld (2009), The HAP-certification is strongest selling point of the framework. It covers six workable benchmarks for certification assessment which verifies and recognises compliance:

1. Accountability commitments and management
2. Staff competencies
3. Information sharing
4. Participation

5. Complaints-handling

6. Monitoring evaluation and learning

The standards are not groundbreaking and commonly understood to be elements of good humanitarian practice. In this sense, similar ideas exist in Spheres Humanitarian Charter and the People in Aid Code of good practice. It is thus the ability to certify against these standards of which HAP is a front runner of. (Lloyd & Casas, 2006) The rationale behind third party verification and certification at first glance falls in line with the instrumental 'surrogate accountability' approach advocated by Rubenstein (2007). She advocates for a third party to act as surrogate to ensure accountability, through standard-setting, information-sharing and sanctioning. In theory the approach is promising but when recognising the wider consequence of sanctioning an NGO on behalf of disaster survivors the model holds several limitations. Rubenstein herself points out the possibility of beneficiaries requesting standards that work to the detriment of accountability and that sanctioning an NGO can have deeper consequences for its beneficiaries. Nevertheless the inherent voluntary character of self-regulation and the concomitant inability to sanction adequately at the crux of the criticism pointed towards self-regulatory and third party verification initiatives (Lloyd & Casas, 2006).

As a predecessor to HAP the Humanitarian Ombudsman Project did actually explore the possibilities creating a regulatory body which could "act as an impartial and independent voice for those people affected by disaster and conflict" (Mitchell & Doane, 1999: 123) It was suggested that the UN assume the role as ombudsman, but they rejected and no other organisations were able or willing to take on the responsibility. Finally, a Sphere assessment gave the final blow by declaring that such initiatives "were only effective in societies with well-established public services and fair, effective and accessible judicial systems" (HAP-I, 2010: para. 4).

Because of these limitations, the Humanitarian Ombudsman transformed into the Humanitarian Accountability Project which was to explore alternatives ways of ensuring accountability to victims of a humanitarian crises. The research resulted in

recommendations to build a softer form of policing through self-regulation based on partnerships where organizations could receive strategic and technical support. Compliance to a number of principles would then be ensured through monitoring and peer-pressure. (Jordan, 2007)

2.4 Impact

Humanitarian agencies and research institutions have generally failed to demonstrate the impact of humanitarian action on wider humanitarian concerns such as recovery, livelihoods, capacity-building, protection and rights (Mitchell, 2007). The generic methodological constraints and factors particular to humanitarian action are often recognized as being the cause of superficial evaluations.[12] Examples of these include the vulnerable operating environment, the need for immediate action in a crisis situation, an humanitarian imperative that values action over analysis, compressed timeframes, scarce resources, limited access populations and space for analysis, and finally the diverging perceptions of the core objectives of humanitarian aid (Hoffmann, Roberts, Shoham, & Harvey, 2004). The complexity of these factors also makes it a daunting task to prove causality of interventions and attribute impact to stakeholders, where many actors have multiple and diverging interests. This is especially because impact in the humanitarian context is just as much about averting negative change as bringing about positive change (Hoffmann, Roberts, Shoham, & Harvey, 2004). Because the humanitarian sector has failed to prove the value of their activities, they are now understood to be using beneficiary accountability as a proxy for impact. The understanding is that Q&A mechanisms such as HAP-certification will increase consultation and participation and result in more appropriate and effective programming (Mitchell, 2007).

After a challenging upstart the HAP is, according to its secretariat, convincing the sector of its merits, and now "poised to capitalize on the achievements to date and be recognized as a leader in quality assurance and accountability in the humanitarian sector" (HAP Secretariat, 2009: 36) Yet HAP has been subject to some criticism. First

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[12] see: (Hoffmann, Roberts, Shoham, & Harvey, 2004)

it often criticized for the lack of documentation supporting its value, as well as the lack of existing tools able to measure its benefits. The HAP-standard is, so far, based solely on output or process indicators. These do not attend to the deeper concerns of the humanitarian crises as they are isolated from external influence and their ability to impact the wider system. Second, obligations to implement HAP principles through partners had not been sufficiently specified. Third, the humanitarian imperative has made it difficult to certify multi-mandated agencies. Fourth, HAP has not have the capacity to certify the organizations who requested their assistance (Salkeld, 2009).

HAP has responded to these challenges in a number of ways. First, it has put out its hand to high-level research institutions to collaborate on creating an indicator which can be used to document its benefits [13]. The overall goal of this new focus area is to capture the impact of the HAP standard, which the HHI already has developed a preliminary model for.[14] Second, it has specified the requirements for documenting accountability partnerships in the draft of new 2010 HAP standard. Third, the new strategic plan opens up for a more broad understanding of humanitarianism to also include development initiatives. Finally, it has adopted a country-based strategy shifting its focus from short-term engagement in many countries to a longer engagement in a few countries.

2.5 Conceptual framework

The literature review explored a number of theories that have contributed to the global debate on accountability. It is fair to say that the once dominant understanding of accountability, at least in theory, has gradually moved away from a simple top-down understanding founded in principal-agency theory, towards less demarcated interpretations that are constructed to strengthen accountability towards the end-receivers of humanitarian aid. What is also clear is that the nature of accountability is largely dependent on the incentives for its usage and the context in

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[13] The list of strategic research partnerships consists of prominent institutions such as the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, the Law & Policy Forum, Virginia Tech, the Oxford Refugees Studies Centre, the London School of Economics and Kings college London (Salkeld, 2009; HAP Secretariat, 2009)
[14] See Foran (2010)

which it is applied. HAP is commonly acknowledged to be a frontrunner of accountability to beneficiaries and has recently come to be known as the loudest voice of beneficiaries (Salkeld, 2009). It has, however, been subject to some criticism, especially with regards to the limited documentation of its benefits (Salkeld, 2009). To overcome these challenges HAP has undergone some practical and strategic which might influence TBBC's position towards HAP-certification. The following analysis will be built on a relatively simple conceptual framework which seeks to analyse the challenges and opportunities for TBBC to become HAP certified. The analysis is based on how accountability is constructed in the case of TBBC. It is argued that constructed through the pressure of an audit-culture, but also by the local interpretations of NGOs. This is what creates the dualism of accountability through public and private transcripts. Both are significant for the legitimacy of NGOs. The public transcripts are more evidence-based and address external stakeholders. They function as mobilising metaphors for NGOs to operate. The transcripts follow global standards, and are created through global partnerships and an evidence-based accountability model. The private transcripts are more contextual and address local accountability stakeholders through a trust-based accountability model. TBBC tries to capture the middle space between these two models and is losing legitimacy.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS: CONSTRUCTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When TBBC staff members expressed their understanding of accountability, the most common answer was that they were part of a two-way communication between donors and beneficiaries. Some answers were short and quite superficial and others more well-informed and reflected a deeper understanding of how accountability can be multi-facetted. The Community Outreach Officer (COO) was especially informative of how trying to be accountable to one group, sometimes can impede on others of accountability. He explained that "in most of the camps, there is a lot of diversity and, therefore, there are naturally many different needs which have to be taken into account when planning a policy. Accountability is an intricate element of these procedures [policy planning and implementation]" (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). According to the Deputy Executive Director (DED) at TBBC, they are well covered with regards to the scope of their accountability mechanisms. She stressed that these had been built up in collaboration with their beneficiaries through lessons-learned by the course of action taken over the past 25 years. The DED also referred to the fact that TBBC is signed up to CoC (Codes of Conduct) and Q&A mechanisms which work in collaboration with HAP (S. Thompson, personal commincation, June 16, 2010). TBBC are signed up to three external CoC's, namely, the International Red Cross CoC, the Red Crescent Movement CoC and NGOs in Disaster Relief CoC. Staff members are also obligated to follow the CCSDPT (Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand) Interagency[15] CoC. TBBC also follows Sphere's guidelines as outlined in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief Project (TBBC, 2009: 87). Additionally, HAP has provided PSEA training for The IRC (International Rescue Committee) PSAE officer who is mandated to work closely with CCSDPT and the AM (Administration Manager) at TBBC. Therefore, awareness

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[15] The CCSDPT CoC covers the Core Principles set out by The Interagency Standing Committee Task Force on PSEA in Humanitarian Crises.

raising and training on PSAE provided to the CBOs (Community-Based Organizations) follows the HAP framework, where ad hoc collaboration with HAP is a possibility when needed (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010). In support of the level of accountability mechanisms in place, an evaluation report published by NCA in 2007, stated that "the staff is committed and professional, monitoring systems and logistical systems are excellent, accountability is on a high level, lines are short, programmes are relevant, and internally, TBBC has attention for staff training and motivation in this difficult type of work" (Meer, 2007: 8). The current state of accountability affairs was further supported by the representative from Act for Peace, who noted "The answer is simple (as far as I'm concerned), TBBC could be HAP certified with very little effort, though it is unclear what the benefit would be. They already operate according to all HAP principles and it is unlikely that it would attract any further funding" (A. Gee, personal communication, August 13, 2010).

Nevertheless, a few concerns were raised in relation to TBBC's current accountability approach when seen in the light of HAP-certification. A CMPM (Camp Management Program Manager) suggested in relation to HAP that especially participation and communication could be improved. (S. Komchum, personal communication August 30, 2010). The FO (Field Officer) at TBBC, though, was more critical in his tone and explained that the first thing that came to his mind was the "dollars and cents." He referred to the large amount of complicated monitoring and auditing manuals with language that would be alien to most people - but of course would keep donors satisfied (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). The AM (Administration Manager) and PSM (Programme Support Manager) at TBBC took a softer stance stressing the 'middle way' as a balanced outcome of beneficiary needs and promises made to the donors. (A. Sopinpornraksa, personal communication, August 5, 2010; J. Foster, personal communication, August 23, 2010). It seemed to be that the more engaged the informants were in the field the more thought provoking their answers would be. Although, it is not surprising that informants would respond in relation to their different work functions and expertise, it does show how accountability internally has different meanings and is implemented

through different mandates. This has some obvious methodological implications when trying to trying to asses' an NGO's practices and perceptions of accountability. Especially, if the NGO is treated as a single entity and the group who is most represented comes to determine how an organisation uses accountability.

3.1 Audit culture

The effects of the so-called 'audit culture' on humanitarian action was widely recognized within TBBC. The Executive Director (ED) explains that in the past, TBBC's humanitarian efforts were more like "a group of friends who helped" [16] in an aid program based on trust, while mentioning that "the way we organized help back then would not be acceptable today" (Bolt, 2007: para. 6). He further notes how his job has changed due to the more rigid standards pushed forward by donors (Bolt, 2007). According to the COO, the increase in auditing has been an on-going process over the last three to five years and has moved forward in "leaps and bounds" with the increased requirements for monitoring from donors (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). According to the FO, TBBC was until recently founded upon a trust-based relationship. To his understanding TBBC had been financially secured and received 'buckets of money' due to long-term engagement in the refugee camps and the achievements of the ED (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). Because of this, each camp had rather simple forms of monitoring "which could fit onto a single page" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). To his understanding, the global financial crises had recently forced TBBC to "strengthen" the monitoring mechanisms to the extent that they have had to implement the amount of ten years work in just three years.

TBBC's latest programme report states how it in 2006 ran into tits first serious funding crises since it began its activities, and how the problem ever since has become chronic. A number of factors, such as an increased camp-population, higher food costs and exchange rates are listed as a cause (TBBC, 2009: 61). From the interviews, it was also clear that both TBBC (especially operational staff) and partners

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[16] The two quotes by Jack Dunford are personally translated from Danish to English.

were sceptical of the auditing culture in fear of it diverting too much attention to donor satisfaction instead of focusing efforts locally to secure long-term viability. There was also expressed some frustration with the fact that the donors still seemed to be unsatisfied (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010).

3.2 Accountability to Beneficiaries?

Although accountability to donors was considered important, there was a widespread understanding that accountability to beneficiaries should take a high priority amongst FPs and TBBC. The Humanitarian Response Director (HRD) at DCA explained that after years of increased financial scrutiny, it was now time to pay more attention to the end-receivers of their funds. A key factor was to open up the process of funding for participation and criticism, so that beneficiaries could be incorporated in decision-making on "how policies should be programmed and performed or whether they should be performed at all" (L. Henry, personal communication, November 26, 2008). The HRD also referred to the benefits of having some standard procedures, but at the same time it was important to avoid ending up with organizations that are so regulated that there is "no room for innovation and thinking outside of the box" (L. Henry, personal communication, November 26, 2008). Partner organizations' representatives stressed that for years they had been subject to financial scrutiny, so now the time had come to put beneficiaries first, or as the HRD stated, it was time to go "back to basics". (L. Henry, personal communication, 26, November 2008). TBBC on the other hand, have been running a program based on the immediate needs for Burmese refugees for as long as the organization has existed. Only recently, in 2006, did they experience their first funding crises. This has inevitably led to some pressure to pursue funding sources more systematically. They have been forced to review their funding options, but due to the scale and nature of their program they have to remain dependent on government sources. In effect, governments are requested to be engaged more strategically and their responses better coordinated (TBBC, 2009). In relation to HAP, the FO suggested that HAP-certification should be applied to donors (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). The potentials of creating a donor certification scheme would however seem bleak when taking into account how such a scheme

would be financed. HAP's strategic plan for 2009-2012 shows that an average 70,5% of their revenue is expected to come from donations (HAP-I, 2010). Although not discussing an actual HAP certification for donors, The HAP Secretariat (2009) has however discussed a donors meeting with some donors where the initial response was encouraging, though nobody so far taken the lead in arranging such a meeting. Similar initiatives do however exist, such as the GDHI (Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative) which brings together 36 humanitarian donor governments. Notably, TBBC have actively pursued their funding strategy at GDHI since 2006 (TBBC, 2009: 61).

TBBC staff members' critical positions towards the auditing culture seemed justified in comparison with their HAP-member FPs. Their response is arguably dependent on their stage of professionalization. From this perspective, the partner organizations as big multi-mandated organizations, who have undergone 'technical management' for a longer period of time, have all got the procedures in place which allows them to find some ground to explore alternatives whereas, in the words of the FO, TBBC is "still playing a game of catch up" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). The question then, is whether a formalized approach through HAP certification would be a valuable tool to counter the audit-culture accountability and effectively increase beneficiary accountability.

3.3 Information-sharing, Participation and Empowerment

The literature review outlined some of the many implications of implementing rights-based concepts in a humanitarian context. It is therefore not surprising that most of the interviewed TBBC staff members were critical towards effectively implementing information-sharing, participation and empowerment in accordance with the HAP standards. An immediate funding crisis would force management to act fast, and would not open up for any beneficiary participation in decision-making In relation to the funding crises, operational staff members would simply be informed of higher-level decisions to budget cuts. These decisions would then have to be "worked" at field-level before being passed on to the beneficiaries (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010).. Another concern was whether many refugees, who in their whole life have been excluded from policy processes, would

have the capacity to take part in such participatory processes. (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010).

The attempts to build these capabilities were often undermined by the large degree of turnover caused by-resettlement – a 'durable' solution which itself offers a very unaccountable processes. Although resettlement is recognized by TBBC as the only durable solution for the refugees who leave, it has meant that a disproportionate amount of the highest educated and most skilled refugees have left the camp, as they are the most eligible for re-settlement. This has been a severe blow to the CMM (Camp Management Model), which in 2007/8, had been losing up to 75 percent of its skilled staff in health, education and camp management (TBBC, 2009: 9). In effect, TBBC has been addressing basic skills replacement rather than strengthening delivery services (TBBC, 2009). A further implication in terms of accountability is that the criteria for selection are given by resettlement countries where certain groupings are excluded. This has led to a number of cases where refugees have taken measures to fit these criteria by changing religious affiliation, and not recognizing ethnicity and family relations. Moreover, cases of direct fraud had occurred[17] (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). Some positive comments on the HAP standard were also put forward. It was mentioned that there might be some practical benefits of "meeting with beneficiaries and discuss what sort of accountability they would like TBBC to adopt" (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). Other members saw it as a good starting point to address challenges more consistently, although TBBC at the moment did not have any major shortcomings. CMPM stated that "the HAP standard is interesting and quite comprehensive; there are some areas where we could be doing a little more. We do try with communication, but it is hard to reach people at the lowest level. The high and middle level [beneficiaries] understand important pieces of information but the lowest don't. A little bit here and a little there could also be done with participation" (S. Komchum, personal communication, August 30, 2010).

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[17] In 2009, UNHCR began investigations of 300 alleged fraud cases (TBBC, 2009)

The FO was more critical of the requirements for participation. For example, if it was a requirement to do a workshop with the beneficiaries on programming and monitoring activities the beneficiaries, in his opinion, would simply did not hold capacity at the moment – it would be a precondition to build this up first (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). That beneficiaries play an active role in 'the interpretive community' reflected in how refugees were reluctant to filing a complaint, as it was seen to be at the risk of slowing down or complicating a potential resettlement process. The possibility of losing face or being branded as a trouble maker was also understood to restrain complaints.[18] References were also made to how good intentions sometimes could have an adverse effect and lead to more local inequality such as corruption and fraud.[19]

3.4 Camp Management Model

Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging the lengthy process, some real empowerment was recognized to exist within the original CMM, which is understood to be doing "exceedingly" well (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). Operational staff members gave many examples of how more freedom meant more risk-taking, but at the same time how negative impacts of misconduct to a greater extent were being understood by camp leaders and management. After a long implementation process, they were "finally opening up to ensuring some checks and balances" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010).

TBBC has lately expanded their scope of income generation activities by supplementing their Community Agriculture and Nutrition Project and Longyi Weaving Project with an Entrepreneur Development, Grants and Savings Project and a shelter construction initiative (TBBC, 2009). Over the last two years, TBBC has also received help from an external consultant supported by SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation) to formalize internal-external beneficiary

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[18] See Lattu, Martin, Ahmed, & Nyambura (2007) for further examples of local constraints in the Thai refugee camps in the HAP-evaluation of PSEA mechanisms.)
[19] HAP-I themselves have documented some of the challenges of working with community-based management. See: Gasagara & Sorensen (2010)

communication strategy. This has meant that beneficiaries have been involved in formulating certain announcements and publications. This is to ensure that they are informed of upcoming changes in a "timely, accurate and professional manner" (TBBC, 2009: 58). The beneficiary communications group also regularly formulates a news update which includes some information related to complaints (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010).

The CMM is strongly supported throughout the TBBC. This is supported by the fact that the objective "to support a mutually accountable community-based management model which ensures equity, diversity and gender balance" is clearly specified in TBBC's Strategic Plan Objectives, 2009-2013 (TBBC, 2009: iv). However, a major constraint to the foundation of the CMM is that it is understood to be less well-received with donors, who presumably are at unease with responsibility being delegated to beneficiaries because of the aforementioned risks. The FO expressed that to the best of his understanding, this arises from a fear of having "the prisoners running the prison" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). This fear can best be understood in terms of the 'broken feedback loop'[20]. With regards to accountability, foreign aid serves as a particular case of performance feed-back loops. The intended beneficiaries of NGOs and governments are not the same people they collect their revenues from. It is possible for beneficiaries to observe performance directly, but they cannot sanction or reward on the basis of performance. Therefore, donors are still most accountable to their national citizens, who are only indirectly exposed to performance. It would thus be at the interest of aid agencies to keep the risk of bad misrepresentation of humanitarian aid as minimal as possible (Martens, 2002).

3.5 Legitimacy

The awareness of the HAP certification scheme was rather limited at TBBC. The awareness was naturally highest amongst the staff-members who work on HAP

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[20] A broken feedback loop exists when beneficiaries are not able to give feedback on the services that are provided to them.

specific issues and programme managers. Most field staff remembered peripheral or superficial discussions that did not address any specific details of how the scheme worked. The CMPM mentioned that it was the first time she had heard of the HAP-standard (S. Komchum, personal communication August 30, 2010). HAP-certification was also recalled as an initiative that was aimed towards pleasing donors and had not seemed relevant at the time it was discussed. As the COO explained, HAP did not imprint itself on the staff's minds. He specifically stated that, "If you spoke to people about HAP a lot of people would just frown and not know what you meant. I have never met anyone from HAP. We should reflect on our planning, but it is a bit of a distance. It would nice to see a face to it on a personal level" (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). The limitations of HAP's outreach are thus widely acknowledged despite that four of TBBC's twelve founding organizations are HAP members. The interviewed partner representatives stated that they had discussed HAP certification with TBBC. However, the FP representatives gave three different accounts of TBBC's response. The NCA representative re-called that it had been received positively, hence that there was no need for any further convincing (M. Volden, personal communication, August 13, 2010). The HHR at DCA expressed that it would br a good idea but that TBBC had seemed reluctant (E. Johnson, personal communication, June 25, 2010). The representative from Act for Peace stated that they understandably were not that interested as their accountability mechanisms already were strong (A. Gee, personal communication, August 19,2010). This suggests that the discussions had been superficial avoiding any deeper meaning of what a HAP-certification would really mean for TBBC.

With regards to the more stipulated requirements for partnerships, the NCA representative said that "despite its good intentions, this is of course an extra requirement" (M. Volden, personal communication, August 13, 2010). If TBBC was to sign up for HAP-certification, it would have to follow these requirements with all partner CBOs. Rearranging their accountability relationships with the local partners would, however, not be a major challenge as mutual expectations are already stipulated in their LoAs (Letters of Agreements) with their respective partners (S. Komchum, personal communication August 30, 2010).

3.6 Impact

The PSAE coordinator shared some concerns about HAP creating a impact indicator by stating that "I am sceptical to whether you can develop an indicator for measuring how much a situation has been improved in terms of NGO accountability or even reduced level of abuse or non- abuse by NGO workers. Having a measurable baseline is next to impossible, as it is permanently changing" (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010). And finally concluded "they [HAP] are based in Geneva and work through partners. It would be difficult to get a sense of NGO accountability without being on the spot. Even with an emergency deployment team it would be difficult to measure improvement or deterioration of NGO accountability. This is not limited to HAP. No matter how much donors or auditors request it, numbers on paper are not going to tell you what the situation is like in reality." (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010).

A further constraint to building a valuable impact indicator is the fact that the indicator must cover a broad scope of complex issues. This would result in the scheme being even more difficult to comprehend. What is even more difficult, is attributing impact to HAP members, or showing a correlation between the activities of a HAP member and any given change or prevention of negative impact. Seeing this in the light of TBBC, they are a consortium of 12 founding organizations where each follows a different set of standards. The issue becomes more complex when considering that many of TBBC's activities are organized through the CCSDPT in collaboration with a number of CBOs. In contrast to the IRC representative, the HHR at DCA argued that it was possible to attribute HAP as having contributed to the increased quality of programs. The proof was found in what he referred to as 'anecdotal evidence'. He, however, suggested that HAP perform a more systemic analysis to strengthen the evidence base. To his understanding, HAP is currently reaching this phase. He conveyed this by stating, "What we have got at the moment is anecdotal evidence; we don't have a solid body of data. It would, for example, be beneficial to document its effects to visit 30 random camps in a specific country. The only criteria should be that 15 of them should be where HAP standards are being

applied and 15 where they are not. Finally, they could be compared to document its effects" (E. Johnson, personal communication, June 25, 2010). The idea of comparing camp models was also brought up by the FO in relation to the TBBC's CMM. He remarked, "I have begged the management to do a comparative study of our camp-management model and other camps where beneficiaries are not involved in the distribution chain" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). In his opinion, the activities of the camp population engaging in food distribution and population management is empowering, dignifying, and helps to "build capacity," but these do not correspond to the accountability criteria requested by donors (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). The Camp Management Programme Manager preferred qualitative research if HAP was to facilitate valuable evaluations (S. Komchum, personal communication August 30, 2010). A resource centre for sharing different stories of success and lessons learned in various situations was, therefore, understood to be a good idea (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). This was supported by the representative from Act for Peace who noted that "The most useful would be if they were able to collect some of the stories of success [….] and see what a difference it can make hearing from the people themselves. For example, case studies from the people themselves of what a difference it can make would help to kick it a long", but he added that the indicators "might still be useful" (A. Gee, personal communication, August 19,2010). The question then, is whether a formalized approach through HAP certification will be a valuable tool to counter the audit-culture accountability and effectively increase beneficiary accountability. This will be analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

According to the FP representatives, HAP membership had not led to many major internal changes in their respective organisations. It instead opened up for a platform to promote their existing accountability strategies. (L. Henry, personal communication, 26, November 2008). HHR stated that "an external certification against bench-marked standards was a good opportunity to promote initiatives which already fit well into our value-base and strategies"[....]"HAP is a good way of systematizing this approach" (E. Johnson, personal communication, June 25 2010). This was seconded by the NCA representative who explained that "HAP brings together the bits and pieces which are already in place. It gives a new angle and a new opportunity to analyze our interaction with beneficiaries" (M. Volden, personal communication, August 13, 2010).

TBBC could neither recall any direct changes or influences of their partner's HAP membership or certification. The reason for this could of course be that although staff members might apply the tools they do not necessarily associate them with HAP. (S. Thompson, personal communication, September 3, 2010). Practical changes would neither be expected at TBBC, if they themselves were to become HAP-certified. They already felt they lived up to HAP principals and standards, so if TBBC were to sign up it would more be a case of 'why not' rather than a belief in that their modes of operation could be improved significantly. (S. Thomson, personal communication, June 16, 2010) When explaining why HAP certification was not relevant the DED at TBBC expressed some resistance and stated that "the principles are fine but an actual certificate is not relevant [....] People have to take the spirit and use what is appropriate - not be a slave to them by obtaining certification" (S. Thompson, personal communication, September 3, 2010). She further explained that ensuring a general standard across broad spectrum of mission-cases in many different countries

would be relevant to its FPs. TBBC on the other had only covers one mission-case (S. Thompson, personal communication, June 16 2010).

However, the most influential factor on a decision to take on or dismiss HAP-certification was whether it was a pre-requisite[21] for funding or not. As explained by the DED "We looked into it just to see whether it would be a pre-requisite. It is not, so we looked at in terms of whether it was useful to focus on.... There was no push internally a part partner only suggested it would be good for the donors. Only 2 out of the twelve were certified and there was no pressure from other members. At the moment it is not a priority therefore actual certification is not discussed. Some parts are however have been used as a guideline in the daily work (S. Thompson, personal commincation, September 3, 2010). The HRM also referred to HAP certification as a case of priority. He explained that "with HAP it is not a specific requirement or condition of funders. I am sure if that was a condition we would want to do it, but it has never been imposed by donors. If HAP was a compliance issue of certain donors we would have to look at it more seriously" [....] I'm not saying we would never do it, at the moment I just don't think we need to do it to be compliant. It takes time and resources. It is a question of timing when we do it and how we do it and the moment we are occupied with living up to the a number of other standards. (L. Buckles, personal communication, September 7, 2010).

Although room for improvement in specific components of their programmed was acknowledged, HAP certification was therefore commonly perceived as a means to promote and legitimize accountability practices rather than orientate action. This runs in line with the understanding put forward by the BM at Danida, who stated that to in his opinion accountability mechanisms are "more about calling for more attention to accountability-related issues rather than actually placing trust in that the tools can manage all the challenges we face" (H. S. Marcussen, personal communication, July 27, 2010).

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[21] Pre-requisite refers to whether a mechanism is required by donors or partner agencies for funding.

Nevertheless, the HRD at DCA argued that the response at DCA had been received overwhelmingly positive by its staff members. Previously, staff members had be pressurized by the many different tasks laid down by the management board and where therefore happy to spend more time in the field. The positive effect of having DCA management push HAP forward as a general strategy was also accentuated. This had given accountability activities an extra push in terms of legitimacy (L. Henry, personal communication, November 26, 2008).

When asking about whether HAP certification would be a good idea for TBBC staff members commonly referred to people in charge of their strategic line. This gave the impression that TBBC's strategy has not been thoroughly discussed at the operational levels of the organisation and rather seen strictly as a management issue. Most of the field-staff were however open to share their personal opinions. The interviews showed, with some reservations, a relatively support in favour of a HAP-certification. It should be noted, however, that this answer would be the most 'safe' to give an external interviewer. The AM at TBBC suggested that, "as TBBC has such a strong emphasis on the operational aspect of humanitarian aid, it could be a good way of informing external stakeholders that international standards were being followed throughout partnerships, hence present to donors that their partnership has a good foundation" (A. Sopinpornraksa, personal comminication, August 5.,2010). CMPM argued that the "HAP document is interesting and something to start with" but that it needed to be managed in terms of the local context.

4.1 Dualism of accountability

According to the FO, donor accountability is often at the centre stage of programming whereas accountability for the work in the field holds other criteria. This means that that the TBBC often is caught up in a game of balancing between agency accountability ensuring donor satisfaction and a more constructed form of accountability with camp needs with a more open interpretation of accountability (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). He also referred to a Bangkok-field divide where management currently was focused on donor requirements and the field more engaged in local accountability. He stated that "we are tentatively placed in

this balancing act trying to keep donors happy on an international financial accountability standard and this is what management in Bangkok is about. There is the Bangkok and field divide, whereas accountability for the field officers is more akin to HAP standards" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). This was recognised by CMPM who argued that the management team being placed in Bangkok would not have the daily engagement necessary to judge what would work in the camps or not "People who are not in the field look more towards the global level. They do not know whether a standard can be implemented or not. It has to be broken down to the local context. For example, they might say we need a newsletter or complaints boxes, but they do not get a sense of whether it works or not" (S. Komchum, personal communication August 30, 2010).

When asking FP representatives whether HAP certification was not just intended to increase donor support, the HDR argued that of course accountability to donors was a necessary part of any form of accountability. "It is an enormous industry and we are not afraid of saying, nor blind towards, that you have to know when to use different tools. Sometimes you need to use a policy to increase funding […] The field workers have to know the code of conduct and some standards. The rest of the policies and standards are used at a certain place, at a certain time. This is how the world hangs together" (L. Henry, personal communication, November 26, 2008). This dualism of accountability was seconded by an ACC (anti-corruption coordinator) at DCA "There is no doubt about that there also is an external focus. When deciding to become HAP-certified, we state that it is for our beneficiaries and it is - this is our overall values and objectives. However, it is also to satisfy our support base which we are dependent of "(M. Gram, personal communication, December 8, 2008).

4.2 Global or Local Partnerships?

HAP's decision to interpret humanitarianism more broadly to also cover development initiatives did not attain for TBBC. Although, they might be able towards longer term livelihood programs, such as, facilitating the process of renting out farming land to refugees, this very much depended on the external environment and would not lead to a considerable change in the organization's mission (TBBC, 2009). These points to a

very fundamental question concern in terms of increasing strategic accountability. As Humanitarian agencies are provided aid on a humanitarian mandate of solidarity it makes the pursuit of strategic accountability contentious. For example, if a humanitarians mission is empowerment, and humanitarian agencies are actively and publicly seeking to shift power balances from the dominant to the less powerful, than they would make it easier for stakeholders who are not interested in this change to register what is going on and work against it, or eventually lead to the closure of an organisation for being 'subversive'. (Bryant, 2007). The new HAP country strategy aims to deepen its initiatives in countries where there is a weak accountability movement and where there is also strong donor assurance (HAP-I, 2010). The informants were rather positive towards this strategy. The IRC representative for example expressed that "on the surface it would make sense and is a wise strategy. You should be cautions of biting off more than you can chew though [....] As more and more donors are requiring some kind complaints management system as a condition of funding the more organizations are going to jump on regional or national opportunities to be certified. It would have to be planned carefully. Given the gigantic realm accountability it makes a lot of sense (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010). Nevertheless some scepticism would, according to the researcher, be justified when seeing HAP strategic development in a broader picture. All the recent changes to increase their outreach might at the same time serve to strengthen the power of global partnerships and promote the idea of working through these global networks rather than local partnerships. The general trend can be identified in how the FPs, such as, DCA, Act for Peace and NCA have recently signed up to the umbrella organization Act Alliance which itself is a HAP member. The BM gave an elaborate account of how he understood this trend:

> Partnerships is one of the new catch words for, not least, NGOs who are coming together in global networks to improve accountability and the quality of aid action as opposed to partnerships which are established locally. The strategic approach is to downplay national efforts to global partnerships, in the sense that local partners should use the expertise fetched globally rather than locally. The idea is to mobilize the additional resources that these

organizations have globally rather than looking towards the partnerships in the south. The tendency is moving towards larger forms of business where the expectations are, with regards to the local partnerships, that impacts will be stronger in effect of this unification. (H. S. Marcussen, personal communication, July 27, 2010).

According to the IRC representative, "HAP is a lot about international NGOs trying to get together to promote that they are self-auditing well" [...] I don't know whether it is able to get power out of donor's hands. I do not have a problem with this as long as it is effective..." (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010). The DED at TBBC also recognised the focus-shift from local to global accountability and expressed that "I agree that this is happening and I think that it is just to make things bureaucratically easier for the donor communities to have a one size fits all. With the global partnerships you start loose the benefit of local partnerships and the national focus adapting to the situation on the ground" [.......] "The HAP tools are useful though they need to be adapted to local situations. When you have a one size fits all they can be so general that they lose their meaning. You have to unpack them and use them how they are relevant in your context" (S. Thompson, personal communication, September 3, 2010). Although that the HAP standard has been formulated on the bases of several trials trying to assessing what humanitarian accountability might means and continuously has tried to incorporate beneficiary inputs, it is fair to say that the learning process takes a starting point globally but applied locally. This was, however, surprisingly in broad terms received positively by other TBBC informants.. The FO believed that TBBC locally meet a lot of the HAP principles, at the higher-level though it is a different game: "The management looks out to international standards the field looks within" (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010). According to the COO it depended on what level HAP wants to become mainstreamed or more visible. The policy-level was one thing, but for it to filter down into practical implementation was understood to be more challenging. He thus stated that "it would certainly be appropriate, but TBBC would have to sit down and look at its impacts and implications for their program" (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). He rounded off by putting it very simple

terms: "If it is about displaying that members are accountable - great. But the practical implementation is more important." (M, Jury, personal communication, August 11, 2010). To whether it is possible the IRC representative gave an elaborate answer:

> I think there is only a certain degree to which you can take power out of donor's hands and having large NGOs or institutions try to appropriate it. Donors will always have an end say, because they are giving the money. Any day they could request to document how local your standards are. The more donors, NGOs and beneficiaries experiment with accountability they going to keep on returning to the fact that clearly defined localized accountability are the way to go, regardless of international standards.... Down the line no matter how much the large NGOs try to establish standards, they are always going to be called back by both donors and essentially beneficiaries. When a scandal brakes, it drives NGOs to change their practices. There will at some point be somebody who does something wrong which make the prevailing standards look silly. In effect, all stakeholders will ask for more accountability. (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010).

The quotation above serves as a strong counter argument to whether HAP-certification would promote global partnerships over local. According to the IRC representative, it will essentially be local accountability which sets the agenda and donors who make the call.

4.3 Challenges and Opportunities

One of the recognised challenges with regards to value of the HAP-certification is its weak political support. "The greatest challenge is to get donors to stand forward and say that one or another of these mechanisms is good and we require you to use it" (L. Henry, personal communication, 26, November 2008). This challenge was also recognized by the representative from Act for Peace, who stated that the HAP certification was most likely to gain impetus "when donors begin to require that the only people who are allowed in the room is the certified organizations. It is inevitable that some form of humanitarian certification process is going to be

required, and my money is on that this is going to be led by HAP" (A. Gee, personal communication, August 19, 2010).As mentioned, HAP-certification is after a slow start now beginning to gain footing at a global level (Salkeld, 2009). HAP is supported by a number of donors who have an interest in seeing that the funding they provide is being spent effectively with the best results for beneficiaries (The European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2009). TBBC donors listed as associate members are DfID, SIDA and Danida (HAP-I, 2010). An implication of donors requiring HAP-certification as a conditionality of its funding is that this inclusion of HAP-certified members, would lead to a concomitant exclusion of other organisations which do not have it. Furthermore, if HAP begins to gain further footing within the donor community it, arguably, might begin to undermine the self-regulatory nature that HAP certification iss founded upon. In the words of HRM at TBBC, "NGOs would certainly begin to join if it[HAP-certification] was a pre-requisite of funding" (L.Buckles, personal communication, September 7, 2010).

Throughout its 25 years of existence TBBC's ability to provide local solutions has been trusted. TBBC's organization has grown accordingly. Arguably, they have now become so big that donors have begun to require that they follow international standards. As mentioned by, the NCA representative it is not common to have local partners with such a high level of management as TBBC (M. Volden, personal communication, August 13, 2010). The problematic is exemplified in the FO's frustration on how the criteria such as empowerment, hope, capacity building which makes camp-management model successful does not correspond with the accountability criteria required by donors. (C. Clifford, personal communication, August 10, 2010).The Bangkok field divide is also arguably a symptom of a structural balancing act between the global and the local. As the standard is universally applicable it is appropriate for large multi-mandated agencies but excludes the small CBOs (Salkeld, 2009).

The motivation for TBBC to become HAP certified would essentially be driven from the donor community depending on whether they consider HAP certification a conditionality of their funding. This does not mean that TBBC would

not have well-intended reasons to pursue practical accountability simultaneously with strategic accountability and the HAP might even be considered as means to both of these ends depending on the strategy of the organisation. As the IRC representative acknowledged: "taking on HAP is a bit of both a practical and strategic decision. Strategically, I think it is the way you have to go. From a business point of view you have to work on agreements, practically these networks can help find new partners or contracts. The more people you have a board the more power you will have to pursue your agenda." (L. Ferran, personal communication, August 25, 2010). Whether the HAP will be valuable mechanism to shift power away from donors is contentious and yet to be proven. What seems to remain is that accountability mechanism such as HAP can be used by NGOs like TBBC to construct accountability and legitimacy. However, if such mechanisms become a prerequisite of funding and are demanded at too fast a pace, they will still resemble a principal agent relationship where donors have the last say.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The research showed that it would not take many internal changes for TBBC to gain HAP certification. TBBC's self-driven downwards accountability mechanisms are already supported by HAP's consultation and management services. Especially, their PSAE policies have gained benefits from HAP tools and training. The main limitations of implementing the HAP standard are still found in ensuring adequate information-sharing, participation and empowerment in a humanitarian context. Re-settlement and immediate funding crises are known to be severe threats to building up a relationship of trust which is considered to be crucial for any effective participation. HAP-certification would seemingly not add much value to overcome these challenges.

An actual HAP-certification is at the moment dismissed by TBBC for two different but inter-linked reasons. First, it is a question of limited time and resources. TBBC has for many years relied on a thrust-based model of legitimacy which has now caught up with them. TBBC has therefore recently been forced to take on many new duties as required by an audit culture. At the moment they are therefore occupied with a number of other self-regulatory mechanisms in addition to the incresed requirements of donors. The frustration with these requirements is apparent throughout the organisation. This is related to the second reason which indicates that TBBC are reluctant towards letting go of their thrust-based model which has been effective over the last 25 years.

TBBC are as a middle-sized NGO are caught in a transition stage between an evidence-based model and a thrust-based model. As they have grown in size, external requirements for monitoring and management have increased which at the moment has placed them in a grey zone between International NGOs and CBOs. The strategic decision to focus on a evidence-based or trust-based accountability model is related to the legitimacy of accountability partnerships. With regards to HAP-certification it comes down to whether they seek legitimacy by pursuing global accountability

standards or a more in-depth local constructed accountability. The dilemma is arguably a structural challenge, which is reflected internally at TBBC in the Bangkok-field divide.

The research showed that a decision to go through the process of a HAP-certification would be based on whether it is a pre-requisite from donors or partner. Although recognising the value of some HAP-tools, TBBC have so far decided to stay independent of HAP-certification. However, the more HAP certification is demanded by external partners the more pressure there will be for TBBC to take on a certification. If the certification scheme becomes successful enough it then be in danger of undermining its self-regulatory and voluntary nature. In other words, the more successful HAP-certification gets, the more it will be required by donors, and the more it will come to resemble a donor imposed initiative. Organisations in this case might then join as a pre-requisite of funding and not by an interest of improving their action.

Despite that a decision in favour HAP certification process would be determined by external stakeholder, it does not mean that TBBC is not pursuing strategic accountability to its beneficiaries. The pursuit of strategic accountability is contentious in a humanitarian context and therefore the related activities are less formalized. Again, this does not mean that they do not exist. As opposed to an academic accountability debate, the might be advantageous to keep accountability simple in myopic conceptualisations. These two factors essentially lead to the dualism of policy programming created by public and private transcripts and were well identified in the interviews. The case study indicates that different forms of accountability might not necessarily be exclusive, but instead can be mutually inclusive A focus on practical accountability might give organisations like TBBC some more room to actively pursue strategic accountability. If external stakeholder are ensured that certain standards are followed it would allow TBBC to work internally with deeper impact analysis and local accountability on a daily basis. However, if self- regulatory mechanisms and donor requirements are demanded to the

extent that TBBC are unable to interpret them in the local context, they might move focus away from important learning processes locally.

Although it theoretically makes sense to build accountability partnerships based on mutual accountability models and management tools such as HAP-certification, the case study showed that they through their implementation transform into a legitimising tool in a power-game between the traditional actors of a principal-agent relationship. It would have little possibility of orientating and improving accountability praxis. This counts especially for the context of humanitarian action, where structural inequality is intrinsic to the crisis. The superficiality of HAP at the local level is a good example of the vague practical benefits.

Some of the latest changes to the HAP-standard have worked towards strengthening accountability work at the global level. Global partnerships legitimise global standards which promote an evidence-based accountability model. This direction might be considered a threat to TBBC's legitimacy as a locally-based NGO. Nevertheless HAP certification was received positively by most informants. A deeper analysis of what HAP might mean for TBBC in terms of their strategy would therefore be a good opportunity to discuss their strategic position internally and to streamline this position throughout the organization.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of key informants

A. Gee, Director, Act for Peace, email correspondence, August 13, 2010
> Telephone interview, August 19, 2010,
> Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

A. Sopinpornaksa, Administration Manager TBBC, personal interview, August 5, 2010.
> Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

C. Clifford, Field Officer TBBC, personal interview, August 10, 2010.
> Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

H. S. Marcussen, Danish International Development Assistance Board Member,
> telephone interview, July 27, 2010,
> Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

Justin Foster, Programme Support Manager, TBBC, personal interview, August 23, 2010.
> Interviewer M. A. Shaw.

L. Buckles, Human Resources Manager TBBC, personal Interview, September 7 2010
> Interviewer: M. .A. Shaw

L. Henry, Humanitarian Response Director DCA, personal interview, November 26. 2008
> Interviewers: A. Fejerskov, M. A. Shaw & T.K. Ziethen

M. Gram, Anti-Corruption Coordinator DCA, personal interview, December 8, 2008

    Interviewers: A. Fejerskov, M. A. Shaw & T.K. Ziethen

M. Jury, Community Outreach Officer TBBC, personal Interview, August 11, 2010

    Interviewer: M. A Shaw

M. Volden, Regional Coordinator NCA, telephone interview, August 13, 2010

    Interviewer. M. A. Shaw

S. Komchum, Camp Management Programme Manager TBBC, telephone interview,

    August 30, 2010.

    Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

S. Thompson, Deputy Executive Director TBBC, consultation, June 16, 2010

    Telephone interview, September 3, 2010.

    Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

Luc Ferran PSAE Coordinator IRC/CCSDPT, telephone interview, August 25, 2010.

    Interviewer: M. A. Shaw

E. Johnson, Head of Humanitarian Response DCA, telephone interview, June 25, 2010.

    Interviewer: M.A. Shaw

APPENDIX B

Questions for TBBC operational staff members.

Location: Date:

Key informant: Job title:

Job function: Employed at TBBC since:

Information

1. In your opinion how accessible and comprehensible is the information TBBC provides to refugees? For example is information provided in languages they understand? Is the material presented in the best way? (For example spoken word, paper handouts, notice boards)?

2. Have the refugees been informed of the selection criteria for the aid they are entitled to receive? Have they been informed via letter of agreement, information board, and minutes of a meeting or other verifiable means?

3. Do the refugees have access to names and contact information for representatives of TBBC?

4. When they try to contact TBBC staff members do you feel that they receive accurate information?

5.   Do you feel that the refugees have generally speaking have access to staff who are equipped to deal with their concerns and problems?

Participation

6. How and to what extent do refugees participate in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action?

Staff competence

7. To what extent does your organization provide you with continual training?

Accountability

8. Is accountability a guiding concept in your organization?

9. How do you understand accountability?

10. How do you practice and perceive accountability in your organisation?

11. Do you use accountability mechanisms practically in your daily work, and if so, how?

12. In your opinion, is your organisation working towards making humanitarian action more accountable?

13. In your opinion, how well does the aid meet the needs of the refugees?

14. In your opinion what makes a humanitarian relief program high quality?

15. In your opinion, how high is the current quality of your organisation's work in the refugee camps?

16. What are your recommendations for improvements of TBBC's work?

17. What external factors affect your organisation's ability to be accountable?

Complaints

18. Are refugees able to file a complaint against your organisation. If so, have they been informed of this possibility, have measures been taken to ensure that complain makers feel that they are not intimidated?

19. Are all complaints taken seriously and dealt with in a fair manner. How successful is the complaints handling initiative in general?

20. How would you deal with complaints which work against good humanitarian action?

HAP

21. Have you heard about the HAP Standard and Certification scheme?

22. Do you think it is a good idea? If so why?

23. Do you feel that the certification scheme has led to improved accountability within your organisation?

24. Do you think HAP certification can significantly improve the humanitarian action of your organisation?

25. How important is it compared to other accountability initiatives?

26. In your opinion should TBBC become an ordinary member without HAP certification?

27. In your opinion should TBBC become HAP certified?

APPENDIX C

Questions for TBBC managerial staff members

Location: Date:

Key informant: Job title:

Job function: Employed at TBBC since:

Accountability

1. Is accountability a guiding concept in your organization?

2. How do you understand accountability?

3. How do you practice and perceive accountability in your organisation?

4. How do you use the accountability mechanisms practically in your daily work?

5. What is the main limitation to be accountable in the context of your work?

6. How effective is TBBC's quality and accountability management system?

7. Has your organisation faced any challenges in sustaining support from donors?

8. In your opinion what makes a humanitarian relief program high quality?

9. What are your recommendations for improvements of TBBC's work?

10. What external factors affect your ability to be accountable?

11. How effectively does TBBC continually reassess and improve its accountability framework and quality management systems?

Information

12. In your opinion how accessible and comprehensible is the information TBBC provides to refugees?

Participation

13. In your opinion, how well does your agency incorporate participation from intended beneficiaries into project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

Staff competence

14. In what ways does TBBC evaluate staff-members' performance and competences, including knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes?

Complaints

1. Are refugees able to file a complaint against your organisation. If so, have they been informed of this possibility, have measures been taken to ensure that complain makers feel that they are not intimidated?

2. Are all complaints taken seriously and dealt with in a fair manner. How successful is the complaints handling initiative in general?

3. How would you deal with complaints which work against good humanitarian action?

HAP

15. What is your overall opinion of the HAP Standard and Certification scheme?

16. Do you think the HAP standard has an impact on the quality and effectiveness of the accountability and management programs of TBBC?

17. How valuable is it compared to other accountability mechanisms?

18. Do you think the certification against HAP standards can contribute to make humanitarian action more accountable?

19. Do the results, outcomes and expected impacts justify the costs?

20. Would an improved focus on documentation of its value affect your opinion?

21. Under what circumstances would HAP-certification be beneficial?

22. Do you feel any benefits from DCA's HAP certification?

23. How important is third-party verification compared to other accountability initiatives?

24. In your opinion should TBBC become an ordinary member without HAP certification

25. In your opinion should TBBC become HAP certified?

New standard

26. Do you think it is a good idea for HAP to strengthen requirements for working with partners?

27. Do you think it is a good idea for HAP to change it membership criteria?

28. Is HAPs decision to view humanitarianism more holistically by e.g. incorporating development initiatives relevant to you?

29. What do you think of HAPs new country-based focus?

Professionalization

30. Some argue that in an unequal world there is a need for a kind of surrogate who can effectively attend to the interests of disaster survivors. In your opinion, is the HAP-I able to meet this criterion?

31. According to others accountability is not a practical tool but rather a tool used to increase legitimacy and create more funding?

32. From your view in what way has TBBC become more effective and professional over the past decade?

33. Do you see any challenges related to the general professionalization of the aid sector?

34. One of the main points of criticism pointed towards Hap is that its effects are undocumented, so the issue of lacking evidence needs to be addressed. In your opinion, how should HAP deal with this challenge?

APPENDIX D

Questions for FP representatives

Location: Date:

Key informant: Job title:

Job function: Employed at TBBC since:

Accountability

1. How do you understand accountability?

2. How do you use the accountability mechanisms practically in your daily work?

3. How do you practice and perceive accountability in your organisation?

4. Why did your organisation become HAP certified?

5. Where did the idea come from?

6. What are the gains?

7. What are the challenges?

8. Have you become more accountable after the certification?

9. Has it lead to more accountable partnerships?

10. What internal changes has the Hap certification led to?

11. What external changes has the HAP certification led to?

12. Has HAP had any effect on your partners?

13. Have there been any donor responses?

14. Has your organisation faced any challenges in sustaining support from donors Thai/Burma context?

15. How effective is DCA's quality and accountability management system?

16. In your opinion what makes a humanitarian relief program high quality?

TBBC

17. In your opinion should TBBC seek HAP Certification?

18. Have you tried to convince them?

19. Will you be attempt so in the future?

20. What possibilities would the standard offer TBBC?

21. What external factors affect your possibilities to be accountable in the Thai/Burma context?

HAP

22. What is your overall opinion on the HAP Standard and Certification scheme?

23. How valuable is it compared to other accountability mechanisms?

24. Do the results, outcomes and expected impacts justify the cost?

25. Do you think the HAP standard can make humanitarian action more accountable?

26. Would an improved focus on documenting its impact affect your opinion?

27. What are the challenges and opportunities in relation to taking on the new requirements for partnerships?

28. Is there a need for changing membership criteria?

New Standard

29. What do you think of HAPs decision to expand its scope to also convey development initiatives?

30. What do you think about the new country-based focus?

31. What do you think of the new partnership requirements?

Complaints

32. How successful is the complaints handling initiative in general?

33. How would you go about complaints which work against HAP intentions?

Professionalization

34. Some argue that in an unequal world there is a need for a kind of surrogate who effectively can take on the interests of disaster survivors. In your opinion, is the HAP-I able to meet this criterion?

35. According to others accountability is not a practical tool but instead is a tool used to increase legitimacy and create more funding?

36. In your opinion in what way has DCA become more effective and professional over the past decade?

37. Do you see HAP as a further step in this development?

38. Do you see any general challenges related to the professionalization?

39. One of the main points of criticism pointed towards Hap is that its effects are undocumented and the issue of lacking evidence needs to be addressed, in your opinion, how could HAP overcome these challenges?

BIOGRAPHY

The son of an English father and a Danish mother, Mac Albert Gordon Shaw was born and raised in Frederikshavn, a small town in the Northern part of Denmark. Here he finished his compulsory and high school education. He was awarded a diploma in commerce at Pécs University in Hungary before commencing his undergraduate studies at the Social Science International Basic Studies at Roskilde University, outside of Copenhagen. He finished his BA degree with a specialisation in International Development Studies and Global Studies. He will be graduating with an MA degree of Arts in International Development studies at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.