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TRANSLATING THE MACRO TO THE MICRO:

**ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT EARLY-
WARNING SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY-LEVEL HUMANITARIAN
ORGANIZATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the relationship between community-level humanitarian organizations and conflict early-warning systems, by applying theoretical information to the prevention mechanisms for the Kenyan elections from 2007-2017. Conflict early-warnings constantly face issues with prompting early-responses, but despite issues with data and a lack of political will to act and prevent, humanitarian organizations are translating macro-level information provided by early-warning systems into micro-level actionable projects capable of preventing or reducing violence in communities. This study argues a multi-level conflict prevention and preparedness method, led by humanitarian organizations, has the ability to translate warnings into action.

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ACRONYMS

CEWS	Conflict Early-Warning Systems
CPP	Conflict Prevention and Preparedness
GA	General Assembly
GECARR	Good Enough Conflict Analysis for Rapid Response
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SG	Secretary General
UN	United Nations

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Humanitarians and the international community are at a fundamental crossroads in history, where the frequency and intensity of violent conflicts across the world should make responders and policy makers reflect on their actions.¹ Albert Einstein said “you cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war,” but convoluted and politically weighted prevention mechanisms from the international community seem to be trying to do just that.² The era of CEWS that began after the end of the Cold War offered new hope for early-action, capable of actually preventing conflict. Unfortunately, over two decades later the world seems only marginally closer to producing relevant early-action policies and programs. Although international institutions and high level policy makers possibly hold the key to solving this dilemma by pushing for actions like preventive diplomacy, humanitarians on the ground dealing with the horrors of conflict cannot wait any longer for a solution from the top-down. This study innovatively explores the relationship between CEWS and community-level humanitarian organizations, and what this relationship can do for CPP.

CEWS face numerous obstacles in promoting early-action, due to challenges with data on conflicts and response plans, and due to barriers in the international system. This study explores the possibility the relationship between CEWS and community-level humanitarian organizations has the capability to overcome both of these significant obstacles to early-action. By combining macro-level conflict information, with micro-level community perspectives, humanitarian organizations can craft CPP policies with sustainable and sensitive outcomes for the community. The apolitical nature of the majority of humanitarian organizations also makes them exempt from some of the institutional barriers at the national and international level, allowing them to connect a multitude of actors on various levels to create a multidimensional operational response. The most recent Kenyan elections offer a relevant and ongoing case study, whereby interviews with organizations in Kenya demonstrate the beneficial relationship community-level humanitarian organizations have with CEWS, as well as the overall goal of preventing and preparing for violent conflict.

In order to understand the important role humanitarian organizations can play in ‘translating the macro to the micro,’ outlining the challenges with conflict data and prevention

¹ Full citations for full study available in Bibliography.

² Nevin, 46.

policy is key. There is limited literature on what specifically causes humanitarian emergencies, partly due to a lack of understanding surrounding complex conflicts.³ It is problematic to attempt to prevent something without first understanding the properties that created it. This study draws on the lack of policy examples and material explicitly aimed at preventing conflict, and connects this to the debate regarding the types of conflict and their causes present in the 21st century.⁴ Mary Kaldor introduced the concept of ‘new wars’ as theory to help explain and solve the multidimensional conflicts of this century, and her cosmopolitan approach aligns with the goals of bottom-up conflict preparedness.⁵ The growing practice of field analysis led by humanitarian organizations and their partners helps to inform CEWS and program development on multiple levels, because the micro-information collected at the community-level helps to fill in some of the gaps regarding what causes violence. The debate surrounding the causes of conflicts will no doubt continue, but humanitarians can assist by validating macro-information with community perspectives, moving one step closer to understanding conflict.

Even as CEWS develop into better understanding conflict, and invite more participation from the community-level, barriers in the international system like funding constraints, lack of national and international will, political dynamics, and finally the realization top-down policies may not be the best solution, still impede early-actions. The area of literature and policy material surrounding preventing and preparing for conflicts from the local levels is in the beginning stages, but if embraced and expanded upon community-level humanitarian organizations have the tools to overcome most of the barriers to early-action listed above. Using organizational actions from Kenya, and secondary literature, this study aims to outline the possibility of using a combination of macro-level information and micro-level information to inform programs led by humanitarians in communities to prevent and prepare for violent conflict.

1.2 Structure

This section will expand on the methodology of the study, and relevant background information regarding CEWS. Section two will outline the conceptual framework concerning the fundamental challenges to early-warning and early-action, and the relationship to humanitarian organizations. Section three provides the most recent three Kenyan elections as

³ Harff, 552.

⁴ De Maio, 133

⁵ Kaldor,.

a case study for early-action, and section four connects these examples to the concepts outlined in section two. The final section offers concluding remarks.

1.3 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology because the conceptual framework, as well as the case study, rely on the actions of institutions, governments, organizations as opposed to quantifiable data. The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in perspectives on CEWS, the theoretical dilemma surrounding prevention versus preparedness, and institutional barriers in the national and international system. The area of conflict early-warning and conflict prevention is a complex field of study; therefore, the conceptual framework section hopes to make unique connections using a variety of academic perspectives, because using one perspective would not accurately reflect the complexity of the topic. The relationship between CEWS and community-level humanitarian organizations is a very new field, and because there is limited literature on a direct connection or specific role humanitarians can play, this study presents a creative and innovative assessment.

The Kenyan case study relies on media reports and some academic perspectives from the 2007 and 2013 elections. The majority of the information on the August 8, 2017 election comes from interviews with representatives from World Vision Kenya, Trocaire Kenya, Actionaid Kenya, and a Start Network Kenya analysis facilitator. These organizations were also kind enough to share the semi-confidential completed analysis on Kenya, as well as subsequent program proposals which also informed some portions of this study. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic and the confidentiality of the Kenyan analysis, interviewees will remain anonymous and any direct comments will not be tied to a specific organization. This study recognizes the bias in interviewing only members of the humanitarian community in Kenya as opposed to also including national and international officials, but this study centers around assessing the relationship between CEWS and humanitarians which limited the scope of research. It is also important to note the 2017 case study chosen for study is an ongoing situation, and thus the opinions and analysis in this study only refer to the events one week after the election.

1.4 Background of Conflict Early-Warnings

Early-warning systems are multifaceted information structures being progressively more relied upon by governments, international institutions, and humanitarian and development organizations. During the Cold War era, early-warning systems were initially

envisioned by national governments and military departments in order to anticipate possible nuclear or military advances.⁶ Drought, famine, and dangerous weather early-warning systems are all common today, and are often referenced on major news networks catering to the average person. Early-warning systems specifically for violent conflict were much slower to develop, and are still lacking in readership.

The idea of early-warnings entered the conflict management sphere in the 1970s, and the most recognized CEWS were established since 2000.⁷ In the UNSG 1992 “An Agenda for Peace,” he defines and calls for ‘preventive diplomacy’ which was a large milestone for CEWS and contributed to its mainstreaming.⁸ In the report, the SG highlighted the progress that had been already made with famine and natural disaster warning systems, while he drew attention to the need “to strengthen arrangements in such a manner that information from these sources can be synthesized with political indicators to assess whether a threat to peace exists.”⁹ This agenda called for early-action and preventative measures based on facts related to violent conflict, recognizing conflicts have economic, social, and cultural roots. By planning for the possibility of a violent conflict, diplomatic negotiations or mediations can be arranged, or peacekeeping measures imposed. The important aspect to these systems is warning must be partnered with an option or perspective on response. Scholars make it clear, “conflict early-warning mechanisms must include the element of early-response for them to make any sense in preventing conflict. Indeed, without provision for an early-response, an early-warning system becomes meaningless.”¹⁰

CEWS are different from other early-warning mechanisms yet are often confused. What needs to be made clear regarding CEWS is that they do attempt to predict future conflicts, they simply express possible future paths as they are “anticipatory not predictive.”¹¹ The main objective of CEWS is to not predict conflict, but prevent it.¹² Although the exact definition of CEWS is not agreed upon across the field, the definition from Forum for Early Warning and Early Response highlights the majority of the key elements central to the purpose and operation of CEWS;

Conflict early warnings are the ‘systemic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purpose of: (i) anticipating the escalation of violent conflict; (ii) development of strategic response to these crises; and (iii) the presentation of

⁶ Souare, 4.

⁷ Ibid.,

⁸ “Agenda for Peace,”

⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰ Mwagiru, 167.

¹¹ Mwagiru, 168.

¹² Bock, 104.

options to critical actors (national, regional and international) for the purposes of decision-making and preventive action.¹³

The methodology behind the majority of these systems can be summarized in four main steps; collecting the information, analyzing it, creating options, and communicating those options.¹⁴ One of the main challenges with this process, distinguishing conflict from natural disaster systems, is the multitude of factors which can drastically alter future events or drive changes such as; natural resource competition, border and boundary disputes, land ownership, food insecurity, climatic extremes, organized crime, religious and ethnic identity, inequality, elections, and the proliferation of weaponry.¹⁵ Even if there was data available on these types of driving factors, unpredictable and devastating effects from massive events such as displacement or terrorism makes CEWS incredibly difficult. Despite the obvious challenges, organizations, institutions, and governments are continuously exploring and working towards a more accurate, well-informed, and useful system. The efforts put on conflict early-warning in the last two decades have led to a variety of methodologies aimed at producing something useful for the variety of actors.

Conflict early-warning systems are often divided into three methodological generations. The first generation beginning in the mid to late 1990s, as mostly head-quarter based run by large intergovernmental institutions, such as the European Commission or the African Union, who use vast data sets stemming from conflict indicator models.¹⁶ The second generation dates from the early 2000s onward, and relies more on a connection to the field by valuing both quantitative and qualitative information. The final generation is the most recent, and somewhat similar to the second generation, but it puts even more focus on field information and has a strong focus on response mechanisms.¹⁷ The third generation is constantly evolving and widely used, showing the CEWS community's appreciation for perspectives from the ground is growing. The variety in these methodologies highlights pinpointing one utility or one use for these systems is difficult, as each organization or beneficiary may intend to extract something different from this exercise.

¹³ Souare, 3.

¹⁴ Mwagiru, 168.

¹⁵ Kasaija, 12.

¹⁶ Mwagiru, 168.

¹⁷ OECD, 34-35.

SECTION 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

While there is a significant amount literature on conflicts, there is significantly less on specific ways to prevent or prepare for humanitarian emergencies brought on by violence.¹⁸ This is a fundamental issue for CEWS, because reports often fail to produce early-action. This section will demonstrate CEWS are failing at their most fundamental theoretical purpose, prompting an early-response, because of the dilemma around preventing conflicts, post-cold war institutional structures, and the challenges with swaying political will. These challenges, although damaging the possibility of high level influence, are offering humanitarian organizations an opportunity. Community-level humanitarian organizations can use and adapt CEWS in order to overcome these challenges from the bottom-up, by creating multi-level response plans capable of preventing or reducing the intensity of violence.

2.1 Conflict Prevention vs. Conflict Preparedness

Determining one specific type of CEWS is challenging as the section above demonstrates, but also determining one specific goal of CEWS is complex. When assigning a label to CEWS, most can be positioned under either conflict prevention or conflict preparedness. These two classifications, although sometimes considered mutually exclusive, are actually very related. Conflict prevention is usually associated with diplomatic or security solutions orchestrated by national or international actors. Conflict preparedness is also actually form of prevention; the label of preparedness encompasses a variety of actions by many players in a conflict situation, whom can contribute to the reduction or emission of violence in the areas in which they operate by preparing. Preparing for conflict can take the form of community outreach, educational campaigns, information collection, or resource procurement. This section will address the issues with preventing conflict solely from the top-down, thus demonstrating the benefits of preparedness as the alternative.

Although the majority of official policy literature explains the goal of CEWS is prevention, this language is misleading because it leads the audience to believe all types of conflicts are similar in that they can be prevented by top-down activities like negotiations, when in actuality even the data on conflict types, let alone the response, is fragmented.¹⁹ The people and institutions with policy capabilities need to come to terms with the fact most interventions after the end of the Cold War, whether they be diplomatic, military, economic,

¹⁸ Harff, 552.

¹⁹ Everett, 312.

or social have been geared towards conflict management and resolution as opposed to prevention.²⁰ A limited number of tangible high-level policy decisions are actually centered around prevention, and an even fewer amount meet the qualifications for prevention in design as well as implementation.²¹ Claims of prevention emit the notion international power structures and national competences actually have the capacity to prevent conflicts, while the majority of empirical evidence regarding conflicts centers around causes, leaving prevention, management, or resolution out.²² Policy material around the specific area of preventive diplomacy, as called upon by the UNSG's resolution 1366, offers simple descriptions of programs, leaving out any form of tangible guidelines.²³ The first step in moving towards early-action is coming to terms with the fact there is significantly less literature and studies surrounding the causes for peace as opposed to causes of violence.²⁴ These holes in academic and policy literature regarding clear steps to conflict prevention expose a void, having devastating effects for much of the world consumed by conflict. Without first addressing the issues with data collection and policy creation, top-down conflict prevention is unrealistic in many cases.

While it is true some types of conflict can still be prevented by diplomatic or political means, other types of violent conflict are much more complex and deeply rooted into the communities of a nation, whether it be ethnic, political, or economic grievances. It is necessary for this study to expand on the type of conflict present in the world often referred to as 'new wars,' coined by Mary Kaldor. The reason why this concept is important for conflict prevention is because it is pertinent to understand 'preventing' violent conflict can not always come through top-down interventions. 'New wars' is usually defined as a combination between war and organized crime, that feeds off an intertwined network of transnational connections.²⁵ Although Kaldor's theory has met opposition, it is difficult to argue the causes of violence are simple. Multifaceted conflicts like the ones presently occurring, are going to taking a much more well rounded and dynamic prevention plan than perhaps some traditional policy's may have suggested, because traditional reports fail to integrate technical information within political and local contexts.²⁶ Kaldor explains the only real solution to this type of violence is a cosmopolitan approach which intertwines responses to the civil, political, and economic

²⁰ Engel, 214.

²¹ Ibid.,

²² De Maoi, 133.

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ Ibid.,

²⁵ Kaldor, 2.

²⁶ Whittall, 1237.

aspects of a conflict, and she highlights “humanitarian assistance is essential.”²⁷ Kaldor’s theory specifically applies to ending an ongoing conflict, but it can be applied to preventing brewing conflicts, because the reasons for starting a conflict, and the reasons for continuing one often overlap. The cosmopolitan approach, for the purpose of this study, can be thought of as conflict preparedness at all levels. Preparing community level resources, connecting civil society, and reaching out to leaders diplomatically, outlines a method of preparedness for prevention suited to the dynamic conflicts of the 21st century. Jennifer de Maio also highlights NGOs have a key role to play in this method, because they are capable of conducting operations as well as devising strategies for orchestrating the moving parts of a multi-level response.²⁸ NGOs have the reach to access communities, as well as national or international leaders. Due to the obvious challenges in preventing all types of conflict with a top-down mechanism, conflict preparedness is a much more realistic goal also compatible with multi-level responses. A large number of second and third generation conflict early-warning systems have already begun adapting their reports, recognizing top-down conflict prevention may not be the only route to prompting an early-response.

2.2 Post-Cold War Humanitarianism

The evolution of early-warning reports and what they contain, supports the advancement of multi-level prevention and response, but unfortunately traditional international power structures still impede these advancements. There is a lack of focus in literature and analysis’ as to “the political dynamics that cause early warning to fail.”²⁹ This section will explore the political obstacles to early action present in the power dynamics of the post-Cold War era. These challenges expose another void humanitarian organizations can fill in the complex process of CPP.

Some of the largest, most widely read CEWS focused at humanitarians still suffer from political restrictions. The ISAC monitors 70 to 80 countries and the three most critical scenarios are referred to OCHA country directors for each affected country.³⁰ This offers an improvement in the area of multi-level response mechanisms, but the link from OCHA to the communities is significantly lacking. There is currently no UN coordinated system of collecting, assessing, or integrating the vast array of conflict related data being produced.³¹ The UN is arguably one

²⁷ Kaldor, 145

²⁸ De Maio, 133.

²⁹ Whittall, 1240.

³⁰ Zenko, 26.

³¹ Zenko, 21.

of the largest power structures in the world, and thus all of its departments and affiliations are subject to some of the same categorization. These links make it politically difficult for UN bodies to role out CPP programs when the conflict has not yet arrived, with fear of losing favor with certain governments. Contingency planning and early-warning lists are a “hyper-sensitive area” and in the past countries have appealed to be removed from international lists.³² Damaging relationships with governments can have consequences for the constant worry of funding in the humanitarian sector. In addition to funding, these lists can have negative effects on foreign direct investment, of which many emerging economies rely greatly.³³

In one perspective the inability to act is due to post-cold war institutional hurdles which favor reactive measures, because there is a clear and tested method to follow.³⁴ These barriers can be massively destructive when they impede early-responses to conflict early-warnings. Johnathan Whittall explains large response mechanisms from governments or bodies like the UN, follow a pattern set in force by factors like political will and the conditionality of aid. This pattern begins with a declaration of risk by another country or a governmental emergency appeal, and for just a CEWS to jump-start preventive actions would break the mold.³⁵ The orthodox nature of understanding conflict “obscures the social dynamics and agency of violence” by focusing on causation rather than multi-level dynamics and the fluid nature of 21st century conflicts.³⁶ Although the benefits of CPP are well-known, it is also well-known how incredibly difficult it can be to break the traditional models of international action, and create new processes. Institutions are slowly adopting early-action mechanisms, but there is still a major policy gap.³⁷ Whittall makes it clear this specific barrier to early-action is not a failure of CEWS, it is a failure of the political community.³⁸ This very fundamental critique of the international system and its capability to adapt, is also further complicated by popular moral sentiments.

Early-action is at odds with the forces of political will. Understanding the multifaceted nature of ‘will’ is complicated and dynamic, but important for understanding the lack of early-response, and the need for change in this sector. Understanding political will contains the issues of why there is a lack of action, who influences it, how it can be mobilized, and what policies

³² Zenko, 29.

³³ Zenko, 30.

³⁴ Whittall, 1240.

³⁵ Ibid.,

³⁶ Engel, 214.

³⁷ De Maio, 132.

³⁸ Whittall, 1240.

it can influence.³⁹ Macdonald unpacks the connotations of ‘will’ by likening it to ‘national will.’⁴⁰ In order for CEWS to indeed promote early-action, the reports, data, or scenarios need to sway the national will of a country or a region, to push for an early-response whether that be humanitarian, militarily, economically, or diplomatically. One of the major influencers of national will is the media. CEWS are at odds with the “60-second sound-bite exposure that current television reporting accommodates.”⁴¹ The topic of these sound bites is even more damaging to the possibility of early-response, because major news networks dwell on the ‘popular’ conflicts complete with eye-catching photos and videos. The significant loss of foreign correspondents has drastically hindered the ability for news media to uncover developing crisis’, or monitor risk levels.⁴² It is difficult for a country to sell political or diplomatic intervention or assistance to its citizens when they are unaware of looming conflicts. The “CNN effect” implies a case needs to be made for any humanitarian involvement beyond the borders of ones country.⁴³ Reactive cases are much easier to establish, because it is difficult to argue against a response when faced with the horrific images of violence. In the case of CEWS, national will may shift in the direction of ‘this is a problem for the UN,’ but the realities of the international system are security council members are often the only players with enough political or diplomatic influence to intervene prior to a conflict erupting.⁴⁴ These extensive requirements can impede nations to even acknowledge evolving situations, to respond to warnings, or to fund preparedness programs.

Beyond the factors for will to act, there are also more concrete requirements nations abide by when determining which international issues they will associate themselves with. Political conditionality’s, are guidelines established by national governments and international institutions that establish benchmarks in areas like political fairness, corruption, and human rights which countries must meet before receiving any assistance. Although PC’s are usually described in terms of aid, they can stretch across different policy areas.⁴⁵ In some cases, despite an early-warning of possible conflict scenarios, powerful international players may refuse to facilitate negotiations, impose sanctions, or distribute funding to certain governments because of other interests or requirements it may conflict with. In some cases, humanitarian

³⁹ MacDonald, 124.

⁴⁰ Ibid.,

⁴¹ MacDonald, 125.

⁴² Otto, 205.

⁴³ Jakobsen, 212

⁴⁴ Ibid.,

⁴⁵ Molenaers, 2.

organizations can act as the distributor of funding if the host government involvement is restricted.

The theories behind conflict prevention still attempt to target the macro-level solutions, ignoring the obvious power structure obstacles. Humanitarian organizations have the ability to take macro-level conflict information and translate it into action by utilizing micro-level validation, ultimately bypassing some of the complex issues outlined in this section.

The “current and potential contributions [of NGOs] to the prevention of deadly conflict especially mass violence within states is rapidly becoming one of the hallmarks of the post-Cold war era.”⁴⁶ Macdonald questions whether or not humanitarian action can be substitute for political will, and in the case of conflict early-response there is significant evidence a multi-level response including community-level NGOs at the forefront, is the most probable way of overcoming these barriers in the international system.⁴⁷

2.3 The Evolution of Conflict Early-Warning Reports

Most conflict early-warning reports offer a technical and macro-level circumstance description, but as discussed this data does not always translate into immediate response. There is an assumption quantitative and qualitative data cannot interact, and both should be presented in a vacuum, which damages the way CEWS are understood.⁴⁸ Although data presentation and relevance in these reports continues to be a significant downfall, it is important to note the way this information is evolving is beneficial for the increased involvement of humanitarian organizations. The IASC Early Action, Early-Warning, and Readiness Reports, coordinated by OCHA, bi-annually highlights areas of possible risk increase. These reports represent one of the main macro-level CEWS referenced in the humanitarian sector.⁴⁹ The table below compares the ‘preparedness’ section from the 2013 report on Cote d’Ivoire and the 2016 report on Burundi;

⁴⁶ Hamburg, 111.

⁴⁷ MacDonald.

⁴⁸ Clarke, 75.

⁴⁹ IASC 2016, 1.

IASC 2013: Cote d'Ivoire	IASC 2016: Burundi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct training at a sub-national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for UN agencies and NGOs to bring in more staff as well as open sub-offices away from the capitals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake secondary data review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review logistical gaps in storage, transportation, and protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct simulation to train/test/review capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in information management throughout humanitarian partners

Recognizing the committee had different institutional resources and capabilities across a three-year span, it is still interesting to examine the perceived audience of these reports, and the perceived leaders in CPP over the last three years. The preparedness points of focus highlighted in 2013 target government or international institutions capable of orchestrating the macro-level tasks such as sub-national training or a data reviews.⁵⁰ These points follow the traditional structure which's aligns governments and international institutions at the forefront of CPP. The vast majority of NGOs would not be able to participate in exercise-oriented tasks listed in the 2013 report, because their funding is generally concentrated to operational projects. The report from 2016 paints a different picture and is quick to highlight, at the beginning of the report, the partnership between "65 development and humanitarian organizations already established in Burundi."⁵¹ The preparedness suggestions are operational items most NGOs would be able to contribute to, bringing in a bottom-up theme. Although there are obvious critiques to proposing community-level initiatives such as more NGO offices and increased transportation having the capability to prevent conflict, it is important to note most political or resource based violence occurs at the local level. Those who create the underlying causes may be at the top, but the victims and perpetrators of their damaging goals are often at the local level.⁵² By increasing community initiatives and resource distribution some areas may experience significantly less violence, and others may not experience violence at all. Top level negotiations and national level response planning is not a sustainable method of peace if it does not reach the bulk of society. The difference in IASC reports reflects the slow realization preparedness at the local levels has tangible and sustainable benefits. Unfortunately, there is still a dilemma around simplicity; Policy-makers want concise reports with operational summaries, but "there is no

⁵⁰ IASC 2013.

⁵¹ IASC 2016, 3.

⁵² Kaldor,.

shortage of data” as producers of the warnings are weary about simplifying something as delicate and complex as violent conflict.⁵³ NGOs and community-level humanitarian organizations have the resources and capabilities to overcome this issue with data by facilitating an interaction between the macro-level and the micro-level, validating or expanding on what is required and what is happening at the field level.

2.4 The Role for Humanitarians in Conflict Early-Response

With top-down CPP facing a challenging future, and national and international actors reluctant or unable to participate in early-action, the preparedness sector needs to embrace different methods. Humanitarians are capable of these new methods because they are able to use micro-level community data to translate macro-level analysis information into actionable programs for an early-response. Scholars have drawn attention to the fact that a response on multiple levels and from multiple sectors is the most successful and logical method.⁵⁴ By no means should the top-down method cease altogether, but country or regional strategies need to be coupled with efforts at the local level, where humanitarians are posed to offer real influence and assistance.⁵⁵ NGOs are positioned at a key response level because they “are important to the political health of virtually all countries.”⁵⁶ This section will demonstrate the role humanitarians can play in early-response in term of information collection, understanding the needs of the community, and rolling out sensitive programs.

As discussed earlier there is a wealth of knowledge about conflicts more generally, but a general lack of information in terms of what specifically causes humanitarian emergencies. Andrea Everett outlines a new dataset that helps to bring in human consequences to the discussion of conflicts. Macro-level conflict analysis created a good understanding of certain patterns, but they tend to rely on assumptions when connecting them to the community level.⁵⁷ These assumptions can be dangerous because they can reduce the effectiveness of aid received at the community level. Humanitarian organizations can assist in this area because of the growing norm of conflict analysis in the field. Conflict or context analysis helps organizations validate claims or assumptions made at the national or regional levels. The majority of conflict and context analysis completed by field offices includes engagement with the community that

⁵³ Clarke, 74.

⁵⁴ Bock, 106.

⁵⁵ Ibid.,.

⁵⁶ Hamburg, 111.

⁵⁷ Everett, 313.

then helps inform programs.⁵⁸ Participatory analysis allows humanitarian policy makers to create “people-centered” and “community-based” responses.⁵⁹ This new dynamic reverses the flow of policy, by allowing communities to tell actors at the top what type of assistance they require.

The news media obstacle present in the political dynamics of early action is also an area where NGOs can assist with the exposure of new information. News media and its reluctance or inability to cover evolving conflicts hinders the swaying of political will, and the reduction in foreign correspondents on average means there is a window NGOs can fill.⁶⁰ The proliferation of advocacy organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International helps to produce information for the every-day reader, but they are also confident their products reach “expert communities.”⁶¹ This expansion of information is a key element to the multi-level response required of CPP. By raising awareness and providing new information, NGOs can bring new actors into the preparedness realm and also attract new funding sources.

One of the things key to reducing violent conflict in communities is awareness of the principles of conflict sensitive programs. Humanitarians are familiar with these principles since the production of the *Do No Harm* paradigm in 2001.⁶² By appreciating the impact of different actors in a sensitive conflict environment, humanitarian organizations are capable of orchestrating civil society to empower and educate communities in order to reduce violent tendencies. Although a multi-level early-response is favored, combining many levels can be politically complicated, and for international institutions or national governments to coordinate this would be challenging. Humanitarian organizations at all levels can communicate between the macro-level and the micro-level with sensitivity and in some cases impartiality. In addition to this new appreciation for context sensitivity some NGOs explicitly focus on conflict prevention and resolution, meaning in some cases they may be more prepared and experienced than some national governments or international institutions.⁶³

2.4.1 Humanitarian Sector Barriers to Early-Response

It is important to note humanitarian organizations are not without their own barriers to early-action, two of the main obstacles being funding and ethical challenges. Funding is a

⁵⁸ LSE Consultancy,.

⁵⁹ Pham, 108.

⁶⁰ Otto, 209.

⁶¹ Otto, 213.

⁶² Wood,.

⁶³ Hamburg, 113.

constant and well-known challenge to humanitarian action. Although humanitarian organizations may have the micro-information from communities validating larger conflict early-warnings, their actions can often be at a standstill until they receive funding as the international community is often reluctant to get involved. One way to overcome this issue is to present the benefits humanitarian aid can have in preventing conflict. If national and international players do not have the will or information to intervene diplomatically or militarily, humanitarian organizations can use context analysis to provide evidence their actions have the capabilities as well. Slowly international donors are allocating more funding to preparedness measures, but there is still significant improvement required in the area of convincing policy maker's community-level humanitarian action has a key role to play in preventing violence. The expansion and increased frequency of studies like this, exposing the relationship between humanitarian organizations and CEWS, can be a step in the right direction.

The second downfall which brings the foundation of humanitarian action into question is the relationship early-warnings and early-action have with the Dunantist principles.⁶⁴ The issue with simply sounding an alarm and calling for a humanitarian intervention, or seeking funding from a global superpower, is it brings humanitarian organizations closer to blurring the line between "providing assistance and military actors fighting 'humanitarian wars'".⁶⁵ In an address to the UNGA in 2000 MSF responded to the growing focus on conflict prevention by acknowledging this fundamental dilemma, but by also suggesting a solution. MSF highlighted that although conflict prevention is usually thought of as political, military, or diplomatic, "material humanitarian assistance can have preventative impact when carried out according to operational humanitarian principles."⁶⁶ This perspective also aligns with Mary Kaldor's theoretical stance on one cause of violent conflict often being economically grounded. An adequate amount of physical aid can prevent some types of violence in communities.

CHAPTER 3: KENYA CASE STUDY

The Kenyan presidential elections from 2007-2017, offer a unique and valuable case study for understanding CEWS and early-response, because they provide comparisons in preparedness. This section will begin with a discussion of the humanitarian emergency that ensued after the 2007 Kenyan presidential election, and explore some explanations as to what

⁶⁴ Whittall, 1245.

⁶⁵ Whittall, 1246.

⁶⁶ Ibid.,.

contributed to the humanitarian crisis. The more recent presidential elections in 2013 and on August 8, 2017 will stand as the comparison. This study engaged with five humanitarian organizations based in Kenya from June-August 2017 through a desk review of their material, and through interviews with members from four of the organizations. This information presents a current example of bottom-up CPP from humanitarian organizations currently located in the communities effected by ongoing election tensions.

3.1 2007-2008 Kenyan Election

Following a close presidential vote, on December 29 2007 behind closed doors, the electoral body of Kenya declared Mwai Kibaki winner. This was challenged by opponent Ralia Odinga and some members of the international community on the grounds the election had been rigged. What is usually referred to as the most politically and economically stable country in East Africa broke out into unexpected violence killing over 1,000 people and displacing more than 600,000.⁶⁷ The UN brokered power sharing agreement finally resolved the crisis on February 28, 2008. This exceptionally gruesome post-election violence took much of the world and the region by surprise because the generally cohesive Kenyan society had been split among ethnic lines. The exact reasons for this violence are still unclear a decade later, but significant focus has been placed on the ethnic claims made by the candidates and the undemocratic process where by the winner was confusingly declared.⁶⁸ The ongoing investigation initiated in 2010 by the International Criminal Court is tasked with uncovering exactly what role the ruling parties had in the violence, and whether or not their involvement could constitute a crime against humanity.⁶⁹ Many experts highlight blaming this violence on ethnic tribalism is too simplistic, and in addition to the criminal investigation, national and international players need to consider their role and if more could have been done.

Keeping in mind this section has the benefit of hindsight, it is valuable to consider whether or not any preventative actions could have been taken. There were several events in the years and months leading up to the election that with the knowledge of today, should have been key areas of focus of CEWS. In 2005 the ruling party called a referendum in regards to constitutional challenges. The president led the 'yes' campaign, and many Kenyans reportedly used this vote to voice their discontent with his rule of the country. The 'no' campaign success in the referendum caused the president to dismiss his entire cabinet and denounce political

⁶⁷ *Daily Nation Kenya*,.

⁶⁸ Brownsell,.

⁶⁹ ICC,.

rallies and calls for a new election.⁷⁰ Kenya has a long history with restrictions on opposition support since the first President Jomo Kenyatta banned opposition parties. Despite the bans on political gatherings many protests took place across Kenya, and some experienced violence. Experts and some figures in the region warned of the presidents alienation of opposing views and warned of the possible consequences.⁷¹ In addition to these specific trigger events, during the early 2000s Kenya experienced a deterioration of its political sphere due to corruption, decreased freedom of expression, and extrajudicial killings.⁷² The macro-level conflict information is well documented in terms of the referendum and the ban on political expression, but the micro-level evidence from communities is lacking; this could explain why an ethnic explanation was placed on the 2008 violence instead of a combination between political and economic. This presents a perfect example of where community-level information could have been used to validate the macro-level reports explaining exactly why this event turned violent when decades before saw peace.

Much of the international community was condemned for the allowing the violence, looting, and arson to fester for 60 days.⁷³ There are numerous explanations for this whether it be lack of political will, inability to negotiate, or just a simple lack of preparedness. What this study would like to highlight is if the national and international community failed to act even in the face of violence due to a number of political and institutional constraints, is it reasonable to assume other actors could have prevented or prepared some of the violence? As demonstrated in the sections above prevention and preparedness can encounter the same obstacles when orchestrated from the top-down. This case study is an important example of the dilemma of conflict preparedness when the international community is absent and the national government is quite possibly one of the major contributors to the conflict. Unfortunately, situations like this are not uncommon as often international actors have their hands tied, and national governments are simply incapable. Breaking the mold of typical CPP is difficult, but in situations like this bringing in new actors such as humanitarian organizations to prepare, may produce tangible results capable of reducing the intensity of humanitarian crisis’.

⁷⁰ *BBC News*,.

⁷¹ *BBC News*,.

⁷² Brownsell,.

⁷³ *Ibid*,.

3.2 2013 Kenyan Election

In 2013 Kenya voted again for a new president, and despite small pockets of violence the vote was largely peaceful. The lack of violence after this vote was due to a number of factors, like the raw memories of the recent violence, and the new constitution enacted in 2010 which had a legal provision for contested elections.⁷⁴ After Uhuru Kenyatta was announced as the winner, opposition candidate Raila Odinga again contested the result. As part of the new constitution this claim proceeded through the Supreme Court, and even after his claim was unsuccessful the country remained peaceful. Although the judges were given significant evidence there may have been tampering with the votes, on average Kenyans in post election polls felt the results were free and fair.⁷⁵ In a study that analyzed post election opinion polls it found the view Kenyans had of ‘free and fair’ was much more swayed by what the results meant for their ethnicity or community, as opposed to the technical aspects of election operations.⁷⁶ By taking into account these polls, the study highlights “local context can also be an important contributing factor to the development of voters’ perceptions of credible elections.”⁷⁷ This proves very interesting for then considering what specifically has the capacity to prevent election related violence. Although governments and institutions can create systems and mechanisms to monitor elections, this may not translate down to the communities as the drivers of free and fair elections if the government is largely untrusted. Another important aspect to the lack of violence in 2013 highlighted by some political analysts was the prepared Kenyan institutions and the very active non-profit sector.⁷⁸ The government, in partnership with international institutions, alongside with grassroots movements took the initiative to prepare communities with sensitivity and with educational information campaigns distributed through SMS.⁷⁹ By connecting all sections of society, communities may have felt, regardless of the outcome of the election, they were being considered on a local level.

The benefit of what occurred in 2013 shows the CPP sector is capable of orchestrating an early-response to possible violence from the top levels in terms electoral regulation, and from community-levels in terms of outreach and education. As the post election opinion polls show, one without the other may not be enough to stop violence in communities.

⁷⁴ Dupas,.

⁷⁵ Shah, 45.

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Shah, 58.

⁷⁸ *Foreign Policy*,.

⁷⁹ Ibid.,

3.3 2017 Kenyan Election

In the months prior to the August 8, 2017 presidential election news outlets, human rights advocacy groups, and humanitarian organizations drew attention to growing hostilities and a lack of preparedness. On June 14, 2017 the conflict early-warning network the International Crisis Group, released a specific call for action from international and national players citing the possibility for violence.⁸⁰ At the same time as this alert was released, Kenya held a National Elections Conference to audit the preparedness of the government in areas like integrity, technology, and the media.⁸¹ The conference helped bring together important officials, with hopes to ensure the election was fair and transparent. The national government also organized for the deployment of 150,000 security personnel on the day of the election.⁸² Despite these attempts at high level organization, some groups in the country still felt at odds with the electoral system, as on July 31, 2017 Chris Msando, head of information, communication and technology at the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, was found tortured and murdered on the outskirts of Nairobi.⁸³ In addition to challenges regarding the electoral body, there was also not the same level of community outreach educational programs as seen in 2013. The month before the election both candidates withdrew from the televised debates adding to the failure of the government to provide political information to the voters.⁸⁴ Just two days before the election, Raila Odinga leader of the opposition stated to news media “the only way Jubilee can win this election is by rigging.”⁸⁵ This kind of statement is incredibly dangerous considering Odinga’s involvement during the rejection of the 2007 and 2013 results. This damaging tone of speech from a mainstream candidate, in combination with the lack of political information distributed to communities, set the stage for possible post election tension. Regardless of whether or not security personnel are deployed on the day of the election, if dangerous tensions have been left to fester in the month’s prior, violence can still ensue.

Despite the national attention to promote of a free and fair election, community-level humanitarian organizations noticed election related tensions were still growing in the communities where they operate. Although humanitarian leaders in various communities expressed their appreciation for the electoral reports and government information published,

⁸⁰ Mutiga,.

⁸¹ Lang’at,.

⁸² “Protests over election fraud,” *Al Jazeera*.

⁸³ *The Guardian*,.

⁸⁴ “Uhuru pulls out of debates,” *Al Jazeera*,.

⁸⁵ Hamza,.

there was common sentiment the government and the international community should still be doing more.⁸⁶ One issue with bringing these grievances to national representatives is the danger of sounding too political, as it can be a hindrance to an organizations operations.⁸⁷ Two months before the election four large humanitarian organizations in Kenya, World Vision, Trocaire, Islamic Relief, and ActionAid jointly applied for funding from The Start Network, to conduct a preliminary micro-level analysis of several communities in order to establish whether or not preventative actions should be put in place prior to the elections, and to validate conflict early-warning reports.⁸⁸ The lead agency ActionAid, was awarded 10,000 GBP to complete the analysis. The final analysis included macro-level information establishing a background of contributing factors to violence from secondary sources, grounding community data in other reports, both policy and academic.⁸⁹ The second part of the report relied solely on micro-level community data collected by the humanitarian organizations over the course of one week under a month prior to the election. The analysis process consulted 334 people in focus groups and key informant interviews, in 7 locations, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Mombasa, Garissa, Isiolo and Marsabit.⁹⁰ Numerous organizations involved in this process interviewed expressed the need for national and international reports to listen to the people through “participatory analysis.”⁹¹ These interviews and focus groups helped validate concerns coming from the macro-level conflict warning reports, and in some cases escalated the level of risk, implying the macro-level information was in some cases unaware of the level of discontent among community members. The analysts noticed a pattern of people reporting witnessing the collection of ‘crude weapons’ such as spears and machetes across several communities, which was something not referenced in macro-level reports as a possible indicator of violence.⁹² This analysis process, although conducted quickly and limited geographically, helped validate concerns and create operational goals of what to target in which communities.

While much of the explanations regarding the violence in 2007-2008 revolved around ethnic tensions, respondents to this humanitarian analysis expressed socio-economic issues were dividing their communities. In addition to political tensions, the country is facing the worst drought in decades.⁹³ The focus groups and interviews found tension in communities was

⁸⁶ Interviews,.

⁸⁷ Ibid.,.

⁸⁸ “175 Alert” *Information Page*,.

⁸⁹ Interviews,.

⁹⁰ Kenya GECARR,.

⁹¹ Interviews,.

⁹² Start Network Debrief Meeting,.

⁹³ *The Guardian*, “Drought.”

created by unrealistic promises made by politicians, in addition to widespread hate speech.⁹⁴ Decades of corruption and lavish lifestyles of politicians have led to suspicions and accusations of political groups hoarding food to fuel sentiment of instability.⁹⁵ The lack of public information or televised debates only increases these suspicions. The information collected by news media and government agencies paints just some of the picture regarding how socio-economic factors effect community tensions, but community engagement analysis expands on the claims made at the county or national levels. In the analysis conducted by the humanitarian organizations they conducted 28 focus groups with boys and girls aged 13 to 17. During these focus groups, a trend emerged among children who reported increased domestic violence in the household due to differing political opinions. In all of the interviews conducted for this study, the humanitarians expressed their appreciation for the involvement of children and for their extremely valuable perspectives. Domestic violence can be helpful for monitoring the possibility increased violence, but the topics sensitive nature often excludes it from discussion or inclusion in other reports by the governments or news media. Due to their genuine nature, involving children in the conflict early-warning data collection process uncovers valuable information. The prevalence of economic and food issues before this election raises even more concerns of voters not accepting the results, because a free and fair election has limited direct influence on the circumstances of the average voter, as the post 2013 opinion polls outlined.

The scenario building workshop, organized to share the data collected after the analysis, created three possible scenarios and drew representatives from 15 organizations in Kenya, connecting community-level preparedness mechanisms across the country.⁹⁶ Representatives from OCHA Kenya were invited to participate in the workshop, but these requests were left unanswered.⁹⁷ One humanitarian interviewed expressed the fact that NGOs are not well integrated into the national system in Kenya, and the joint analysis assisted in the coordination of the humanitarian sector.⁹⁸ A subsequent project proposal from ActionAid Kenya, informed from the micro-level analysis completed, obtained 280,000 GBP of funding for election preparedness weeks before the election.⁹⁹ The project orchestrated response in six high risk counties with eight addition partner agencies. In addition to supplies stock piles, the project also included assisting the county governments in information dissemination, and humanitarian

⁹⁴ Kenya GECARR,.

⁹⁵ *The Guardian*, "Drought."

⁹⁶ Kenya GECARR,.

⁹⁷ Interviews,.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*,.

⁹⁹ "175 Alert," *Information Page*.

relief if the need arose.¹⁰⁰ ActionAid also distributed the completed analysis report to security partners in the communities.¹⁰¹ With all of these steps completed in just over a month, one organization questioned what would have been capable if they had acted even early.

As many expected, Raila Odinga contested the election results announcing Uhuru Kenyatta as president after the August 8, 2017 vote. Odinga claimed he had been given anonymous evidence the electronic voting system had been hacked.¹⁰² After Odinga's press conference, disenfranchised voters took to the streets in violent protests that killed five people on August 9, 2017. After an investigation by the electoral commission the chairperson admitted the system was subject to an unsuccessful attack.¹⁰³ Despite the investigation Odinga continued to demand access to the electoral servers to conduct his own investigation. Kisumu, Odinga's stronghold, and Nairobi experienced protests which were quelled by reports of police using live ammunition. As of August 13, 2017 Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights put the death toll at 24 people.¹⁰⁴ Most of the deaths reported were allegedly due to police firing live ammunition at protesters, painting a different picture than the ethnic clashes amongst citizens in 2008, further complicating the true causes of violence and how to prepare. As this situation is still evolving, Kenyans and the international community both hope peace is achieved in the government and on the streets of the country.

SECTION 4: DISCUSSION

CPP are both complicated tasks connected to the unique characteristics of each event, influenced by the capabilities of all actors involved. Respecting the complexity of this subject, this section will discuss some links between the literature on this topic and the case studies from Kenya over the last decade. The opportunity to connect with reputable humanitarian organizations preparing for and responding to the 2017 Kenyan election offers a unique perspective to this discussion, as it uncovered the real role humanitarians can play.

4.1 Conflict Early-Warnings; The Kenyan Example

One of the fundamental challenges to early-action is convincing policy makers to engage with CEWS and use them for CPP. From the beginning of the 2000s until the election in 2007 there were significant warning signs, and looking back the post election violence

¹⁰⁰ ActionAid Project Proposal,.

¹⁰¹ Interview,.

¹⁰² "Election Chief," *Al Jazeera*.

¹⁰³ Ibid,.

¹⁰⁴ Duggan,.

should not have been such a surprise to the international community. The fact that the international community was surprised came down to a variety of factors, one being relatively under developed CEWS at the time. Prior to the election the second generation of CEWS was just beginning to make connections to the field, and rely slightly less on large volumes of quantitative data.¹⁰⁵ The fact that a warning was released in 2017 shows improvement in the sector, and the benefit of third generation CEWS connection to the field. Although the data has improved, convincing the international community to act is still challenging when less and less focus is placed on developing crisis' in the news.¹⁰⁶ CEWS which outline a specific event like an election benefit from some coverage because it is a clear cut event news stories can summarize into a sound bite. Unfortunately, the majority of developing conflicts are fluid, with undefined start or end dates, which makes coverage increasingly difficult.¹⁰⁷ Even though Kenya received some coverage, the International Crisis Group on June 14 still had to highlight the need for action. The improvement of CEWS is beneficial, but the calls to action continue to be in a manner not preferred by policy makers in the international community. Considering whether humanitarians can be a substitute for political will when calls to action are left unanswered is important for the future of CPP.¹⁰⁸

In order to produce a conflict early-warning suitable of promoting action, the type of conflict and its drivers are vital pieces of information. Unfortunately, the data surrounding conflict types and the specific drivers of humanitarian emergencies is fragmented.¹⁰⁹ One of the reasons the 2017 election saw some violence is because warnings based on the events from 2007-08 and 2013 failed to truly understand the causes of discontent amongst the population. The violence after the 2007-08 elections was widely categorized as ethnic violence, but as experts highlight, and as the 2017 election shows, this label is far too simplistic.¹¹⁰ In post election opinion polls in 2008 only 23% of those surveys attributed violence to land grievances or longstanding ethnic tensions.¹¹¹ The post election survey in 2013 demonstrated people were genuinely concerned for their socio-economic wellbeing, not just their ethnicity.¹¹² In interviews with community members prior to the most recent election, economic grievances were a major issue raised. Mary Kaldor highlighted conflicts currently facing the world almost

¹⁰⁵ OECD, 34-35.

¹⁰⁶ Otto,.

¹⁰⁷ Engel, 214.

¹⁰⁸ Macdonal,.

¹⁰⁹ Everett, 312.

¹¹⁰ Brownsell,.

¹¹¹ Wolf, 280.

¹¹² Shah,.

always have an economic element, and Kenya is no exception.¹¹³ Moving even further from the ethnic label, initial reports of the lives lost since the election on August 8, 2017 place most of the deaths on police forces using live ammunition, bringing in the possibility of politically in sighted violence.¹¹⁴ By taking into account the information from all three elections, it is clear the drivers of election violence in Kenya are multidimensional; if early-response programs center around solely either economic, ethnic, or the distrust in the government, without recognizing all three, the policies that may result from the report will not be equip to prevent or prepare for violence. The micro-level analysis completed by the humanitarian organizations in Kenya helped to expose concerns deep in communities, and that information helped to inform sensitive programs for the communities that required it.¹¹⁵ If this analysis had been done earlier, and exposed pre-election tensions were more than ethnic, perhaps programs and policies could have been put in place to reach out to the communities and give them resources and information, instead of just holding an election conference for high level officials disconnected from everyday Kenyans.

4.2 The Role of Humanitarian Organizations in Kenya

In order to deal with the multifaceted nature of 21st century conflicts, various different perspectives, academic and policy, point to a multi-level response for CPP. International and national power dynamics can often make this complicated because of the sensitive nature of releasing conflict early-warnings.¹¹⁶ In the case of Kenya, as well as many other examples across the globe, national governments can not always be relied on to take conflict early-warnings from international organizations and then translate that into sensitive programs for their communities. In some cases this may work, but the early-warning sector needs to have alternate plans. In some circumstances OCHA would be capable, as they are the body set to ‘coordinate,’ but as seen in the Kenyan example, OCHA cannot always be relied upon to participate.¹¹⁷ The micro analysis workshop collected valuable information, but also managed to connect 15 humanitarian organizations across Kenya. In ActionAid’s program proposal they listed sharing information with security personnel, bringing in partner organizations, and working with county governments. These actions completed just weeks before the election

¹¹³ Kaldor,.

¹¹⁴ Duggan,.

¹¹⁵ Kenya GECARR,.

¹¹⁶ Zenko, 29.

¹¹⁷ Interviews,.

offer an example of the humanitarian sector connecting different levels and actors to orchestrate a multi-level response.¹¹⁸

The reactive international structures of post-Cold War humanitarianism are deeply engrained in the international system, and vital issues like creating policy and collecting funding are reliant on this system.¹¹⁹ The unique position humanitarians are in allows them to be able to collect community-level data, while also communicating with experts on the macro-level. Adopting and supporting analysis by humanitarian organizations breaks the pattern of always relying on a declaration of risk by another country or a governmental emergency appeal.¹²⁰ The analysis completed in just over a week was able to unlock 280,000 GBP of preparedness funding for the most recent election, changing the traditional flow of funding and policy. Third generation CEWS cultivated an appreciation for field level data, and as seen in the Kenyan example, humanitarians are poised to collect and interpret this data.

The dilemma of conflict prevention versus conflict preparedness is a debate humanitarians are often faced with. In the case of the August 8, 2017 election prevention of violence by a national or international body seems highly unlikely because of the dangerous rhetoric spouted by one of the leading candidates. The national government organized a large security presence on the day of the election to prevent violence, but as initial reports showed, much of the deaths were due to live police ammunition. This example perfectly expresses the notion that most interventions are geared towards management and resolution, not prevention.¹²¹ Security forces deployed on the day of the election is conflict management at the core, citizens unhappy with the government would have already decided they were going to protest despite the security presence. The only way to truly prevent conflict, is to approach the real underlying issues. The SMS information campaign in 2013 helped inform citizens, and perhaps if the debates had been allowed in 2017 people would have been more informed about each candidate's agenda, or would have been able to weigh the issue of false promises.¹²² In the case of Kenya in 2017, humanitarian organizations showed key methods of preparedness, through resources and security organization, but if given more time community-level organizations would have been able to also translate national information down into communities. The prevention model of preventive diplomacy has massive obstacles in situations like this, because those that perpetrate violence are far removed from the top leaders

¹¹⁸ De Maio, 133.

¹¹⁹ Whittall, 1240.

¹²⁰ Whittall, 1240.

¹²¹ Engel, 214.

¹²² Kenya GECARR,.

and often have their own complicated reasons for violent protests. Community-level organizations are best oriented to reach out to communities to reduce violence through education, communication, and cooperation.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

A constant theme throughout this study highlighted the challenge with connecting warnings to action. The lack of information about evolving violent situations, complicated data translation, and the dilemma of simplicity in reports makes creating operational response plans difficult. The goal of this study was to outline the issues currently facing early-action to possible violent conflicts, and then to outline a solution to this challenge. Although this area of literature and policy is new and adapting, producing ideas and solutions should be valued in a sector so easily critiqued.

Providing humanitarian organizations that prepare, and in some cases prevent conflict, with attention and appreciation should be a key goal of the CEWS sector, as the debates and barriers plaguing early-action need to be resolved, or at least not prolonged. The realities of CEWS and early-action are suffering from debates surrounding whether or not the real goal of the international community is conflict prevention or conflict preparedness, while the actual solution is to broaden how the world understands these concepts. This debate is also combined with the fact that CEWS are only gradually improving, meaning the realities of conflict reports do not even offer the right information for operational early-responses. If this weren't enough obstacles, CEWS also have to challenge the post-Cold War reactive institutional power structure which governs when and how to act, or when to release funding. In an ideal world solving these issues would be one way to truly prevent and prepare for violent conflict, but with the rise of violent conflict and protracted crisis,' humanitarians on the ground attempting to cope with devastating emergencies cannot afford to wait for academics and policy makers to reach an agreement.

Although humanitarians are not without their own barriers, as the Kenyan examples show, organizations are able to overcome obstacles by attracting funding, doing micro-level analysis, and bringing together a multitude of actors. Multidimensional polices informed by dynamic information seem to be the only appropriate way to respond to something as complex as violent conflict in the 21st century. By combining macro-level conflict warnings, with micro-level information and validation, organizations and their partner institutions are able to create policy's informed by the macro, tailored to the micro.

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