

The Political Marketplace Framework and Mass Starvation: How Can Humanitarian Analysis, Early Warning and Response Be Improved?

Aditya Sarkar

Research Fellow, World Peace Foundation, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA; aditya.sarkar@tufts.edu

Benjamin J. Spatz

Research Fellow, World Peace Foundation, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA; benjamin.spatz@tufts.edu

Alex de Waal

Executive Director, World Peace Foundation and Research Professor, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA; Professorial Fellow, London School of Economics and Political Science; alex.dewaal@tufts.edu

Christopher Newton

Researcher, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston; christopher.newton@tufts.edu

Daniel Maxwell

Henry J. Leir Professor in Food Security at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy and The Fletcher School at Tufts University; Research Director at the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, Boston; daniel.maxwell@tufts.edu

Abstract

In 2017, the UN raised the alarm on famines in North-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. Starvation has been used as a weapon of war in Syria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo currently has among the largest numbers of severely food-insecure people of any country assessed by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system. Each of these sites of mass starvation or famine can be understood as a 'political marketplace'. They are characterised by the dominance of transactional politics over public institutions, and elite politics is conducted for factional or personal political advantage, on the basis of monetised patronage. This paper examines the relationship between these systems of transactional politics and famine and other forms of mass starvation, and outlines the implications of the political marketplace framework for humanitarian action. It argues that both transactional politics and mass starvation emerge from particular political-economic configurations characterised by economic precarity and mismanagement, violent forms of peripheral governance and war economies. Applying the political marketplace framework can help improve humanitarian information and early warning systems, as well as programme decision-making, while helping humanitarians think more carefully about the constant trade-offs they are forced to make.

Keywords: famine; mass starvation; humanitarian analyses and information systems; humanitarian response; political marketplace; conflict

Introduction

Depending on how one counts, nine out of the ten ‘worst humanitarian crises’ in 2021 have been caused entirely, or at least in part, by violent conflict (IRC, 2021), and almost *all contemporary instances of famine and mass starvation*¹ have been driven – at least in part – by violent conflict (de Waal, 2018).² While the association between armed conflict and food insecurity is complex, ranging from outright starvation crimes committed by belligerents to the broader economic impacts of war, much of the humanitarian assessment of these situations often mentions armed conflict – or generalised insecurity – as merely a ‘contributing factor’ and leaves it at that.³

In contrast, the point of departure for this paper is to assess humanitarian assistance, early warning and response in relation to the logic driving the onset, duration, severity and character of armed conflict in several severe complex emergencies (North-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).⁴ Our research from those cases⁵ finds that a dominant logic of elite political behaviour is the political marketplace (PM). This applies where transactional politics (the day-to-day use of coercion/violence or material incentives among members of the elite) trumps the functioning of formal rules and institutions. Such transactional systems are monetised and coercive, often overtly violent. They also cross national boundaries. Political systems that exhibit this logic can be called political marketplaces and can be described using the PM framework (PMF) (Spatz *et al.*, 2021; de Waal *et al.*, 2021: 1; de Waal, 2015).

Nearly all ongoing instances of famine and mass starvation are enmeshed in the dynamics of local, national and transnational PMs. This paper examines the connections between the PMF and mass starvation, and distils the implications for humanitarian analysis, early warning and response. It argues that understanding the logic of the PM can help humanitarian actors be more aware of the context in which they are operating and weigh the constant trade-offs they are forced to make.

Guiding Questions, Structure and Caveats

This paper integrates existing empirical work on the PM theory and synthesises findings from case studies on the genesis and nature of the simultaneous occurrence of armed conflict and widespread severe food insecurity, including mass starvation. These cases were chosen because they are among the conflicts which have produced extreme and protracted cases of mass starvation in this century. They also exemplify PM systems. The paper begins by briefly outlining the PMF’s key

concepts and assumptions before addressing three key research questions.

1. How do PM systems cause mass starvation?

‘Armed conflict’ is commonly reduced to a dummy variable in analyses of the causes and dynamics of acute food security crises, while ‘political will’ (or lack thereof) substitutes for a lack of analysis of the logic of elite political actions. We assess how the PMF might open up these analytical ‘black boxes’ and thereby help explain the dynamics that lead to such crises.

2. How can understanding PM systems complement other forms of humanitarian analysis to improve understanding of, and response to, mass starvation?

Humanitarians have improved metrics for humanitarian outcomes, but conflict analysis remains weak (Maxwell, 2019). How can an understanding of PM dynamics complement other forms of analysis to improve early warning and make intervention more ‘conflict-sensitive’? Can humanitarian actors truly modify their responses to account for the implications of these analyses? Of course, improved analysis does not necessarily lead to improved humanitarian action, but we argue that PM analysis can help improve (a) information and early warning, (b) programme decision-making, while helping humanitarians think more carefully about (c) conflict mitigation, and (d) the current policy debates around the localisation of humanitarian action and leadership.

3. To what extent does humanitarian assistance contribute to the dynamics of PMs, and to what extent do elites in these conflicts compete to control humanitarian aid? Is there a point at which the effects of political contest for control over aid outweigh the humanitarian impacts of assistance? How might this issue be analysed?

These are old questions that have not been resolved, but the PMF allows them to be subjected to new forms of analysis that are, we submit, more rigorous. We find that while aid resources may contribute to wider conflict dynamics, control of aid resources is a less important element in intra-elite competition.

In posing and answering these questions, the intention of this paper is not to present the PMF as a ‘better’ or ‘stand-alone’ approach to understanding the dynamics of violent conflict or their humanitarian knock-on effects. Instead, it is to bring a theory of politics, and in particular a theory of elite political actors and the way they behave when violence and loyalties become commoditised, to bear on understanding of mass starvation.

Three clarifications are in order. First, our focus is on mass starvation rather than famine per se – defined by the IPC as the worst outcome on its scale of acute food insecurity (IPC Global Partners, 2021). It is now

recognised that food insecurity at a slightly lower degree of severity but with larger numbers of people affected and/or over increasingly long periods of time, can lead to greater loss of life and livelihood (Maxwell *et al.*, 2020). This was true in South Sudan, where 99 per cent of the mortality resulting from the civil war between 2014–18 took place *outside* of the confines of the specific famine event declared in central Unity State in 2017 (Checchi *et al.*, 2018). In Somalia in 2011, 258,000 deaths were attributed to the famine, but 43 percent of those deaths occurred before famine criteria set by the IPC were met and ‘famine’ was declared, and much of the mortality occurred outside the areas declared to be in famine (Checchi and Robinson, 2013). Our use of ‘mass starvation’ encompasses a range of situations of extreme food insecurity, including famine-likely, or localised famine-like conditions, which may not always be aligned with publicly available reporting through the IPC (see Maxwell and Hailey, 2021). Resonating with the definition of starvation as a war crime, it also includes the deprivation of objects indispensable to survival including water and sanitation, medical care, shelter and maternal care for young children (Jordash *et al.*, 2019).

Second, this paper adopts a ‘concentric circles’ definition of humanitarian action in which the core life-protecting mission is at the centre, but it also recognises prevention, recovery and addressing underlying causes as being key to the humanitarian endeavour. Therefore, it considers the broad goal of protecting human life and alleviating suffering in a conflict or crisis in relation to a much wider set of goals – around livelihood protection, governance, resilience, conflict resolution and others that align with the ‘triple nexus’ of humanitarian action, development and peacebuilding.

Third, we recognise that the ‘humanitarian community’ is not a monolithic entity. It consists of different types of groups and movements, often with contradictory ideas about how the broad goal of saving lives and alleviating suffering ought to be pursued, with different operating assumptions and models (Donini, 2010: S220). The expression includes the multibillion dollar Northern/Western humanitarian movement, rooted in various traditions of charity and philanthropy, as well as local actors, Islamic humanitarian organisations and even military actors. In this paper, we are concerned primarily with the formal humanitarian system, though we make reference to others.

The Political Marketplace Framework

The ‘political marketplace’ refers to a system of monetised political governance in which transactions or deals dominate formal institutions, laws and regulations (Spatz *et al.*, 2021: 7–8; de Waal, 2015). The PMF is best understood as an analytical lens – with a set of

empirically grounded assumptions about elite⁶ behaviour which allow researchers and analysts to investigate how power operates within these political markets. It is a ‘realist’ theory in the sense that it takes the world ‘as it is’ rather than ‘as it ought to be’ and recognises that making progress toward the latter requires resolute confrontation with the former. It draws and builds on theories of war economies, greed versus grievance, patronage and corruption, patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism and rentier states, among others, and updates and reformulates these concepts to fit the contemporary configuration of the global political economy (Spatz *et al.*, 2021; Spatz, 2020; de Waal, 2015). The theory most applies to violent political systems often called ‘fragile states’ (de Waal, 2015), although while the fragile state paradigm describes how these systems fall short of the imagined ideal of the institutionalised Weberian nation state, the PMF describes how these countries are actually organised (Boege *et al.*, 2009; de Waal, 2020).

Politics in these systems is organised by different rules than in bureaucratic states. At the most basic level, political elites (mostly men) try to gain and retain power through near-constant bargaining using violence and material reward – the ‘twin currencies’ of political power (Spatz, 2020). Alliances are fluid; elite members can compete one moment and collude the next, or indeed can do both simultaneously. Where democratic institutions and practices do exist, they are effectively subordinated to the tactical calculus of elite negotiations. In PMs, peace agreements are not ‘political settlements’ that endure; they are elite bargains that are only likely to hold as long as the political market conditions in which they were struck persist, a type of ‘permanent political unsettlement’ (Bell and Pospisil, 2017: 581). Overall, these states are not moving inexorably toward more-institutionalised statehood; rather, they are on different long-term pathways.

Because gaining and maintaining political power depends on the ability to mobilise and control the means of violence and material reward, the core business of elite players in political market systems is to secure discretionary cash (i.e. the ‘political budget’) or the ability to grant or withhold access to material rewards (e.g. bribes, contracts, formal and informal licenses to operate/predate in certain areas, etc.). Material inducements are then used to buy or rent loyalty and/or violent capabilities. Almost all political actors in these contexts conform to these basic rules – failing to do so jeopardises their political viability and goals. Even those who attempt to chart a different course – those pursuing a ‘democratic’ reform agenda, for example – are usually obliged to work within these rules.

The PMF is not a theory of everything and not all behaviour fits within the framework; it is not economic determinism by another name. Indeed, this logic is often

closely intertwined with, and operates alongside, other political logics, such as the logic of exclusionary identity politics (Kaldor and de Waal, 2021). Moreover, political markets, like all other markets, are socially embedded; societal norms shape the market, and certain actions are clearly proscribed. In South Sudan's civil war, for instance, the ability of Dinka political elites (perceived as being allied to the ruling group) to purchase loyalties from the Nuer (identified with the opposition), was circumscribed by the moral expectations of kinship and community among the Nuer, especially in a context characterised by egregious, identity-based violence. The moral limits of the South Sudanese PM and the meaning of money and transactions in it were 'contested, negotiated and part of societies' pervading social norms' (Pendle, 2021: 588).

This logic has immediate implications for mass starvation and humanitarian response. Most importantly, PM dynamics act as an entrenched obstacle to the provision of public goods since political leaders are only incidentally concerned with welfare of the general population. This is not a novel observation, but it means that in times of crisis, the priority for elites is their own political survival, while in non-crisis situations, they have little incentive to tackle the political economy of precarity. Extreme food security crises represent a change in political market conditions that compel political elites to make tactical adjustments while also providing new opportunities for acquiring power or the instruments for power. Such changes in political organisation may endure well beyond the crisis. Finally, it follows that humanitarian operations are most likely to be caught up in the calculus of transactional politics in contexts where other sources of political funding are not readily available to PM actors or are in decline (due to macroeconomic collapse, for instance).

PMF and Mass Starvation: Three Primary Points of Intersection

There are three broad points of intersection between the PMF and mass starvation. The first relates to the *continuum of war and peace* in PMs, where economic regulation and political negotiation are both underpinned by elite bargaining (Debos, 2016). Formal 'peace' does not automatically lead to better humanitarian outcomes in PMs, and the specific nature and severity of humanitarian need depends on why fighting is taking place and how violence is organised (for instance, whether elites are fighting to control resources such as oilfields or land or rebelling to be included as a party to peace talks). The second point of intersection is more straightforward and concerns *humanitarian assistance, spending and 'entrepreneurship'*. The third relates to the *broader predatory political*

economies which create the structural conditions for the onset and intensification of mass starvation and act as the basis for the marketisation of politics. The underlying point is this: *it is the combination of PM dynamics and war* which is crucial to the genesis of extreme food insecurity or famine even though there are no straightforward predictive links between the marketisation of politics and mass starvation.

1. First point of intersection: The conduct of war and the business of peace

As we have noted above, war is the most common cause of mass starvation in the contemporary world. The ways in which war causes starvation and famine are relatively well known. They include deliberate starvation crimes, starvation as the consequence of specific political economic goals (e.g. moving people off their land to take control of it, appropriating assets, licensing pillage, etc.), the reckless pursuit of war strategies that cause deprivation, hunger and other knock-on economic effects. Not all wars are triggered or driven by transactional politics, of course, but organised violence is often a point of entry for intensification of marketised politics.

Starvation Crimes

Starvation crimes – in essence, the use of starvation as a weapon of war or as an element in a crime against humanity – can be utilised by political authorities to achieve multiple objectives (Conley and de Waal, 2019). These include: mass killing; reducing the capacity of a group to mount resistance; punishment; a means of seizing territorial control (for instance, through siege warfare as in Yemen and Syria); flushing out a population into areas controlled by the perpetrators (in Nigeria, making aid available only in garrison towns has been part of a larger strategy to lure people out of Boko Haram controlled areas and create free-fire zones for the military to operate in); altering a targeted group's political calculus; a tool of material extraction (for example, to force people of their land); and finally, a way to feed the perpetrators' soldiers. Creating or sustaining starvation conditions can also be a means of coercing labour. Some of these goals are related to the logic of the PM, others (such as mass killing) may fall outside the PM entirely. In fact, the extreme deprivation and violence associated with starvation crimes can actually damage elite efforts to extract political funds and services (de Waal *et al.*, 2021). The presumption of impunity and the instrumentalisation of all elements of human welfare within a PM underpin the commission of such crimes.

Starvation crimes may also be committed at the provincial or local level. Local norms against deliberate starvation are often strong, but once they are overridden, perpetrators with more granular knowledge of targeted communities and households can inflict greater damage. In South Sudan, for instance, local militia forces were

more efficient perpetrators of starvation against neighbouring communities than forces drawn from further away. Militiamen from a neighbouring community knew more about the assets and livelihoods of the target group and could cause greater harm through looting, stealing and killing livestock, and attacking food stores and other hidden assets. They were also able to put those assets (e.g. livestock) to more immediate use (Newton, forthcoming 2022a). This finding also contradicts a commonly held assumption among some humanitarian analysts that 'local' or 'communal' forms of organised violence are inherently less impactful on food security than those involving formally recognised armed actors like rebel groups and government forces. This assumption was a primary cause of the humanitarian community's inability to identify the growing risk of famine in South Sudan throughout 2020 despite a national-level peace agreement (Newton, 2021).

Peripheral Governance

The operation of violent, monetised patronage is commonly more overt and brutal in the geographical peripheries of PMs (which are often also socially marginal areas). Elite at the centre often delegate authority over localities to provincial elites (tribal leaders, militia commanders, political-military entrepreneurs) who then engage in competitive bargaining for resources provided from the centre in an updated version of the old divide-and-rule strategy. From the perspective of the centre, adopting such violent techniques of peripheral governance can serve multiple purposes – they can (a) facilitate resource extraction where those resources can contribute to political finance (e.g. artisanal minerals or timber, part of whose proceeds are channelled to the centre), (b) keep provincial leaders either loyal or preoccupied with local affairs, (c) lower administrative costs and (d) help mobilise cheap male labour to serve in militias and armed groups. This can have implications for food security, especially in instances where the local actors are rewarded with the assurance that they can pillage, extract local resources, levy taxes and fees, smuggle goods or people and undertake other activities without fear of consequence.

The case studies provide stark examples of how this creates incentives for local elites to rebel, using violence as a means of signalling and bargaining with the centre, with knock-on humanitarian implications. In Kasai, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), competing claims over a particular chieftainship led to a rebellion which then fragmented and became a highly disruptive conflict causing significant loss of civilian life (Maxwell and Fitzpatrick, 2021). The origins of Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria are comparable, with the added twist that militia groups were mobilised

initially for gubernatorial elections with the blessing of the central authorities (Miller, forthcoming 2022). In South Sudan and Darfur, rivalries among central elites (the Islamists in Khartoum excluded from central power by Omar al-Bashir after 2000, and the South Sudanese after the recent peace agreement) were displaced to the peripheries where they took on violent forms, with serious humanitarian consequences, including a likely famine (Thomas and de Waal, forthcoming 2021; Newton, forthcoming 2022b). In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh fomented local wars in the peripheries to keep his rivals busy fighting each other, so as to reduce challenges to his power (al-Iriyani and Nasser, 2021).

War Economies

In all cases of contemporary mass starvation, war economies emerged and were closely intertwined with the causes of food insecurity. The expression 'war economies' encompasses a wide variety of phenomena, but at its simplest can be used to refer to commercial transacting (including for private enrichment) among armed groups and businesspersons in conflict. War economies are characterised by clandestine commercial networks, which dominate not only formal institutions but also cross political and military lines and facilitate collusive profiteering among ostensible enemies. They emerge in protracted wars, especially those with proliferating state and non-state armed groups hybridised with criminal gangs and smugglers. A highly precarious gig economy for militarised male labour can emerge to supply the workforce for these armed groups, and with much reduced domestic production, the war effort begins to depend on pillage, extractive taxation, shake-downs and external patronage (Kaldor, 2012: 94–6). Aid resources are often taxed, diverted or looted. As interests in the war economy become entrenched, battles become rarer and selective cooperation among warring factions becomes the norm. Armed operations may be undertaken more for commercial purposes than in pursuit of military victory. The most egregious examples of collusion across front lines involves the trade and smuggling of weapons between belligerents. This was the case in Yemen, where weapons supplied by the Saudi-led coalition to allied militia have appeared in Ansar Allah's hands (al-Iriyani and Nasser, 2021), and in Nigeria, where both Boko Haram and the Nigerian Army stand accused of illicit trading, sometimes with each other (Miller, forthcoming 2022). War economies can exist independently of PMs but are fertile breeding grounds for the marketisation of politics and are a characteristic of armed conflicts in PMs.

Black-marketeering and profiteering from the supply of food and other essential goods contributes to food scarcity and inability of civilians to purchase food. These

are compounded by restrictions (including through taxation) on trade and the mobility of labourers and livestock herders which are central to livelihoods. A feature is 'roadblock politics' (Schouten, 2019), where actors and armed groups impose themselves on strategic points on trade routes, to extract resources and influence from control over trade. Sieges are an extreme example of this. Often instigated for specific military goals, over time, sieges become opportunities for profiteering. The most striking example is Syria, in which smugglers were able to make windfall profits from the price gradients for essential goods between the besieged enclaves and other parts of the country. This quickly led to the organisation of a parallel economy. Not only did these activities generate commercial profits and personal fortunes, but the money involved was sometimes put to political purposes, and the points at which profits were extracted – checkpoints, tunnels, permissions from the security forces – became commodities to be traded or a cause of political strife and security incidents as belligerents fought to control the lucrative source of income. A checkpoint could be bought and sold between different factions, either units within the same armed group or even across contending groups. The political economy of siege, sustained by the logic of the PM, created very high prices for essential food and medicine, deepening and prolonging crisis (Kanfash, 2021).

Peace Agreements

Ceasefires and peace agreements may bring positive humanitarian outcomes by ending active hostilities, opening up markets and trade routes, allowing people to move and humanitarian aid to flow. But if a peace agreement falls apart, the humanitarian consequences can be worse than if it had not been attempted. The collapse of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) in 2016 is an example. What followed was an extension of war, pillage and displacement into areas that had not been severely affected in the immediately preceding war, and new rounds of destruction including starvation crimes and the declaration of famine (Newton, forthcoming 2022a). In some cases, even just initiating negotiation of a peace agreement can cause a rise in violence, as belligerents try to fight their way into a better negotiating position – a peril of 'payroll peace' (de Waal and Boswell, 2019). This may contradict the common assumption that peace agreements are automatically 'good' (see, for instance, Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility and World Food Programme, 2020). A corollary assumption is that, following a peace agreement, humanitarian needs will drop, and displaced populations will return home (Hilhorst and Serrano, 2010).

Adopting a PM lens makes the reality, and potential danger, of peace agreements clearer. They are best understood as a share-out of the spoils among

political-military elites. Given this, a peace bargain could conceivably be reached that keeps a country vulnerable to humanitarian crisis, by continuing to stymie the provision of public goods or perpetuating exploitative political economies. For example, in the Sudanese case peace agreements have led to the extension of agrarian capitalism into areas of smallholder farming (Gallopín *et al.*, 2021); in Syria it is leading post-conflict reconstruction contracts that undermine livelihoods (Kanfash, 2021). Another feature to consider is that once an agreement is signed it legitimates certain types of violence and obscures other forms. That is, some violence is treated as a legitimate element of implementing the agreement (e.g. through suppressing or disarming spoilers and holdouts) and other violence is not considered important enough to warrant attention. There is utility in incorporating a PM assessment to inform humanitarian analysis regardless of what is agreed on paper.

2. Second point of intersection: Humanitarian assistance, spending and humanitarian entrepreneurship

Humanitarian assistance is a public good that is, in principle, initiated and organised according to universal principles that counteract the logic of the PM, or at least seek to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of this logic. Aid to a suffering population can contradict or support the war aims of a belligerent. A humanitarian operation is also conducted by staff members who are witnesses and may publicise violations and expose perpetrators. A humanitarian operation is therefore potentially a civic institution that complicates the PM. However, humanitarian activities can also become enmeshed within a PM, presenting risks for humanitarian actors and opportunities for political or conflict actors. The potential for humanitarian assistance to exacerbate conflict has long been recognised, but so has its potential for reducing conflict (Anderson, 1999). The *type* of humanitarian assistance is of less importance than the *way in which* assistance is managed. Achieving positive impact, however, requires an acknowledgement and leveraging of the real politics of a locality in the design and implementation of humanitarian programming. Hence, understanding PM dynamics is critical to the way in which humanitarian assistance is managed in conflict.

In general, humanitarian assistance is a relatively small contributor to political funding and national budgets, compared to other sources such as minerals, except in the case of Somalia. This is in keeping with the literature regarding the role of food assistance in armed conflict. Recent work has found that food assistance has the potential to impact positively on conflict dynamics – depending on method of implementation – and that humanitarian food assistance programming can meet intended objectives in conflict settings despite wide-ranging concerns. And even in

the countries with the highest quantities of humanitarian food assistance per capita, food assistance is a small proportion of total consumption outside a few crisis areas (Christian and Barrett, 2018).

In some cases, humanitarian aid has significantly influenced the workings of the PM, with Somalia being the principal example again: business fortunes and political careers were launched on the back of the massive international spending in Somalia during the UNITAF-UNOSOM period 1992–94, and the delivery contracts for in-kind food aid of the 2000s assisted the commercial and political ambitions of some members of the elite, including a prime minister and numerous regional or local officials (Ahmed, 2017; Jaspars *et al.*, 2019). The post-2011 shift from in-kind food aid to cash altered the beneficiaries of humanitarian programming: the food trucking cartel was broken, and money transfer companies became the commercial actors (though aid vouchers are not sufficiently large to be their main business). The shift has not changed the structure of Somalia's PM, but some of the commercial beneficiaries are different, and in turn some politicians have been advantaged and others disadvantaged (Jaspars *et al.*, 2019).

The role of humanitarian assistance in a PM can also change over time. In South Sudan, aid was a crucial resource for all parties in the civil war in the 1990s. It became marginal when the country's politics were funded by oil after 2005. During the recent war, it has become more important once again, especially at a local level, where humanitarian operations, facilities and commodities can become important sources of political finance (Geneva Call, 2021). In Yemen, the selective allocation of humanitarian aid is a means of rewarding constituency leaders (al-Iriyani and Nasser, 2021). The DRC case study of Kasai was notable in that there was no substantial humanitarian operation to be co-opted, and the resources from those relief operations were insignificant compared to those available from mining (Maxwell and Fitzpatrick, 2021). Humanitarian aid may also be significant at the local level, including within urban economies. In Somalia it is a significant source of local political revenue through corrupt levies and taxes, through profits from renting out NGO compounds and through capturing exchange rate differentials associated with cash transfer programming (Jaspars and Majid, forthcoming 2022).

An issue in Somalia, South Sudan and Syria is that local humanitarian actors of all kinds can also be PM operators (sometimes referred to as 'humanitarian entrepreneurs'), using the same kinds of skills as politicians including maintaining political networks and monitoring shifts in the PM, constantly negotiating their position and adjusting it accordingly and brokering information and access (Ibreck, 2019; Jaspars and Majid, forthcoming 2022; Kanfash, 2021; Newton, forthcoming 2022b). They

are political actors of necessity, but with humanitarian and civic goals.

3. Third point of intersection: Predatory political economies

Political marketplaces are underpinned by, and give rise to, predatory political economies. These have second-order impacts on civilians – shaping the specific contours of people's vulnerability, and the humanitarian consequences of war and violence. Take, for instance, mass starvation in Yemen. The structural drivers of hunger in Yemen pre-date the present conflict and have their roots in years of export-oriented irrigation-dependent agricultural policy promoted by donors which led to a high degree of import-dependence, integration into a regional oil economy, a male-migration (and remittance) based economy and a highly militarised patronage-based ruling system. The proximate drivers of mass starvation, however, have been the tactics of all the belligerents in the war – including blockades, sieges, indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilian infrastructure, as well as the systematic targeting of the food system, war economies and manipulation of macroeconomic institutions (including the central bank) (Sarkar, forthcoming 2022). The predatory political economy which existed *before* the war has shaped the strategies and tactics of elites *in* the war, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of Yemenis.

Political marketplaces also generate other types of precarity, including through crony-capitalist processes of post-conflict reconstruction – as in Syria, where contracts for import of food and oil have been used to channel public resources to elites allied to the regime (Mehchy, 2021) – or through displacement and the immiseration of large groups of people, who join a precarious and cheap labour force, exploited by agrarian capitalists in Sudan (Thomas, 2019), urban contractors in Somalia (Jaspars and Majid, forthcoming 2022) and military recruiters everywhere. The displaced can also be a magnet to attract humanitarian aid (as in Somalia), allowing those who control access to the displaced populations to reap material rewards (World Bank, 2021: 114).

(Lack of) Economic Reform and Macroeconomic Mismanagement

Elites in PM systems have little incentive to provide public goods or undertake welfare-enhancing economic reform. In some contexts, national economic strategies are geared almost solely toward corrupt activities – such as in Zaire under Mobutu, continuing to the economic networks which dominate commercial activity in present day DRC (Schouten, 2021). In other countries, even when funds are available for investment in public goods, they may be diverted toward sustenance of a security sector or used to maintain patronage networks (Miller, forthcoming 2022).

Most PMs are also characterised by macroeconomic mismanagement. From the perspective of elites in a PM, decisions that seem irrational in terms of promoting public welfare or economic growth, may actually be perfectly rational, and macroeconomic institutions can be instrumentalised for political purposes with negative implications for food security. For instance, the relocation of the Central Bank of Yemen from Sana'a to Aden and stopping of civil service salary payments in Houthi-controlled areas for political reasons contributed to the disastrous fall in incomes in those areas (Biswell, 2020) and had outsized impacts given the large size of the public sector. Similarly, the Central Bank of Sudan was requisitioned by the al-Bashir regime as a gold purchasing agent in order to secure both state and political finance, which was an inflationary strategy that contributed to the collapse in real incomes in Sudan (Elbadawi and Suliman, 2018). Inflation, which is often the outcome of an attempt to manage the competing demands of political constituencies, can be a contributing factor to food insecurity: in South Sudan it has hit hardest at the pro-government constituencies which relied most heavily on salaried jobs, causing hunger in areas not directly affected by fighting (Kindersley and Majok, 2019).

Agrarian Economies

The PMF intersects with the political economy of agriculture and food in several ways. First it can be a source of political funds, while at the same time contributing to the immiseration and precarity of certain groups. A commercial agricultural sector may provide the profits – from sale of crops and livestock and sale/mortgages of land – that supports a section of the political class. This has historically been the case for Sudan's political elite, where commercial agriculture has generated profits for a capitalist class that used it to control state power. In turn, the marketisation of politics increased the incentives for the hyper-exploitative character of that sector as the political class sought to exploit a precarious labour pool (along with other measures such as manipulation of exchange rates) to extract profits without improving agricultural productivity (Gallopín *et al.*, 2021; Thomas and El Gizouli, 2020).

Second, there can be more direct humanitarian impacts when other, more accessible sources of political finance collapse. As extraction from the agrarian sector becomes necessary to fill political budgets, this can mean a shift from relatively benign taxation of farming communities to violent plunder and land seizure. In South Sudan, for instance, after the collapse in oil revenues, President Salva Kiir informally licensed localised pillage as a way of maintaining his dominant position. This led to localised but extreme violence, as well as mass displacement, and precipitated short-term food crisis while re-shaping the longer-term political economy of the country.

Finally, commercial food imports can be a source of profit and hence political funds. In Syria, import of wheat has become a way for the regime to both extract funds from, but also reward regime loyalists (Mehchy, 2021). Similarly, in Somalia, commercial cash crop production, trade and food imports are still controlled by a limited number of businesses which are also involved in money-transfer businesses. This generates rents for the political elite and has arguably worsened the exploitation of marginalised and minority groups, many of whom have been displaced (Jaspars and Majid, forthcoming 2022).

Can PM Analysis Improve Humanitarian Analysis and Response?

The case studies suggest tentative conclusions for the ways in which PM analysis can be used as a tool both to improve the analysis of humanitarian crises and to improve – or at least limit unintended harm from – humanitarian assistance. These fall into at least four different categories: information and analysis/early warning, programme decision-making, conflict mitigation and the current policy debates around the localisation of humanitarian action and leadership. Note that in all cases, for the most part, PM analysis is *not* currently part of the toolbox.

1. Context analysis, real-time monitoring and early warning

The PMF provides a set of tools to systematise the analysis of elite politics and to understand its basic logic. This can help humanitarians understand the webs of actors, transactions and results (both intended and unintended) that constitute PMs within armed conflict and other situations of violence. It can help humanitarians develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of context, which can then be applied to programming and operations in different ways. While the PMF is not predictive, analysis utilising it can support real-time monitoring and forecasting, including the scenario-building required for most contemporary famine early warning. For example, the PMF could help in determining the potential humanitarian consequences of shifts in political budgets for different actors or a change in loyalty of a key actor in the PM, like a large militia. In this, the PMF is different from 'network' or 'actor' analyses which create a static snapshot of actors and their relationships (Le Billon, 2002; USAID, 2012). A PM analysis helps uncover the broader dynamics and rules underpinning those relationships and how they may evolve over time. In particular, the PMF highlights the role and actions of specific individuals and can help humanitarians determine who the key individuals are. Though this is often done for national-level actors, the PMF may also be applied subnationally and locally,

where humanitarian programming often needs such analysis most.

In South Sudan, for example, the political loyalties of armed actors – including government security forces, paramilitaries, militias and different components of armed opposition groups – have often shifted according to PM logic (Craze, 2020). Humanitarians were frequently surprised by or failed to fully understand the implications of many of these changes, which appeared chaotic, though the logic was discernible through the application of the PMF. For instance, Bul Nuer militia forces played a large role in the war in Unity State (and contributed to famine), acting according to the logic of the PM rather than on the basis of co-ethnicity, and siding with the government against an overwhelmingly co-ethnic armed opposition in the state. PM analysis could have helped humanitarians understand that this group was pivotal to state politics while also indispensable to the government effort to retake and maintain control of the state and its oilfields (Craze *et al.*, 2016).

The PMF is therefore best used as one tool among several for understanding politics and diverse uses of organised violence as drivers of severe humanitarian need and a complicating factor in responding to that need. Incorporating PM analysis into humanitarian early warning and information systems amounts to a kind of systems correction mechanism – challenging general assumptions about the way that conflict is interpreted as a simple ‘contributing factor’ to extreme humanitarian consequences like mass starvation and famine.

2. Conflict sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity is often viewed as having three basic components: developing a thorough understanding of a context, using this to understand the interactions of humanitarian response and the context and minimising harm and maximising contributions to peace throughout all aspects of humanitarian response. This requires understanding power in all its forms and layers within a given context, and over time, from the highest political level to the village politics of community-based targeting. Though not designed as such, the PMF can be utilised by humanitarians to understand the most extreme humanitarian crises and how their programming does and will likely interact with a PM.

Strategically, the PMF may be used to develop scenarios for informing the development of Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans as well as planning for major activities that feed these products, such as nation-wide household surveys. Programmatically, it can be applied to context analysis throughout a project cycle, including in planning stakeholder engagement and assessing risks to programming over different time periods. It can also have major uses in

programme implementation, such as assessing risk in activity site selection, supporting access negotiations by improving understanding of actors, their interests and where humanitarian leverage exists or may be created, and using improved forecasting for contingency planning. Operationally, the PMF may be useful in assessing the interactions of humanitarian logistics, procurement and other enabling activities with a PM, such as through roadblock politics or the money exchange market. It may also support efforts to maintain the security and safety of humanitarian staff, assets and the people they serve while engaged in humanitarian activities.

Overall, the PMF is not an analytical panacea. It requires resources to be invested in research and analysis and is one tool among many available to humanitarian actors. However, it does have the potential to fill an apparent gap in humanitarian analysis of elite politics. However, conducting analysis is often not the same as translating analytical conclusions into practical applications, which remains up to humanitarians.

3. Conflict mitigation and humanitarian red lines

Anticipatory action in the short term to mitigate conflict – or its humanitarian consequences – is a more difficult challenge. PM analysis may inform advocacy, in particular to better understand motivations, sources of power and points of leverage. In theory, the incentives to actors could be tweaked to tilt the balance toward negotiation rather than fighting. But external actors will never have more detailed knowledge than those within the system; playing along will likely mean ‘getting played’. Additionally, persistent turbulence and unpredictability makes it difficult for external actors to distinguish between everyday changes driven by transactional politics and other more fundamental changes. For instance, it can be very difficult to tell whether violence is really toward a non-negotiable outcome, or simply a tactic being utilised by belligerents to try and negotiate an outcome – or both (de Waal *et al.*, 2020: 4). As one observer put it, with regard to mitigating conflict, ‘it’s not a question of trying to convince conflict actors to negotiate rather than fight – by definition actors are doing both and each is a means to the other’.⁷ Perhaps the best that can be hoped for here is that humanitarian actors can become more aware of the environments in which they are working and self-aware about the limits of their engagement.

Underlying this discussion is a rather uncomfortable question of ‘red lines’ – that is, at its most extreme form: under what circumstances is the continuation of humanitarian assistance doing more harm than good in terms of perpetuating the conflict that is causing the humanitarian suffering in the first place? Again, this is not a new consideration (Minear, 1997). On the one hand, almost by definition, ‘pulling the plug’ on humanitarian assistance means a greater loss of life in

the short term, which few humanitarians are willing to countenance. On the other hand, even when some humanitarian agencies have taken a principled stand on this issue and exited from a context where they believed they were doing more good than harm – such as the Goma refugee crisis (Terry, 2001) – there have always been plenty of other agencies willing to step in and fill the gap left behind, which simply removes those principled actors from the arena and replaces them with (presumably less principled) actors. But PM analysis likewise shines a new light on this issue as well – not simply the diversion of aid and funnelling it to combatant or criminal actors, but actually as the means by which political actors can and do buy loyalties and commoditise violence. Whether this changes the humanitarian calculus about principled withdrawal from a violent context remains to be seen, but PM analysis should inform a discussion of humanitarian ‘red lines’.

4. ‘Humanitarian entrepreneurs’ and the humanitarian localisation agenda

In the discussion above, we have referred to ‘humanitarian entrepreneurs’ – individuals who know how to operate in a PM, who do so for humanitarian reasons rather than for personal gain or political advantage, but who nevertheless are subject to the same ‘rules of the game’. In one case from the DRC, for instance, this involved having to indirectly pay off local commanders and other local elites so they would allow refugees under their control to be repatriated by a local organisation (Maxwell, 2021). Given the idiosyncratic nature of reporting on these cases, we do not know how widespread this phenomenon is. Nor is it entirely clear – at least in the short term – how an outsider could differentiate between a ‘genuine’ humanitarian entrepreneur who knows how to navigate the PM and a political operator who simply knows how to play the ‘humanitarian game’. The history of humanitarian action in, for example, Somalia is rife with examples of the latter, but also more than a handful of examples of the former – people with genuine humanitarian motives obliged to follow the rules of the PM (Jaspars and Majid, forthcoming 2022).

These observations raise thorny questions related to the contemporary drive toward the ‘localisation’ of humanitarian action. Traditionally, an ‘emergency’ has been defined as a shock or crisis that overwhelms local capacity to cope with it. The stated goal of localisation is to empower local capacity to respond to crises, rather than calling on external capacity (UN, 2016). Much of the attention has been focused on the role of local non-governmental organisations. In the view of some critiques, this amounts to insisting that local organisations conform to international norms and practices (Donini, 2010).

The notion of local humanitarian entrepreneurs stands this notion on its head: the very reason for

embracing local humanitarian action and leadership should be because they are embedded in the local context and thus better able to discern need and vulnerability, better able to reach affected populations and better placed to know the best response. Yet the discourse over localisation has yet to come to grips with the embeddedness of local humanitarian actors in PMs and the distinct deviation from standard norms and practices that this may imply, as illustrated by the above example from the DRC. A PM analysis shines an altogether different light on behaviours that would perhaps simply be dismissed as ‘corruption’ in standard humanitarian discourse – therefore constituting grounds for disqualification of actors involved, particularly vis-à-vis western donor agencies. While a PM analysis might not map a route out of this dilemma, it at least highlights some fundamental differences in the way that the issue may be perceived by local and outside actors – and highlights the extent to which these differences have so far not really found a footing in the debate over localisation.

Conclusion

The links between violent conflict and humanitarian crises are clear, complex and difficult to eliminate. Analysis of the situations in the DRC, North-east Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen shows that the combination of PM dynamics and war is crucial to the genesis of mass starvation – and therefore to its understanding and prevention. This presents an analytical entry point for progress, even as the broader context, rationale and demand for improving humanitarian analysis of, and operations in, violent conflict comes from UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018). The incorporation of PM analysis into efforts in conflict analysis and sensitivity is an area in which humanitarians can learn and improve. Current forms of analysis can determine whether famine *is* occurring but is less able to speak to the conditions under which *it is likely to occur*. If famine and mass starvation are a deliberate outcome (or ignored by-product) of the PM, humanitarians have to find a way to systematically assess the relationship of transactional politics and mass starvation and seek proactive measures to mitigate conflict, or at a minimum to be better prepared for its consequences. The ‘triple nexus’ of humanitarianism, development and peace requires humanitarians to address these concerns simultaneously. In this context, and as we have pointed out, political marketplace analysis is not a ‘stand-alone’ tool but can be usefully incorporated into the contextual analysis so critical for good humanitarian programming and for ‘nexus thinking’. Many humanitarians implicitly recognise this already.

As we have also noted, improved understanding of crises may not necessarily lead *directly* to improved humanitarian action. One of the key drivers of crisis and

famine in these political economies is the systematic instrumentalisation of humanitarian assistance and political-military tactics which use starvation either deliberately or recklessly, reducing people to starvation. This usually means that while PM analysis can provide insights into the political decisions that create humanitarian crises, it also highlights how difficult it is to reform these systems in the direction of better outcomes. After ‘looking under the hood’ of PM systems, one might see the messy reality and wish to simply slam it shut again. It might seem easier to either just call conflict a ‘contributing factor’ and leave it at that while advocating more assistance or even to write off a situation as a ‘lost cause’. Neither impulse will yield improved outcomes.

The point is not that humanitarians ought to be trying to change a PM into a governance system of impartial public institutions – that is neither their mandate nor their mission. Rather, we recognise that humanitarians are trying to operate within a PM while doing the least harm possible and maximising positive impact. The PM analytical approach contributes to this by enabling humanitarians to be more aware of the context in which they are operating, test their assumptions and conduct more precise and nuanced analysis about the likely dynamics of the politics and organised violence driving humanitarian consequences, especially mass starvation, and the impact of their interventions.

Acknowledgements

This article is an output of the Conflict Research Programme, led by the London School of Economics and Political Science and funded by UK aid from the UK government; however, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government’s official policies.

Many of the ideas for this paper emerged from collective reflections around the topic at a remote workshop involving Jared Miller, Abdulghani al-Iriyani, Amal Nasser, Patrick Maxwell, Merry Fitzpatrick, Susanne Jaspars, Nisar Majid, Mohammad Kanfash, Augustino Ting Mayai, Edward Thomas, Chris Newton, the authors and a number of other discussants. The authors are especially grateful to Jared Miller for managing the broader research project. Any errors in this paper, needless to say, are attributable solely to the authors.

Notes

1 We use the expression ‘famine’ in the sense defined by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC Global Partners, 2021), including its famine guidance on ‘famine likely’ and ‘risk of famine’ – given how frequently the lack of data makes definitive analysis impossible – and ‘mass starvation’ to denote both deliberately caused famine and

- other extreme food insecurity, even if it does not rise to the minimum number of people required by IPC analysis.
- 2 A notable exception is Madagascar, which is currently experiencing acute food insecurity driven by the climate crisis.
 - 3 This is how conflict is labelled by most contemporary humanitarian information/analysis systems, for example the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Working to improve conflict analysis is underway, but so far tools like the political marketplace (PM) framework have not been incorporated.
 - 4 The paper was written after the outbreak of conflict in Ethiopia, but prior to the current turn of events and the acceleration of the humanitarian crises. Events in Tigray are changing too rapidly to be adequately captured in a paper of this nature, so we do not include it in our analysis. For an early analysis, see [World Peace Foundation \(2021\)](#).
 - 5 Research was undertaken as part of the four-year Conflict Research Programme, hosted by the London School of Economics, with the goal to understand and analyse the nature of contemporary conflict and to identify international interventions to reduce violence and contribute to broader security. The case studies were prepared by Jared Miller (North-east Nigeria), Chris Newton (South Sudan), Eddie Thomas and Alex de Waal (Sudan), Susanne Jaspars and Nisar Majid (Somalia), Patrick Maxwell and Merry Fitzpatrick (DRC), Mohammad Kanfash (Syria) and Abdulghani al-Iriyani and Amal Nasser (Yemen).
 - 6 We understand elites to be individuals with the power to make decisions that affect populations.
 - 7 Personal communication with authors of the Kasai, DRC case study.

Works Cited

- Ahmed, A. (2017), *Jihad & Co.: Black Markets and Islamist Power* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Al-Iriyani, A. and Nasser, A. (2021), ‘The Political Marketplace in Yemen’, Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper, *Mimeo*.
- Anderson, M. B. (1999), *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers).
- Bell, C. and Pospisil, J. (2017), ‘Navigating Inclusion in Transitions from Conflict: The Formalised Political Unsettlement’, *Journal of International Development*, 29:5, 576–93.
- Biswell, A. (2020), *Yemen Economic Bulletin: The War for Monetary Control Enters a Dangerous New Phase* (Sana’a: Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies).
- Boege, V., Brown, M. A. and Clements, K. P. (2009), ‘Hybrid Political Orders, Not Fragile States’, *Peace Review*, 21:1, 13–21.
- Checchi, F. and Robinson, C. (2013), *Mortality among Populations of Southern and Central Somalia Affected by Severe Food Insecurity and Famine during 2010–2012* (Rome and Washington, DC: FAO and FEWS NET).
- Checchi, F., Testa, A., Warsame, A., Quach, L. and Burns, R. (2018), *Estimates of Crisis-Attributable Mortality in South Sudan, December 2013–April 2018: A Statistical Analysis* (London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).

- Christian, P. and Barrett, C. (2018), 'Food Aid and Conflict: What Is the Evidence?', *Economics That Really Matters*, 3 July, www.econthatmatters.com/2018/07/food-aid-and-conflict-what-is-the-evidence/ (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility in South Sudan and the World Food Programme (2020), *Adjusting Terminology for Organised Violence in South Sudan*, www.csrf-southsudan.org/repository/adjusting-terminology-for-organised-violence-in-south-sudan/ (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Conley, B. and de Waal, A. (2019), 'The Purposes of Starvation: Historical and Contemporary Uses', *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 17:4, 699–722, doi: [10.1093/jicj/mqz054](https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mqz054).
- Craze, J. (2020), *The Politics of Numbers: On Security Sector Reform in South Sudan, 2005–2020* (London: CPAID and the London School of Economics and Political Science).
- Craze, J., Tubiana, J. and Gramizzi, C. (2016), *A State of Disunity: Conflict Dynamics in Unity State, South Sudan, 2013–15*, HSBA Working Paper 42 (Geneva: Small Arms Survey).
- de Waal, A. (2015), *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (Cambridge, and Malden, MA: Polity Press).
- de Waal, A. (2018), 'The End of Famine? Prospects for the Elimination of Mass Starvation by Political Action', *Political Geography*, 62: 184–95.
- de Waal, A. (2020), *No End State: Exploring Vocabularies of Political Disorder*, World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 26 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventing-peace/files/2020/09/Vocabularies-of-Political-Disorder-20200924.pdf> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- de Waal, A. and Boswell, A. (2019), 'South Sudan: The Perils of Payroll Peace', Conflict Research Programme Policy Memo, Conflict Research Programme (London: London School of Economics and Political Science).
- de Waal, A., Sarkar, A. and Newton, C. (2021), *Transactional Politics and Humanitarian Crisis: Lessons for Policy from the Political Marketplace Framework*, Conflict Research Programme Policy Brief (Medford, MA: Tufts University and London: London School of Economics and Political Science), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/110722/> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- de Waal, A., Sarkar, A., Detzner, S. and Spatz, B. J. (2020), 'A Theory of Change for Violent Political Marketplaces', Conflict Research Programme Memo (London: London School of Economics and Political Science).
- Debos, M. (2016), *Living by the Gun in Chad: Combatants, Impunity and State Formation*, trans. Brown, A. (London: Zed Books).
- Donini, A. (2010), 'The Far Side: The Meta Functions of Humanitarianism in a Globalised World', *Disasters*, 34:S2, S220–S237.
- Elbadawi, I. and Suliman, K. M. (2018), *The Macroeconomics of the Gold Economy in Sudan*, Working Paper 1203 (Cairo: Economic Research Forum).
- Gallopin, J.-B., Thomas, E., Detzner, S. and de Waal, A. (2021), *Sudan's Political Marketplace in 2021: Public and Political Finance, the Juba Agreement and Contests over Resources*, Conflict Research Programme (London: London School of Economics and Political Science).
- Geneva Call (2021), *Understanding Humanitarian Access and the Protection of Civilians in an Era of Depoliticized War* (Geneva: Geneva Call), www.genevacall.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Geneva-Call-South-Sudan-Report-Final.pdf (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Hilhorst, D. and Serrano, M. (2010), 'The Humanitarian Arena in Angola, 1975–2008', *Disasters*, 34:S2, S183–S201.
- Ibreck, R. (2019), *South Sudan's Injustice System: Law and Activism on the Frontline* (London: Zed Books).
- International Rescue Committee (IRC) (2021), 'The top 10 crises the world should be watching in 2021', (New York: IRC), www.rescue.org/article/top-10-crises-world-should-be-watching-2021 (accessed 7 October 2021).
- IPC Global Partners (2021), *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Manual Version 3.1. Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions* (Rome: IPC), www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Jaspars, S. and Majid, N. (forthcoming 2022), 'Somalia's Evolving Political Marketplace: From Humanitarian Crisis to Permanent Precarity', *Journal of Modern African Studies*.
- Jaspars, S., Adan, G. M. and Majid, N. (2019), *Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual? A Scoping Study on the Political Economy of Food Following Shifts in Food Assistance and in Governance*, Conflict Research Programme (London: London School of Economics and Political Science), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/103138/> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Jordash, W., Murdoch, C. and Holmes, J. (2019), 'Strategies for Prosecuting Mass Starvation', *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 17:4: 849–79.
- Kaldor, M. (2012), *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Kaldor, M. and de Waal, A. (2021), 'Identity Formation and the Political Marketplace', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 20:5, 519–38.
- Kanfash, M. (2021), 'Starvation in Syria: A Political Marketplace Analysis', Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 31 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2021/12/Starvation-in-Syria.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2021).
- Kindersley, N. and Majok, J. D. (2019), *Monetized Livelihoods and Militarized Labour in South Sudan's Borderlands* (London: Rift Valley Institute).
- Le Billon, P. (2002), 'The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know', Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 33 (London: Overseas Development Institute).
- Maxwell, D. (2019), *Famine Early Warning and Information Systems in Conflict Settings: Challenges for Humanitarian Metrics and Response*, Conflict Research Programme (London: London School of Economics and Political Science).
- Maxwell, P. (2021), *'Regulating' Violence: A Political Marketplace Analysis of the Eastern Congo, 2003–2014*, (Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Capstone, The Fletcher School of Global Affairs, Tufts University).
- Maxwell, P. and M. Fitzpatrick, M. (2021), 'Incentives, Violence, and Political Skill: The Political Marketplace in the DRC and the Crisis in Kasai', Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 30 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2021/12/PM-Incentives-Violence-and-Political-Skill.pdf> (accessed 9 December 2021).
- Maxwell, D. and Hailey, P. (2021), 'Analysing Famine: The Politics of Information and Analysis in Food Security Crises', *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs*, 3:1, 16–27.
- Maxwell, D., Hailey, P., Khalif, A. and Checchi, F. (2020), 'Viewpoint: Determining Famine: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis for the Twenty-First Century', *Food Policy*, 92, 101832.
- Mehchy, Z. (2021), 'The Interactions between State Budget and Political Budget in Syria', Conflict Research Programme Policy Memo (London: London School of Economics and Political Science).
- Miller, J. (forthcoming 2022), 'The Politics and Profit of a Crisis: A Political Marketplace Analysis of the Humanitarian Crisis in Northeast Nigeria', Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 32 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/conflict-research-programme-2/>.
- Minear, L. (1997), 'Time to Pull the Plug on Operation Lifeline Sudan?', *Crosslines Global Report*, March/April: 59–60.
- Newton, C. (2021), 'Pandemic of Hunger Symposium: Famine in a NIAC's Shadow – Other Situations of Violence and a Challenge for UNSCR 2417', *Opinio Juris Blog*, <http://opiniojuris.org/2021/05/20/pandemic-of-hunger-symposium-famine-in-a-niacs-shadow-other-situations-of-violence-and-a-challenge-for-unscr-2417/> (accessed 7 October 2021).

- Newton, C. (forthcoming 2022a), 'Not Never Again, but Next Time: Armed Conflict and Mass Starvation in South Sudan 2013–19', in Conley, B., de Waal, A., Jordash, W. and Murdoch, C. (eds), *Accountability for Starvation: Testing the Limits of the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Newton, C. (forthcoming 2022b), 'The Political Marketplace and Fragmented Famine in Lakes State, South Sudan', Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 34 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/conflict-research-programme-2/>.
- Pendle, N. R. (2021), 'The 'Nuer of Dinka Money' and the Demands of the Dead: Contesting the Moral Limits of Monetised Politics in South Sudan', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 20:5, 587–605.
- Sarkar, A. (forthcoming 2022), "'Once we control them, we will feed them": Mass Starvation in Yemen', in Conley, B., de Waal, A., Jordash, W. and Murdoch, C. (eds), *Accountability for Starvation: Testing the Limits of the Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Schouten, P. (2019), 'Roadblock Politics in Central Africa', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*: 1–18, doi: [10.1177/0263775819830400](https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775819830400).
- Schouten, P. (2021), *Violence and Fragmentation in Congo's Political Marketplace*, Conflict Research Programme (London: London School of Economics and Political Science), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/110426/> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Spatz, B. J. (2020), *Cash Violence: Sanctions and the Politics of Power, and Peace* (PhD dissertation, Tufts University).
- Spatz, B. J., Sarkar, A. and de Waal, A. (2021), 'The Political Marketplace: A Framework and Toolkit for Analysing Transactional Politics in Conflict Affected Countries', Conflict Research Programme memo (Medford, MA: Tufts University and London: London School of Economics and Political Science), <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/111009/> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Terry, F. (2001), *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- Thomas, E. (2019), *Moving Towards Markets: Cash, Commodification and Conflict in South Sudan* (Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute), <https://riftvalley.net/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Moving%20towards%20markets%20by%20Edward%20Thomas%20-%20RVI%20X-border%20Project%20%282019%29.pdf> (accessed 7 October 2021).
- Thomas, E. and de Waal, A. (forthcoming 2022), 'Hunger in Sudan's Political Marketplace', Conflict Research Programme and World Peace Foundation Occasional Paper No. 33 (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/conflict-research-programme-2/>.
- Thomas, E. and El Gizouli, M. (2020), *Sudan's Grain Divide: A Revolution of Bread and Sorghum*, Rift Valley Institute Briefing Paper (Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute).
- United Nations (2016), *The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need* (Istanbul: World Humanitarian Summit), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf (accessed 7 October 2021).
- USAID (2012), *Conflict Assessment Framework* (Washington, DC: USAID).
- World Bank (2021), *Somalia Urbanization Review: Fostering Cities as Anchors of Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank).
- World Peace Foundation (2021), *Starving Tigray: How Armed Conflict and Mass Atrocities Have Destroyed an Ethiopian Region's Economy and Food System and Are Threatening Famine* (Medford, MA: Tufts University), <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2021/04/Starving-Tigray-report-final.pdf> (accessed 7 October 2021).