

RISK MANAGEMENT, FIELD SECURITY AND URBAN PATHOLOGY
The Bunkering of the Aid Industry in Sudan

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The fortified aid compound is now ubiquitous throughout the global borderland. Following the local backlash against the politicisation of aid, the aid industry is bunkering itself. In examining these developments, this essay first looks at the spatial turn, or rather its absence, in the field of international assistance. The potential for UN field-security training to normalises risk-aversion and the necessity, even desirability, of segregated living is discussed. The essay then proceeds to examine the wider implications of the fortified aid compound, including its overlaps with the global trend towards social polarisation and related forms of urban pathology. It concludes by considering this architectural form as symptomatic of the deepening crisis of the development-security nexus.

Introduction

This essay arises from a visit by the author to South Sudan in May 2008.¹ Having travelled in the South on several occasions during the war years, this trip left two striking impressions. Unsurprisingly, given the return of peace in 2005, the number of aid agencies operating in the South has increased visibly. Less expected, however, was the widespread withdrawal and encampment of donors, UN agencies and larger international NGOs into what are best described as *fortified aid compounds*. Such compounds typically have strengthened double gates and inner and outer walls or fences topped with razor-wire. They enclose accommodation, offices or support facilities, sometimes combining them all into a single complex. Movement in and around these visibly defensive and guarded structures is restricted and hedged with security protocols. The spread of the fortified

¹ This was to evaluate UNHCR's refugee return and reintegrate programme (Duffield, Diagne, and Tennant 2008). This essay does not draw on this work nor does it reflect the views of UNHCR.

aid compound is especially noticeable in South Sudan as it is occurring at a time of ostensible peace. Moreover, while conditions were different during the war, the physical bunkering of the aid effort was not encountered; a more mobile approach to security was then in operation (Karim et al. 1996: 51-53). The irony of the situation is that for ordinary Southerners, after decades of war and dislocation, these militarised buildings are the first material expression of peace. Rather than celebratory structures, they are exclusionary and disempowering.

With its focus on South Sudan, this essay reflects on the material and spatial effects of an expanding aid industry. Its point of entry is the architectural form of the fortified aid compound and its framing philosophy is that their construction, and the practices associated with them, "...are inseparable from the production and reconstruction of global relations and identities" (Smirl 2008: 237). Put another way, buildings "...offer cues suggesting how people should act. They tell us our relationships with one another" (Montgomery 2009: 6). As a distinct and private space, the aid compound has long been a feature of Sudan. Representing a visible island of modernity where vehicles, diesel, electricity, medical supplies, safe water and telecommunications are concentrated, aid compounds have existed in South Sudan since at least the early 1970s (Tvedt 1994). Accentuated by the return of peace, what appears new is the militarisation of their design to create an overtly defensive structure. At the same time, the fortified aid compound is linked to the spread of mandatory field-security training among aid workers (Bruderlein and Gassmann 2006). In analysing these developments, the spatial turn, or rather, its absence with regard to the aid industry is first examined. The potential for UN field-security training to normalises risk-aversion and the necessity, even desirability, of segregated living is discussed. The essay then proceeds to examine the wider implications of the fortified aid compound, including its overlaps with the global trend towards social polarisation and related forms of urban pathology. It concludes by considering this architectural form as symptomatic of the deepening crisis within the development-security paradigm.

Aid and the Spatial Turn

Security-driven concerns over the contingencies of life, populations and their permissive interconnections, including the ability to collapse the internal-external divide (Bigo 2001), are necessarily spatial in their compass. Over the last couple of decades, as a reflection on the essential interconnectivity that underpins ideas of globalisation, there has been a

growing interest in the study of space, location and mapping. This has had a significant impact upon the humanities and social sciences (Warf and Arias 2008). Besides human geography (Hubbard et al. 2002), it has enriched international relations (Campbell 1998) and brought penetrating insights to the study of the city and urbanity (Davis 1990; Graham and Marvin 2001; Blakely and Snyder 1997) and the internationalisation of urban space (Gillen 2007). It has also thrown a powerful light on the modalities of urban warfare (Coward 2007; Graham 2006) and the architecture of security (Sorkin 2008; Lacy 2008; Weizman 2007; Petti 2007). However, while there are exceptions (Smirl 2008; Siddaway 2007; Higate and Henry 2009), this *spatial turn* is noticeable by its absence in humanitarian and development studies. As Lisa Smirl (2008) argues, the spatial and material practices of the international community “...are almost completely overlooked in any analysis of post-crisis reconstruction or emergency response” (Ibid: 237). If you Google ‘aid architecture’, for example, you get some twenty million hits almost all concerned with the institutional arrangements necessary to enact aid policy. The industry is oblivious to both its own built environment – the offices, houses, storerooms, leisure facilities and transport infrastructures that aid workers need – and, at the same time, the economic and political impact that these structures and relations have on the social systems in which they operate. This absence of a spatial turn is both surprising and, at the same time, understandable.

A broad definition of the aid industry would include the people either working for, or receiving grants from, donor governments, aid coordinating bodies, multilateral organisations, UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs or community groups – as well as private contractors and commercial companies – that, either directly or indirectly, have the betterment or protection of others as their aim. Apart from frontline aid workers, the industry depends upon auxiliary functions such as policy making; administration; accountancy; logistics; procurement; security; public relations; advocacy; fundraising; research; consultancy; even volunteering and internship. Taken together, this transnational, multileveled, variously interconnected and networked assemblage of people and public/private organisations constitutes the aid industry. Given the turn to counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, a growing proportion of military expenditure is finding its way into ‘hearts and minds’ programmes. Parts of the military, and peacekeeping more generally, are also blurring into the aid industry (Walker and Pepper 2007). Many would argue that this definition is too broad. To limit it, however, would replicate the aid agency practice of excluding as many ancillary functions as possible

to increase the apparent 'efficiency' of the enterprise. It would also deflect attention away from how lucrative, all encompassing and viral the aid industry has become.

While drawing on earlier currents, the modern international aid industry emerges with decolonisation and the establishment of the UN system, the growth of the NGO sector and, since the 1960s, the creation of specialist government or donor aid departments (Duffield 2007: 32-65). Since decolonisation, the aid industry, in and out of recession, has been growing steadily; Sudan is a good example. For over four decades, Sudan has been the site of end-to-end international humanitarian and related development interventions (Karadawi 1999; de Waal 1989; Cutler and Keen 1989; Karim et al. 1996). With each episode, the physical footprint of the aid industry has incrementally increased. Today Sudan is unique in being home to two UN missions and, in relation to Darfur, hosting the largest humanitarian operation in the world (hpg/ALNAP 2009). However, while such local and anecdotal evidence is plentiful, there is considerable uncertainty over the actual size of the global aid industry, even the actual number of front-line humanitarian workers (Stoddard, Harmer, and Haver 2006), let alone the massed ranks of ancillary staff supporting the enterprise as a whole. At the same time it is unclear where all of the aid industry's funds come from (Harmer and Cotterrell 2005), or even what should count as funding (Stoddard, Harmer, and DiDomenico 2008). Nor is it clear how much is spent on its intended purpose (Webster et al. 2008) and, given the privatised, multileveled and networked nature of the industry, what the transaction costs are in any given operation (Walker and Pepper 2007).

Here we will take just one variable: the number of front line aid workers. Following the perceived increase in the number of aid workers being deliberately killed since the mid 1990s, the absence of a reliable 'aid worker denominator' has weakened serious attempts to calculate the risk associated with aid work (Stoddard, Harmer, and Haver 2006: 7 fn8). A recent study, contacted 10 leading UN agencies, 54 international NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) in order to obtain figures for total numbers of their international and national field-staff on a yearly basis between 1997 and 2005 (Ibid). Of these 66 international organisations, 67 percent could only provide partial or "...very minimal figures" (Ibid: 8). This included WHO, UNDP and IFRC. Of the non-governmental organisations, SCF UK, CARE US, American Refugee Committee, Mediciens du Monde, Action Aid and International Islamic Relief "...specifically confirmed that they did not keep staffing records for more

than a two year period" (Ibid). The same 66 agencies were also asked for field-staff figures for their operations in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Somalia and Somaliland, and Sudan. However, "...the percentage of agency HQs able to provide these numbers was even lower than the small percentage that could provide the global figures" (Ibid). By way of explaining this absence of basic information, the authors footnote three difficulties. First, many projects are short-term and there is a high staff turnover making employment levels volatile and difficult to estimate. Moreover, the absence of centralised staffing records in many agencies means that,

...even if information was collected for previous years, it is often not readily available today. Second, national staff are usually hired and managed by country offices, without the requirement that figures be reported to HQ. Third, organisations have little incentive to collect such information, given that it is not explicitly required in reports to donors, the media of the general public, and given the many other urgent priorities (Ibid: 8 fn12).

While these impediments undoubtedly exist, there is also something functional in the lack of such information. In the same way as the absence of institutional memory within aid organisations has for decades enabled an unchanging developmental toolkit to be periodically reworked as "...new and improved" (Easterly 2002: 235), the dearth of staffing information supports the aid industry's ethos of transience and impermanence. The aid industry sees itself, through its acts of commission and completion, as working towards its own redundancy. While this impermanence is central to helping-hand notions of development, it also underpins the liberal interventionism of the post-Cold War period. In explaining the latter, Michael Ignatieff has coined the term *Empire Lite*. This is a form of external tutelage where local elites are empowered to take over as soon as possible. It is "...imperialism in a hurry: to spend money, to get results, to turn the place back to the locals and get out (Ignatieff 2003: 22). Since decolonisation, however, the aid industry has been steadily increasing year on year in size and depth. While, initially at least, post-Cold War liberal interventionism has usually been framed as time limited, in practice, however, a situation of long-term, indeed, indefinite engagement is a better descriptor (Chandler 2002). When run against the industry ethos of transience, this growing permanence is threatening and subversive. The absence of a spatial turn in international aid is not simply an oversight, or the result of organisational impediments, it is something that is functional to the industry itself.

Following the lead of Foucault and the international political sociology of the Paris School (see Slater 2008), the networked and multileveled aid industry has the characteristics of a *dispositif* or “...constellation of institutions, practices, and beliefs that create conditions of possibility within a particular field” (Ibid: 248). The industry is synonymous with a field of humanitarian, development and security actors, aid agencies, multilateral organisations, private companies and professional networks, complete with their own forms of subjectivity, that call forth the conditions of underdevelopment and insecurity to which collectively, and in competition, they seek to provide solutions. In so doing, however, not only is risk normalised, the origins and causes of the absences and instabilities it hopes to rectify are obscured and occluded. For one, the aid industry ignores, internalises and normalises its spatial and material effects because they contradict a liberal way of development that preaches the empowerment and self-organisation of beneficiary populations and, as such, promises their independence. Since this model requires the trusteeship of aid to be temporary, its permanence, indeed, its growing material weight, signals a deepening crisis of liberal developmentalism. The physical and institutional permanence of the fortified aid compound takes us into the heart of this crisis.

An Archipelago of the International

The human rights group B’Tselem, has produced a map of the roads, forbidden to Palestinians, which link Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.² These roads enable rapid transportation between these settlements and, via the Separation Wall, into Israel proper. They also serve a security function by breaking up and helping contain the Palestinians living either side of them (Petti 2008). It is interesting to compare this map to one showing the scores of bush airstrips that lie scattered, like leopard spots, across South Sudan.³ Most of these airstrips have appeared since 1993 and emerged in connection with the international humanitarian relief operation then organised from Kenya (Duffield et al. 1995: 172-75). While still a bounded area of international space, each bush airstrip became the site of an initially non-fortified aid compound agreed through negotiation with the main rebel groups (Levine 1997). Via these airstrips, each compound connects by light aircraft to the rest of Sudan and the outside

² http://www.btselem.org/Download/Forbbiden_Roads_Map_Eng.pdf

³ http://www.unjlc.org/sudan/maps/catalogue/unjlc_sdn_706_A0

world.⁴ While the invisible flight paths linking aid compounds are different from the forbidden roads, they do share one characteristic. They both reflect exclusive and restricted modes of transport that have specific and enforceable rules regarding who can, and cannot, move and circulate through them, be they Palestinians or aid beneficiaries.

The architect Alsesandro Petti (2008) has argued against theorists that too readily equate globalisation with fluid, borderless spaces of unlimited flows and circulation (Castells 1996). To the contrary, paralleling the spread of new networks and forms of interconnection “...the numbers of barriers and checkpoints for the protection of networks is being multiplied” (Petti 2008: 9). While flows are becoming every more intangible, the fortification of physical space is also accelerating. This, “...has created a territorial system in which the *archipelago* (the smooth space of flows) and the *enclave* (the spaces of exception) cohabit” (Ibid). The metaphor of the archipelago can be extended to the fortified aid compound. As outposts of defended international space, the compound is a material part of the archipelago of international aid. In 2008, for example, with UN help to fast-track a visa, it was possible to imagine sitting in the British city of Bristol one day and the next relaxing in a ‘deep-field’ location near the Sudan border with the Central African Republic. Linking these two locations is a series of discrete and restricted relays. This includes an international flight to Khartoum; pick-up by a UN driver and transport to a security-vetted hotel; paper work to obtain a UN ID card; a UN flight from Khartoum to Juba, the capital of South Sudan; and onwards by light aircraft to a deep field fortified aid compound.

The irony of this fantastic international space of flows is that the beneficiaries that aid workers encounter cannot move, at least not legally; they are stationary subjects. Most people in South Sudan lack any personal documentation – birth certificates, educational qualifications, ID cards or passports (Duffield, Diagne, and Tennant 2008: 25-26). Since doing anything other than manual labour requires proof of identity or a licence, the majority of the population are effectively confined to a precarious servility. From an official perspective, other than an aid statistic, they have

⁴ During the war, NGOs operating from the North were able to make their own arrangements to fly into government held towns, for example, Juba (Duffield et al. 1995). With regard to rebel-held areas, under the auspices of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), and in agreement with the main rebel groups, in 1993 the UN established what was then an innovative security and evacuation system (Karim et al. 1996: 51-53). Based on the network of bush-airstrips, a radio-based trip-wire system of four security levels, ranging from ‘normal’ to ‘evacuation’, was organised. This intelligence-led system worked well in terms of moving humanitarian workers in and out of South Sudan according to the ebb and flow of the conflict.

no existence; they are the non-people or surplus population (Agamben 1998). Even within the space of flows of the aid archipelago, however, aid workers themselves are distinguished according to their relative mobility or stasis. While those on international contracts are able to move and circulate, local aid workers, like beneficiaries are also immobile onlookers.⁵

Securing aid workers

Before examining the spatial and material effects of the fortified aid compound in more detail, it is useful to consider how the aid archipelago, including its militarisation, is being normalised. More specifically, it is necessary to consider how forms of aid subjectivity or individual agency are being called forth that accept segregated living as necessary, even desirable. Important here, is the evidence that, since the end of the Cold War, aid workers have increasingly found themselves the deliberate target of political violence. Between 1997 and 2008, for example, one study records an absolute and relative increase in number of serious attacks (injuries, kidnapping and fatalities) on aid workers, including both national and international staff. In absolute terms, such incidents have increased from around 30 to 160 per year (Stoddard, Harmer, and DiDomenico 2009). The literature offers several explanations for this growth. Since the early 1990s, the UN, for example, has tended to focus on the changing nature of conflict, stressing the emergence of violent and, essentially, irrational non-state actors that have fomented “...brutal ethnic, religious, social, cultural and linguistic strife” (Boutros-Ghali 1995: 42). More recently, this changing external environment theme has expanded to include irregular armies that do not respect the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian personnel “...and/or reject international agreements designed to [protect] such personnel” (UN 2001: 2).

⁵ Organisationally, at least for staff on international contracts, the UN is remarkably multicultural and gendered. In field locations, the glass-ceiling that separates national immobility from the international space of flows is, if anything, inflected by class and geography rather than race or gender. Many African men and women, for example, work for the UN in Sudan at all managerial levels, including the most senior. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that they originate predominantly from countries with relatively strong educational systems, for example, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Senegal or Tanzania. Few come from fragile states or zones of crisis. In the case of South Sudan, southerners are usually on national contracts and, as such, occupy the more menial posts of guards, drivers, cleaners, radio operators, office clerks and interpreters. National staff also have inferior terms of employment, for example, falling outside UN security protocols, including insurance and evacuation entitlements. There is, a South-South socio-political hierarchy separating national stasis from the international space of flows.

Others, however, have pointed to internal changes within the UN system itself. In particular, the emergence of the UN integrated mission that brings together in a unified management system the UN's humanitarian and development work with that of peacekeeping and political affairs (Eide et al. 2005). It is an example of the search for greater coherence between aid and politics that has shaped the last decade of organisational reform (Macrae and Leader 2000). UN integrated missions not only typify places like Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, they range from the Caribbean, through Africa (including Sudan), the Balkans, Middle East and into East Asia. UN specialist agencies and allied NGOs have been drafted into donor-led post-interventionary programmes of disarmament, demobilisation and reconstruction in support of the internationally recognised state. Besides pursuing a humanitarian agenda, integrated missions are instrumentally involved in attempts to reshape the social, political and economic structures of the countries concerned. Warring parties, especially non-state groups that have done badly in a peace agreement, "...may sometimes perceive such agendas as biased and politically motivated. Thus the universality of the values promoted by the UN no longer guarantees the security of its access in conflict situations." (Brudelein and Gassmann 2006: 65). In places like Afghanistan, this politicisation of aid work has led to its effective paralysis (Donini 2009). Again, however, it is important to emphasise that these problems are not confined to political hotspots but are more general and widespread. They underpin both the spread of the fortified aid compound and the universalisation of field-security training.

With the breakdown of UN negotiated access programmes in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda, a need for field-security training first emerges in the mid 1990s. From this time, improving field-security for aid workers has been an ongoing issue (Van Brabant 1998). A key publication was Koenraad Van Brabant's *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* (2000; also see ECHO 2004). Largely based upon earlier *ad hoc* NGO programmes and training initiatives, *Operational Security* brings together in a comprehensive manner what has since become an industry-standard. It is in the nature of field-security training to tend towards standardisation; having different people or different organisations doing different things is counterproductive. In this way, security underpins a strong centralising tendency within organisations.⁶ It has been important in transferring managerial responsibility from field operatives to HQ staff. The generic training framework that has emerged typically divides security

⁶ The systematisation of field-security training has occurred at the same time as a series of reforms that have increased the number of centralised funding mechanisms within the aid industry (Stoddard and Haver 2007).

into movement, work, home and personal components. Training programmes can be produced in basic or advanced forms, they can last from several hours to several days, and vary in realism from class room examples to outdoor role play exercises. In all essentials, the development of field-security training within the UN builds upon and consolidates earlier NGO initiatives.

While individual UN agencies have developed their own policies, the main trend has been towards a "...system-based security approach" (Bruderlein and Gassmann 2006: 65) involving the increasing centralisation and standardisation of security policy. This has occurred at the same time as the global roll-out of the UN integrated mission where a system-based approach to security is seen to offer scalability and replication. It began, for example, with increasing cooperation between the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) to ensure uniform security standards and procedures, including working towards comprehensive security and stress management training (UN 2001: 3-4). By the beginning of 2002, complementing agency initiatives, the UN had begun one-off security training in 111 countries. At the same time, Minimum Operational Security Standards (MOSS) were also introduced. MOSS represents the development of an objective set of security standards covering security planning, training, communications and security equipment, for implementation at each UN duty station. These minimum standards spell out "...the standard which must be met in order for the system to operate safely" (Ibid: 6). The adoption of MOSS standards is also a requirement of the UN insurance underwriters. They will be returned to below.

The August 2003 bombings the UN and ICRC HQs in Bagdad added further impetus to the centralisation and standardisation of security policy already underway (Bruderlein and Gassmann 2006). Further organisational changes took place to embed the importance of field-security within UN operations. Head Quarters oversight was improved and, with the strengthening of the career prospects of security personnel, it was operationalised through a global network of security officers. In December 2004, a new UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) was established within the UN Secretariat. This brought together existing security personnel, such as UNSECOORD and civilian security components of DPKO, under one roof. In January 2005, a former Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard appointed to head DSS at Under Secretary General level. This was the first security professional appointed at such a level within the UN with a wide-ranging mandate "...to professionalise the

UN security system" (Ibid: 76). One outcome of this centralised, expert-driven security regime is that field-security training is now available to all UN staff either through in-house training courses, on video or CD-ROM, or outsourced to specialist NGOs or private companies. In Sudan for example, besides the in-house UN programmes, the UK-based training agency, RedR, has a Khartoum sub-office and runs regular courses for NGOs.

Calling forth insecurity

In examining the content and implications of field-security training, a starting point is the choice that exists in relation to problem solving. You can solve a problem at its root or, alternatively, you can increase your resilience by changing and adapting your behaviour to the problem (Reid 2009). For many, the dangers facing aid workers stem from the politicisation of aid (Fox 1999; Stockton 2002; Donini 2009). A root solution would be the disentanglement and distancing of aid agencies from the ideology, practice and aims of liberal interventionism, the public rejection of state funding and the promotion of independent action. It would also involve talking back to Western foreign policy. For an embedded aid industry, this is an impossible political choice. Hence the seemingly easier organisational option (but costlier in aid worker lives) of attempting to adapt to the changing security threats created by liberal interventionism. As a technology of resilience, field-security training has a number of generic characteristics. The literature on aid worker deaths contains conjecture, ambiguity and competing claims. For example, uncertainties over economic or political motivation, differences between relative and absolute increases, the exposure of national and international staff, and geographical variations (Stoddard *et al* 2006; 2009}. Field-security training, however, strips out all shades of grey. It adopts a black and white version of the changing external environment thesis; aid workers everywhere and all the time are facing *permanent and pervasive danger*. It is not difficult to understand why this should be. The purpose of security training is to produce behavioural change and conformity; it cannot do this if its main message is hedged with doubt or speculation. At the same time, this ideological purity means that such training material is invaluable for deconstructing field-security as a design of power.

In Sudan today, in order to enter the UN Mission in Sudan's (UNMIS) logistical system it is necessary for new aid workers, visiting HQ staff and temporary consultants to first pass the UN's Basic and Advanced Security in the Field training modules (UNBSF 2003; UNASF 2006). Without passing these modules, you cannot get a UN ID card, and without an ID card you

cannot enter UN compounds, board UN flights or travel in UN vehicles; you must remain outside the international space of flows. One form of training comes on two CD-ROMs. It is interactive and the identity of the trainee is password protected. The CD's combine voice-overs, video clips and role-play exercises with multiple-choice end of level tests. The Basic and Advanced modules both culminate in a final multiple-choice examination. Progress through the level tests is recorded by an animation at the bottom of the computer screen. Reflecting the content of the training, it features a white UN SUV travelling along a twisting road bordered in places by trees that could conceal an ambush. Correct answers incrementally advance your journey from danger to safety, wrong ones knock you back. Each CD takes about an hour to work through. Upon successful completion, the software prints a named pass certificate.

The UN aid workers encountered by the author in 2008 generally enjoyed and appreciated the field-security training they received. They felt that the knowledge imparted was useful. Moreover, it gave the feeling that the UN was serious in fulfilling its duty of care. While there is a growing literature on field-security in hazardous environments (Van Brabant 2001; Bruderlein and Gassmann 2006; Stoddard, Harmer, and Haver 2006), it is generally supportive and, indeed, could be said to be part of the enterprise itself. Just as this literature tends to ignore the appearance of the fortified aid compound, it does not problematise the content of field-security training and avoids analysing its wider implications; training is something that is self-evidently good. If one takes a step back, however, training appears differently. Using generic messages and advice, the aim is to call forth a subjectivity that is risk averse and, importantly, accepts the fortified aid compound as both normal and even desirable. Rather than go through this training in detail, a few of the important themes are picked out.

UN's field-security training is structured around a prime message from which all of the desired behavioural changes can be derived. In its opening section, the Basic Security in the Field CD-ROM quotes Mary Robinson, the former High Commissioner of Human Rights, to the effect that "...some barrier has been broken and anyone can be regarded as a target, even those bringing food to the hungry and medical care to the wounded" (UNBSF Module 1: 2). This prime message is repeated in different ways and forms. Field-security training drives home the idea that times have changed and, like it or not, *aid workers are now under constant threat from a pervasive, unpredictable and calculating enemy*. Since this enemy is faceless, follows no particular pattern and can strike anywhere, it requires constant vigilance and individual attention to one's environment. The onus is on the

aid worker to be constantly vigilant and to make the right choices from the available information, or lack of it. Safe behaviour becomes endless risk-reduction according to the changing environment.

In certain countries, the advice will be to stop when your vehicle runs somebody over on the road; in another setting, the advice will be certainly not to stop until the next police post (Van Brabant 1999: 9).

In terms of helping the aid worker achieve this level of resilience, field-security training imparts the necessary interpretive framework. Besides outlining the organisational or local security procedures in place at the duty station, training covers all aspects of movement; home and office security; health and welfare; and personal safety, including how to respond if under fire or taken hostage. With regard to **movement**, for example, apart from avoiding travelling at night, the UN's Basic Security in the Field CD ROMs cover such things check-point etiquette; how to behaviour with child soldiers; how to react to weapons; anti-highjack techniques; and how to read the road, for example, slowing down before traffic lights so as to avoid stopping. Regarding the **home and office**, things covered include selecting a home neighbourhood. Important here are such things as the level of street lighting, numbers of pedestrians, levels of traffic and parking facilities. The training actively encourages urban segregation in pointing out that families "...with similar income levels tend to share similar lifestyles and security concerns" (UNBFS Module 2: 6). Inside the home, advice is given on locks, window bars and alarms. With regard to the aid office, apart from similar neighbourhood concerns, the importance of office design is flagged, for example, having a secure reception area for screening visitors; using the front desk as a defensive structure; barriers in interview rooms; and having a secure bolt-hole. Besides advice on handling suspicious telephone calls and packages, tips are also given on how to defuse tension and handle hostile crowds.

In working through this training, it is necessary to complete numerous small tests and end of section exercises in order to proceed to the subsequent levels. For example, regarding the actions that aid workers should take when first arriving at their duty station. These are rehearsed in a series of yes-no questions and answers. Those requiring a 'yes' include do you seek a security briefing; meet your warden; register your family members with the office; and find out how to obtain medical services. In contrast, the 'no' questions are do you "...check area around the office and your residential areas on foot" or "...try food from local food vendors" (UNBFS Module 2: 16). Clearly, the desired behaviour is not to walk

around or engage with local people. Repeated on the CDs in different scenarios and situations, the main response to pervasive external threat is to reward and encourage *isolation* and *risk-aversion*. This is the modern default setting of aid work.

Risk-aversion is supported by a different but complementary theme, namely, that aid workers cannot deal effectively with pervasive external threats unless they acknowledge and respect their own inner-vulnerabilities. Trainees are told, for example, that empathy for victims “...does not mean sharing their diseases. To work effectively for others you need to be healthy” (Dr Gro Harlem, former Director General, WHO, UNBFS Module 5: 2). The need to take care of yourself is repeated many times in the UN’s Basic and Advanced Field-security training. Thus, in relation to **health and welfare**, for example, how to recognise fatigue and stress in oneself and others is covered. The importance of exercise; a balanced diet; a good work/life balance; a buddy system; and avoiding excessive alcohol consumption is emphasised. The key message is that without protecting one’s vulnerable inner-self – without regularly taking time-out – then the constant vigilance and adaptation needed to manage pervasive external threats is undermined.

The training reflected in the UN’s Basic and Advanced Field-Security CD ROMS, much of which is generic and shared with other aid agencies, reinforces a defensive isolationism. To paraphrase one of the Advanced modules, if you see what you think is a road accident, don’t stop – think car-jack – and drive on. The importance of protecting the inner-self as a necessary adjunct of managing external threats has been intrinsic to field-security training since its early days (Van Brabant 1998). It is also a good example of what Vanessa Pupavac has called therapeutic governance (Pupavac 2001). In relation to war-affected populations, this is the tendency for contemporary liberal interventionism to replace earlier ideas of political agency based on the rational subject by privileging emotional vulnerability and the traumatised victim (also see Pupavac 2005). In our case, however, since the aid worker, potentially at least, is now the victim, it is perhaps better to talk of therapeutic *self*-governance. As a way of avoiding and minimising risk, it defines how aid workers are expected to act upon themselves, and change their own behaviour, attitudes and lifestyles, in order to make them *fit for helping others*. This reflects another aspect of the resilient subject, not only constant adaptation but, in the process, the promise of becoming something new and somehow better (Folke 2006).

This is a new form of aid subjectivity. It is different, for example, from the NGO voluntarism of the 1960s and 1970s. This agency emphasised 'giving something back' and was associated with modesty, self-effacement and appealed to those "...who had abandoned without regret what used to be called the glittering prizes" of a normal professional or business career (Jones 1965: 209). Rather than institutionalised risk-aversion and defensive isolation, NGOs acted upon themselves differently. The organisational and personal ethos was that of symbolic identification with the world's poor through visible frugality and denied consumption. In Oxfam in the 1970s, for example, apart from unpaid work being common, and overt consumerism discouraged, it was expected that employees would regularly give back wage increments. At the same time, starting salaries where deliberately pitched at 10-15 percent below market rates, with senior managerial positions this increased to 50-60 percent (Whitaker 1983: 29-31). This 'hair shirt' comportment is the essence of NGO voluntarism and agency.

It should be emphasised, no one is arguing that risks do not exist; it is obvious that they do. What is under discussion is a new way of managing risk. New, that is, in relation to an approach that privileged the rational subject and allowed him/her to make considered decisions on the basis of available information. This has been replaced by the *institutionalisation* of risk-aversion and the normalisation of social segregation and defensive living. When this is coupled with the influence of insurance and organisational fears of litigation, a powerful centralising technology for changing behaviour and shaping new forms of personal agency has come into existence. The UN's field-security training, as with other aid agencies, is not optional; it is a mandatory MOSS requirement and a condition for claims under the UN's Malicious Acts Insurance policy. Basically, if you are injured or killed while not following security guidelines or norms, you or your family get nothing. From this perspective, security becomes a performative act. With its long list of restrictions and aversions, compared to the rational subject, it has the effect of *infantilising* all involved (remember...don't eat local food!).

For the new aid subjectivity, with its default setting of risk-aversion, its preferred architectural form, its natural habitat, is the fortified aid compound. Having now completed our training, we can begin to explore this architectural form and delve deeper into its implications and power effects.

Aid and Urban Pathology

Fig 1

The integrated UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) supports the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that covers South Sudan and the border areas of the Transition Zone. UNMIS HQ lies just to the south of Khartoum International Airport where the UN operates both its own aircraft and those leased to support UNMIS and the African Union/UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) operations in the West. Given the volume of air traffic, the UN has its own terminal building to the east of the main runway. The UNMIS HQ is a large rectangular compound fortified with double walls, razor-wire and complete with watchtowers and armed guards (Fig 1). Inside, besides a several story office block, lines of air-conditioned pre-fabs house the administrative staff. Around the extensive perimeter are rows of the UN's ubiquitous white SUVs. The overall impression is that of a hostile military camp. For both residents and long-term visitors to Khartoum, at first glance, the UNMIS HQ seems out of place. Khartoum is a relatively safe city and crime levels, especially violent crime, have historically been low. While UNMIS is associated with the peace agreement in South Sudan, it has brought the architecture of war into the city. In this context the HQ seems anomalous, a sort of mini-Green Zone but without the obvious dangers and violence of Baghdad. While MOSS standards can vary, it is important to realise that they constitute a set of centrally-driven *minimum* operational requirements. In practice, this means that all UN operations in what could be deemed challenging environments – regardless of the actual security situation – have to be MOSS compliant. This creates a potential for both bureaucratic and political anomalies.⁷ Regarding the former, apart from the out of place feel of the UNMIS HQ, for example, fortified mini-Green Zones have mushroomed across South Sudan *at a time of peace*. If South Sudan has reaped an architectural peace dividend, rather than any celebratory or commemorative structures, it is the fortified aid compound. Consequently and paradoxically, there now appears to be more agency

⁷ Due to political sensitivities, occupying coalition forces and donor governments can be reluctant to admit, for example, the extent of humanitarian crisis less their own culpability is questioned. Put differently, despite a growing role for what one would assume to be objective security experts, official measures of insecurity are frequently subject to political decision. As Antonio Donini (2009) has pointed out, while Afghanistan is now one of the most dangerous locations for UN staff, the official security phase "...has no relation to the risk on the ground" (Ibid: 8, fn 14). Today most of country, including Kabul, is described as 'phase three'. However, under Taliban rule, when aid workers were not deliberate targets, the UN operated at 'phase five', the highest security level. This meant staff numbers were kept low; indeed, US and UK nationals working for the UN were prevented from entering the country by their own governments. At the same time, the UN would withdraw its staff at the slightest provocation "...as when a provincial governor allegedly threw a coffee pot in the direction of a UN staff member" (Ibid). Given the rising death toll among aid workers in Afghanistan since 2001, one can only assume that the insecurity that we have helped create is, somehow, the more tolerable for it.

security protocols, restrictions and levels of bureaucracy than during the actual war.

This imagery of a spreading network of aid-related mini-Green Zones is suggestive. Propagated in the institutional medium of the UN integrated mission and fed by the inner-logic of insurance, the fortified aid compound is now ubiquitous from the Caribbean, through Africa to the Balkans and the Middle East, the Caucasus and East Asia.⁸ As an architectural form, however, it is important to stress that the fortified aid compound also merges into and reproduces the global trend toward social segregation and defensive urban living. This ‘splintering urbanism’ (Graham and Marvin 2001) together with deepening patterns of avoidance and risk-aversion are well established within mass consumer societies (Blakely and Snyder 1997).⁹ As a testament to the globalisation of such urban dynamics, however, Khartoum is a good example of this familiar urban pathology.¹⁰ Since the mid 00s, with growing oil revenues and the commercial promise afforded by peace in South Sudan, Khartoum has been experiencing a building and real estate boom. Largely funded by Gulf and Asian investment, new bridges, a swath of iconic buildings, a new international airport and several elite gated-suburbs have either been completed or are under construction in and around the capital (ST 2006; SOL 2008). The character of central Khartoum has been transformed. The most ambitious of these projects is the Al Mogran development at the confluence of the White and Blue Niles. In September 2005, the Sudanese real estate development company, Alsunut, announced a \$4bn project to build a combined business, residential and leisure complex at Al Mogran.¹¹ This development is part of a wider vision that sees Khartoum as a central business hub in East Africa (ST 19 June 2006). Originally scheduled for completion in 2015, the global recession and decline in oil revenues has slowed progress. Nevertheless, important here is the elevation of Al Mogran as a foremost “...symbol of Khartoum’s post-war renaissance and a beacon of modernity in the region” (Ibid).

Fig 2

⁸ I am grateful for audience feedback and anecdotal evidence regarding the geographic spread of the fortified aid compound from seminars given in Rovaniemi (Finland), London, Warwick, Cambridge, Amsterdam, Leeds, Bristol, Bradford and Coimbra (Portugal) during 2008 and 2009.

⁹ The kind of risk-avoidance encountered in field-security training, for example, has even established itself within academic research. Compared to a decade ago, despite little or no evidence that academic fieldwork has become more dangerous, sending research students abroad is subject to a growing bureaucracy of risk, insurance and ethical assessment (Adams 2007).

¹⁰ See the ‘urbanisation’ pages of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) blog: Making Sense of Darfur: <http://blogs.ssrc.org/darfur/category/darfur/urbanization/>

¹¹ For the Alsunut homepage see: <http://www.alsunut.com/index.php>

Al-Mogran is not so much a gated-community as a defended self-contained city suburb that, complete with its own dedicated transport, health, education and energy systems, integrates elite housing, business, hotel and leisure facilities within a single plan (Fig 2). Set against the poverty of the city and rest of Sudan, it's an exclusive space of the modern (de Waal 2009). It reflects similar urban projects in the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Beirut, as well as other African cities such as the elite enclave of Luanda Sul currently under construction to the south of Anglo's socially-polarised capital, Luanda (Eisenstein 2008).¹² Al Mogran is a good example of what Mike Davis and Daniel Monk have called the "...dreamworlds of neoliberalism" where, unfettered by any remnant of a social contract, "...the rich can walk like gods in the nightmare gardens of their deepest and most secret desires" (Davis and Monk 2007: ix). As evident in the Alsunut promotional video,¹³ as a dreamworld it offers an elite view of development and modernity. Something fenced-off from the poverty outside to be savoured by the few in secure and controlled environment.

Based on market research the planners envisage that Al-Mogran's office and residential space will attract both foreigners and the Sudanese diaspora. Regarding the former, Khartoum is full of aid industry operatives "...involved in the huge humanitarian operations covering Sudan as well as contractors and businesses rebuilding the vast country, devastated by war". Both of these groups, moreover, want "...to find the same quality of life they had at home" (ST 19 June 2006). If Luanda Sul is anything to go by, and given the irresistible draw of security, or at least its promise, the aid industry will definitely be interested. In this respect, in order to overcome the negative impact of the aid industry's *ad hoc* segregating efforts to defend itself on Kabul's urbanity (Montgomery 2008), the authorities have raised the possibility of constructing a Baghdad-style Green Zone on the edge of the city. This would house the entire diplomatic, UN and aid community within one secure location with its own dedicated support infrastructure (Boone 2009). The fortified aid compound, reflecting a wider urban pathology, is symptomatic of the deepening institutionalisation of the development-underdevelopment divide.

Exporting urban pathology

¹² For a YouTube video of the safe shopping offered in Luanda Sul see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCm7dJuGpM0>

¹³ For the Alsunut promotional video see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBaJD3di6qQ>

Fig 3

The UNHCR office compound in Khartoum is noticeable by its double fence; an outer chain-link fence and inner wall both topped by razor-wire. The entrance (Fig 3), complete with crash barrier, has a deadzone between the inner and outer gates. In terms of MOSS compliance, this is an upgrading of an existing compound, the external link fence and double gates being added later. This kind of upgrading, although not as extensive, is also evident in UNHCR's compound in Juba, the capital of the southern region. Not all MOSS compliant compounds, however, are adaptations of earlier compounds, some are new buildings. In Juba, for example, not only is their size noticeable but, since 2005, whole districts have been taken over and divided into what can best be described as separate aid cantonments. UNDP, for example, has a large compound that presents itself to the outside world as a high, white painted exterior wall, topped by razor-wire, with 'NO TRESPASSING' stencilled in blue all around its extensive perimeter. The main gate to this office complex is complete with the familiar guardhouse, heavy steel gates and crash barriers. In considering these structures, it is legitimate to ask what sort of impression they make on the public and, not least, those aid beneficiaries that agencies claim to empower and better? In their appearance and intent, these buildings are the very opposite of empowering; they are intimidating structures designed to keep the public out. Moreover, and this should be emphasised, within Juba these militarised structures are among the first physical manifestations of the return to peace in the South; they are the architectural peace dividend.

Instead of a celebratory rebirth, architecturally the aid industry has introduced the signs and visual tropes of an international urban pathology; it is an urbanism that, paradoxically, stands in contrast to the relatively open, low-walled government buildings, many of which date from the colonial period (Daly and Hogan 2005: 231-252). Rather than the beginnings of peace and reconstruction, these alienating and exclusionary structures embody its failure even before it has begun (also see Montgomery 2009). The aid industry, moreover, is introducing the same fractured urbanism into the South's other small towns. Not only are these towns undergoing a process of rapid unplanned urbanisation following the 2005 peace agreement (Duffield, Diagne, and Tennant 2008), given the relative paucity of the built environment, the spatial impact is, if anything, even greater than in Juba.

Similar to the self-contained gated-neighbourhoods emerging in Khartoum, the fortified aid compound is, ideally, self-reliant in terms of basic requirements; they share the same exclusive and independent logic. Aid compounds have their own boreholes for water and, with their diesel stockpile, run their own electricity generators. This electricity renders the compounds autonomous from the erratic or absent town supply. It powers their security lights, telecommunications, refrigerators, air conditioning units and computers, thus allowing aid workers to maintain direct HQ contact and granting internet and satellite TV access. A stock of spare parts keeps the vehicles running and, in the event of a medical emergency, a sophisticated drugs cabinet is maintained. Not only does their built form contrast with the low-walled government buildings, the aid compound's monopoly of resources and expertise heightens the apparent poverty and dependency of the latter. Established by treaty with the Government of Sudan, in most cases during the 1960s, UN aid compounds are sovereign spaces of the international. Agreements, for example, typically confer diplomatic status on international staff and inviolability of the offices, documents and equipment of the agency concerned (UNHCR 1968). Linked by exclusive and secure means of air and road transport, fortified aid compounds interconnect to form an archipelago of international aid. From this perspective, the network of aid compounds that spans the global borderland gives liberalism's external sovereign frontier a material reality: it marks the place where the international space of aid flows physically confronts underdevelopment as dangerous.

Fig 4

UNHCR's combined office and accommodation compound at Yei (Fig 4), near the border with Uganda, is interesting since it is new and purpose built. In May 2008, parts of it were still incomplete. As a new construction, it brings aid, architecture and security together in a particularly clear way. Apart from the usual double gates and outer perimeter chain-link fence, the wide dead-zone between the fence and the inner wall, is patrolled by armed guards at night. This large purpose built compound combines office, accommodation, leisure and essential support facilities. Although on a much smaller scale, it is comparable at least in its basic plan and intention with the already mentioned elite Al Mogran development in Khartoum. Both attempt to combine all the essentials necessary to live a secure and civilised life that is, as far as possible, separate from its surrounding environment. Within its razor-wire topped walls and security lighting, in addition to the usual gate house, water tower and generator, the Yei compound contains a block of about a dozen offices and work rooms; a

dining area; a laundry; an open-sided tented gym; and, in two facing rows of three blocks each, a dozen semi-detached three room bungalows each comprising a bedroom, lounge and shower. In May 2008, the dining area, where aid workers can get breakfast, lunch and dinner, was still a basic construction fashioned from two metal containers. The intention was to eventually replace this with a built structure. At the same time, plans also existed to landscape the rough ground between the facing bungalows to make a garden. The semi-detached bungalows themselves are of a modern design, each having their own porch, air conditioning and links to the internet and satellite TV. Their suburban air, however, is unsettled by barred windows and the razor wire on the inner wall that runs behind them. The fortified aid compound not only reproduces the longstanding development-underdevelopment divide, it signals a deepening institutionalisation of that divide.

Sallying forth to the future

Despite the aid industry's ethos of transience and working itself out of a job, the UN's Yei compound has been built to last. As a means of minimising risk and avoiding litigation, the fortified aid compound is here to stay. Rather than speaking to the development of South Sudan with its implied independence from aid agencies, as an architectural form, it is more concerned with long-term occupation and pacification. Caught between war and peace, the fortified aid compound is a post-interventionary architecture. In this respect, it is significant that most aid workers, given their internalisation of the field-security training they receive, are oblivious to the incongruities and contradictions of their built habitat. The Yei compound, for example, is admired for the superiority of its deep field facilities rather than being seen as out of place or alienating. Fortification and segregation is normal and expected; like rain in the rainy-season. The walls and razor wire fence-off a threatening and unpredictable external world. They demarcate an inner zone of normality and civilisation. Reflecting the requirements of therapeutic self-governance, as a means of taking care of one's inner-self, the fortified aid compound is a place of refuge. It is somewhere to unwind, have a shower, a cold beer and watch some TV.

In considering what is being secured against, in most cases, defensive aid architecture spreads, not as a response to clear and present danger, but as an insurance-driven exercise in minimising risk. With the exception of Darfur, in much of Sudan, as with many other integrated missions, it has preceded the insecurity it seeks to defend against. Rather than eliminating

these conditions, however, this form of architecture, which highlights the exclusivity and inequality of the international space of flows, runs the danger of inciting the hostility and envy it claims to protect against. Not least, institutional risk aversion and segregated living has had a major impact on relations between aid workers and beneficiaries. In South Sudan, at a time of peace, aid work increasingly appears as a series of organised, security-approved aid sallies from the confines of the fortified compound. International staff spend the least time possible in the uncertain outside world. Compared to the NGO voluntarism of the 1960s and 1970s, encounters with aid beneficiaries now lack informality and spontaneity. They are structured, contrived, time-limited exercises. Usually reliant upon local staff, or local NGOs, they range from information gathering exercises, beneficiary training and, in some obviously insecure locations, more arms length forms of engagement.

Information gathering usually takes place through focus groups meetings, participatory workshops or using rapid appraisal techniques (Chambers 2002). The intention of training is to change beneficiary attitudes and behaviour. Just as aid workers are expected to act upon themselves and change their behaviour, in order to minimise risk to themselves and others, beneficiaries are also required to change. There are, for example, health risks; risks of human rights abuse; risk of patriarchy; risks of social exclusion; and risks of ignorance and individualism. Such risks and dangers define the beneficiary population and come complete with their corresponding therapeutic training programmes and desired pattern of behavioural changes. The enemy outside the fortified aid compound is the enemy of underdevelopment or, to be more precise, it is underdevelopment experienced as a lack or inability on the part of aid beneficiaries to lead a full and proper life (Mehta 1999). It is underdevelopment as dangerous and unpredictable. It's the human essence of the undocumented masses living outside the aid archipelago. Such a condition has to be both kept at bay through training and – because of the uncertainty of this task – defended against with razor wire.

In areas where the population is in a state of insurgency, the interaction between aid worker and beneficiary is even more restricted. In Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur, Somalia and northern Uganda, for example, a technique known as *remote management* has emerged (Rogers 2006; Bruderlein and Gassmann 2006; Stoddard, Harmer, and Haver 2006). This involves working at arm's length through local staff or local NGOs. In Afghanistan, for example, it is not uncommon for international aid managers not to leave their compounds but, either through email or

satellite phone, to manage projects at a distance; in some cases, never visiting them at all (Montgomery 2009). Indeed, such is the nature of the aid archipelago and modern telecommunications that it is no longer necessary for operational aid agencies to be based in the same country as the programmes they support. For example, Jordan has become a base for aid operations in Iraq, while Nairobi and Dubai serve Somalia and Afghanistan respectively.

Conclusion: caught between the walls

Prompted by the recent spread of fortified aid compounds in South Sudan, this essay has taken a discursive look at the implications of this development. The alliance between this architecture and the roll-out of mandatory field-security training for aid workers is important. This training calls forth a risk-averse subjectivity that finds segregated living not only necessary but also desirable. However, while things like insurance and fears of litigation are drivers from the aid side, the fortified compound also merges with international trends of urban pathology based upon social splintering and the privatisation of space. In this respect, rather than working against this pathology, or standing apart from it, the aid industry is a driving force. In terms of the relationship between identity, territory and security, the Khartoum elite and the representatives of the international aid and diplomatic world, for example, have more things in common than differences (see Campbell 1999).

Fig 5

As an international space of flows, the archipelago of aid highlights the immobility of the aid beneficiaries it exists to serve. By their nature, fortified aid compounds are disempowering. It is revealing that, in the case of South Sudan, one of the few other new build programmes, as opposed to renovation work, relates to prisons. Under its Rule of Law Programme, for example, UNDP has constructed a number of new prisons. What is striking about these prisons (Fig 5) is their outward similarity to the fortified aid compound. One is to keep people in, the other to keep them out. This outward similarity but different purpose says much about the abjection of the undocumented surplus-lives existing between these walls. They suggest different but interconnected sets of possibilities: on the one hand, a future of containment and confinement, on the other, a pacified life of managed poverty. In the struggle for human emancipation, the fortified aid compound is a strategic dead-end; it sums up the short post-Cold War journey of the development-security nexus from initial optimism to

political paralysis and intellectual sterility. In thinking a way out of this impasse, the first step is perhaps the easiest. It's deciding which side of the wire you are on.

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