

Projects

Read about our projects and events, forthcoming and past, relating to the theme of Saving Humans:

Ethics, War and Intervention

Friday 30 May 2014

Conference announcement and call for abstracts



Keynote speaker: Professor Jeff McMahan (<http://jeffersonmcmahan.com/>)

The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at Birmingham is delighted to announce a one-day conference on the ethics of war and intervention, to be held on 30th May, and marking the visit to Birmingham of Prof. Jeff McMahan, as Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the IAS, under its **Saving Humans** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/ias/saving-humans/index.aspx>) research theme.

The conference will feature a paper by McMahan himself, and others, working in disciplines including ethics, political science, and history.

The IAS seeks to foster inter-disciplinary engagement, and wide-ranging academic partnerships. We therefore encourage papers with cross-disciplinary reach and significance, and from scholars of all levels.

Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words by 21 March 2014 to ias@contacts.bham.ac.uk (<mailto:ias@contacts.bham.ac.uk>)

The conference is free of charge. However, space at the conference is limited, and **registration is required**. (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ethics-war-and-intervention-conference-the-institute-of-advanced-studies-saving-humans-tickets-10506843251>). Reasonable travel and accommodation costs will be reimbursed for accepted speakers.
Provisional Programme: Ethics, War, and Intervention, 30th May 2014

9.30-10.00: Coffee and Registration

10.00-11.00: Prof. Jeff McMahan, 'Liability, Proportionality, and the Aggregation of Harm' (Chair: Heather Widdows)

11.00-12.30: Panel Session 1 (Chair: Christopher Finlay)

- Dr Eamon Aloyo (Hague Institute for Global Justice), 'The Last of Last Resort'
- Dr Rita Floyd (POLSIS, Birmingham), 'Just Resort to Securitization'
- Dr Simon Jackson (History, Birmingham), 'Blockade then relief: the politics and law of humanitarian intervention in WW1 Syria'

12.30-1.15: Lunch

1.15-2.15: Prof. Victor Tadros (Law, Warwick), 'The Uncertainties of War' (Chair: Jeremy Williams)

2.15-3.15: Panel Session 2 - Doctoral Students (Chair: Paul Jackson)

- Lars Christie (Philosophy, Oslo), 'Humanitarian interventions and collateral damage: Distributing the Cost of Rescue'
- Amanda Cawston (Philosophy, Cambridge), 'What is Wrong With Alienated Violence?'
- Andrew Forcehimes (Philosophy, Vanderbilt), 'Luck ad Bellum'

3.15-3.30: Coffee

3.30-4.30: Prof. Kim Hutchings (International Relations, LSE), 'What Would We Do Without World War Two? A Feminist Critique of Cosmopolitan Just War Theory' (Chair: Scott Wisor).

Public Lecture

After the conference, at 5pm, Prof. McMahan will deliver a **public lecture on the ethics of humanitarian intervention** ([/research/activity/ias/workshops/2014/ethics-humanitarian-intervention.aspx](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ethics-war-and-intervention-conference-the-institute-of-advanced-studies-saving-humans-tickets-10506843251)) at the Barber Institute of Fine Art. This will be followed, from 18.30-20.00, by a drinks reception. Details on how to register for this event can be found [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jeff-mcmahan-the-ethics-of-humanitarian-intervention-with-comments-on-syria-tickets-10486819359) (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jeff-mcmahan-the-ethics-of-humanitarian-intervention-with-comments-on-syria-tickets-10486819359>).

About Jeff McMahan

Jeff McMahan is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow of Saving Humans, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Birmingham. He is the author of *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford University Press, 2002) and *Killing in War* (Oxford University Press, 2009). He has several other books forthcoming from Oxford University Press, including a collection of essays called *The Values of Lives*, a book on war intended for both academic and non-academic readers called *The Right Way to Fight*, and a sequel to his 2002 book called *The Ethics of Killing: Self-Defense, War, and Punishment*.

The Kindertransport in History and Memory

Project Leads: [Dr Rose Whyman](http://staff/profiles/drama/whyman-rose.aspx) (Drama and Theatre Arts) and [Dr Isabel Wollaston](http://staff/profiles/tr/wollaston-isabel.aspx) (Theology and Religion)



December 2013 - September 2014 marks the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first of the Kindertransports, the rescue of c10,000 unaccompanied children (under 17 years of age, mainly but not exclusively Jewish) from the Third Reich (Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Danzig [now Gdansk]) in the 9 months leading up to the outbreak of World War II. The transports were organized by Jewish, Christian and secular NGO's after the British government waived immigration restrictions subject to the provision of a £50 bond per child as an assurance of their 'ultimate resettlement'.

This rescue operation relied heavily on formal and informal networks, public and private support, and embodies the complexity of British immigration policy and attitudes to refugees (both then and now), as well as of understandings of, and attitudes to, Holocaust victimhood. After being largely overlooked or forgotten for many years, the Kindertransports are increasingly recognized and celebrated as an important part of Britain's memory of both WWII and the Holocaust. 75 years on the Kindertransports remain a complex, contested phenomenon, with ongoing controversies raising key strategic, political, ethical, theoretical and practical questions relating to, amongst other issues, the strengths and weakness of British immigration policy, the role and effectiveness of the NGOs, religious and secular organizations involved in both the rescue operation and caring for the Kinder once they arrived, whether the Kinder were 'merely' refugees or were also survivors of the Holocaust; how the Kindertransports should be commemorated, memorialized and represented and by whom.

IAS will host a programme of local/regional events followed by more high profile events in spring/summer 2014 that will move beyond the celebratory and hagiographic, in rigorously exploring these more complex issues, both within the University and through a series of public engagement activities.

Information and Intervention in Fragile States: Donors, locals and the construction of reality in South Sudan

Project Lead: [Dr Jonathan Fisher](http://schools/government-society/departments/international-development/staff/profiles/fisher-jonathan.aspx) (IDD)

Western donor aid and influence lies at the heart of the state-building enterprise in many of today's 'fragile and post-conflict' states. Much-needed funding, training, capacity-building and logistical support supplied by the UN, US, UK, EU and others as part of post-conflict reconstruction initiatives has frequently had a profound impact on the governance and security environments of many such states. Limited infrastructure and widespread insecurity in many 'fragile states', however, has prevented most 'in-country' donor officials from regularly leaving capital cities in order to witness the local effects of these initiatives or, indeed, to determine for themselves where international intervention might be best directed in an effort to save humans in the immediate and longer term. Growing donor concern with the 'risks' to staff associated with such travel and local engagement has also encouraged donor officials to increasingly retreat into their compounds – a phenomenon Mark Duffield describes as the 'bunkerization of aid'.

This reality raises critical empirical and normative questions about the relationship between information-gathering in fragile states, the policies promoted by donor officials therein and the type of state constructed in this process. For while donor-sponsored initiatives such as security sector reform (SSR) have contributed to the building of more secure and enduring political settlements in some states (eg Mozambique) they have had the opposite effect in others (eg Chad). This pilot project therefore seeks to examine how donor officials gain access to information in fragile states and which local groups or individuals mediate this information, with a view to better understanding what informs policy priorities and key decisions on 'saving humans' in post-conflict situations.

The project will concentrate on two key areas of focus for donors involved in fragile states – SSR and decentralization – in relation to a state where donor influence has been immense but where donor travel beyond the capital has been extremely limited – South Sudan.

This project will link together and develop two strands of contemporary thinking on the political economy of intervention in fragile states. One critiques Western-promoted state-building activities as being detached from local realities and based on ignorance of domestic political economy structures and local sentiments (Autesserre 2010; Lacher 2012; Roberts 2013; Tull 2010). The other explores the 'bunkerization' of aid by donor officials and the introverted sociologies of 'interveners' in post-conflict settings (Duffield 2010, 2012; Higate and Henry 2010). Building on these two bodies of thought, the research will take the debate in a new direction by examining two key questions not explored in either or in broader political science literature.

The first is primarily practical – where do international donor officials derive information from in – and in relation to – fragile states? The second is more normative and explores the role of local actors and organizations as information providers for donors in these settings. Building on my earlier work on African agency, this enquiry focuses on the agency of local actors in the intervention dynamic, an angle gravely under-explored in existing literature. An examination of the role and impact of local actors as 'reality entrepreneurs' in South Sudan will also establish a sound conceptual and empirical foundation to be scaled-up and developed for a larger, comparative and multi-disciplinary research funding bid at the end of the project.

The major activity will be two-weeks' fieldwork in Juba where interviews with a range of stakeholders will establish key sources of information used by donors in relation to SSR and decentralization. This will be complemented by discourse analysis of donor 'grey literature' on these topics and interviews with donor officials based in London.

There will be two roundtables aimed at disseminating findings and building a research community around the theme of 'information and intervention'. The first of these will be in Juba itself at the end of the fieldwork and the second roundtable will be held in Birmingham at the end of the project under the aegis of IAS.

The main published outputs from the project will be two article submissions to leading peer-reviewed journals: an empirical piece on information and SSR in South Sudan to *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* and a broader conceptual piece on intervention, information and 'reality entrepreneurs' to *Security Dialogue*. Earlier versions of these will be presented in Juba and at the 2014 International Studies Association Conference respectively.

The project will also entail the formation of a research community around the theme of 'information and intervention'; this will be consolidated at the roundtables in Juba and Birmingham. Individuals and institutions across Birmingham University as well as in Europe and Africa who could participate in these events have already been identified. There will be relevant stakeholders from outside academia to maximize impact. The purpose of establishing this community will be to build a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary research team interested in this topic and these questions. Between 2014-2015 this team will work together in order to submit a research bid based on an expanded and scaled-up version of the project to a major funder (likely the ESRC or EU).

Ethics of Health Security

Project Leads: [Dr Jonathan Herington](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/herington-jonathan.aspx) (Medicine, Ethics, Society and History Unit), [Professor Angus Dawson](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/dawson-angus.aspx) (School of Health and Population Sciences) and [Professor Heather Draper](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/draper-heather.aspx) (College of Medical and Dental Sciences)

The past ten years have seen rising interest in the intersection between health and security. The threat of bioterrorism in the post 9/11 world, SARS and influenza pandemics, and perpetual health insecurity in the developing world all pose serious moral, as well as political, challenges. This workshop will explore the normative dimensions of global health security by bringing together moral philosophers, security studies scholars and public health practitioners. Scholars of security have often questioned the value of 'securitizing' health, the role it plays in shaping resource allocations, and the potential for new health technologies to create security challenges. In parallel, moral philosophers have been deeply engaged in discussions regarding the most appropriate responses to public health emergencies, emerging biotechnologies and the provision of healthcare in a military context.

By bringing these two debates together, we hope to address a number of conceptual and applied questions. These will include: assessing the concept of global health security and its relationship to other health policy goals such as efficiency, equality and patient autonomy; analysing the way in which resources are allocated in a health emergency and assessing which actors are instrumental in this decision; the security challenges posed by new biotechnologies and the appropriate role of experts and the public in weighing the risks and benefits; and the potential ethical challenges which arise when providing healthcare in a conflict zone. A session at the conclusion of the workshop will seek to identify future research questions within the ethics of health and security.

The workshop would be held, subject to speaker availability, in mid-May 2014.

Potential Outputs

- Policy brief summarising workshop, to be disseminated via ESRC Seminar website;
- Special issue of cross-disciplinary journal (e.g. *Public Health Ethics, Health Care Analysis*);
- Network of US and UK scholars for AHRC/NEH and/or NIH funding proposal.

The workshop will be one of the first opportunities for scholars in philosophy and security studies to engage with each other's work in the domain of health. Moral philosophical work on pandemics and biosecurity often makes claims about the political feasibility of particular interventions and their effect on the realisation of justice. Likewise, social scientific work on health security often invokes normative commitments which are unexamined, or only tentatively argued for. Bringing these two scholarly communities together will strengthen the work in both disciplines, open the way for novel collaborations, and improve the quality of policy advice in the future.

The workshop is clearly within the purview of the Saving Humans theme: dealing, as it does, with the complex web of insecurity created by health emergencies and emerging biotechnologies. The workshop is conceived from the beginning as an interdisciplinary event designed to create a network of scholars across two disciplines. It is likewise invested in policy relevance – several speakers and participants are policymakers or academic/practitioners – and we have devoted a session at the end of the workshop to help pose the most crucial future research questions. Bringing these communities together in Birmingham will cement the University's association with research into saving and securing human lives from serious health threats.

Ken Loach's 'Save the Children Fund Film'

Date: Tuesday 18 March 2014

Venue: Lecture Theatre WG5, Aston Webb Building



The previously banned, *Save the Children Fund Film*, directed by Ken Loach and produced by Tony Garnett, is a documentary about the work of *Save the Children*, a British-based charity working for children around the world. Shot in 1969 in the UK, Kenya and Uganda, the film was originally commissioned by *Save the Children* and London Weekend Television to mark the Charity's fiftieth anniversary.

Already an established filmmaker, Loach opened the documentary with a quotation from Friedrich Engels, and constructed a film that explores the politics of poverty, class and charities and the relationship between them. The film, however, was promptly withdrawn from release and kept in the BFI's national archive; *Save the Children* representatives at the time felt it subverted their aims. Banned until 2011, we are delighted to present the second ever public screening of this film.

After the screening Professor Matthew Hilton will lead a Q&A session with Juliano Fiori, Humanitarian Affairs Adviser from *Save the Children*.

Admission free, booking recommended. (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/events/arts-and-science/ArtsScience2014/Screenings2014/Ken-Loachs-Save-the-Children-Fund-Film.aspx>)

2013

1st-31st October - [Climate Change and Arctic and Alpine Environments \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2013/climate-change-and-arctic-and-alpine-environments.aspx\)](#)

30th July - [Refugees and states in the modern Middle East: current challenges and historical perspectives \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2013/ODI-event.aspx\)](#)

21st-22nd March - [Beyond the Rights & Wrongs of Abortion: Access as a Question of Reproductive Justice \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2013/beyond-rights-wrongs-abortion.aspx\)](#)

2012

29th-30th October - [Human decision making under uncertainty \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/human-decision-making.aspx\)](#)

17th October - [Hydrohazards: extremes, environment and people \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/hydrohazards.aspx\)](#)

28th September - [Health and Happiness \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/health-happiness.aspx\)](#)

10th September - [Territorial and Non-Territorial Autonomies \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/territorial-and-non-territorial-autonomies.aspx\)](#)

14th July - [Vulnerability, Justice and the Responsive State \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/vulnerability-justice-responsive-state.aspx\)](#)

11th July - [Evaluating Policy and Practice Interventions that Aim to Develop Wellbeing and Resilience \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/wellbeing-and-resilience.aspx\)](#)

27th June - [Evaluating Behaviour Change Interventions in Social Policy \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/evaluating-behaviour-change-interventions.aspx\)](#)

22nd June - [Superdiversity \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/superdiversity.aspx\)](#)

24th May - [Researching Africa and the development of the Africa Hub Website \(/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/researching-africa.aspx\)](#)