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For good and country: nationalism and the diffusion of humanitarianism in the late nineteenth century

Shai M. Dromi

Abstract: Despite the growing interest in transnational fields and their influence on national-level dynamics, existing literature has not yet addressed the processes involved in creating such fields in the first place. This article provides insight into the complexities involved in national–transnational interactions amidst national and transnational field formation. It examines the nascent transnational humanitarian field of the late nineteenth century through the work of the emerging Red Cross Movement in the 1860s–1890s, drawing primarily on the archive of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The findings show that National Red Cross (NRC) societies employed a discourse drawn from a transnational cultural arena in order to gain central positioning in their national fields and to convince other parties of their necessity. Conversely, NRCs used nationalism as a form of symbolic capital in establishing themselves in their national fields, seemingly at odds with their cosmopolitan aspirations. Thus, by contrast to the ideal-typical representation of global humanitarianism as non-national, these findings suggest that nationalism and impartial humanitarianism are historically intertwined. More broadly, the article argues that national-level field dynamics as well as nationalism play important roles in the creation of transnational fields, even when field actors present themselves as acting for universal causes.

Keywords: humanitarianism, transnational advocacy, Red Cross, field theory, nationalism

Introduction

Scholars often cite humanitarian international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) as central actors in the effort to counteract the destructive effects of rampant nationalism (Kurasawa, 2012; Brysk, 2013; Balibar, 2013; Jean, 1993). Indeed, since organizations such as Oxfam and Doctors Without Borders have historically provided relief to victims of conflict and disaster regardless of ethnicity, nationality and religion, they have associated themselves with a cosmopolitan ethic that transcends state sovereignty (Davey, 2011). These

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characteristics have led scholars to identify the world of humanitarian INGOs as a *transnational field*, in which actors supersede their national positioning and work in relation to other global actors (Krause, 2014). And yet, other studies of humanitarian work have shown that activists regularly link the form of universal aid they provide with their national values and character, thereby suggesting that national-level dynamics may impact the subtleties and divisions of the transnational humanitarian field (Stroup, 2012; Redfield, 2013; Siméant, 2005).

However, there is little research about the interaction of national-level dynamics with transnational social processes in the emergence of transnational fields. While there is growing scholarship on transnational fields as a phenomenon (Dezalay and Garth, 2010; Mudge and Vauchez, 2012), there is little concrete research of the relations between transnational fields-in-formation and corresponding national fields. Instead, transnational field research has often analyzed such fields separately from nation-level specificities (Hagan and Levi, 2005; Dixon and Tenove, 2013). Furthermore, recent scalar expansions of field analysis, including contributions in this volume, have looked at the formation of supranational fields as a process of disengagement from national confines (Buchholz, this volume) or as a process of imperial expansion (Steinmetz, this volume; Wilson, this volume), but have not considered the role of nations and nationalism in transnational field formation processes. The current article presents initial insights into these issues by examining the nascent transnational humanitarian field of the late nineteenth century. It focuses on the international spread of the Red Cross movement and on its interweaving of national and global social spaces.

The article turns to the late nineteenth century because that period was pivotal for the emergence of a relatively autonomous field of humanitarian activism, and saw the emergence of the stakes and logics that ultimately came to underpin the transnational humanitarian field. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, established 1863) was central to this process as it advocated for the creation of a network of impartial aid societies, each of which would be based in each sovereign nation and would care for the battlefield wounded regardless of nationality.[1] By the turn of the century the movement expanded into most European states, as well as numerous American and Asian ones, by establishing a National Red Cross Society (NRC) in each. While the late nineteenth century humanitarian community was irreducible to the Red Cross alone, this movement was crucial in laying down the infrastructure for what would become a transnational humanitarian field: it provided a level of international cooperation that allowed actors in different locations to become cognizant of each other as participating in the same global endeavour (Moorehead, 1999); it laid down the legal and political groundwork to facilitate this type of relief work (Veuthey, 1983); and it propagated a new *ethos* sanctifying impartial and universal humanitarian care for the wounded regardless of nationality, providing humanitarian actors with markers of honour and worth over which to compete (Hutchinson, 1996). By serving as a model for other activist groups, the Red

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Cross was key in disseminating an organizational template for other relief societies (Forsythe, 2005).

The article shows that the nascent transnational humanitarian field of the nineteenth century emerged through processes embedded in national-level dynamics, inextricably linked with currents of nationalism. The ICRC endorsed and enhanced pre-existing national sentiments in eliciting support for the globally relevant mission of helping all those in need. Such affirmation of nationalism, as well as the considerable autonomy afforded to the national Red Cross societies by the ICRC, allowed for the creation of nationally bounded fields devoted to long-distance humanitarianism in multiple states. In those national-level fields, local Red Cross actors drew both on symbolic resources provided by the ICRC and on local notions of nationalism in establishing themselves and promoting their work. On the one hand, they employed the internationally shared cultural resources and standards of conduct espoused by the ICRC in order to convince others in their polity of their superior adherence to universal values. On the other hand, local Red Cross activists developed ideas and beliefs about the relationship between humanitarianism and their own national identity, embedding nationalist value and imagery in the logics of their evolving humanitarian work. This hybridity allowed local actors to represent and conceive of providing aid to foreign nationals as an expression of their own patriotic spirit, and to generate a sense of pride and worth from their subscription to a global project. Thus, while the article does not deny that the nationalistic underpinnings of nineteenth-century humanitarianism occasionally inhibited cross-national humanitarian action,[2] it demonstrates that nationalism has also had a generative effect on humane conduct. The research is based on documents from the archive of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Library of Geneva, as well as self-reports sent to the ICRC by national Red Cross societies and related actors in the years 1860–1900.

Theoretically, the article shows that the genesis and growth of transnational fields involves processes of translation and adaption into local contexts, which are performed by national-level actors and are embedded in national-level social dynamics. The article draws on Bourdieu's work on the international circulation of ideas to unpack the roles such processes play in the emergence of transnational fields. After outlining the theoretical approach, the article will turn to the empirical case. It will first show that, despite being presented as a transnational project by its founders, the Red Cross was deeply tied to *intra*-national processes and actors. In this, the Red Cross helped consolidate pre-existing local humanitarian communities into national humanitarian fields, and at the same time oriented those fields toward transnational stakes. The article will then show that national-level actors presented humanitarianism in their countries as aligning with their national values and character, and that this was a central aspect of the emergence and maintenance of the transnational humanitarian field. The discussion will highlight the implications for the study of transnational fields.

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Transnational fields: between global and national dynamics

The notion of a 'transnational' field makes several modifications to the traditional, state-bounded concept of a social field.[3] At its most general, a field is a 'domain of relative autonomy marked off from others by its distinctive hierarchy, values, struggles, styles of improvising action, and forms of capital' (Calhoun, 2013: 37).[4] It is populated by actors who believe they are engaged in the same type of social action and therefore work in relation to each other. Those actors collectively identify a limited set of hierarchical positions and largely agree on who occupies which one. In this, they implicitly agree on a certain set of logics that dictate the norms by which action within the field ought to be conducted, and they share a belief in specific stakes that orient their work.[5] Field analysis has tended to remain confined to nationally bounded fields (Bourdieu, 1993, 1996a, 1996b), as the theory assumes elite actors in different fields within a particular state struggle for influence over its institutions and resources.

What, then, defines a 'transnational' humanitarian field? Krause's recent work (2014) demonstrates that such a field is very much in existence today and has several defining characteristics. Firstly, it involves humanitarian organizations (or, in some cases, individual actors) competing for funding, recognition, and influence on global scales, in relation to other global actors. The ICRC, Doctors without Borders, Oxfam, World Vision International, and other such associations ultimately compete over a limited pool of resources, as well as over dominance in defining what 'true' humanitarianism ought to be.[6] Secondly, it features a relatively consensual understanding of hierarchy and positioning between global humanitarian actors. While humanitarian INGOs are often critical of one another, few of them would disagree that the ICRC possesses unique prestige and influence over international and intergovernmental organizations, and that numerous 'camps' of relief organizations exist and work in relation to each other (Best, 1980; Fassin, 2011). Thirdly, their mutual critique notwithstanding, humanitarian organizations implicitly agree about a set of norms that bind their interaction regardless of their national origin (eg how funding can be secured; what types of justifications can be provided; etc.). Fourth, humanitarian INGOs subscribe to an overarching ethos, according to which social suffering must be alleviated impartially and universally, regardless of national boundaries (even though the practical interpretations of this injunction vary dramatically between organizations; see Plattner, 1996). Indeed, humanitarian INGOs have historically struggled over who best emulates this ethos (eg Fassin, 2011; Cullity, 2010).

Existing treatments of transnational field formation have tended to view national-level dynamics and culture as the context from which a transnational field gains autonomy (Buchholz, this volume) or a context into which transnational fields interject (Petzke, this volume). However, there is reason to believe that national-level factors play a more direct and positive role in transnational field formation. Despite the cosmopolitan attitudes espoused by many actors in the transnational humanitarian field, humanitarian INGOs continue to be influenced by national dynamics in their states of origin as well as by beliefs

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about the relationship between their nationality and their global work. Sarah Stroup (2012) has recently shown the profound influence national organizational culture exerts on humanitarian organizations, even as they engage with global actors and action. Recent research has shown similar patterns in the environmental field, where actors in different locations engage with the global task of counteracting climate change by construing links between that ideal and their national character and values, drawing motivation from a sense of unique responsibility and dedication that makes them feel best suited for such a global task (Shani, 2011; Arnold, 2012). Since contemporary transnational domains continue to be influenced by national differences (as evidenced by these studies), nationality may play a role in the emergence of the transnational humanitarian field. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the transnational humanitarian field-in-formation of the mid to late nineteenth century shows that much of the action in it had to do with nationally bounded dynamics within local humanitarian communities, even as those communities were adopting transnational types of discourse about impartial humanitarianism.

The international spread of field logics

Bourdieu's (1999) short essay about the complexities involved in the transnational travel of ideas is instructive for examining how the shared beliefs that are constitutive of a transnational field are circulated. While he has often been criticized for his nationally confined research (Chernilo, 2006; Beck and Sznaider, 2006), Bourdieu provided good reasons to be cautious in expanding research beyond national boundaries, especially when it comes to the diffusion of ideas such as impartial humanitarianism. According to Bourdieu, ideas circulate from their fields of production without their context or their original meaning structure, and are received in a field of reception with a set of different assumptions that brings forth reinterpretation.[7] Moreover, which texts travel and how they do so varies according to the peculiarities of the field of reception: who 'discovers' and selects the text or the idea? Who translates it to the receiving language? Finally, the way ideas are received is intertwined with the new meanings they are assigned by their importers (one might conjure up Parsons's translation of *The Protestant Ethic*[8]). Polysemic texts are in particular important here, as they can be adapted to different contexts easily (Bourdieu, 1999). Crucially, the shifts of meaning in international circulation of ideas is often independent of any conscious intention of any party to manipulate information.

Even though Bourdieu saw the international circulation of ideas, with the attendant misunderstanding and distortion, as having both good and bad consequences (Bourdieu, 1999), he ultimately saw these processes as a barrier for the creation of transnational fields. With relation to the possibility of a world field of sociology, he asked if it is 'possible to circumvent the barrier of the nationalisms that hinder the free circulation of ideas' thereby allowing 'the formation of a worldwide space of social scientific discussion and critique' (Bourdieu, 1991: 374). However, the same processes that complicate the travel of ideas between

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national contexts are also those that render them intelligible across boundaries, thereby facilitating the emergence of global engagement. They travel without the context in which they were produced, but their local reception may reinterpret them in a way that resonates with local meaning structures; they are selected and translated by specific agents, but those agents may thus encourage other actors to engage with global stakes and actors; and they are assigned new meanings by their importers, but those new meanings may be crucial to permeate those ideas in the first place.

The task ahead, then, is to explicate how impartial humanitarianism – advocated as a *transnational* mission by the ICRC – became meaningful in multiple *national* contexts to the extent that it was seen as a patriotic endeavour, and the extent to which this contributed to the creation of a transnational field. To this end, the next section will turn to the empirical examination of the spread of impartial humanitarianism through the work of the Red Cross and the establishment of multiple local fields dedicated to providing impartial relief. Following a brief historical context, the section will show that the ICRC advocated the transnational project of impartial humanitarianism as a *national* mission that should be undertaken independently by charitable communities in different states. In this, it will demonstrate that local humanitarian actors drew upon transnational discourse in order to gain dominance and prestige in their national communities. Second, it will demonstrate that activists also interpreted the discourse of humanitarianism through the lens of nationalism, which they presented as an important motivation for humanitarian work on a global scale.

Historical context

The ICRC was founded in Geneva in 1863 as a private association tightly connected both to Genevan civil society and to Swiss diplomats and decision makers. Drawing on firm Calvinist ideas about the need to subordinate international relations to Christian ethics, the ICRC advocated the establishment of independent volunteer societies in each state, which would provide humanitarian relief to wounded soldiers regardless of nationality. According to the ICRC proposals, each society would secure the cooperation of its host government in advance in order to ensure free access to the battlefield once war broke out (CICR, 1904). The ICRC saw the ratification of the Geneva Convention of 1864 – proposed by the ICRC and endorsed by the Swiss Federal Council – as a key condition for such cooperation (CICR, 1864). The Convention, initially signed by 12 European states including most great European powers, established that both wounded soldiers and medical workers (ranging from military medical staff to local volunteers offering help) in the battlefield are inviolable, designating the Red Cross emblem as conferring neutrality upon its bearers, and obliging armies to allow the wounded to be treated (ICRC, 1864).[9]

As a result of these efforts, National Red Cross societies (NRCs) began appearing in both core and periphery states, some of which were organized by volunteers and others by state officials. Each of these societies emerged independently

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from the ICRC, but shared with Geneva and with other NRCs knowledge, procedures, principles and symbols. In most states, the national society was joined by provincial volunteer societies, which were centralized (to varying extents) by the NRCs, and additional unaffiliated societies often worked closely with the NRC (or competed against it for funding and prestige). The ICRC coordinated NRCs in all areas concerning protection of victims of armed conflicts, as it was (and still is) the sole NGO recognized by International Humanitarian Law (Veuthey, 1983). By the end of the century 33 national Red Cross societies existed, each with its own constellation of local donors, activists, administrators, supporters, and detractors.[10] Some NRCs consisted of small groups of philanthropists whereas others employed thousands of medically trained workers. NRCs worked primarily within national boundaries – establishing hospitals, training, and accumulating funds and resources – but during wartime they also provided aid to foreign nationals. In 1919 the International Federation of the Red Cross was also established to coordinate the peace-time relief work of the NRCs.

International recognition and its uses in national-level humanitarian fields

Some scholars (Finnemore, 1996) have described the early diffusion of the Red Cross as a top-down process, with Swiss philanthropists advocating the idea of impartial aid societies to state leaders and local notables who, in turn, worked to establish NRCs. However, the road from the abstract proposals proffered by the ICRC in Geneva to the development of robust NRCs that are positioned in nationally bounded humanitarian fields involved more intricate processes of translation and adoption. A key function the ICRC played in support of the NRCs and of their dominance in their local fields was in maintaining global recognition of the Red Cross as an elite movement. NRCs drew upon the growing international prestige of the ICRC in order to gain symbolic distinction in their home countries, while at the same time being influenced by local dynamics and competition.

The ICRC, from its early years, invested considerable effort in creating a shared identity among its national chapters and to draw outside attention to its work. Red Cross activists published reports about their endeavours and achievements in newspapers, memoires and treatises (eg Pearson and MacLaughlin, 1871), and organized expositions dedicated to the movement (Barton, 1898). The ICRC established an international periodical to help coordinate activities between the various national societies and to help them publish stories of their successes and challenges. The periodical (as well as nationally based versions of it) attracted activists, decision makers, and philanthropists alike (Moynier, 1882). The Red Cross also organized international meetings for the NRCs for similar purposes (CICR, 1890, 1904). At the same time, the ICRC also worked to standardize the various organs of the movement, thereby emphasizing the relationship between the NRCs and the international movement. Key here was the proposal to adopt the name and emblem of the Red Cross in 1872 and to encourage NRCs to use them (Moynier, 1905). Since the establishment of the movement

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each society had been free to choose its own name, and – as the ICRC emphasized – remained free to do so. However, in order to achieve coherence in the eyes of diplomatic powers, the ICRC 'strongly urged the national societies to adopt the name Red Cross Society or, better still, Austrian, Russian, English, etc…'. (Moynier, 1905). These various efforts drew attention to the transnational features of the movement and connect NRCs symbolically to the ICRC.

Alongside these efforts to create a shared, transnational identity, the ICRC was concerned about unwittingly undermining trust between local governments and their respective NRCs. If an NRC appeared to bear allegiance to an international cause over a national one, it could appear as a threat in the eyes of its governments. In France, for example, the identification of the Paris-based NRC with international agents caused the Paris Commune to accuse it of spying in 1871 and to confiscate its supplies (Cte. de Beaufort, 1871). Thus, the ICRC exercised its influence cautiously so as not to exacerbate such suspicions, and placed much of the responsibility for the creation of local organizational structures on local volunteers.[11] The reasoning was that local notables (state officials, philanthropists, physicians) would be more likely to move state governments to establish aid societies than a foreign committee that may be unaware of local specificities or be perceived as interfering in domestic affairs (CICR, 1863). Since there has never been a formal hierarchy between the ICRC and the NRCs, the ICRC even resisted the label of the leader of the movement and its identification as a 'central' committee (Moynier, 1905; CICR, 1904). This was easier said than done, as the ICRC gained public visibility that attracted unwelcome attention by enthusiastic actors believing it to possess powers it did not have. A report of ICRC activities during the Franco-Prussian War complained:

> There have been some grave misconceptions about our responsibilities. We have seen, for example, people of all countries pouring into our offices, coming to join the *International*, as they say, thinking that there was only one society operating on both sides, and that we have the capacity to enlist them or to direct sanitary societies, and the ability to confer upon them absolute inviolability by giving them an international armband. The need to disabuse these applicants and to refer them to the proper authorities has been, for some weeks, fairly demanding work (CICR, 1870a: 8).

However, since the ICRC adopted a policy to communicate with only one central NRC per state (Moynier, 1905), it kept control of an important resource: recognition of the official NRC in each state.[12] Recognition by the ICRC as a national Red Cross society had clear advantages. First, it provided societies with access to an alternate source of funding that, once emergency struck, could circumvent the state's financial influence on the organization. Second, it gave societies access to a channel of information and a network by which to exercise moral agency (either by sending donations or by travelling to disaster-ridden areas). Third, it conferred distinction and prestige upon the recognized society, marking it as part of an internationally acclaimed group of elite institutions and – no less important – marked it as being an exemplary carrier of impartial humanitarianism.[13] Fourth, these benefits – taken together – provided NRCs

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with considerable leverage in their home countries and attracted the attention of royal houses and volunteers alike (with Japan, Prussia and Saxony being prime examples).

These rewards have led to various local squabbles between societies presenting themselves as belonging to the movement, as being impartial, and as representing the international Red Cross in their country (Gautier, 1890). In Belgium, the NRC warned about a competing society, going by the name of 'Société nationale belge de la Croix-Rouge', which 'did not possess as recommendable a character as its name suggests' (Moynier, 1905: 29). In France and Britain, 'copycat' Red Cross societies appeared – often taking similar organizational forms as the official NRC – and vied for funds and prestige. An English letter to the Genevan society warned that a competing society was a 'political and combatant aid society',[14] and another confessed that 'the National Red Cross Society has many enemies in England and among the worst are those who try to take its place in order to obtain the credit for its work'.[15]

Whether in competition or cooperation, the emergence of new NRCs had the effect of orienting existing charitable societies, which had already been a staple of mid-century aristocratic social life, toward the template of the Red Cross (eg the 'Samaritan Society', which was educating volunteers in first aid and formed strong ties to the Red Cross in numerous locales[16]). NRCs often formed close relations with pre-existing charitable religious societies of similar aims (CICR, 1870c).

The nature and extent of the competition in each national-level humanitarian field greatly depended on the level of state contribution and support. In some states, enthusiastic state involvement produced highly hierarchical and structured NRCs that were quasi-state organizations and produced little competition between actors over symbolic capital. In other cases (eg the Ottoman Empire), Red Cross societies remained weak and, with little interest from the state level, gave rise to weak field dynamics. But in most cases, NRC work interacted with varying levels of state involvement to consolidate nationally bounded fields of humanitarianism, in which providing impartial help (and, no less importantly, being recognized for this) was an object for some competition. In Prussia (and later Germany), the NRC enjoyed the strong support and, to a large extent, the cooperation of hundreds of local volunteer societies (von Itzenplitz, 1870).

The emergence of the transnational humanitarian field, then, involved the adoption (and competition over) a set of discursive and symbolic resources proffered by the ICRC and their deployment in national settings as a way to attain funding and prestige. Thus, a project that has prided itself as promoting impartial aid to victims regardless of their nationality did not emerge only as a cosmopolitan, boundary-defying construct but also as a set of nationally bounded fields, operating around stakes that were drawn from a transnational discourse arena. But how were these adopted codes culturally adapted in each setting for the promotion of the global Red Cross aims? The next section will take a closer look at the symbolic roles and discourses adopted by the ICRC and the NRCs in order to answer this question.

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Humanitarianism between patriotism and transnationalism

From its original conception the movement did not position itself as defying national sovereignty or denying nations of any right, thereby allowing nationally situated actors to 'translate' the ICRC framework to local codes that resonate with local notions of patriotism. In this, the movement greatly differed from many of its peers that called for disarmament and saw their mission as restricting belligerents (CICR, 1863). ICRC leaders – alongside their critique of the brutalities of war – espoused a positive view of the potential of patriotism to motivate humane conduct (Hutchinson, 1996). Indeed, Red Cross advocates described nationalism and humane conduct as fully compatible with each other, often citing the United States as the model of such patriotic humanitarianism:

> America … with the energy, spontaneity, and unwavering commitment that distinguish its children, and also – we should add – with a deep sense of patriotism and a tender and compassionate love which is one of the most previous fruits of Christianity, responded without hesitation [to the Civil War] (Maunoir, 1864: 179–180).

In keeping with this worldview, ICRC leaders spoke of NRCs as 'primarily *national*, and not *international*, as they are often believed to be', for each one of them was 'born under the joint inspiration of charity and patriotism' (Moynier, 1874: 4):

> What is essentially *international* in the Red Cross Societies is the spirit that animates them, that spirit of charity that moves them to wherever blood flows on the battlefield, experiencing as much solicitude for foreigners as for their compatriots when they are injured … [but] most of the work of each society will concern the army of its country; they are thus eminently *national* institutions … they cannot repudiate this character. By proclaiming it, they affirm their autonomy which is a condition for their vitality…. this is a guaranty for their success both with relation to their nation and with relation to their government (CICR, 1870b).

The ICRC aimed, then, at drawing upon the perceived positive effects of national commitment in order to promote an overarching transnational humanitarian project that would alleviate suffering in battlefields worldwide.

Such endorsements of patriotism made it easier for NRCs to present the Red Cross project to local contributors and statesmen as directly aligning with their national interest and well-being. For example, the statute declaration of the Magdeburg provincial society explained:

> The international character the [Red Cross] project takes does not only respond to the voice of philanthropy, but also satisfies national patriotism. We find in it a guaranty that the wounded and the sick of the Prussian army will be treated fraternally, even if they are in an enemy country, and our own assistance could not reach them (CICR, 1864: 208).

Indeed, in various parts of Europe and in the United States, the equivalence of nationalism and charity latched on to already-existing types of charitable volunteer work that had become popular among aristocratic women (Quataert, 2001;

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Lawson, 2002). With the mass conscription of men and with the multiple wars that erupted in the second half of the nineteenth century, this equivalent system of quasi-national service provided women and non-combatant men with prestige and recognition that greatly resembled military honours. In Prussia and post-unification Germany, Empress Augusta provided humanitarian volunteers (both in the service of the Red Cross and in other societies) medals of honour, and the Japanese empress followed suit in the 1890s (Richardson, 1905). By creating NRCs (or relabelling an existing society as such) and providing it with national recognition, state leaders singled out the Red Cross as occupying an elite position which, as we have seen, often created competition among different humanitarian actors.

The growing legitimacy of Red Cross societies helped state leaders present themselves as morally superior to their neighbours once their NRC was well established. They did so, however, in different tenors. The Franco-Prussian War saw both belligerents exchanging accusations of mistreatment of enemy wounded soldiers, with Prussia in particular brandishing its compliance with the Geneva Convention, its superior Red Cross society, and the generosity and compassion of its broader humanitarian community in the face of its enemy (CICR, 1871).[17] This type of legalistic claims for national superiority were a common way in which nations competed in the late nineteenth century (Mazower, 2012). Other types of claims for superiority were also made by NRCs. The Dutch NRC, for example, erroneously congratulated its nation for being the 'only country in which an aid society was established by the initiative of the King himself … for the good of the nation and of humanity' (CICR, 1869). The Austrian society prided itself with caring even for the 'infidels', the Ottoman soldiers in a Dalmatian conflict in 1870, when no equivalent care was offered by their enemies (d'Arneth, 1870).

The additional meanings given to the idea of Red Cross humanitarian relief in different countries through the particular aspects of national identity can be illustrated by comparing the early Japanese and United States societies. Figure 1 presents a Japanese woodblock print depicting the Red Cross volunteers at work in the Russo-Japanese War. The well-organized and compassionate Japanese aid workers are seen recovering the wounded Russian soldiers and meticulously caring for them in a field hospital, under a proud Japanese flag. A smaller frame at the top of the print depicts Russian soldiers kicking Japanese women and children. Indeed, European visitors to Japanese Red Cross hospitals reported an unusually large, orderly, and hierarchical society, with staff members professing their devotion to their work as an expression of their devotion to the Empress (who headed the society) and to Japan itself (eg Richardson, 1905), in particular during war. The society worked closely with the military and thus often presented itself as an auxiliary to the armed forces. In short, the Japanese Red Cross presented itself (and was presented by others) as an extension of Japanese moral superiority in relation to its enemies.

By contrast, the aid society founded in New York by Henry Whitney Bellows in 1866 failed to gain much government or public support and disbanded in the mid-1870s (Ador and Moynier, 1876). While appreciative of the initiative, the

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Figure 1 *"Russo-Japanese War: Great Japan Red Cross Battlefield Hospital Treating Injured" (Utagawa Kokunimasa (Ryûa), 1904)*
Source: *Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection, The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.*

US Government (like many potential donors) was confident of existing medical facilities and, with the Civil War concluded, had little interest in making new arrangements for wartime relief. The relief society itself remained small and failed to represent itself as bearing a national mission. When Clara Barton reconstituted the American National Red Cross in 1881, she drew attention to the society through natural disaster relief work (given the relative peacefulness of the 1880s, battlefield relief would have been untimely). Thus, the society grew to fame by helping (both domestically and internationally) victims of floods, famines and fires, with wartime relief being only one of its many functions. Being less affected by the government than its Japanese counterpart, and having little contact with the armed forces in its first decades, the ANRC grew decentralized with many of its interventions obtaining a distinct grassroots character (Barton, 1898; Jones, 2013). By the end of the century, the ANRC presented itself as being an international carrier of American charity and voluntarism, supplying gifts provided 'by the people of America for the innocent, unfortunate sufferers' in other countries (Barton, 1904: 347), as opposed to the more militarized Japanese Red Cross.

The NRC official names and imagery are also indicative as to the patriotic terms in which they conceived of their missions and the nature of the fields in which they stood (the Austrian society, for example, was officially named the Patriotic Aid Society for Wounded Soldiers). Early Red Cross societies saw no contradiction between the Red Cross flag and their own national flag, which were raised side by side in the field and in promotional material. NRCs also recruited local mythical figures and imagery to promote the Red Cross: in the United States

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it was Columbia, the feminine personification of the nation; in France it was Joan of Arc, the patron saint of the French Red Cross; and in Germany it was a medieval armour-clad Red Cross nurse slaying tuberculosis, in the form of a dragon. Presentation as an active expression of nationalism in an era of rising nationalist sentiments in Europe and the United States (Brubaker, 1992) was crucial for the widening influence of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross also helped model ideas of what the nation ought to look like for emerging nation-states. The newly unified German Red Cross cited proudly a letter sent by Emperor Wilhelm I to Empress Augusta in 1871, discussing the cooperation of the pre-unification German NRCs during the Franco-Prussian War: '...my heart was profoundly and joyfully moved by the loving care devoted to the army by the entire German homeland under your direction ... German unity has already been achieved in the field of humanitarianism by the Central Committee of the German Aid Societies for Wounded Soldiers' (Comité central allemand, 1871: 202–203). For the new nation-states that fought for independence in the 1870s and 1880s, establishing a Red Cross Society was a declaration of self-determination and of belonging to the family of nations. Montenegro, Serbia and Romania featured national Red Cross societies months and even years before they were recognized as independent states by the international community. The national revival of Hungary under the Habsburg Empire saw the establishment of a Hungarian society in 1881, which mobilized its own imagery, language and bureaucracy to distinguish itself from the Vienna-based society, which until then had represented all of Austro-Hungary.

In the non-European world, some states supported a strong humanitarian field led by a national Red Cross society for similar reasons. The Ottoman Empire, Siam and Japan established their own Red Cross societies (with Constantinople eventually replacing the cross with a crescent), as part of a general wave of reforms aimed at presenting themselves as equals to Western nations. These states faced considerable threats of coercion and domination by the West, and thus struggled to assert their independence and equal worthiness in the 'civilized' family of nations (Horowitz, 2004). ICRC members were initially incredulous, but were surprised to find that the Japanese emissaries to Geneva 'could not be more charitable, even at the era of enlightened men, who observed the committee's efforts sympathetically' (CICR, 1873: 13). Indeed, reports of the devoted care extended to wounded enemy soldiers, including approximately 70,000 Russian prisoners of war in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, contradicted the initial scepticism toward the Japanese Red Cross (Checkland, 1994). Siam modelled its own NRC after the Japanese chapter, as officials were taken by what they saw in a visit to Japan (Siamese Red Cross Society, 1934).

To summarize, then, NRCs saw themselves and represented themselves as nationalistic, and intertwined specific representations of nationalism with the transnational discourse they adopted from the ICRC. This way, the notion of transnational humanitarianism compelled actors in different nations as – through 'translation' into locally recognizable codes – it became intertwined in a national ethos, but also oriented toward a transnational humanitarian mission.

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Conclusion

The findings have shown that the late nineteenth century proliferation of transnational humanitarianism in different states was associated with the adaptability of the Red Cross to the wave of nationalist sentiments of the same era. National Red Cross societies drew upon a transnational source of prestige and worth – the ICRC – but at the same time adapted their discourse and self-presentation to their local contexts. Theoretically, the paper has argued for increased attention to the roles national-level dynamics and nationalism play in the foundation and expansion of transnational fields. Heeding Bourdieu's cautions about the assumption that ideas traverse boundaries unchanged is thus fruitful for examining the emergence of transnational fields and the effects of national dynamics on the process.

While the twentieth century has seen the increasing association of nationalism with violence and of humanitarianism with non-nationalism, national dynamics continue to matter in the transnational humanitarian field. These national considerations occasionally constrain its work. For example, during the 1998–99 Kosovo War, the humanitarian organization MSF was split when its Greek section, motivated by an expressed pro-Serbian sentiment that was pervasive in Greece, dispatched into Kosovo and Belgrade to provide humanitarian assistance against the position of the worldwide MSF. As MSF-Greece acted under the auspices of the Greek government, thus breaching the non-national principles of the movement, it was ostracized and expelled from the movement for several years (Fox, 2014). Since other instances of national boundary making within the humanitarian community have occurred (Stroup, 2012), it is important to acknowledge that the humanitarian field is rooted in national culture and institutions, and that these may pose challenges to actors who promote a truly cosmopolitan field.

At the same time, this study also questions the assumption of scholars that patriotism necessarily obstructs humanitarianism and is inherently tied to aggression (Kaldor, 2012; Held, 2010). While national attachment often presents obstacles to the provision of impartial relief, at other times it also facilitates and intensifies that same goal, as actors identify helping others with their national values and interests. Thus, to the extent that nationalism involves 'an idealization of the nation' and the 'conviction of one's own national superiority' (Blank, 2003: 262), the category of the nation may also serve as 'a helpful mediation between the local and the global' (Calhoun, 2007: 100). Indeed, existing research has raised the possibility of 'cosmopolitan nationalism' (West, 2008), as actors sympathize with others and wish to act on their behalf while drawing on a nationally defined sense of purpose and meaning.

Admittedly, focusing on the Red Cross as the harbinger of the transnational humanitarian field presents us with an extreme example of the effects of nationalism on the creation of new field forms. The ICRC explicitly identified its mission as building a set of national humanitarian fields that would work together to provide universal relief, thereby forming a transnational field. Other

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transnational fields, for example that of environmental activism, are likely to be less coordinated and less explicit about such aims. Furthermore, due to a growing tendency to view nationalism negatively since the late twentieth century (Alexander, 2003), contemporary transnational movements are unlikely to invoke it in support of their transnational growth. However, the model proposed in this article can help identify the multiple layers that comprise interscalar fields, and can help pinpoint the independent role of cultural adaption and translation in making broad, abstract transnational projects achievable in local field contexts.

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Notes

1 While the movement officially adopted the Red Cross as its name in the mid-1870s, this article refers to these organizations as the ICRC and the NRCs from their inception for clarity.
2 Hutchinson (1996) and Moorehead (1999) provide numerous example of local activists identifying with their national armies rather than the transnational aid movement.
3 This article departs from the concept of transnational social field as used in the context of migration; see Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004).
4 For further elaboration see Gorski (2013).
5 For elaborate discussion see Bourdieu (1993).
6 For further discussion of domination of the 'principles of vision and di-vision' see Bourdieu (1991).
7 In this, Bourdieu's views align with the claims of the transnational constructivist school in international relations. See Risse-Kappen (1994) and Checkel (1998) for examples. Neoinstitutional studies similarly demonstrate the ways global models undergo local adaptations (Boyle, 2005).
8 See Gorski (2003).
9 For full historical context see Boissier (1985).
10 See Online Appendix 1 for specific details at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/2059-7932.12003/suppinfo.
11 This was often complicated when Red Cross advocates requested that the ICRC or the Swiss Federal Council intervene on their behalf and convince their local government (eg, letter from Dr W. Schlesinger to Gustave Moynier, November 14, 1869, Vienna. ICRC Archive, AF 1,3/30(T)).
12 However, aid societies that were not officially related to the Red Cross remained active and, oftentimes, quite powerful (the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Germany and the Knights of Malta in numerous Catholic states, for example).
13 Today, inclusion as part of the movement requires the approval of both the ICRC and the IFRC, and remains contentious grounds, with NGOs such as the North Cyprus Red Crescent Society and the Taipei-based Red Cross Society of the Republic of China achieving only limited recognition.

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14 Letter from Thomas Longmore to Gustave Moynier, 14 April 1872, Wortley. ICRC Archive, AF 8,2 (116).
15 Letter from C. Burgess to Gustave Ador, 17 January 1877, London. ICRC Archive, AF 8,2 (190).
16 Letter from Emilio R. Coni to the ICRC, 25 February 1885, Buenos Aires. Archive de la CICR, ARG AF 1,2 (2). See also Glasgow and West of Scotland Medical Association (1888: 151).
17 In particular, a report published by the Berlin NRC titled *Les violations de la Convention de Genève par les Français en 1870–71* accused France of complete disregard for the convention.

Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Doc S1. Chronological list of signatories to the 1864 Geneva Convention and National Red Cross Societies established, 1863–1899.

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