The debate about Darfur and what to do about the human suffering there has been accompanied by a meta-debate. Amid discussions trying to sort out the nature of the conflict and how the world ought to respond to it there is a recurring disillusion that not enough is being done, that Darfur is forgotten by the rest of the world, a tragic replay of the situation in Rwanda in 1994 where the world reacted too little and too late. Various reasons are given for this situation, the most popular suggesting that September 11 and the war on terror is crowding out all other issues, pushing Africa even further away from the global agenda than it already is. There is some accuracy in such observations. But a closer look reveals a more complex picture about the way societies relate to distant suffering. There may not be large crowds in the streets of Europe and the USA demanding a stop to the atrocities, no media waves, and no governments putting the issue at the very top of their agenda. Instead there are numerous expressions of what I refer to in this article as the institutionalization of solidarity and globalization, a routine response to distant suffering based in a complex of cosmopolitan norms. There has been substantial debate among national political leaders and in international institutions such as the UN and the EU, considerable media reporting, a strong response from civil society organizations and military intervention by the African Union.

The institutionalization of solidarity and globalization is a two-sided phenomenon. On the one hand, the routine response by international institutions and civil society organizations to distant suffering indicates a stable place for solidarity activities in today’s world. This will be referred to as the extension thesis. On the other hand, there are elements that point in the opposite direction. International institutions are not just defenders of cosmopolitan norms; in fact, their actions are often seriously constrained and shaped by the interests of dominant states. And those civil society
organizations active on issues of distant suffering increasingly belong to a small elite of professional organizations with little direct public support. This will be referred to as the *limitation thesis*. My aim in this article is not to use Darfur to offer evidence for either the extension or limitation thesis, but to demonstrate how Darfur and the world’s response to it point in both directions, to a complex doubleness in the institutionalization of solidarity and globalization.

On a theoretical plane Darfur suggests that globalization is not a unitary and homogenizing process (e.g. Giddens 1994; Robertson 1995; Held et al. 1999; Rosenau 2003). Often the same phenomena contain contradicting tendencies. It is incumbent on globalization theorists to identify and unpack such complexities, because it is only here, in the tensions and conflicts, that we encounter the *politics of globalization*. Globalization is indeed contested terrain. Analyzing this tug of war, I argue, is key to understanding the nature of much of contemporary politics. The present article studies this doubleness in globalization through the lenses of solidarity and distant suffering. It organizes the discussion by juxtaposing the extension and limitation theses laid out above.

Methodologically the article builds on an analysis of Darfur related public debate in Denmark during three months (September-November) in 2004 (the methodology is elaborated in the data section below). Denmark has been chosen primarily for reasons of data access, but as suggested by Koopmans and Erbe (2004), national public spheres are increasingly Europeanized. This makes it reasonable to expect the article’s findings to be fairly generalizable. Public debate takes place in numerous forums, but as argued by Ferree and her colleagues (2002) the media has become the *master forum* in most societies; metaphorically speaking, it is through the media that the other forums see themselves and each other. The article’s analysis of Danish public debate on Darfur therefore looks at those aspects of public debate that have manifested themselves in the media. Mapping and coding media reporting on Darfur in the September-November 2004 period provides information on two questions that are directly related to the extension and limitation
theses. To what extent and in what way have international institutions played a role in Danish public debate on Darfur? And to what extent and in what way have civil society organizations played a role in Danish public debate on Darfur? The media analysis data only illuminate a restricted period of time. It is therefore complemented by a broader overview of how the Darfur conflict has developed and how the world has responded to it (see the history section below).

The article begins by outlining a theoretical framework based on theoretical strands in sociology and international relations. It then offers a brief presentation of the history of the conflict in Darfur and the international response to it. This is followed by a presentation of the data gathered from the analysis of Danish media reporting on Darfur in September-November 2004. The next section discusses the data in regard to the extension and limitation theses. The article concludes by highlighting some related problems and issues that lie outside the immediate scope of the article.

**Theory**

Globalization has now been a part of social scientific debate for about 15 years. Yet there have been no systematic attempts to theorize globalization in relation to solidarity. This is regrettable since the way we attend to distant issues is highly informative of the degree of globalization in our societies. Distant suffering is different from most other types of international events that we take an interest in. The growing attention to international events more generally obviously in itself reflects a globalizing tendency, an awareness of the interconnectedness of the world. We know that what happens elsewhere can ultimately end up having an impact on our own lives; terrorism and environmental destruction are some of the more conspicuous examples. Distant suffering rarely has the same quality. When we become concerned with distant suffering we are primarily driven by moral considerations rather than self-interest. The concern with distant suffering therefore indicates a strong measure of the degree of what might be called the *socio-cultural globalization* of society.
Socio-cultural globalization builds on cosmopolitan norms. Such norms are not free-floating, but anchored in *international institutions* and *civil society organizations* (Vincent 1986). As laid out in the introduction, it is in relation to these two sets of actors that the extension and limitation theses are assessed. To theorize the institutionalization of globalization and solidarity the article draws on various theoretical traditions: international society and liberal institutional theory in IR and social movement theory in sociology. These positions in particular enable us to investigate the extension thesis. To contrast the image of cosmopolitan norms, cooperation and progress drawn by these traditions, the section concludes with a discussion of the criticism leveled at them from neorealist and neomarxist positions. These positions help shed light on the limitation thesis.

International society theory, also known as the English School, is an IR tradition with a distinctly historical approach to the question of international norms. Bull (1984), a key figure in this tradition, observes how a universal international society of states gradually came into being in the 19th and 20th centuries. This was not a universal international society in the sense that the participants in it were on equal footing. In fact, the international society that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries was a result of European expansion. To become part of this society it was necessary for political entities to take on the state form known from European countries (Bull 1984: 121). The dominance of the state form was made even more apparent when the de-colonization struggles in the latter half of the 20th century gave rise, not to a redefinition of the political model imposed by the European powers, but to a number of new and independent states.

International society rests on the principle of sovereignty. This formal equality between states is a precondition for their communication and cooperation, although it obviously does not preclude the dominance of some states over others. In order to facilitate and regulate the cooperation between them, states started creating a number of international institutions in the late 19th century (Held et al. 1999). In the beginning these were aimed mainly at technical issues such as
the regulation of world time and international post and communication, but gradually, and especially during the latter half of the 20th century, international institutions were created that required a much more politically complex cooperation between states. Interdependence theory (Keohane and Nye 1977/2001) and regime theory (e.g. Krasner 1983) within IR both focus on the growth and role of international institutions and regimes in world politics. Although created and maintained by states institutions are not simply the puppets of states as realists would have it. Institutions weave a complex pattern of rules and norms at the international level. This pattern is a product of states, but at the same time it also regulates and constrains their behavior.

The creation of the United Nations in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 marked a new stage in the role and scope of international institutions, one that pointed beyond sovereignty as the main issue in state interaction. The UN thus committed its member states to the respect for individual human rights. The issue of human rights has, especially in later years, come into tension with the issue of sovereignty. This is probably most evident in discussions of humanitarian intervention (e.g. Wheeler 2000) and post-national citizenship (e.g. Soysal 1994; Benhabib 2004). The UN and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first attempt in human history to codify such rights, to make them truly universal and to commit states to adhere to them. The new states that emerged from the anti-colonial struggle joined the UN and often used it as a platform to exert their newfound power and independence. In terms of membership this development made the UN a more universal institution than any institution before it. This, combined with its concern for human rights, has made it the most advanced expression of a universal international society based on cosmopolitan norms. The international human rights regime is not only encoded in the UN, but also in numerous other international institutions such as the EU.

When IR theorists speak about international society they generally have in mind a society of states and institutions. However, such a focus overlooks an important aspect in the development
of international society in the decades after the Second World War: civil society organizations. As has been shown by Sikkink and Smith (2002), the post-war period witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of civil society organizations. This tendency has led authors, within both IR and sociology, to identify a new and stronger role for civil society actors in world politics (e.g. Smith et al. 1997; Anheier et al. 2001; Khagram et al. 2002). Civil society organizations’ role in international society goes back to the 19th century when they were active in anti-slavery mobilization (Charnovitz 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998). As the anti-slavery example suggests, civil society actors have often been involved in issues with cosmopolitan, human rights and democratic aspects. Civil society organizations, in this reading, are important carriers of the cosmopolitan norms that make up the ideational content of international society (Kaldor 2003). In a volume entitled The Social Movement Society, Meyer and Tarrow (1998) concluded that the decades since the 1960s has seen the emergence of civil society organizations as an integral part of the political landscape in Western democracies. This observation is also accurate at the transnational level. Today, inter-organizational networks of civil society organizations have created a stable transnational infrastructure for the mobilization of solidarity and human rights claims (Anheier et al. 2001; Sikkink and Smith 2002).

The interpretation of world politics presented above is based on conceptions of common norms, cooperation and progress. It is therefore open to criticism from neorealist and neomarxist positions that tend to see world politics in terms of power and domination. From a neorealist perspective world politics is anarchic and creates incentives for aggression rather than trust or binding common norms (Mearsheimer 1990). The overriding concern of states is survival and security in relation to other states. Strong states, including democratic ones, use their power to pursue economic and political interests, even if it involves disregarding international law (Waltz 2000: 13). States do create and maintain norms and regimes based in human rights, but these are only consequential when powerful states enforce them and as long as they do not consider them to
be contrary to their strategic interests (Krasner 1993: 141). Consequently, neorealists do not consider institutions and norms to wield any independent power over states. Similarly, civil society organizations play a marginal role in the neorealist account of world politics.

Viewed through Marxist lenses, a somewhat similar image is drawn up. Here, it is mainly transnational classes, rather than states, that are the prime movers in world politics (Robinson 2001). World politics is characterized by the pursuit or preservation of economic power and human rights and democracy is, at best, only a decorative cover. The kind of democracy promoted is a low-intensity democracy (Gills and Rocamora 1992) which aims at suppressing aspirations for substantive democratization (Robinson 1996: 6). In this view, the promotion of human rights and democracy is highly congruent with the promotion of capitalism and free markets. For neomarxists international institutions and norms consequently come to serve the political and economic interests of powerful democratic and capitalist states and the classes that dominate them. Civil society organizations active in the area of human rights are often seen as just another cog in this wheel.

History
The conflict in Darfur must not be mistaken for Africa’s longest civil conflict between the Arab and Islam dominated government in Khartoum and the African and Christian dominated South. This conflict has evolved in two stages, from 1956 to 1972 and from 1983 to 2005. It was formally ended in January 2005 when the government and the SPLA (Sudan People’s Liberation Army) agreed on a peace arrangement which guaranteed power sharing between the groups.

The conflict in Darfur in the Western part of Sudan has a much shorter history. It erupted in February 2003 when the SLM/A (Sudan Liberation Movement/Army) and JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) took up arms against the government. The rebels, which are comprised of different groups (Fur and Masalit in the SLA and Zaghawa in the JEM), explained their action as a
response to decades of social and political marginalization and repression by the government in Khartoum. The government responded with aerial bombardment and by arming local militias commonly referred to as the Janjaweed. Although the conflict is about political power it also has social and cultural dimensions. The Janjaweed are of Arab origin and recruited from the originally nomadic Baggara people. The Janjaweed have mainly targeted people from the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa people associated with the SLA and JEM. People from these groups are generally farmers and of African descent. All the parties to the conflict are Islamic and Arab speaking.

Estimates of the number of people affected by the conflict have varied. Early reports spoke of 50000 dead, but in March 2005 a spokesman for the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, Jan Egeland, raised the estimate to 180000 (Vasagar and MacAskill 2005). The majority of those who have died have not died as a result of violence, but as a consequence of the humanitarian disaster created by a huge number of refugees in Sudan and Chad. Estimates point to between one and two million refugees in Sudan and around 200000 in Chad.

The conflict only began coming to the world’s attention in 2004. The growing concern was expressed in UN Security Council Resolution no. 1556 on 30 July 2004 (UN Security Council 2004a), which followed a visit by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Darfur region. The resolution came after a cease-fire brokered by Chad and the African Union (AU) on 8 April 2004 had failed to stop the violence (AU 2004a). In it the UN expressed concern over political violence, human rights violations and displacement and assessed that more than one million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. The resolution attributed responsibility to both parties in the conflict, but in particular singled out the Janjaweed militias as the main perpetrators. The resolution also pointed to the responsibility of the Sudanese government in providing security within its borders and gave it 30 days to disarm and bring the Janjaweed militias and their leaders to justice.
Furthermore, it instructed all states not to engage in the selling or transfer of weapons, ammunition and other military equipment to any of the parties involved in the conflict (see paragraphs 7 and 8).

The UN resolution was preceded by resolutions from the US Congress. In a number of concurrent resolutions in June, July and September the House of Representatives and the Senate declared the violence to constitute genocide (US House of Representatives 2004). The stark language used to describe the situation was a result of secretary of state Colin Powell’s commitment to Darfur. However, the US position was later put in doubt when the Los Angeles Times (Silverstein 2005) revealed that US authorities held meetings with Sudanese intelligence chief Salah Abdallah Gosh in Washington in April 2005 in order to further cooperation on terrorism related issues.

Shortly before the UN resolution of 30 July, the African Union (AU) issued a communiqué on 27 July, which expressed grave concern over the humanitarian situation and called for intervention from both African civil society organizations and military observers to monitor the cease-fire of 8 April (AU 2004b). The AU has played a prominent role in the situation surrounding Darfur and established a Cease Fire Commission following the 8 April cease-fire. In August 2004 the AU sent 150 Rwandan troops and 150 Nigerian troops to Darfur to protect some 60 military cease-fire observers. The AU mission is also known as the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and has a rather weak mandate which primarily extends to monitoring the situation. The number of personnel has gradually increased and in October 2005 there were 6781 military and police personnel on the ground. The AU plans to extend this number to 12300 in 2006 (O’Neill and Cassis 2005). AMIS has received financial support from the EU (EU Council Secretariat 2005) and the EU has generally been keen to portray Darfur as a problem requiring African solutions.

The original UN resolution of 30 July 2004 and its demand for disarmament of the Janjaweed were not heeded by the Sudanese government. The pressure was stepped up with the UN Security Council Resolution no. 1564 of 18 September 2004 (UN Security Council 2004b) in which
the council reiterated its arms embargo and threatened to use sanctions against Sudan’s oil industry if the government did not fulfil demands of the resolution. Perhaps as a result of increased pressure from the UN and other institutions and a rise in international public concern the Sudanese government and the rebel groups reached an AU brokered agreement to cease hostilities and ensure improvements in the working conditions of humanitarian organizations and the AMIS (AU 2004c).

Despite these efforts and reassurances violence in Darfur has continued. The UN increased its pressure on the government of Sudan in January 2005 when a report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur presented a comprehensive report to the Secretary-General which identified 51 individuals (but without publicly naming them) responsible for serious human rights violations in Darfur (the list included rebel officers, Janjaweed leaders and government officials). This was followed by a Security Council Resolution (no. 1591) of 29 March 2005 which requested all states to prevent the entry of persons deemed responsible for human rights violations in Darfur and to freeze their financial assets (UN Security Council 2005a). Resolution 1591 also established a Committee of the Security Council and a Panel of Experts with the aim of identifying human rights perpetrators, ensuring the freezing of their assets and monitoring the arms embargo. In a subsequent resolution (no. 1593) the Security Council furthermore decided to refer the cases of human rights violations to the International Criminal Court (UN Security Council 2005b).

In July 2005 the commander of the AU peacekeeping force, Nigerian major General Festus Okonkwo, said that the security situation had improved although there were still about two million refugees in Sudan and Chad (Fisher 2005). However, the fall of 2005 has seen a resumption of violence, including abductions and killings of AMIS personal and increased tensions between Sudan and Chad. In light of the deteriorating situation the UN Security Council (2005c) resolution no. 1651 extended the mandate of Panel of Experts until 29 March where it presents its final report.
On the ground in Darfur there has been a massive influx of humanitarian civil society organization and UN agencies. According to information from Humanitarian Information Centers (2005) there were 83 civil society organizations and 13 UN agencies operating in Darfur as of November 2005. Their work has been made difficult because of the ongoing violence in the region. Both UN agencies and organizations have been subjected to violence and have withdrawn from some of the more dangerous areas during shorter or longer periods of time. To this should be added an even larger number of civil society organizations that have not been physically present in Darfur, but have engaged in information and awareness and fund raising campaigns.

Data

The data collected for the analysis are based on Danish newspaper sources in the months of September, October and November 2004, when the issue reached its peak of attention in Denmark.\textsuperscript{6} To achieve maximum breadth in the collected data the article analyses the content of three Danish newspapers covering different socio-political positions: Information (green-left), Politiken (cosmopolitan-centre), and Jyllands-Posten (liberal-right). To retrieve the data the article used Infomedia, an electronic database covering the majority of Danish newspapers. All news pieces found by using the search word “Darfur” (145 in total) were read and coded according to the following questions: 1) is it an editorial, a regular article or a paragraph?; 2) who is making a statement in the news piece?; 3) to whom (if any) is the statement directed?; 4) who (if any) is used as a source in the statement?\textsuperscript{7} In the following two questions that reflect the extension and limitation theses introduced earlier are used to guide the presentation of the data. First, to what extent have international institutions been involved in the issue, and to what extent have they been used as sources and points of reference in Danish media reporting? Second, to what extent have civil
society organizations (both Danish and non-Danish) been active in and on Darfur, and to what extent have they been used as sources and points of reference in Danish media reporting?

Out of the 145 coded news pieces, 50 refer to international institutions, either as a source or a theme for debate or both. The institutions referred to are the African Union (AU), the EU, and the UN and its various agencies. The AU is referred to because of its peace keeping/monitoring role (see the history section). Reference to the EU is mainly linked with the AU because of the financial support the EU is providing to the AU mission in Darfur. The relationship between the AU and the EU is often seen as significant step towards African solutions for African problems. In November 2004, Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General in the UN, spoke against deployment of UN troops and for AU troops: “There is consensus among the African countries and parts of the international community that the best approach to Darfur, when it comes to achieving sustainable results, is a regional solution backed by strong international support” (quoted in Andersen 2004a).

This view has been echoed by outgoing Danish EU commissioner Poul Nielsen who has had an active role in providing financial support for the creation and development of the AU. For him the AU embodies a new African will and capacity to solve regional problems (quoted in Andersen 2004b). There have, however, also been disagreements between European leaders regarding the amount of money contributed by individual countries to the AU mission (Aagaard 2004).

Apart from the EU and the AU, the UN has played a considerable role. Of the 50 news pieces that refer to international institutions the large majority refer to the UN or one of its agencies. Not surprisingly the axis of many of these news pieces is the Security Council resolutions described in the history section. The use of UN sources and UN related debates in news pieces fall in three categories: 1) many pieces take what we could the “UN paralysis” angle, describing how the UN is talking and doing nothing and how stronger resolutions are obstructed by countries such as Russia and China (the role of these countries is taken up below). This type of approach is often coupled to
discussions about a reformation of the UN that will make it easier to agree on and implement international intervention (Jyllands-Posten 2004; Information 2004; Hækkerup 2004); 2) some pieces, on the other hand, puts focus on the positive contribution of the UN and especially its agencies on the ground. Erik Kjærgaard (2004), a former Danish UN area coordinator in Darfur writing in Information observes how “the UN, for once, turned out to be an organization capable of getting out in the field and cover humanitarian needs when no one else offered to do so”. There are also pieces describing Danish people working for the UN and its agencies. These often take a “heroic” angle describing the hardship and sacrifices that these people face in order to do what they consider to be a moral obligation (From 2004; interview with Inge Andersen from the UN’s World Food Programme); 3) many pieces that refer to the UN or its agencies use the UN primarily as a source of information. The UN issues numerous reports and resolutions that all contain important factual information about the situation. There is a widespread tendency to use UN sources when referring to the number of deaths and refugees in Sudan and Chad. This category also includes the large number of news pieces in which UN resolutions is the centre of attention.

Out of the 145 news pieces 29 make reference to one or more civil society organizations or civil society activities. This category primarily includes Danish and international organizations, but also non-organizational civil society activities such the CD recorded by British artists to aid refugees in Sudan and Chad (Amsinck 2004). The news pieces in this category include (1) articles where organizations or their spokespeople are interviewed and used as sources of information, (2) articles describing fundraising activities and their results in terms of the number of collectors that were mobilized and the amount of money collected, (3) and short paragraphs presenting Danes who travel to Sudan and Chad to work for one of the civil society organizations present in Darfur.

The majority of organizations that occur in the news pieces are Danish organizations, but also transnational organizations such as Oxfam, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and
Doctors without Borders. The transnational organizations are primarily used as sources of information and especially in moments where they have just published reports on the situation. This was the case, for example, in November 2004 when Amnesty International published a report documenting how UN Security Council members Russia and China were involved in arms sales to the government of Sudan (Selva 2004). The Danish organizations primarily referred to are members of a rather small family of large and professional humanitarian organizations: Dansk Røde Kors (Danish Red Cross), Folkekirkens Nødhjælp (Danish Church Aid), and Dansk Flygtningehjælp (Danish Refugee Council). As suggested with the categorization above, a large number of news pieces that refer to civil society are neutral in their reporting. This is especially the case in pieces where journalists write about the problems that organizations have in getting enough people to work as collectors in fundraising activities. This type of reporting accounts for a large percentage of the total number of pieces referring to civil society. In only a small number of these do we find critical comments from organization spokespeople or critical articles that use organization spokespeople as sources. The following interpretation by the chairman of the Danish Church Aid, Stig Glent Madsen (2004), tellingly appeared only in the debate section: “Terror sucks up news space…While we in the West are concerned with our own security, we create room and opportunities for the continued extermination and driving away of large parts of the population in Darfur”.

Overall civil society organizations appear to have a rather marginal role in Danish public debate on Darfur. This image, however, needs to be complemented with the fact referred to in the history section above that Darfur has 83 humanitarian organizations working on the ground. Their lack of clout in public debate, in other words, does not mean that civil society organizations do not engage in effective and useful activities on the ground in Darfur and in fundraising. In fact, the fundraising campaigns carried out by Danish Red Cross and Danish Refugee Council in the fall of 2004 raised amounts that were described by organizations as very satisfactory. This underlines
findings from a public survey by Gallup in which 83% of the respondents said that Danes are obliged to help Darfur, for example by donating to the organizations (Winther 2004). This reveals an image of a population in which the large humanitarian civil society organizations have a relatively high degree of legitimacy in the population. At the same time, however, the same survey also showed that 37% of the respondents had not even heard about Darfur.

Discussion

This section analyzes the two theses put forward in the introduction: the extension and limitation theses. Guided by the positions outlined in the theoretical section it demonstrates how the case of Darfur reveals support of both theses. The analysis mainly builds on the newspaper data reported in the preceding section, but also draws on the information provided by the history section. The discussion follows the same structure as the theory and data section; it starts out with a discussion of the role of international institutions and concludes with a focus on civil society organizations.

In the history section it was shown how international debate on Darfur to a significant extent has gravitated around international institutions; most notably the UN, the EU and the AU. The newspaper data corroborated this. In about 35% of all news pieces related to Darfur international institutions were a theme. In the theory section it was discussed how international institutions are expressions of international interdependence and consequently of globalization. The fact that international institutions are centers of gravity for public debate is evidence of two things that support the extension thesis. First, it shows that national debates are increasingly transnational in character. This obviously does not mean that national public spheres cease to exist or become wholly penetrated by transnational issues. Debates still take place primarily within national public spheres and are shaped by national specificities. But international institutions make it possible for a variety of national debates to achieve a common point of reference and suggest the gradual
emergence of a transnational public sphere. Second, the role of international institutions indicates that the cosmopolitan norms they embody have an impact on the way people around the world perceive and react to distant suffering. As discussed in the theory section, they, and especially the UN with its human rights declarations, are among the main bearers of cosmopolitan norms that legitimize and motivate action on behalf of distant suffering. The key role of international institutions in public debate is, in other words, a sign of the spread of cosmopolitan norms.

When international institutions become so central in issues of distant suffering it makes sense to speak of the institutionalization of solidarity and globalization. And in a normative sense this development represents a step forward for solidarity and globalization. But it also suggests serious weaknesses and shortcomings that lend support to the limitation thesis. International institutions are not just the carriers of cosmopolitan norms as the discussion above may seem to indicate. They are also the scene of conflicts between states. Such conflicts give the impression of a world guided by other rationales than cosmopolitan concerns. As shown in the data analysis section a significant part of news pieces referring to the UN have a “UN paralysis” angle. In these pieces there is recurring reference to the fact that certain countries in the Security Council obstruct the adoption of resolutions that open up for sanctions and even military intervention. This type of criticism is not critical of the UN as such, but rather wishes to see a stronger UN able to make consequential decisions, even if it requires violating a country’s sovereignty. In the case of Darfur criticism has been directed especially at the permanent Security Council members Russia and China who have oil and arms sale interests in Sudan (see the Amnesty International report referred to above). Both countries have voiced their intention to veto resolutions that takes drastic measures such as declaring the conflict genocide and intervening militarily without Sudan’s consent.

In contrast to the USA (see the history section), the UN has officially refrained from declaring the conflict genocide. This is not just a quibble over words because an official UN
definition of the conflict as genocide would require military intervention on the part of UN member states. While the USA, and in particular secretary of state, Colin Powell, has tried to gather support for a much harder stance towards Sudan, this role has been made difficult by the USA’s intervention in Iraq and its disregard in that case for the UN and international law (Information 2004). Iraq has eroded the legitimacy of the USA internationally and reduced its chances of reaching agreement on a united position vis-à-vis Sudan. The UN and the debates about Darfur that have taken place within its framework consequently reflect the conflicts that exist in international politics. What this indicates is that world politics is guided not only by cosmopolitan norms and cooperation, but, as argued by neorealists and neomarxists, by the pursuit of national interests. 11 September and the war on terror have created a situation where such interests have come to play a more conspicuous role than they did in the post-Cold War decade of the 1990s (Kaldor et al. 2003).

The second major actor involved in Darfur related action and debate is civil society organizations. The analysis of the role of civil society organizations in Danish public debate on Darfur revealed two things that support both the extension and limitation theses. First, the data showed that only about 20% of the news pieces referred to organizations and that the majority of these spoke about organizations and their fund raising efforts. In other words, organizations were only to a very limited extent used by the media as independent sources for analyzing the situation. In the theory section it was discussed how cosmopolitan norms and the globalization of human rights ideas are borne by civil society organizations. Their absence or marginal presence in public debate on issues of distant suffering reflects limitations when it comes to the extension of solidarity and what was referred to earlier as the socio-cultural globalization in a society. Second, the analysis exposed that the organizations that were granted some media space came from a select group of three large and professional humanitarian organizations. This suggests an institutionalization of solidarity and globalization within the area of civil society organizations. Distant issues and the
response to them are gradually professionalized. Undoubtedly this development has to do with the significant resources required to act on distant issues. It is costly to send staff and materials to remote and inaccessible areas such as for example Darfur.

Institutionalization of this kind enables a routine professional response to distant suffering. The large number of organizations active in Darfur (see the history section) is evidence of such a situation and supportive of the extension thesis. On the other hand, however, the institutionalization also suggests a de-popularization and de-democratization of solidarity and globalization that points more in the direction of the limitation thesis. This is the Janus face of *The Social Movement Society* discussed in the theory section. The institutionalization and professionalization of solidarity indicates the possibility of solidarity without a popular base. When solidarity is managed by a professional humanitarian elite there is a risk that the norms and values that underlie solidarity become institutionally “trapped”. In the longer run this may lead to a depletion of norms and values supportive of solidarity and socio-cultural globalization. That this is not necessarily the state of things, at least at the present, is suggested by the survey referred to in the data section in which 83% of the respondents agreed that Danes have an obligation to help in instances of distant suffering. Based on this finding, cosmopolitan norms seem to have quite a strong anchoring in Denmark.

Of course, the fact that the news media only cover a small group of large and professional organizations does not mean that these are the only organizations active on the issue. What it does mean, however, is that these organizations to a large extent come to represent the civil society view on things. This has certain problematic implications because large and professional organizations often have extensive cooperation with and sometimes even economic dependency on national and international authorities. The result is that their demands and interpretations tend to become restrained by a range of practical concerns and by the constraints of the national and international political systems they operate within. Under such circumstances it is less likely that organizations
can play an independent role and serve as a counterweight to the strategic and economic interests that, as argued above, continue to guide the actions of states and sometimes obstruct the functioning of international institutions and the adherence to cosmopolitan norms. If we accept that solidarity and globalization norms and values are not just anchored in states and institutions, but also at the level of civil society, this situation clearly points to a possible limitation.

**Conclusion**

The discussions in this article have used Darfur and public debate about it to demonstrate that contemporary solidarity and globalization is characterized by an institutionalization that contains elements of both extension and limitation. It did so by combining coded data from three Danish newspapers in the period from September to November 2004 with an analysis of how international institutions and states have responded to the crisis. The extension thesis was supported by the active involvement in the crisis of international institutions such as the UN, the EU and the AU, and by their prominent place in Danish public debate. International institutions are carriers of cosmopolitan norms and values and entail an institutionalization of solidarity and globalization. The extension thesis also drew support from the involvement of civil society organizations on Darfur. This set of actors is also viewed as carriers of cosmopolitan norms and values. Evidence was found in the number of organizations active in Darfur and, to a lesser extent, in the role of organizations in Danish public debate. The limitation thesis was supported by observations made in relation to the activities of institutions and states. The world of states and institutions is not primarily characterized by the adherence to cosmopolitan norms, but also by conflicts rooted in strategic considerations. The international response to the situation in Darfur was for example made difficult by disagreements in the UN Security Council. The limitation thesis was also strengthened by the fact that civil society organizations, at least based on the analysis of Danish public debate, played a
relatively marginal role in the debate. At the same time, those organizations that did take part were a small group of large professional organizations. This led to the conclusion that solidarity and globalization risk becoming de-popularized and de-democratized. On the other hand, it was also remarked that this institutionalization of civil society responses is in some ways an advance because it allows a routine professional response to distant suffering.

What should we make of these conclusions in a more critical perspective? The article has focused quite strongly on what has been called the institutionalization of solidarity and globalization and has tried to illuminate some of the positive things this development entails. It has also demonstrated some negative trends. The following takes up a different set of issues that primarily point in the direction of the limitation thesis.

The article has primarily analyzed a certain period where attention to Darfur reached a peak. What is interesting to note is that at the time of writing this article, more than one year after the period of analysis in the fall of 2004, the conflict and violence in Darfur continues, and not only does it continue, but it continues in the shadow of a greatly diminished attention. As has been noted by students of public policy, issues are often subject to an issue attention cycle (Downs 1972) in which issues develop, reach a peak of attention and then decline, with the attention shifting to new issues and new areas. This is the result of the constant competition of political claims and the limited carrying capacity of the public sphere in democratic societies (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988; Benford and Hunt 2002; Koopmans 2004). Public attention is not important in itself but because it keeps up the pressure on states, politicians, institutions and organizations to become and stay active in relation to the issue. Attention can wane and shift either because new issues appear on the scene or simply because every issue has a saturation point in terms of media and public interest. This is a problem that is not resolvable in any straightforward manner. With the extreme amount, some would say overload, of information about distant issues that is available today, competition for
public space and attention is unavoidable (Bob 2005; Eisensee and Strömberg 2005). The tsunami disaster in December 2004, for example, quickly moved world focus almost completely to Asia.

In a more consistent manner, Iraq and the war against terror, has served as a sponge of world attention in the last three years. But Darfur has also had this effect. The sudden surge of concern with Darfur in the latter half of 2004 inevitable meant less interest in other conflicts. What this shows is that attention to distant suffering is extremely dynamic and that at any given time there is a of hierarchy of issues (one need only read the annual reports from Doctors without Borders on the world’s most underreported humanitarian stories to get an impression of this). Yet if we wish to live in a world based in cosmopolitan and democratic values there need to be more stability and consistency in the way we deal with distant suffering. The case of Darfur does display elements of stability, that is, of an institutionalization of solidarity and globalization. But the case also reveals that attention is fickle and that in the worst case this can leave conflicts and violence simmering and unresolved. States, institutions and media have strategic, political, and economic interests that can easily drive their attention away from an issue. As suggested by Booth (1995), the best hope for keeping cosmopolitan norms at the centre of worlds politics are probably civil society organizations. However, as the de-popularization and de-democratization of civil society based activities discussed earlier also make evident, this solution is fraught with its own problems.

Notes

1 The article is a revised version of a paper presented at the annual convention of the International Studies Association in San Diego, USA, 22-25 March 2006.
2 The concept of “distant suffering” is taken from Boltanski (1999).
3 But see for example Vincent (1986) and Linklater (1993) for a stronger focus on organizations and individuals.
4 The rest of this section draws on Olesen (2005).
5 See www.icc-cpi.int/cases/current_situations/Darfur_Sudan.html for information on the International Criminal Court’s proceedings regarding Darfur.
6 Control searches of media content in February and September 2005 revealed patterns that did not differ significantly from those observed in the September-November 2004 period. There is accordingly reason to believe that the results are relatively representative of a more general pattern in the way Darfur has been reported in Danish media.
In total the search turned up 150 pieces including the search word Darfur. However, since five of these were irrelevant to the issue the coding was restricted to 145 pieces. The 145 pieces can be categorized as follows: 5 editorials, 13 debate pieces, 44 short paragraphs and 83 regular news articles. Out of the 83 regular news articles, Darfur was the main theme in 52 and a minor theme 31. This study does not make any analytical distinctions between “main theme” and “minor theme” articles.

My translation from the Danish.


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