The Role of Humanitarian Aid in Conflict
Introduction and Problem of the Study

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Abstract

The term “humanitarian aid” has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense; according to Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss it is “activities undertaken to improve the human condition.” This study has adopted the contemporary definition of humanitarian aid according to Minear and Weiss, and named the traditional definition of humanitarian aid “relief aid” to remove ambiguity. Also known as emergency aid, relief aid refers to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to the immediate needs of people.

Keywords: humanitarian, aid, conflict

Background and Motivation

Violent conflicts anywhere in the world are costly. This fact can be said of Sudan’s north-south conflict, which resulted into a fully fledged armed civil war fought between Khartoum’s Government of Sudan army in the north and the dissident Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in the South. While some analysts1 argue that there are no reliable figures to tabulate the human cost of Sudan’s 21 years old civil war, it is generally argued that the effects of Sudan’s civil war upon crops, property and vast amounts of natural resources have been devastating, resulting in the loss of millions of innocent lives.2 Sudan’s victims of direct violence or related starvation and disease”3 include half a million refugees that spilled into neighbouring countries and another estimated 4 million internally displaced people, “driven from their homes within Sudan - the largest such dislocation in the

1 Douglas Johnson is one such analyst. See his, Douglas H. Johnson, The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars, Oxford, James Currey, 2003, pp. 143-144
2 Raphael Badal, Local Traditional structures in Sudan: a base for building civil society for the promotion of peace and reconciliation (LPI: Nairobi, 2006), p. 1
3 International Crisis Group, God, Oil and Country (Brussels: ICG Press, 2002), p. 3
During the civil war, which was prosecuted “with stark brutality although the government has usually carried out the worst abuse” in the South, the international community “poured humanitarian relief […] on a massive scale – billions of dollars.” But this humanitarian relief “barely addressed the symptoms and [did nothing] about the causes of the country’s suffering, [which included] religious intolerance, racial discrimination, rapacious resource extraction and elite domination.”

Although much of the international community increasingly recognises and appreciates the value of humanitarian aid in times of civil war, Anderson asserts that humanitarian relief on occasion could exacerbate instead of contributing towards the resolution of the conflict and promoting peace building. According to Anderson, the negative impacts of humanitarian assistance comprise two basic types: the first result from the transfer of resources and the second involves what she calls, “the ethical message conveyed by the provision of assistance.”

Internationally renowned peace scholar, John Prendergast contends that this “critique often goes further and blames humanitarian agencies for not dealing with political roots of crises, a critique that overestimates agency mandates and their potential for addressing macro-political issues.” These critics argue that “donor governments are using humanitarian aid as a cover for a lack of political engagement.” It is against this background that this researcher endeavours to understand the role of humanitarian relief organisations in conflict, and how humanitarian relief aid inadvertently feeds conflicts by making more resources available to warring parties. This researcher further seeks to establish whether or not “the costs of the conflict to the international community are much higher than the humanitarian bills it has been paying.”

Background to the Research Problem

Sudan has been at war with itself following a conflict that has “consumed the country of 34 of its 45 years of independence and remains the only constant factor in a land whose population has repeatedly been devastated.” Until its recent resolution through the signing of a CPA

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4 Ibid, pp. 3-4  
5 Ibid, p. 4  
6 Ibid, p. 4  
7 Ibid  
9 Ibid.  
12 Ibid, p. 8  
13 Ibid, p. 25  
14 International Crisis Group, God, Oil and Country (Brussels: ICG Press, 2002), p. 6  
15 International Crisis Group, God, Oil and Country (Brussels: ICG Press, 2002) pp. 3-4
between the GoS in Khartoum and the SPLM in the South, the decades of violent civil war in the South led to the loss of an estimated 2 million people, mainly in the South. Consequentially, the war caused life-threatening conditions that became responsible for causing most of the deaths. In addition to the prevalence of curable diseases, malnutrition due to famine-induced food shortages and starvations, many people lost their lives from the mass displacement and long-distance trekking in search of refuge and security.

Sharply divided by geography, culture, race, ethnicity and religion, Sudan’s conflict was the world’s foremost example of an intractable and endless civil war. The major foes prosecuted the civil war with stark brutality that an estimated 2 million people have died over the past 21 years, mainly as victims of direct violence or related starvation and disease. Half a million refugees have spilled into neighbouring countries and roughly four million people have been displaced and driven from their homes within Sudan- the largest such dislocation in the world today. Yet, it was not impossible to avert this unfortunate phenomenon if efforts of the international community were truly concerted.

Statement of the Research Problem

During Sudan’s 21 years of civil war in the South, a unique phenomenon and continuum of humanitarian intervention developed. From what was initially a supply of emergency relief aid, a multi-billion corporate relief industry emerged to develop into an organized, formal and well structured mechanism for social service delivery. There is no doubt that the emergency relief aid rendered saved many lives across Southern Sudan. However, this operation also witnessed massive diversions of relief supplies and a constant use of many civilians as shields by the various armed factions. According to Prendergast, cases of favouritism exhibited by certain NGOs in the distribution of relief supplies were also common. At the time, UN and NGO relief campaigns disastrously undermined local production, and relief supplies were regularly stolen or diverted, unprecedented efforts were made on two grounds. Firstly, the conflict parties namely the Government of Sudan and the SPLA were persuaded to adopt and begin to adhere to the Geneva conventions and other humanitarian principles, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Secondly, the humanitarian coordination body worked towards strengthening local authority structures as part of the wider relief operations. In this regard, female leadership was empowered especially in the distribution of the relief aid. Although this sometimes conflicted with local traditions, it was consistent with women’s predominant roles in household and food economies across southern Sudan. Limited efforts were put towards strengthening the civilian relief wings of armed factions as human rights monitoring was also introduced.

Although the success of these measures will have to be evaluated over time, they do represent the dramatic dual views that humanitarian assistance does have a negative and positive impact on conflict management and vice versa. While humanitarian agencies struggled to promote local food security, military operations continued to undermine any progress made with the government in Khartoum struggling to manipulate the differences among the rebel factions and undermine the relief effort, in the belief that humanitarian aid to the south only

17 Ibid, p. 4
augmented the fighting strength of the southern rebels. As an exit strategy, many international humanitarian agencies established partnerships with local institutions, including local NGOs. With the end of the civil war in Southern Sudan, which many acclaim to be Africa’s longest and intractable violent conflict, it would be interesting to find out what the role of humanitarian assistance played on the conflict in Southern Sudan.

The Role of Humanitarian Aid in Conflict

Introduction

This section is analyses the influences or consequences and impact of humanitarian aid on conflict – and to some extent vice versa. Although it might also offer a brief on what and how conflict influences humanitarian aid interventions, its emphasis lies on how humanitarian aid during the civil war in Southern Sudan. That is, it seeks to discuss how humanitarian aid interventions influence conflicts including their escalation, de-escalation, exacerbation, transformation, resolution or management. The chapter strives to analyse the subject matter using, among other tools, Anderson’s “Do No Harm” (DNH) framework18, Woodrow’s Reflecting on Peace Practices19 (RPP), and Galtung’s ABC triangle of conflict. While the first two appeal to the investigation of the role of aid – its potentials to generate and exacerbate conflicts, Galtung’s ABC will stimulate an in-depth understanding of conflict management. The chapter ends with a note on the specifics of the roles played by NGOs and their humanitarian aid interventions in conflict management.

A Theoretical approach to aid

The term “humanitarian aid” has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense; according to Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss it is “activities undertaken to improve the human condition.”20 This study has adopted the contemporary definition of humanitarian aid according to Minear and Weiss, and named the traditional definition of humanitarian aid “relief aid” to remove ambiguity. Also known as emergency aid, relief aid refers to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to the immediate needs of people.

Mary Anderson’s framework for analyzing capacities and vulnerabilities may be used to further define what the “immediate needs” of people are. Relief aid meets people’s needs, or their “immediate requirements for survival or recovery” as defined by Anderson. A definition of human requirements for survival is provided in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, which states, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living

adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”\(^2\) In sum, a comprehensive definition of “relief aid” is any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to a person’s immediate requirements for survival or recovery, which include food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, and security when a person is faced with circumstances beyond her or his control.

In contrast to relief aid, development consists of long-term projects that aim to better the welfare of society as a whole. Development in conflict situations is often labeled as “reconstruction” or “rehabilitation.” Although post-conflict reconstruction is important work, these terms reaffirm the stereotype that development is a peacetime-only activity. This study adopts Mary Anderson’s definition of “development” as “the process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased.”\(^2\) This means that improving a society is to reduce that society’s vulnerabilities, thereby making the population less susceptible to disasters. The most efficient way to remove vulnerabilities is to use that society’s pre-existing capacities. This definition of development requires the project to improve both the autonomy and strength of the society. Further, Mary Anderson distinguishes “development” from “sustainable development” by asserting that sustainable development is reducing societal vulnerabilities and increasing societal capacities in a way that does not compromise resources for future generations and promotes the achievement of human rights before any other goal. In addition, “relief-aid” and “development” concepts are further distinguished from “development-relief” which is the provision of emergency aid that simultaneously attends to peoples’ immediate requirements for survival or recovery, while attempting to reduce societal vulnerabilities and increase societal capacities.\(^2\)

**Humanitarian aid and conflict**

It has been argued that the phenomenal escalation of Sudan’s civil war went hand in wrist with the pouring of humanitarian relief aid into Sudan on a massive scale and in terms of billions of dollars.\(^2\) Unfortunately, this intervention barely addressed the symptoms while doing nothing about the causes of the country’s suffering. This analysis follows on from the advice of Galtung (1969) that the need to initiate an effective humanitarian intervention goes hand in hand with the imperatives of understanding the intractability and violence of

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\(^2\) Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 12.

conflict. The intractability in question finds its relative right footing in the fact that humanitarian assistance in times of war has become an issue of growing concern.

In recent years humanitarian assistance provided in situations of war and disaster by donor governments, international organisations like the United Nations (UN), and, particularly, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) has saved hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of lives. The provision of food and medical supplies to refugees, displaced persons, and those near the battlefields in Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sudan, and elsewhere constitutes one of the most heroic and life-preserving activities of our time. Major NGOs like CARE, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and many less well known organisations have been on the front lines relieving desperate human suffering in Africa.

While the international community increasingly recognises and appreciates the value of these efforts, some analysts have begun to assert that humanitarian assistance on occasion exacerbates conflict rather than contributing to peace. No one questions that the value of this assistance far outweighs its occasional negative consequences, but members of the assistance community find it necessary nevertheless to address the issues these analysts have raised. They want to assess the extent of the damage and consider how to eliminate or minimise these negative consequences.

The urgency of this issue led the United States Institute of Peace to organise a daylong symposium in October 1995 – attended by experts from NGOs, government agencies, the UN, universities, and think-tanks – to discuss and debate the issue of assistance. During the symposium, the principal dialogue occurred among representatives of NGOs. In some respects the conversation was painful, because no one likes to concede that the highly acclaimed humanitarian aid to Africa has some negative externalities. Nevertheless, the importance of maintaining the integrity of such endeavours led everyone to engage in an open dialogue. Symposium organisers confined the discussion to Africa both because Africa has featured so prominently in recent aid matters. The outcome has reinforced the thought pattern that averts that humanitarian aid does have some influence, consequences and impact on conflict.

In symposium findings compiled by Smock, Anderson observed that although NGOs do not generate conflicts, they sometimes contribute to and reinforce violent conflicts pre-existing in the societies where they work. According to her, the negative impacts of humanitarian assistance comprise two basic types: the first results from the transfer of resources and the second involve “the ethical message conveyed by the provision of assistance”. In the case of resource transfer, the most direct impact occurs when warring forces and armies gain control of supplies provided for humanitarian assistance, either by imposing levies on humanitarian assistance operations or by stealing supplies. A more indirect impact occurs when NGOs meet the needs of civilian populations, which frees the warring factions to use their resources for

war-making. She averred that “resources under the control of one or another warring faction help buttress the power and continuing legitimacy of that warring faction.”

Intergroup tensions are also reinforced when NGOs provide external resources to some groups and not to others. For instance, NGOs hire people from certain groups and not others. When NGOs have more funds than local governments, that creates an imbalance between external resources and domestic resources, which makes it difficult for local institutions to build for peace. Also, NGOs hire away much of the best talent from domestic agencies. Illustrating some of these issues in relation to Sudan, Prendergast wrote:

“To what extent is the international community assuming the public welfare responsibilities of the Sudanese government, thereby freeing resources for the war? Are aid flights from Khartoum to the south supplying soldiers in the government garrisons rather than civilians in need? Is money spent in the pursuit of aid projects providing the government with a source of hard currency used to prosecute the war, and are donated food stocks in the north freeing Sudan production for export (reports say up to a million tons of northern Sudanese sorghum may be exported [in 1995] alone)?

Still in the symposium, Smock recorded Anderson assertions that the second type of negative impact humanitarian aid can have, involves the ethical messages NGOs sometimes convey. “When we negotiate with the parties who are at war with each other in order to gain access to the civilians behind the lines they control, when we hire armed guards to protect our staff and our delivery of goods in order to be able to operate in a highly volatile and dangerous situation, when we use the stories of war atrocities to educate and raise funds back home, we become part of the conflict and we convey an implicit message that it is legitimate for arms to decide who gets access to humanitarian assistance,” Anderson said. NGOs also sometimes express solidarity with groups engaged in armed struggle against repressive regimes, thereby indirectly reinforcing the conflict. Moreover, the moral legitimacy that accrues to a faction because of support received from international NGOs sometimes makes that faction less willing to engage in peace negotiations.

NGOs send complicated and compromised ethical messages, Anderson argued, in so far as their operations are now increasingly intertwined with those of official agencies. Donor governments and UN agencies increasingly rely on NGOs as their field agents. Moreover, NGOs now collaborate with military forces in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. This raises questions about the nongovernmental and pacific character of NGOs and also suggests they may be adopting some elements of military operating style. Moreover, the military preoccupation with logistics and delivery systems may replace and in turn undermine local capacities to carry out locally initiated developmental activities. The predominant military presence can also undermine civilian control, which in turn slows peace building.

28 Ibid
30 Op cit
Milton Esman\(^{31}\) in his works asserted that Some NGOs, notably sectarian agencies, may exacerbate ethnic tensions by favouring one community over another. Another well-informed and sympathetic participant observer of NGO operations, Mary Anderson reached the surprising conclusion that NGOs have seldom been effective in mitigating interethnic conflicts:

[Through] operational dilemmas encountered in providing aid, NGOs – whether focused on relief, development, human rights, or peace – have, to a greater or lesser extent, inadvertently exacerbated rather than lessened it [conflict] and its consequences. In some cases the negative consequences have been profound and costly.\(^{32}\)

Anderson further cites as one of many examples the tragedy of the refugee camps in Goma, Zaire, near the Rwandan border. There NGO supplies intended for destitute refugees were distributed through refugee “leaders.” These leaders proved to be officers of the Hutu militia whose fighters had committed genocidal atrocities against unarmed Tutsi civilians. The Militias were using the camps and the supplies provided by NGOs for conscription, training, resupply, and sustenance in preparation for the reinvasion of Rwanda and the renewal of civil war against the Tutsi regime.\(^{33}\)

**The challenge of humanitarian aid on conflict**

In situations of conflict, it has been argued that any externally introduced resources and externally induced policy changes have distributitional consequences.\(^{34}\) Better still, there are those who have concluded that such humanitarian interventions affect communities differently. Since humanitarian aid introduces fresh resources or allocate and/or re-allocates existing resources in new patterns, all these modalities of assistance have potential implications for conflicts. Some interventions may be conducive to peaceful coexistence and equity; others may aggravate tensions and precipitate conflict. Some present cruel dilemmas. Food and medical supplies intended to sustain the victims of civil wars may be hijacked by military contingents of their own ethnic community, leading their enemies to interdict all humanitarian assistance.

In assessing of the impact of aid on conflict and the impact humanitarian intervention on the larger context of peace, employing the DNH and RPP analytical frameworks, both Anderson\(^{35}\) and Peter Woodrow\(^{36}\) respectively argue that any programming that focuses on change at individual/personal levels, but that never links or translates into action at the socio-political level has no discernible effect on peace. In this regard, humanitarian efforts that focus mainly

\(^{31}\) Milton J. Esman, “Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?”, p. 4


\(^{33}\) ibid

\(^{34}\) ibid


on the delivery or distribution of relief items but edge on building relationships and trust across conflict lines, increasing tolerance, increasing hope that peace is possible will most likely not produce dramatic transformations in attitudes, perceptions and trust.

The thrusts of the DNH programming of humanitarian aid intervention lays on how to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of aid on conflict. In the same vein, the RPP focuses on how to make peacebuilding work more effective. The DNH and the RPP frameworks are somehow hinged on Galtung’s conflict triangle, by which he attributes violent conflicts to three basic factors namely Attitudes (A), Behaviours (B), and unresolved Causes (C) of conflict. Both Galtung and Woodrow affirm that the transformation and linkage between the significant changes that take place at individual/personal levels and those that occur at the socio-political institutional level change are critical to the mitigation of the conflict, presumably creating leverages for conflict management and resolution.

Woodrow’s RPP treats humanitarian assistance as part of the bigger conflict context. He alludes to some evidence that broader positive impacts are more significant if personal transformations are translated into actions at the socio-political level and vice versa. In this manner, humanitarian interventions either contribute less towards de-escalating the conflict or more towards exacerbating the violence. This thought pattern is closely linked to the work of Galtung in categorising violence into structural, cultural, and direct forms.

Like Woodrow (2004), it is rather easy to posit that since there is no perfect humanitarian intervention program, there is also no easy way by which humanitarian interventions can readily diminish conflict. Given that the movement towards peace – both at the macro level and at the project level – often occurs as “two steps forward, one step back” and not in any linear progress, the things that exist beyond the control of humanitarian actors and peace practitioners can go wrong. This is so because like all humanitarian agencies, peace practitioners also make mistakes. While many peace practitioners assert that it is better to try something and risk failure than to avoid risks by doing nothing, Woodrow’s RPP’s review of experience suggests that negative impacts are not merely “inevitable bumps along the road to peace.”

Interventions by humanitarian organisations can do actual harm by making a situation and the lives of people living in conflict worse rather than better. As expected, the RPP framework of impact analysis has established that these negative impacts are not inevitable. Experience shows that there are predictable ways negative impacts occur. Consequently, with greater awareness of how negative impacts occur and how peace agencies contribute to them, practitioners can anticipate and minimise them in their work. Given that conflict management connotes a mechanism that is concerned with defining a conflict as ended (at least temporarily) and deciding on the distribution of values and resources, humanitarian assistance,

40 Ibid.
according to Jacob Bercovitch and Patrick M. Regan\(^{41}\) should add to the rational and conscious decisional process whereby parties to a conflict, with or without the aid of outsiders, take steps to transform, deescalate or terminate a conflict in a mutually acceptable way. Although this should have been the case with an intractable conflict such as the one of the Sudan, the actual status of things is contrary. Perhaps, this should be the motivation for further research and/or analysis of the current models, theories, and concepts in this field.

In his analysis of current foreign policy attitudes, Les Aspin, former U. S. secretary of defense, cited two schools of thought on the issues of intervention for peacekeeping, the prevention of ethnic cleansing, and the alleviation of starvation\(^{42}\). The isolationist school is reluctant to support intervention except for national security purposes. The internationalist school, on the other hand, supports intervention on the basis of morality and the defense of humanitarian values. Julia Taft also took up this theme, asserting that NGOs embody the internationalist/moralist approach, with a strong commitment to empowerment, peace, prosperity, and economic and social justice.\(^{43}\)

Pamella R Aal compiled responses to international conflict highlights from the managing chaos conference in a peace work article titled “NGOs and conflict management”. In the conference, the following questions were posed: should NGOs be involved in conflict prevention and resolution? If so, how extensive should their involvement be? Effective responses to post–Cold War humanitarian crises often means that many NGOs must go beyond their traditional mission of providing food, water, and medical assistance, into the realm of ensuring political stability and fulfilling governmental functions in failed states. Are such expanded roles appropriate for NGOs?\(^{44}\) Vivian Lowery Derryck answered these questions with a qualified yes, proposing certain conditions that must be present before NGOs engage in conflict management activities:

- The NGO knows the country and the regional institutions involved in the conflict resolution effort;
- The NGO has indigenous partners;
- The NGO staff has a good knowledge of conflict mediation skills; and
- The NGO’s field staff members fully understand the personal risks they are assuming.\(^{45}\)

John Paul Lederach agrees that NGOs could be very effective in managing conflict, noting that they bring several special qualities to peacebuilding, especially through their particular insights into different cultures, their relationships with local partners, and their understanding of the links between crisis management and long-term sustainable development. He recalled how NGO representatives often talk about their operations as comprising a continuum of

\(^{42}\) see Peaceworks No. 3, February 1995
\(^{43}\) Ibid
\(^{44}\) Pamella R Aal, “NGOs and conflict management”, pg 14
\(^{45}\) Ibid
relief efforts, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and sustainable development. All of these components are essential to the development of both new and more effective paradigms for peacebuilding and appropriate strategies to deal with specific conflicts.46

According to Lederach, there was widespread recognition that NGOs might unwittingly become a party to conflict in the course of their humanitarian relief work; that their actions could be part of a concerted, coordinated effort involving governments, international and regional organisations, and private groups to avert or resolve conflict; that they had the ability to both provide early warning and shore up the political will of governments to act; and that they could give guidance to policymakers in their own countries and encourage community-building and the development of civil societies in countries decimated by war. In short, the work of NGOs forms an important part of the entire repertoire of intervention strategies for dealing with conflict in the post–Cold War era.47

Lederach notes that the challenges posed to NGOs by the new types of conflict have become commonplace in the post–Cold War era. These challenges clarified the need for a more comprehensive framework for conflict resolution and conciliation activities on the part of NGOs. Based on both his field experience in conflict situations and his work as a practitioner developing conflict resolution programs to accompany the relief activities, Lederach offered some general observations about the changing nature of the international response to crisis.

In Lederach’s view, the NGO community and the international community at large should concentrate on techniques that link crisis management and humanitarian relief activities to the longer term goals of conflict resolution and sustainable development. “We need to develop our capacity to think in decades instead of months to a year,” he said, “and to develop ways in which our crisis management activities are imbedded within, and linked to, a broader set of activities which lead to sustainable development.” However, the context in which these needs emerge almost always involves settings of protracted, divisive, and deep-seated generational conflict. To move beyond the management of an immediate crisis, according to Lederach, NGOs must change their planning time frames to a long-term perspective. The initial emergency relief response should be linked to a set of activities that leads to the transformation of those conflicts in a way that promotes sustained and comprehensive reconciliation among the warring parties.

Finally, Pamela48 noted that while NGOs cannot be expected to solve all the problems associated with humanitarian crises, the new environment in which these organisations operate suggests the following four fundamental roles: early warning functions, human rights monitoring, relief and rehabilitation, and conflict resolution activities. Yet it may be detrimental for NGOs to assume all these roles simultaneously. Of these four roles, the early warning and conflict resolution functions typically engender the most debate, not only because of their relative newness in the repertoire of NGO capabilities, but also because both of these roles subsume many other increasingly important—and, some would argue,

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46 Ibid
48 Ibid
controversial—tasks NGOs must consider in carrying out their primary missions during complex emergencies.

**Impact of humanitarian aid on conflict - Conceptual assumptions**

Renowned scholars of peace and conflict studies (John Paul Lederach, 1997; John Prendergast, 1996; David Smock, 1996; Mary Anderson, 1999; and Thania Peffenholz and Luc Reychler, 2004) have dedicated much attention to the development of more pragmatic theories, concepts and models of understanding the relation of interplay between humanitarian aid and conflict. Their approach has focused on assessing the impacts of conflict. It would appear that an underlying conclusion has been drawn on the influence, consequences and impact of humanitarian aid on conflict.

Discussions in this chapter have led the researcher to conclude and agree with Anderson's sentiments on impact and role of aid on conflict. In addition, the researcher supports views by Predegast and Woodrow on the role of aid on conflict. Furthermore, the works of Smock, Pamella, Esman and Galtung all support this outlook. In recapitulation, it is important to reiterate that humanitarian aid is not neutral in the midst of conflict. Aid and how it is administered can cause harm or can strengthen peace capacities in the midst of conflicted communities. All aid programmes involve the transfer of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment. Where people are in conflict, these resources represent power and wealth and they become an element of the conflict. Some people attempt to control and use aid resources to support their side of the conflict and to weaken the other side. If they are successful or if aid staff fails to recognise the impact of their programming decisions, aid can cause harm.

However, the transfer of resources and the manner in which staff conduct the programmes can strengthen local capacities for peace, build on connectors that bring communities together, and reduce the divisions and sources of tensions that can lead to destructive conflict. To do no harm and to support local capacities for peace requires: careful analysis of the context of conflict and the aid programme, examining how aid interacts with the conflict, and a willingness to create options and redesign programmes to improve its quality. In addition the framework also requires careful reflection on staff conduct and organisational policies so that the ‘implicit ethical messages’ that are sent communicate congruent messages that strengthen local capacities for peace.

The researcher advocates for the use of conflict sensitive planning and programming in humanitarian intervention. In addition, it is recommended that coordination of efforts is by far a very important aspect that needs to be put into consideration in order to maximize the impact of humanitarian assistance. This recommendation is also supported by authors such as Smock, Pamella, Esman. The researcher further recommends the use of Anderson DNH

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49 See PeaceWorks 3. 4. 5 & 6
50 Ibid
52 Pamella R Aal, “NGOs and conflict management”, pg 14
53 Milton J. Esman, “Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?”, 4
framework, whose primary purpose of the DNH framework is micro conflict analysis, project planning and programme quality, and impact assessment of programme on conflict. The intended users for this framework include field staff of international or local NGOs, also widespread among donor agencies (headquarters and field offices). It is primarily targeted at humanitarian organisations, but is also applicable to development co-operation and peace building. In addition, the appropriate level of application is project level.

Framework analysis: Conflict-sensitive aid intervention

Humanitarian aid interventions, the world over, do influence and/or impact positively as well as negatively on conflict. Whichever level the conflict may be in – i.e. latent, ongoing or escalating, and protracted – it is more often easily affected by external interventions. The interplay between humanitarian aid interventions and the need to manage the conflict is the core of this analysis: balancing between being conflict-sensitive in providing humanitarian aid and wanting the intervention to influence the management of the very conflict or its situation. Using the DNH analytical framework for conflict-sensitive humanitarian aid interventions, it turns out that the act of analysing dividers and sources of tensions between groups becomes very important.

The DNH Framework

This analytical tool divides every conflict situation including its actors and other related factors primarily into parts namely dividers and connectors. In the first lot, one needs to take into consideration how to analyse the following: Systems & Institutions; Attitudes & Actions; [Different] Values & Interests; [Different] Experiences; Symbols & Occasions. Furthermore, it is imperative to analyze connectors across subgroups and Local Capacities for Peace: Systems & Institutions; Attitudes & Actions; [Shared] Values & Interests; [Shared] Experiences; Symbols & Occasions.

The third step in the DNH process is to analyse the aid programme: mission, mandate, headquarters; describe the logical programme in terms of why; where; what; when; with whom; by whom and how. The fourth step is to analyse the aid programme’s impact on dividers/tensions and connectors/local capacities for peace: is the programme design, its activities, or its personnel increasing or decreasing dividers/tensions? Is it supporting or undercutting connectors/local capacities for peace?

Finally, it’s important to consider options for programming redesign and re-check the impact on dividers/tensions and connectors/local capacities for peace: how can the programme details be redesigned so it will ‘Do No Harm’ and strengthen local capacities for peace? Ensure the redesign options avoid negative impacts on the dividers or connectors. The Do No Harm framework is generally used by a group of practitioners familiar with the context and project.

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55 Please show that you’ve interacted with the literature and have decided that the analysis is sufficient to warrant adoption

56 Ibid
In this sense, most data is drawn from the participants. However, there are times when information gaps are identified and data is collected from other sources to improve the quality of the analysis. The DNH framework does not include explicit conflict and peace indicators. However, there are many implicit indicators that can be made explicit, through a community-based process of indicator development. Such indicators could include a just distribution of resources, creating or strengthening networks of relationships across divisions, strengthening good governance, the use of participatory processes for decision making, supporting traditional or indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and reconciliation, inclusion of diversity of ethnic or religious groups, gender, or youth in programme activities and leadership structures.

Reflecting on Peace Practices

There is a need for you to indicate that you have read and interacted with the RPP approach in analysing conflict and its impact. But it is how you intend to apply the RPP model of assessing peace work in order to one to understand what Peter Woodrow terms as the “peace writ” that equally matters in discussing the topic of this chapter.

Conclusion

It can be noted from this study that indeed, that war is caused by many factors. However, the most argued about cause of war is the economic agenda. For example, this study hypothetically argues that the economic agenda was a main cause of war in South Sudan. To begin with, the Government of Sudan was interested in the South due to the numerous oil deposits that are located there. That’s why, as observed by Prendergast, the Government of Sudan used helicopters and gun ships to displace the southerners from oil rich areas. Consequently, any move towards self determination would be uneconomical for the Government of Sudan. In addition, the Sudan war can be also be described as a war of visitors as various Governments supported the two warring parties. China and the Arabian states supported the Government while Uganda and Ethiopia supported the Rebel Group, SPLA.

From a conceptual point of view, the researcher agrees with the findings of De Soysa who claimed that the abundance of renewable and non-renewable resources is consistently associated with higher levels of conflict and lower levels of human and institutional development. It is noted that the findings of De Soysa, study support the argument that armed conflict is often driven by greed-motivated factors rather than grievance factors. In this case, it is observed that there are lot of renewable and non renewable resource in Southern Sudan such as oil. In addition, the River Nile passes across the vast land of Sudan not to mention the agriculturally rich Nuba Mountains.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the abundance rather than the scarcity of resources was the cause of the war.

Meanwhile, the root cause of the war can be traced to the structural inequalities caused by the colonization of Sudan by two different masters with different political, social and economic
systems. These phenomena led to the division of Sudan into two regions sharing different ideologies.

However, it is also noted that one of the fundamental cause of the Sudan War was the different faiths of the Northerners and Southerners. While the majority of the Southerners subscribed to the Christian faith, Majority of the Northerners were of Muslim faith. Consequently, Jihads (holy war) was a common phenomenon in an effort to convert the Christians Southerners into Muslims.

Other reasons such as the ethnicity and negative distributive consequences of humanitarian aid also contributed to the exacerbation of the war in Sudan.

The conventional role was rubbished by the many deaths and the desolate state of affairs in Sudan. While the researcher may argue that the role of aid and aid agencies is to offer relief aid, it is important to ask a question at this point. What is the appropriate length of time for offering aid? As noted, some civil wars can last over generations. Consequently, are aid agencies comfortable with the role of saving the current generation through relief at the expense of the future generations? While the aid agencies may argue that relief aid is purposed to sustain the populace so that it can seek and get the solutions to its problems, one can not help to note that the populace in some cases takes too long to find a solution. Therefore, the aid agencies should address their conventional role of giving relief as well as embrace their contemporary role as conflict mangers. As argued by Galtung, any attempt at conflict management that does not address the structural causes of war doesn’t achieve lasting peace. In Sudan, it is noted that aid and aid agencies did more harm than good, because it took so long for the donors of that aid to intervene and assist in the establishment of a solution towards the century old civil war. Only when, USA (one of the donors) was faced with the September 11th aftermath did it consider the implication of watching while war raged in Sudan.

Other ways in which aid did more harm than good in Sudan was when the aid was used as a means of sustenance for the different warring groups. It is noted that provision of goods to warring parties makes the warring parties see no need to resolve the conflict amicably. In addition, it may be noted that the message sent to the warring parties in Sudan i.e SPLA and other warring groups when aid was provided to either of them is one of encouragement and thumbs to continue as someone was watching their back in terms of resources. This in itself had the effect of prolonging the war.

It can also be noted that aid by itself sparked violence in Sudan. The provision of aid to one belligerent group gave rise to distributive concerns and a reason for attack by from other groups in an effort to steal the relief aid. As observed, the aid agencies themselves may be attacked and relief aid stolen from them. As such, they needed either the Government troops or the SPLA militia to protect them on their aid distribution agenda. Ironically, this sets the state for further conflict in Sudan due to the ethical message sent i.e the one with arms gets to decide where resources go.

It can also be argued from this study that aid did more harm than good in Sudan due to the distortion of market forces. As noted, the influx of goods from other countries in form of aid led to the undermining of the local production since the aid was either free or priced very
lowly. Consequently, this effect led to the escalation of the factors leading to war as indicated in Burton’s human needs theory.

Furthermore, this argument can be extended to cover the fact that the provision of aid to Sudan led to overdependence of the citizens on it. Consequently, the citizens found no reason to resolve the war amicably and invest in the activities that would lead to sustainable development such as agriculture. This by itself creates an attitude similar to ‘I have invested nothing in this country; therefore, I have nothing to loose in case of war’.

During the war, the aid agencies have set up temporary accommodation in the form of tents to facilitate their operations. However, reports have been rife that these tents are now being used for commercial purposes where one can get to hire tented accommodation at very high rates. While the aid agencies may argue that they are providing a basic necessity, it is to be noted that the activities speak of commercial business more than they speak of humanitarian activity. Therefore, it can be further asserted that aid is doing more harm than good because it is offering a basic necessity at commercial rates, which by itself goes against the nature of relief activities.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Ibid