

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Dilemmas in Providing Humanitarian Intervention in Ethnic Conflict

**A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of**

**Master of Philosophy in
Development Studies at**

**Massey University, Palmerston North
New Zealand**

Matthew Perry Haddon

2004

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the difficulties of providing humanitarian assistance in ethnic conflict situations, explaining the problems and offering suggestions to mitigate the consequences.

Ethnic conflicts are complex situations that result from and exacerbate uneven development, political instability, social inequality and poverty. Humanitarian intervention has evolved to become as complex as the conflict itself. Humanitarian agencies are increasing in number and diversification, expanding their capacity to address emergency situations. As a consequence, the repercussions of assistance have also increased and the exploitation of aid by warring parties and the creation of dependency have become central concerns.

The commitment of political institutions is important for the success of humanitarian intervention yet it often remains in doubt. Unwillingness to be involved in the problems of another state or region has minimal appeal where no national security issues are at stake. The tendency to misinterpret or obfuscate the causes and processes of conflict has compromised the capability of political actors to address the conflict and its consequences. The conflicts in Rwanda, Bosnia and the Solomon Islands illustrated the multifarious problems associated with humanitarian assistance and the subsequent consequences.

It is suggested the capability of humanitarian intervention in the future relies on its re-evaluation in an effort to deal with the specific aspects of the given conflict and minimise the inappropriate allocation of aid. Furthermore, reform of the processes of development in conflict and post-conflict situations is required in an effort to bolster the resilience of recipient populations to the processes conducive to conflict. The support and commitment from political actors also remains critical for the success of humanitarian intervention. The need for early assessment and pre-emptive or reconciliatory diplomacy are key objectives yet must be backed by military capabilities necessary for the protection of the providers and the beneficiaries of relief aid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Susan Maiava and Dr. Donovan Storey of Massey University for their invaluable assistance and the contributions they made during the completion of this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance my father gave me and my family and friends for the support they have extended to me during the course of my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Key Concepts	1
Research Objectives.....	3
Methodology	5
Structure	6
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THEORIES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT	8
Introduction.....	8
Fundamental Causal Arguments	10
History of power	10
The Colonial Legacy.....	11
The End of Political Hegemony	14
Power and Politics.....	16
Post-colonial and Post-communist Elites.....	16
Political Oppression.....	18
Resource Scarcity and Allocation.....	22
Resource Wealth	22
Resource Scarcity	24
Economic and Social Factors.....	27
Poverty	27
Conflictory Modernisation and Unequal Economic Development	29
Social Discrimination	31
Summary	34
CHAPTER THREE: HUMANITARIAN RELIEF AND ETHNIC CONFLICT	36
Introduction.....	36
The Advent of Humanitarian Relief	36
The Relief-Development Paradigm.....	39

Failed Development.....	43
Criticisms of Humanitarian Relief.....	46
The Failure to Link Relief and Development	46
Exacerbating Tension and the Failure of Relief	47
Problems Associated with the Allocation and Distribution of Relief	48
The Problem of Uneven Allocation and Distribution.....	48
The Problem of Dependency Creation.....	50
The Problem of Unbalancing Local Market Economies	52
The Problem of Aid Channelled into Elite and Political Camps.....	53
The Problem of Recipients and Providers as Targets of Contempt	54
Problems Associated with Relief Workers Themselves.....	55
Relief as a Fuel for War	58
Summary	63
CHAPTER FOUR: HUMANITARIAN RELIEF ACTORS	65
Introduction.....	65
Donor Agencies	65
Bilateral Aid.....	65
Multilateral Aid.....	67
The United Nations and the Military.....	68
United Nations Humanitarian Function.....	68
United Nations Security Council and the Role of the Military	70
Non-Government Organisations	74
Local Humanitarians	76
Criticisms of Humanitarian Relief Actors.....	77
Coordination Within Each Humanitarian Actor Group	78
Donors.....	79
United Nations and Military Humanitarian Relief	81
Non-Government Organisations	85
Coordination Between Different Actor Groups	89
Summary	91
CHAPTER FIVE: CHAOS AND DISSOLUTION: HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN CONTEXT	93
Introduction.....	93
Rwanda	94

Recent Historical Background	94
The Course of the Conflict	96
Analyses and Explanations	97
Bosnia-Herzegovina	103
Recent Historical Background	103
The Course of the Conflict	105
Analyses and Explanations	109
Misconceptions about the War and Lack of Acknowledgement of its Seriousness.....	111
Lack of Coordination and Cooperation Between Political Institutions and Humanitarian Actors	115
Solomon Islands	117
Recent Historical Background	117
The Course of the Conflict	118
Analyses and Explanations	121
Summary	124
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS.....	128
Introduction.....	128
The Development-Conflict Relationship.....	129
Politics of Relief: Political Decisions and Policy	134
The Failure of Coordination and Cooperation.....	143
Relief and Development Initiatives.....	145
Summary	149
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION.....	153
Summary and Critical Review.....	153
Proposals for Humanitarian Intervention.....	162
REFERENCES	171
APPENDIX ONE: CHAPTER TWO ANNOTATIONS.....	184
The Roles of Ethnicity	184
Non-neutral States in Ethnic Conflicts	185
APPENDIX TWO: UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS.....	186
APPENDIX THREE: CHRONOLOGIES OF EVENTS	187
Rwanda: A Chronology of Events.....	187

Bosnia: A Chronology of Events	190
Solomon Islands: A Chronology of Events.....	191

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.	The Diverging Incomes of Rich and Poor Countries.....	44
Figure 2.	Rwanda Map.....	100
Figure 3.	Yugoslavia 1945-1991.....	103
Table 1.	Humanitarian Aid Contributing to the War Economy.....	59