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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOREIGN DEVELOPMENT
ASSISTANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE - A
CASE STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
CANADA, THE NETHERLANDS AND INDONESIA**

**A Research Project Presented in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
of Master in Philosophy in Development Studies at
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Dedicated to:

**My grandfather, parents,
brothers & sisters,
uncles, aunts, cousins,
and the one I really love.**

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the degree to which donor countries have attempted to suspend or discontinue foreign aid to the recipients on human rights ground.

Contemporary approaches to human rights in development are represented by both the theory of "Natural Rights" and the theory of "Cultural Relativism". Donors and most of the Western countries, advocate the former and give emphasis to civil and political rights. Whereas most of the recipient countries uphold the theory of "Cultural Relativism" and put emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights. One of the common facets of cultural relativism is the postponement of civil and political rights for the sake of economic development. The basic tenet of this position is that, if economic development has been achieved then civil and political rights will be exercised naturally. Indeed, this is the common conviction in some Third World nations where stability is regarded as the key to successful economic development. Poor treatment of human rights are therefore often a consequence of this conviction in these countries. The advocacy of prevention of abuses of these rights, through the suspension of foreign aid, emerges from this consequence. Another consequence is that, opposition to the "link between aid and human rights" grows largely in the recipient nations.

This thesis, acknowledging the complexity of the issue, sets out to assess the case study of three donor countries; the USA, Canada and the Netherlands. All were, and still are, strong advocates of "giving aid on human rights grounds". The foreign aid flow of these donor countries, each dealing independently with Indonesia as the recipient, is

assessed. The results suggest that, despite the fact that the legitimacy of cutting aid on human rights grounds is emphasized, practical moves in this direction by the USA, Canada and the Netherlands from 1980 until 1995, remain the exception rather than the rule. Though Indonesia's record on human rights has remained deplorable, Foreign Development Assistance (ODA) has continued on the ground. This thesis, finally, suggests possibilities for future improvements of human rights in the recipient countries, particularly in Indonesia, in its recommendations.

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