The Interaction between Humanitarian Assistance and Politics in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis examines how humanitarian assistance and political aspects interact in complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs) in both negative and positive ways, how to minimize negative outcomes, and how humanitarian assistance can contribute to conflict resolution. Although humanitarian assistance has long been considered to be separate from politics, the division between the two has posed serious difficulties for humanitarian aid agencies responding to disasters and even has resulted in negative impacts on political and humanitarian aspects. In order to confront CHEs today, humanitarians need to collaborate conceptually and practically with political actors, while political actors need to be sensitive to humanitarian needs. A priority is considered the minimalist position, aiming at "doing no harm." Under the right circumstances, the maximalist approach can be viewed as an opportunity for maximizing the effects of humanitarian efforts to alleviate people's suffering and contributing to conflict resolution by employing humanitarian assistance as a powerful instrument

Résumé

Cette thèse examine comment l'aide humanitaire et les enjeux politiques interagissent lors d'urgences humanitaires complexes, à la fois de manière négative et positive, comment il serait possible d'en minimiser les aspects négatifs et comment l'aide humanitaire peut contribuer à la résolution de conflit. Bien que l'aide humanitaire a longtemps été considérée séparément du domaine politique, la division entre les deux a causé de graves difficultés aux agences d'aide humanitaire intervenant en temps de crises et a même entraîné des effets négatifs autant au niveau du politique qu'au niveau humanitaire. Aujourd'hui, afin de faire face aux urgences humanitaires complexes, les acteurs du milieu humanitaire doivent collaborer avec les acteurs politiques au plan conceptuel et au plan pratique, tandis que les acteurs politiques doivent demeurer à l'écoute des besoins des intervenants humanitaires. La position minimaliste est une priorité; elle consiste à s'assurer « de ne faire aucun mal ». Si les conditions s'avèrent adéquates, la position maximaliste pourrait être envisagée comme étant une opportunité de maximiser les conséquences des efforts humanitaires pour alléger les souffrances des gens et pour contribuer à la résolution de conflits en se servant de l'aide humanitaire comme d'un puissant instrument.

Introduction

Humanitarian assistance is often considered to be separate from politics, based purely on the *needs* of distressed people. However, a number of studies in recent conflicts have demonstrated that humanitarian assistance has never been disbursed solely on the basis of needs; there have been stark differences between the amount and types of such assistance given to different countries facing complex humanitarian emergencies. Moreover, contrary to the traditional approach, that is, separating humanitarian assistance from politics, humanitarian assistance, in fact, constantly affects and is affected by the perceived interests of political actors. The failure to recognize the interaction between the two has not only posed serious difficulties for humanitarian aid agencies responding to disasters, but also resulted in negative impacts on conflict and local communities.

This thesis will address three issues: how humanitarian assistance and politics interact positively and negatively in complex humanitarian emergencies, how negative impacts may be minimized with a view to building peace, and how humanitarian assistance may contribute to conflict resolution. Chapter 1 will clarify the terminology relevant to the discussion, consider historical factors that transformed the role of humanitarian assistance, review four major positions on the integration between humanitarian assistance and politics, and finally discuss an analytical framework used in this thesis. In Chapter 2, the negative interaction between humanitarian assistance and politics will be discussed. There are a number of ways in which humanitarian assistance has negative impacts on conflict and targeted communities, while political interests have profound effects in shaping and often constraining

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humanitarian response to suffering. Chapter 3 will examine the positive interaction between humanitarian assistance and political consideration. Chapter 4 will analyze the ways to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive effects of humanitarian-politics interaction on conflict and local populations. Finally, Chapter 5 will demonstrate to what extent humanitarian assistance can be employed as a strategy for conflict resolution in cooperation with political actors.

Humanitarian assistance and politics cannot and should not be disassociated. With the conceptual and operational collaboration between the two, humanitarian assistance can play a critical role in addressing the root causes of conflict and building peace. Humanitarian practitioners need to be politically sensitive when planning and operating programs, while parties to conflict and donor governments need to value humanitarian-centered political considerations more than self-interest ones. In this way, humanitarian assistance and politics can have positive impacts on each other, not only serving the humanitarian mandate of saving people, but also contributing to a larger theme of conflict resolution.

Chapter 1: Terminology, historical background, spectrum of views, and analytical framework

1.1. Terminology

Before discussing the interface between humanitarian assistance and politics, this thesis begins with a consideration of what is meant by the concepts of "complex humanitarian emergency," "humanitarian community," "humanitarian action," "humanitarian intervention," "humanitarian assistance" and "politics."

The term "complex emergency" was coined in the United Nations (UN) and has been increasingly used by the international community to describe a variety of humanitarian crises in the 1990s (Slim and Penrose 1994, 194). It should be noted here that the terms "complex emergency," "complex political emergency" and "complex humanitarian emergency" are usually used interchangeably. Following the practice of many humanitarian aid agencies, this thesis will mainly use the term "complex humanitarian emergency" (CHE).

Even before the coinage of this new term, it was well recognized that emergencies were always "complex," but the term, "CHE," has been used particularly in connection with post-Cold War humanitarian crises. They have "multicausal natures" and require "multimandate responses" from the international community (Slim and Penrose 1994, 194). In other words, a "CHE" in the 1990s is a humanitarian crisis with a total or partial breakdown of authority due to internal or external conflict, involving widespread suffering and massive population displacement that requires substantial

international multisectoral assistance going beyond the mandate or capacity of any single UN agency (Nafziger 1996; Vayrnen 1996). These complex features require a wide range of responses, such as a combination of military intervention, peacekeeping efforts, conflict resolution efforts, aid programs and high-level diplomacy (Slim and Penrose 1994, 194; Eade 1996, online). These CHEs are distinguished from natural disasters since they occur primarily due to political and economic factors (Brandt 1997, online).

Another term, "humanitarian community," refers to all actors working toward humanitarian aims. It includes humanitarian agencies, such as UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), regional organizations, and donor governments (Gundel 1999, online).

Three other terms are often confusingly employed: "humanitarian action," "humanitarian intervention" and "humanitarian assistance." "Humanitarian action" reflects the whole spectrum of humanitarian responses taken by the humanitarian community to conflict and crisis situations, ranging from the provision of humanitarian assistance with the consent of a state through to military intervention without consent of the affected state (Roberts 1996, 7). Roberts (1996) argues that humanitarian action take many forms, including:

> provision of food and shelter for refugees; airlifts of supplies to besieged populations; proclamations of "safe areas"; attempts to ensure implementation of the laws of war; monitoring of detention conditions; the use of outside armed forces for "humanitarian intervention" in situations of chaos, warlordism, massive atrocities and tyrannical government; mine-clearance; and post-war (even sometimes intra-war) reconstruction (7).

Fourth, "humanitarian intervention" is defined in its classical sense as military intervention by the international community in a state without the

approval of its authorities, in order to protect and defend human rights of the population in cases of massive violations (Roberts 1996, 19; Gundel 1999, online). The term, however, has come to be used with a much broader meaning. It may embrace intervention, not necessarily involving the use of armed force, or not necessarily against the will of the government (Roberts 1996, 19). Accordingly, "humanitarian intervention" now often refers to the provision of humanitarian assistance as well as the protection of both humanitarian assistance deliveries and the victims of conflict (Gundel 1999, online).

A fifth term requiring definition is "humanitarian assistance," which is often used synonymously with "humanitarian aid" and "emergency relief." "Humanitarian assistance" is in fact a component of humanitarian action and humanitarian intervention and refers to the immediate response with relief supplies to people who are in acute need of basic resources (food, clean water, shelter, sanitation and medical care), as well as the required means of transport and the money to finance the purchase of all such supplies (Gundel 1999, online; Quénivet 1998, online). Excluded are weapons, weapon systems, ammunition and other requisites for the conduct of hostilities (such as communication equipment) or money intended for this purpose. Humanitarian assistance also covers protection from displacement, detention, torture and other inhuman and degrading treatments or rehabilitation operations (Gundel 1999, online; Quénivet 1998, online). To a humanitarian agency like United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), delivering humanitarian assistance covers both the provision of material needs and the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The tasks of these two dimensions of assistance are usually interconnected

(Gundel 1999, online).

In theory, the provision of humanitarian assistance is governed by five humanitarian principles: universality, impartiality, neutrality, independence and humanity. These are summarized in the "fundamental principles" that the Red Cross adopted in 1965 and that the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement reaffirmed in 1986. These principles are described as "an inspiration and a guide for all the movement's humanitarian activities" (Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 1984, 328-30):

1. The principle of universality: The Red Cross is a world-wide institution in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other.

2. The principle of impartiality: The Red Cross makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious belief, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

3. The principal of neutrality: In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Red Cross may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

4. The principle of independence: The Red Cross maintains autonomy from political consideration to be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles.

5. The principle of humanity: The Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being (Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1996, 16; Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 1984, 8).

A final term remains to be defined: "politics." "Politics" is an arena

whereby individuals and groups seek to accumulate resources and power and use them to achieve their objectives (MacFarlane 2000, 7). Weiss (1999) argues "politics" has several forms from "the competition among states for survival and supremacy and for maximizing national interests in an anarchical world" *(realpolitik)* to "efforts to agree upon desirable international public policies within governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental arenas" (online). In a broad sense, the competition among humanitarian agencies for resources, lead roles or other agendas that are not purely humanitarian is inherently part of the political process (MacFarlane 2000, 5, 7). For the sake of discussion, however, this paper employs the term "politics" to refer to the arena where state or state-like actors (e.g., belligerents) pursue their aims based on political calculations and perceived interests, as contrasted with humanitarian aims by humanitarian actors.

1.2. Historical background: the end of the Cold War and its implications for humanitarian assistance

The post-Cold War era has seen the expansion of humanitarian assistance in volume, role and importance. As one indicator, the funding allocated to humanitarian assistance has substantially increased over the past decade at a time of declining official development assistance (ODA). While in 1980 annual aggregate funding by governments for humanitarian assistance accounted for $353 million, or 2 percent of total ODA disbursement worldwide, by 1993 it increased to more than $3 billion, equivalent to over 10 percent of such disbursement (Macrae 1998, online). Such funding peaked at

around $7 billion in 1994 and has since declined to an average of $3 to 4 billion per year. Also, in 1996, over 40 million people were dependent on humanitarian assistance, which was an increase of 60 percent since the mid-1980s (Forman and Parhad 1997, online).

There are mainly three factors that account for this expansion of humanitarian assistance in the post-Cold War period. First, the end of the Cold-War rivalry has reduced the incentive for major states to manipulate aid flows for political purposes (MacFarlane 1999, 548). During the Cold War, the superpowers frequently employed humanitarian assistance as an instrument of their power struggle in order to enhance the capacity of their proxies to prosecute conflicts (MacFarlane 2001, 10). Under the banner of anti-Communism, the U.S. supported anti-government forces in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola and Cambodia, while the Soviet Union justified its intervention whenever a Communist regime was threatened (Minear and Weiss 1995, 33). Since the two governments reduced aid to other countries with limited strategic importance for them, the whole humanitarian apparatus was greatly discouraged (Minear and Weiss 1995, 33).

The U.S. policy toward Nicaragua in the 1980s demonstrates "the extent to which humanitarian assistance was pressed into the service of political objectives" (Minear and Weiss 1995, 33). The Reagan Administration supported the contras, who were committed to the overthrow of the communist regime. Although in 1985 the U.S. government imposed an embargo on trade with Nicaragua, it exempted humanitarian items and provided $27 million in "humanitarian assistance" for the contras, including boots, tents, and telecommunications gear (Minear and Weiss 1995, 33). In 1986, the State Department considered declaring the politico-military arm of

the contras, the United Nicaraguan Opposition, a "private and voluntary organization" so that it could receive U.S. food and other government aid "available only to bona fide humanitarian relief agencies" (Minear and Weiss 1995, 33). The editorial of *The Washington Times* summarized the situation in a May 10, 1985: "Anyone who examines the historical record of communism must conclude that any aid directed at overthrowing communism is humanitarian aid" (Minear and Weiss 1995, 34). The capacity of the superpowers to manipulate humanitarian access and action in the service of their political objectives degraded humanitarian principles, with aid agencies often acting as "extensions of the political/military agendas of the superpowers" (MacFarlane 2001, 9).

As suggested above, no longer subordinated to the anti-Communist or anti-Capitalist political agendas in the post-Cold War era, humanitarian agencies have attained a wider space for their activities than before (Minear and Weiss 1995, 32-34). On the one hand, since the superpowers no longer supported former client states, aid flows sharply declined in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. On the other hand, the absolute and relative amounts of aid spent on humanitarian assistance significantly increased due to an increase in CHEs, combined with the increased scope for intervention in them (Macrae 2001, online).

The enthusiasm of donor governments for humanitarian assistance in the 1990s reflected the expectation that humanitarian activities "fill the space left by the withdrawal of diplomacy" (Curtis 2001, 5). In the profusion of civil wars, major powers now have little strategic incentive to intervene and run the risk of causalities, but they "cannot also be seen to be doing nothing" (Shearer 2000, 198). Thus, instead of admitting that civil wars or outbreaks

of violence (such as the situations in the African Great Lakes region, Sudan, Afghanistan and Chechnya) are thoroughly "political" activities, political actors, such as foreign governments, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, came to call these situations "humanitarian" crises and avoid rigorous diplomatic efforts (Warner 1999, online). Roberts (1996) notes,

> Numerous Security Council resolutions since 1989 have addressed humanitarian issues arising from armed conflicts. . . .One reason for the UNSC's [Security Council's] astonishing attention to humanitarian issues is that, in a 15-member body, it is easier to reach agreement on the lowest common denominator of humanitarianism than on more partisan or risky policies (15).

In short, major donor governments have substituted humanitarian assistance for political action.

A second reason for a new and higher profile of humanitarian assistance is a great rise in armed intrastate conflict over the last decade. Although the demise of the Cold War has facilitated progress toward peace in some areas like Central America, it has not in other areas, especially in Africa and the former Soviet Union (Keen 2000, 20). By one measure, while there were 12 major internal wars (where death tolls exceeded 1,000) at the end of the Cold War in 1989, there emerged 37 in the old Soviet Bloc and post-colonial states in the early 1990s (PRS Group 1998).

One of the features of recent civil wars is the erosion of the distinction between combatants and noncombatants. In the language of the Geneva Conventions and Protocols, humanitarian action presumes a clear distinction between civilian victims, or noncombatants, who are entitled to assistance, and combatants who are not, unless they are prisoners or casualties

(MacFarlane 2000, 9). Since the 1990s, however, the boundaries between paramilitary forces and criminals have been increasingly difficult to define, since people tend to alternate between civilian and military tasks in conflict between communities. Weak command and control as well as lax discipline within fighting forces also facilitated such erosion (Tbilisi 1998, 9).

Furthermore, the problem of distinguishing between civilians and combatants reflects the objectives of belligerents for removing communities or the "cleansing" entire groups, both civilian and military (MacFarlane 1999, 550). Lloyd Axworthy (2000), then Minister of Foreign Affairs, states, "The victimization of civilians is no longer the tragic byproduct of war, but often the principal aim – and, more often than not, the main result of violent conflict" (online). According to Red Cross/Red Crescent Report, *Casualties of Conflict*, it is estimated that 90 percent of the 5 million war victims during the period from 1988 to 1998 were killed in internal conflicts, and 90 percent of these were civilians. This is in stark contrast to the beginning of the 1900s, when 90 percent of war victims were military (Ahlstrom and Nordquist 1991, 19). The incapacity or unwillingness to separate combatants and civilians has led to a dramatic rise in civilian causalities, which has required a massive humanitarian assistance.

A third explanation for the growth in humanitarian assistance since the end of the Cold War is related to a new definition of security and a change in approach to sovereignty (Shearer 2000, 197; Minear 1998, online). With the ebbing of conventional military threats, the international community has come to view the deprivation of the essentials of life and the abuse of human rights as threats to international peace and security. In addition, states came to define their interests in terms of protecting themselves against drug

trafficking, the spread of terrorism and large refugee flows (Macrae 2001, online). Underdevelopment came to be seen as another threat to international security on the prospect that it may fuel such illegal activities over the borders (Curtis 2001, 5-6). These new security issues reflect the pressures of globalization and the difficulty in defining the boundaries between domestic and international policies (Macrae 2001, online).

In order to address these new security issues, the international community has justified the exercise of economic and military force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter so that they can intervene in the internal practices of another state (Minear 1998, online). Such practice has reduced unconditional respect for the sovereignty of states and provided for a much more interventionist approach to international relations (Curtis 2001, 5; Minear 1998, 231). An implication of this interventionist approach is that Western democracies now define national self-interest in terms of "good international citizenship" (Macrae 2001, online). It means that states that abuse human rights forego the right to be treated as "legitimate members of the international community" and become "the object of international scrutiny, censure and occasionally military intervention" (Macrae 2001, online).

Due to a lessening sanctity of sovereignty, humanitarian aid agencies today negotiate more freely with warring parties and more actively engage in aid programs than before. During the Cold-War period, aid agencies, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), had to work almost exclusively through governments, whose ability to refuse humanitarian access was supported by their right of sovereignty (Shearer 2000, 197). In the early 1990s, NGOs in Liberia were able to negotiate directly with Charles Taylor, whose National Patriotic Front of Liberia

faction controlled 90 percent of the country. After 1991, in the absence of a central authority in Somalia following the overthrow of Siad Barre, external aid agencies made their own agreements with warlords and factions. A newfound importance of humanitarian assistance in the post-Cold War era has not only increased the visibility of aid agencies and power to lobby, but also maintained their expanding institutions and activities (Shearer 2000, 199).

These changes in geopolitics, the nature of conflict and the definition of security and sovereignty converged in the mid-1990s to promote the idea of coherence between humanitarian assistance and political responses to CHEs. In 1992, at the request of the Security Council, the UN published an *Agenda for Peace*, a blueprinted for a new vision of security that extended beyond defense and diplomacy and embraced economic and social factors as determinants of peace and stability (Macrae 2001, online). Seeing development of poor countries as an important investment in peace, the agenda provided for humanitarian actors to be included alongside their counterparts in ministries of foreign affairs and defense in a crosscutting effort to promote peace and security (Macrae 2001, online). With this new approach, aid agencies are now entitled to reject the principle of neutrality in the face of genocide or human rights abuses, judge the quality of governance and, if necessary, withhold aid resources on political grounds (Macrae 2001, online; Fox 2001, online)

This attempt to break from traditional humanitarian principles is often called the "New Humanitarianism," which accepts the idea that effective humanitarian assistance needs to take into account a variety of political factors (Curtis 2001, 5-6).

1.3. A spectrum of views on the integration of humanitarian assistance and politics

Although the concept of the New Humanitarianism has become influential, there are still different views toward the integration of humanitarian assistance and politics. While some adhere to the traditional humanitarian principles, others accept different degrees of humanitarian engagement in the political sphere. Weiss (1999) and MacFarlane (2001) attempt to situate four groups of humanitarians along the analytical spectrum according to their degree of political involvement and their willingness to respect the traditional humanitarian principles, although they are well aware of the difficulty in categorizing the range of opinions into clearly defined clusters.

The first position, called "classical humanitarian" position, argues that humanitarian assistance must be based solely on people's needs and separated from politics for program design and implementation, regardless of the consequences (MacFarlane 2001, xi; Weiss 1999, online). Those who take this position believe that political factors may intrude into humanitarianism, but cannot be taken into account in the decisions of humanitarians to help people (MacFarlane 2001, xi). Their perspective is evident in the *1994 Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief*, which states that "the humanitarian imperative comes first" and "[a]id priorities are evaluated on the basis of *need* alone" (DAC 1998, 52).

The remaining three positions along the spectrum accept the adjustment of humanitarian assistance according to political considerations and take consequences into account, departing from the classical understanding of impartiality and neutrality. Thus, they are called "political

humanitarianists" or "consequentialists" (MacFarlane 2001, xi; Weiss 1999, online). The principle of impartiality (where assistance should be proportional to need) is replaced with the essentially political objective of shaping the processes of conflict and the principle of neutrality (humanitarian actors should not take sides in political controversies) gives way to efforts by these actors to encourage belligerents to suspend their warfare (MacFarlane 2001, xiv).

The second position on the spectrum is called "minimalist" position or "damage limitation," which accepts a minimum interaction between humanitarian assistance and politics. Minimalists insist that "at the very minimum, aid that is intended to help victims in war settings should not cause additional harm" (Anderson 1999, 5). This position primarily focuses on identifying potentially harmful impacts of humanitarian action and attempts to avoid or to mitigate them in the process of providing assistance and protection. The most extreme case of limiting damage is withdrawing humanitarian assistance when aid providers conclude that they are merely adding harm to the victims (MacFarlane 2001, xii). One example is Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who decided to withdraw aid from camps for displaced Rwandans in Goma and Bukavu in 1995 after being convinced that it was feeding the conflict (MacFarlane 2001, xii-xiii).

The third position is referred to as "maximalists" or "conflict transformation." This view holds a more ambitious agenda for designing and employing humanitarian action as part of a comprehensive strategy. Maximalists are determined to work on the underlying causes of violence and to reform humanitarianism to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict. They also seek to transform conflict and move societies toward political settlement

(Weiss 1999, online; MacFarlane 2001, xiii). They maintain that such efforts occur at the micro-level through aid designed to rebuild links between communities and to restore authority structures and local decision-making capacities (MacFarlane 2001, xiii).

Finally, on the far end of the spectrum is the "solidarist" position. This position may be referred to as "aid as a weapon," since humanitarian aid is employed to secure the victory of one party or another, abandoning neutrality and impartiality (MacFarlane 2001, xiv). When one party is judged to be the cause of a conflict or the principal impediment to conflict resolution, aid agencies deny humanitarian assistance to the party while providing such assistance to its adversary (MacFarlane 2001, 63-4). In addition, solidarists reject consent as a prerequisite for intervention (Weiss 1999, online; MacFarlane 2001, xiv).

With the emergence of these different views toward humanitarian assistance, classicists came to be criticized for their wide gap between principles and practice in humanitarian operations. In the first place, past experience demonstrates that humanitarian assistance has never been solely based on people's needs. There are stark differences between the amount and type of humanitarian assistance offered with political considerations to various countries facing CHEs (Curtis 2001, 3). OXFAM (2000) calculated that donor governments gave $207 for every person in need in response to the UN appeal for Kosovo and the rest of former Yugoslavia in 1999, but only $16 per capita for targeted beneficiaries in Sierra Leone in response to a UN appeal in the same year.

Similarly, many of the traditional humanitarian principles are now discredited. Even when aid practitioners believe that they maintain neutrality,

humanitarian assistance is seldom perceived as neutral, always affecting the balance of power among the parties concerned (Slim 1997, online). Impartiality is foregone when humanitarian responses are late in coming and selective in some cases. The principle of independence may not be strictly observed by many humanitarian aid agencies that remain dependent on financial support from major donor governments (Curtis 2001, 13). Moreover, the principle of independence may be obscured since the UN, which is a major organ for humanitarian operations, remains subject to decisions of its member states, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council (Pasquier 2001, online).

Second, unlike the argument by classicists that aid agencies can and should be "nonpolitical," in reality humanitarian assistance is and has been a highly political activity (Minear and Weiss 1995, 12). Minear and Weiss (1995) argue,

> To do their work, aid personnel and human-rights monitors usually require the permission of political authorities, which includes entry visas and residency permits. Relief programs need duty-free entry for supplies, permission to exchange foreign currency, and authority to communicate regularly and freely with their respective headquarters. Particularly essential - but also especially sensitive - in times of armed conflicts, aid agencies need access to distressed populations (13).

In addition to these aspects, the day-to-day decisions taken by all humanitarian agencies, whether private, governmental or UN, intersect in innumerable ways with local, regional or international political actors (Minear and Weiss 1995, 13). This means that it is almost impossible to separate humanitarian action from politics.

Third, as the term "complex humanitarian emergency" represents, the complexity of its multicausal nature is never "merely" humanitarian and

cannot be solved by humanitarian work alone. On the contrary, such piecemeal action may have negative impacts on the population concerned and on the prospect for conflict resolution. Evidence began to mount that in cases where humanitarian actors were not politically astute, humanitarian assistance was being incorporated into the war economy to sustain conflict and was not helping to reduce the vulnerability of populations (Macrae 2001, online). Instead of seeing each other as competing, humanitarian and political actors need to see each other as "complementary."

This thesis takes the second and the third positions on the spectrum, believing that they are more appropriate and applicable to the current situations. If the time is right, humanitarian assistance can be employed as part of a process of a strategy for conflict resolution, but doing so requires a great caution. Mary Anderson's analytical framework seems to be of great analytical and prescriptive importance in the search for the most effective role of humanitarian efforts in reducing people's vulnerability and bringing about peace.

1.4. Analytical framework

Anderson (1999) offers an analytical framework for the practical planning by aid workers and for the evaluation for humanitarian operations through the learning of the Local Capacities for Peace Project (which is a joint effort of many NGOs, international donor agencies, UN agencies and European and American donor governments) (37-8). The purpose of this framework is to find ways to "do no harm" on conflict situations and populations affected by

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conflict as well as to support local capacities for peace. According to this framework, humanitarian assistance can make conflict worse in two ways; it can feed intergroup tensions and weaken intergroup connections. Conversely, humanitarian assistance can help to end violence by lessening intergroup tensions and strengthening intergroup connections (Anderson 1999, 69).

Almost all societies, whether at war or not, contain intergroup tensions and divisions, what Anderson calls "dividers," or "capacities for war." At the same time, societies contain "connectors," or "capacities for peace," which interlink the people in conflict (Anderson 1999, 23). If aid providers are aware only of the war capacities preexisting in the societies and do not recognize the peace capacities, their aid can reinforce the former and undermine the latter, which inadvertently reinforces conflict. A better understanding of the pattern in which humanitarian assistance and conflict interact enables aid agencies to design aid programs that relate to and support local capacities for peace (Anderson 1999, 37).

The framework points to a need to strengthen "connectors" and "capacities for peace" and address "dividers" and "capacities for war" on five levels: 1) systems and institutions; 2) attitudes and actions; 3) values and interests; 4) experiences; and 5) symbols and occasions (Anderson 1999, 24-35). First, the war capacities on the first level of "systems and institutions" include armies and gangs, the production and distribution of weapons, the apparatus of war propaganda, system of discrimination, exclusion, dominance and separate religious institutions (Anderson 1999, 31-2). Such systems and institutions may promote or reflect long-standing tensions between communities and may cause—or be manipulated to cause—conflict (Anderson 1999, 32).

The peace capacities on the first level exist prior to war and provide the basis on which future peace can and must be built. Particular systems and institutions may bring people into direct contact or they may connect people without a direct, face-to-face interaction. For example, markets continue to connect people who are divided by war by representing places where people meet and interact by distributing needed goods (Anderson 1999, 25). Infrastructure (such as electrical, water and communications systems and roads) also continues to connect people across the lines of fighting. For their mutual convenience, warring parties may keep the infrastructure in the society intact even in the midst of civil war (Anderson 1999, 25). Whether the contact is direct or indirect, these systems and institutions provide connection and continuity even when people are divided in conflict.

On the second level of "attitudes and actions," the war capacities, such as violence, threats, torture, brutality, lawlessness, displacement and expulsions, divide people (Anderson 1999, 32). Such actions are accompanied and reinforced by the attitudes of mistrust, suspicion, fear and hatred, which are often promoted by the tools of war, including war propaganda and the demonization and hence dehumanization of the "others" (Anderson 1999, 32). Probably, prejudice, competition for resources, incidents of hostility and threats exist in almost all societies and often precede open conflict, but they may often be manipulated to promote violence (Anderson 1999, 32).

On the other hand, the non-war attitudes and actions of people (the capacities for peace) can be found even in the midst of war. Some individuals and groups may continue to express tolerance, acceptance, love and appreciation for "other" people, as well as refuse to demonize or stereotype

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them. They may also recognize the wrongdoing of their own side and emphasize crosscutting contacts and cooperation in areas of mutual concern (Anderson 1999, 26). For instance, in Bosnia, people who refuse to support the ethnic division that their leaders preached started a citizens' forum in one of their homes. When they called a public meeting, over 2,000 people came to the first meeting and over a year the membership grew to over 15,000 people (Anderson 1999, 26).

On the third level, dividers can be found in "different values and interests" that differentiate groups from each other. Although values that represent subcultures and different religious affiliations exist virtually in almost all societies, some societies experience ongoing tension between "subgroups' desire for a distinct identity" and "their urge for sameness or for achieving equality with all other groups in resources and power" (Anderson 1999, 32). In some cases, foreign powers may promote or support conflict in another state, since they have an interest in who holds power, or in the continuing instability of the state concerned, which for some reason serves their domestic or security interests (Anderson 1999, 32-3). On the other hand, when people share common values and interests, such as a love for children, these commonalties can represent connectors in societies at war and reinforce inclusiveness and intergroup fairness. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) succeeded in negotiating "days of tranquillity" and "corridors of peace" in which all sides in warring areas agreed to facilitate the inoculation of children (Anderson 1999, 29).

On the fourth level, different "experiences" can divide people and create tensions between them. In contrast, common experiences, such as memory of former mutual respect and sympathy and even the experience of

war, can provide a basis for link among people on opposite sides of a conflict (Anderson 1999, 29). Fifth and finally, the "symbols and occasions" of distinct subgroups can be easily manipulated to emphasize or create divisions by accentuating differences and exciting unease, suspicion and fear between groups (Anderson 1999, 33). On the contrary, common symbols and occasions, such as national art, music, literature, historic anniversaries, monuments and ceremonies, can provide connections in societies torn apart by civil war. For example, the UNICEF magazine SAWA always featured "our national heritage" to reaffirm the nation of Lebanon in which all people shared a history (Anderson 1999, 31).

The analytical framework presents three steps to deal with "dividers" and "connectors." In the first step, aid agencies need to identify tensions and dividers in the context of conflict and assess their importance. The second step involves identifying, and assessing the importance of, connectors in the same context. Finally, in the third step, aid agencies need to analyze their programs and assess their impacts on the dividers and the connectors (Anderson 1999, 69-70). If necessary, aid agencies need to modify their programs based on the analysis so that they can weaken the dividers and strengthen the connectors. The challenge for aid providers is both to recognize the capacities for peace and to find appropriate ways to reinforce and support them, without simultaneously increasing the probability that they will be targeted and undermined by the capacities for war.

Chapter 2: The negative interaction between humanitarian assistance and politics

2.1. Negative impacts of humanitarian assistance on political and humanitarian aspects

Although humanitarian assistance is well-intentioned, it may negatively affect conflict, local populations and local politics. When external assistance injects substantial resources in an environment of acute scarcity, although intended for civilians, they are often seized by people engaged in war to use for military purposes (MacFarlane 2001, 15). Besides, in an attempt to build or enhance local capacities in conflict settings, humanitarian assistance can inadvertently create dependency or weaken the local institutions (Anderson 1999, 31). Humanitarian assistance can influence the process of conflict before, during and after war takes place (MacFarlane 2001, xv). The focus of this thesis is on the impact of humanitarian assistance in the active conflict.

2.1.1. Negative impacts on conflict

Since substantial resources brought by external aid agencies represent "economic wealth and political power" and affects the capacities and attitudes of warring parties to persist in violent, the control of these resources becomes an important objective for these parties (DAC 1997, 30; Anderson 1999, 38). There are mainly six negative impacts of aid resource transfer: diversion, distributional impacts, substitution effects, buying protection from local militias, legitimizing illegitimate actors and facilitating population

displacement. These negative impacts are closely related to and effected by the intention of warring parties to manipulate humanitarian assistance.

First, humanitarian assistance may feed into conflict through *diversion* (MacFarlane 2001, 15-6). There are mainly four types of diversion. First, theft is the most obvious process by which humanitarian assistance fuels conflict. Warring forces steal humanitarian inputs (such as food, blankets, vehicles and communications systems) for their own consumption, for barter or sale and even for export (Smock 1997, online; Anderson 1999, 39). According to Prendergast (1996), "Selling or trading diverted commodities across borders is a principal method of obtaining arms" (22). Militias looted cars and oil during humanitarian operations in Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. The wealth created by diverted humanitarian assistance is also important to keep the loyalty of their followers and capture the loyalty of other unallied members (Natsios 1997, 85).

Not only can diverted humanitarian assistance finance fighting forces, but it can also reinforce conditions that create conflict (Keen 1998, 59; Prendergast 1997, 139). When humanitarian assistance inadvertently lure raiding, it may escalate violence, competition and tension among warring parties and communities over scarce resources (Slim 1997, online; Prendergast 1997, 139). Diverting humanitarian assistance may also induce an incentive to attacks on civilians, since such attacks create the need and the appeal for more humanitarian assistance (Keen 1998, 59). Moreover, when members of armed gangs profit from looting and stealing aid goods becomes their way of life, the entire economic system would continue to reward antisocial behavior by these members (Keen 2000, 24; Natsios 1997, 85).

Such system would continue to corrupt both the militias and the merchant class, the latter of which "could have been a force for order and the restoration of some political authority" (Natsios 1997, 85).

In Somalia, during the height of the famine in 1992, over 50 percent of all food brought into Mogadishu port was estimated to have been looted, either directly from the port or through the hijacking of aid convoys (Shearer 2000, 192). Owing to drought and civil conflict, food became an extremely scarce commodity and its absolute value rose to an extraordinarily high level (MacFarlane 1999, 557). When food was imported through relief efforts, it became a principal source of wealth and an attractive object of plunder for merchants, common working people without a source of income, organized gangs and militia leaders (Natsios 1997, 77-80). The potential for diversion was enhanced due to the unclear distinction between combatant and non-combatant populations (MacFarlane 1999, 550).

In and around Cambodia/Kampuchea in the late 1970s, any humanitarian assistance diverted away from the intended beneficiaries and into the hands of both the Vietnamese and Cambodian militaries could greatly enhance their capacity to conduct military operations (MacFarlane 1999, 545-7). Humanitarian aid to Khmer Rouge camps went directly to soldiers and assisted the rebuilding of the Khmer Rouge after its demise in the period between 1970 and 1980 (Keen 1998, 59). In Liberia, warlords looted more than four hundred aid vehicles and millions of dollars of equipment and relief goods (Roberts 1996, 34). The vehicles and radio equipment were used for military purposes and sold, along with the diamond and gold deposits, in order to purchase arms (Roberts 1996, 34). Those thefts directly supported the war and caused civilian deaths and suffering.

Another example is Angola. In 1994, the Angolan government forbade humanitarian flights to the besieged city of Huambo, controlled by UNITA (União para la Independencia Total de Angola). This prohibition resulted in a serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the city (MacFarlane 2001, 16). After one month, the government suddenly removed restrictions on the flow of humanitarian assistance and aid agencies rushed to resupply the suffering inhabitants. The government forces then attacked the city and systematically looted the warehouses, which had been fully restocked by aid agencies. In effect, aid agencies ended up with resupplying the government military forces (MacFarlane 2001, 16).

A second variant of diversion is imposing levies on humanitarian supplies and operations. Aid workers have frequently reported that the goods they deliver are routinely taxed as they pass through military checkpoints to reach the intended beneficiaries (Anderson 1998, 141). Import duties, licenses, permits, visas and port or airport charges levied on aid agencies offer large profits to local actors (Prendergast 1996, 26). Evidence of such levies abounds. In Somalia, aid agencies were forced to pay high fees for aircraft that landed at Mogandishu airport (Shearer 2000, 192). In the Southern Sudan, combatants from splinter factions of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLA) systematically taxed aid delivery to suffering populations, going house to house to take distributed humanitarian supplies. They also forced aid workers to pay a "war tax" of about 30 percent to the leaders, creating monthly profits (MacFarlane 2001, 18). Similarly, the Liberian faction leader Charles Taylor frequently charged an aid tax for relief supplies brought into the area under his control, making an additional source of funds for his war effort (Shearer 2000, 192).

In the Goma camps, former military commanders of the Rwandan Armed Forces expropriated an estimated food tax of 15 percent from refugees, which fed the ex-soldiers in the military-run Mugunga camp (De Waal 1997, 205). These leaders also forced local aid workers appointed by aid agencies to pay a war tax of about 30 percent of their earning. (MSF alone had appointed about 2,600 local Rwandan workers in the refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu and paid them each around $100 per month, thus creating a monthly profit of almost $85,000 for war leaders from MSF alone) (MacFarlane 2001, 18).

A third type of diversion is found in dual-currency exchange rates. In order to purchase labor, services or food, aid agencies exchange hard currency for the local currency. War leaders often determine the rates of exchange, either because the currencies are not convertible or because markets for them are extremely thin, but they usually set the rate of exchange at an artificially high rate (MacFarlane 2001, 20). The leaders deposit the differences between the official rate at which foreign currency is exchanged and the "real" rate in their treasuries, thereby forcing aid community in fact to "subsidize continued oppression and violence by funding predatory regimes" (Prendergast 1996, 25-6; MacFarlane 2001, 20). In 1988, Sudanese factions restricted aid transactions to an official rate of 4.4 Sudanese pounds to 1 U.S. dollar, although the parallel market rate was 17 (Prendergast 1996, 26). Similarly, Ethiopia in the 1980s charged approximately three times the market rate for Ethiopian *birr* (Duffield 1995, 2-3, 14).

Fourth and finally, diversion also occurs through the inflated assessments of the number of recipients. In order to maximize the inflow of humanitarian assistance, warring parties often inflate estimates of the number

of people in need (e.g., by creating nonexistent beneficiaries or villages and inflating family size). This benefits powerful groups either within the beneficiary population or among those administering humanitarian assistance (Jaspars 2000, 18; MacFarlane 2001, 17).

For instance, in late 1992, the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA, the relief wing of the SPLA) claimed there were 256,900 displaced persons in camps in and around the Southern Sudan. However, the real number counted by international relief officials later corrected the figure to 86,000 (MacFarlane 2001, 17). In Goma and Bukavu camps, all humanitarian assistance was delivered based on the data obtained from the leaders in the camps. The camp officials in 1994 resisted any aid agency attempts to conduct a census of the camp population that might "expose what was widely suspected to be an exaggerated number of refugees and lead to the reduction of assistance" (MacFarlane 2001, 17; Shearer 2000, 193).

A second negative impact of humanitarian assistance on conflict is *substitution effect*, or freeing up local relief resources. One economic impact is that external aid agencies meet a great proportion of civilian needs for food, shelter, safety and health services, thereby freeing the warring factions to use their local resources to prosecute war (Smock 1997, online; Anderson 1999, 49; Prendergast 1997, 140). This substitution effect has a further political impact. When aid agencies assume responsibility for the welfare burdens of large numbers of war-affected people, military-oriented leaders increasingly evade or defer their responsibility to address the civilian welfare (e.g., health, income support and sustenance) and to seek political solutions to their conflict (MacFarlane 2001, 20; DAC 1997, 30). These leaders then tend to define their responsibility and accountability only in terms of military control

and "lose all interest and competence in civilian affairs," becoming increasingly "ill prepared to assume broad, responsible leadership in a postwar period" (Anderson 1999, 49-50).

The official aid to the government of Armenia during the war over Nagorno-Karabakh exceeded the total state budget for much of the period of active conflict and allowed the authorities to "channel resources otherwise unavailable into the war effort" (Tbilisi 1998, 10; MacFarlane 1999, 551). To receive aid, the authorities found it easier to focus their expenditure on defense and on sustaining the insurgent government in the Azerbaijani enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (MacFarlane 1999, 551). On the other hand, the willingness of humanitarian aid agencies to provide support for IDPs in Azerbaijan has greatly reduced pressure on the Azerbaijani authorities to take responsibility for these people, which constitute about 15 percent of the population of the country, or to consider compromises that might allow these IDPs to return to their homes. In these respects, the substitution effect may have prolonged the war and reduced the incentives for the parties to reach a negotiated outcome (MacFarlane 2001, 22).

Substitution effects were also evident in the Rwandan refugee camps established in Eastern Zaire. Internally, the camps were organized by the same Rwandan leaders who had organized the 1994 Rwanda genocide and among refugees were the former soldiers and *interhamwe* who had been involved in the atrocities (Shearer 2000, 193). A large amount of external aid was delivered to the camps in 1994-95 and these leaders perceived the camps as "a means to maintain control over the population and prepare for a future invasion of Rwanda" (Shearer 2000, 193). Reportedly, when the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) and the Rwandan

army invaded the camps, they found the documents to confirm that the camps had also received international shipments of weapons. Humanitarian assistance ended up with assisting the rearming of the former Rwandan army, creating an enormous potential for future conflict (Shearer 2000, 193).

As a third negative impact, humanitarian assistance may reinforce intergroup tension and competition when aid agencies unevenly provide it among local groups (*distributional impacts*) (Smock 1997, online). Aid agencies often target subgroups—especially those who have been marginalized or impoverished by their own societies—since, with limited resources, they must set priorities and focus on where the need is greatest (Anderson 1999, 46). However, when aid agencies target humanitarian assistance toward specific categories of vulnerability at the expense of the rest of the population, tension can occur between recipient and non-recipient populations, as in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kenya and Ethiopia. Targeting certain vulnerable groups with humanitarian assistance may even make them "targets of violence" (MacFarlane 1999, 559).

In many cases, refugees receive attention and services that are unavailable to the local host community. Similarly, returning refugees or IDPs receive humanitarian assistance, but people who stayed in a war zone and never fled during the fighting often receive none (Anderson 1999, 46). Although this modality of assistance may satisfy the principle of proportionality, it is likely to foster discontent or resentment among those who receive none. Such discord impedes reintegration and carries some potential for the renewal of micro-level conflict; especially where vulnerability correlates with ethnic difference, adherence to proportionality may aggravate ethnic conflict (MacFarlane 2001, 26-7).

Likewise, focusing humanitarian assistance on those who have suffered the most often means helping those who lost the conflict. In Tajikistan, aid agencies directed a program of postwar housing reconstruction toward the Garmi people, who had lost the war and had suffered the most damage. The Kulyabi people who had won the war resented seeing the international community restrengthening their "enemy" whom they had just defeated (Anderson 1999, 46).

In Sudan, the perception that particular groups had received disproportional assistance provoked raiding activities directed at the beneficiaries. In Rwanda, the international community responded with humanitarian aid to the Hutu communities that fled into eastern Zaire from Rwanda, but very little aid went to Rwandans who had survived the genocide committed by the Hutu militias (Anderson 1999, 47). This aid imbalance favoring the Hutu refugee camps in Zaire contributed to not only furthering antagonism between the two communities, but also deteriorating relations between the Rwandan government and international aid agencies (MacFarlane 2001, 24-5).

There are other forms of differential benefits from humanitarian assistance. In emergency situations, employment by aid agencies is "extremely lucrative," but it often benefits different groups to different degrees (Shearer 2000, 192). When aid agencies want to hire local people who can speak their language, or who have other skills needed by them, they may end up with hiring people from certain groups (Smock 1997, online). Since such skills are often related to educational access that is correlated with patterns of privilege and discrimination in the society, benefits from aid agencies tend to be enjoyed by those who are historically advantaged

(Anderson 1999, 47). In short, aid agencies may reinforce subgroup identities through aid programs and patterns of employment, which may lead to intergroup tensions (Anderson 1999, 46).

Another element of distributional impacts is the uneven benefits of aid affecting the balance of power among warring parties (Anderson 1999, 46; MacFarlane 1999, 558). Provided in large amounts in a conflict setting with scarce resources, aid can impact the outcome of conflict and the confidence of warring parties, either inadvertently or advertently (Prendergast 1996, 31). Overconcentrating aid in a stable area may also tip the regional balance and destabilize the area by creating a target. The failure to provide aid proportional to humanitarian needs deepens a party's perceived isolation and encourages a sense that international actors are not impartial. Such perception tends to reduce the credibility and leverage of international actors in the process of conflict resolution (MacFarlane 1999, 558).

The Nagorno-Karabakh case suggests several negative implications of distributional impacts. This relative neglect of Nagorno-Karabakh in humanitarian action sustained its isolation and "limited its exposure to international norms," since the insurgents perceived international actors as biased in favor of the state authorities (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 97; MacFarlane 2001, 24). The fact that Nagorno-Karabakh overcame the humanitarian emergency despite the dearth of external assistance enhanced its self-confidence and promoted the isolation of the region, which correspondingly reduced its propensity to compromise (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 97).

Besides, concentrating aid activities in certain areas in Somalia resulted in negative consequences. Such aid imbalances reportedly fuelled

interfactional fighting and destabilized the areas where aid was delivered, provoking others to attack these areas (MacFarlane 1999, 558).

A fourth negative impact of humanitarian assistance on conflict concerns the purchase by aid agencies of security services from warring factions to protect aid workers and relief supplies in a highly volatile and dangerous situation (MacFarlane 2001, 23). The payment from aid agencies to warring factions directly finances their war effort (Shiras 1996, 114; Anderson 1999, 42). Anderson (1999) makes the added point that hiring armed guards sends an implicit ethical message that it is legitimate for arms to decide who gains access to humanitarian assistance and that security and safety are derived from weapons (56). This view encourages belligerents to have more firepower than anyone else and rely on threat to achieve their aims (Anderson 1999, 56). The demand for security reinforced the demand for weapons, fueling further cycles of rearmament beyond the internal warlord dynamic. Even worse, hiring guards from local militia may not solve the problem of security, since guards and drivers themselves are frequently implicated in theft (Shearer 2000, 192).

In Somalia, aid agencies hired Somali vehicles equipped with their own drivers and security in order to prevent theft, although resorting to armed security clashed with the humanitarian mandate (Shearer 2000, 192-3). However, much of the looting that took place in Somalia was conducted by the armed guards themselves, in collusion with local officials. Ironically, aid agencies that halted aid deliveries if they did not maintain security had a "much better track record—keeping losses down to less than 1 per cent in some cases" (Shiras 1996, 114). Extortion networks including bribes and Mafia protection rackets also prevailed through the payments from aid

agencies (Prendergast 1996, 25).

Fifth, aid agencies may bestow unrepresentative legitimacy on warring parties through negotiations for humanitarian activities. When external aid agencies operate in areas controlled by factions, they have to negotiate with de facto authorities in order to secure humanitarian access and arrange aid processes (Anderson 1999, 50). The commanders, acting in a role of governance, expect aid agencies to comply with the restrictions they impose in their area of command and to make "legitimate" payments to them (in the form of taxes, duties or fees for services) (Anderson 1999, 50). Humanitarian assistance channeled through such "authorities" not only reinforces factional power but also attributes a degree of international recognition to them (MacFarlane 2000, xi, 41). Moreover, the moral legitimacy that accrues to warring factions because of the support received from aid agencies may make the insurgents less willing to engage in peace negotiations (Smock 1997, online).

In Sudan, when aid agencies tried to avoid dealing with the armed factions that control the areas in which they work, these agencies and the intended aid recipients became targets of theft, threats and attacks (Anderson 1999, 51). Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was established by international agencies as a system for negotiation to ensure equal and unimpeded humanitarian access to all civilian populations. Yet warring factions saw OLS as a "legitimating force" and used negotiations with OLS to "gain approval as legitimate wielders of power" over the populations and regions (Anderson 1999, 50-51).

Finally, humanitarian assistance can negatively affect conflict when it acts as a "magnet" as it displaces populations and warring parties use it as a

"key tactic of warfare" (Shearer 2000, 191). Governments and insurgent forces may manipulate aid delivery sites or selectively provide aid to populations in order to depopulate certain areas to suit their military purposes (Macrae and Zwi 1994). Concentrating people into more controllable areas is "a classic counterinsurgency technique" that has been repeated in Burundi and in the northwest provinces of Rwanda (Shearer 2000, 191-2). When military groups cannot sustain operations at certain areas, one solution is deliberately to create displaced groups in the areas where military operations are planned and to prompt relief efforts by aid agencies (MacFarlane 2000, 44). Military forces may even attempt to attract external resources by deliberately maintaining malnourished groups or by excluding displaced persons or politically vulnerable groups (Jaspars 2000, 18).

Besides such military tactics, belligerents may also manipulate aid deliveries for their political purposes. Belligerents can control people's loyalties by claiming credit for the provision of aid, mobilizing populations on the basis of promised aid and organizing or controlling local distribution structures (Prendergast 1996, 32). Population movement through aid provision may also allow the warring parties to keep their populations dependent (Prendergast 1996, 32).

Population displacement, facilitated by aid distribution, may create tension and competition between the displaced and host populations, often creating local resentment at large-scale aid to the former (distributional impacts) (Adams and Bradbury 1995, 45). These tensions can be further exacerbated when there are identity differences between targeted and general populations, such as ethnicity, clan and religion (Prendergast 1996, 29).

In Mozambique, before 1987, large-scale humanitarian assistance was

largely absent in both the areas controlled by the government and insurgent Resistência Nacional Moçambicana forces (RENAMO). After 1987, and particularly after 1990, since international aid agencies encountered difficulties in aiding people in RENAMO rebel areas, aid expanded significantly in the exclusively government-held zones (Keen and Wilson 1994, 213). The concentration of aid in the hands of the government expanded its military control in northern Mozambique and enabled large populations to live in the government-held zones, thereby depopulating rebel-held zones (Shearer 2000, 191).

In the late 1980s, famine relief in Sudan was concentrated on refugee camps in neighboring Ethiopia and on government garrison towns in the south. The government succeeded in depopulating parts of the south, notably oil-rich areas, through concentrating aid in certain areas (Keen 1998, 58-9). On the other hand, the large population displaced along the Sudan-Uganda and Sudan-Kenya border assured the SPLA of aid supply in strategic locations from aid agencies who were serving the destitute (MacFarlane 2000, 44).

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In summary, humanitarian assistance negatively affect conflict in mainly four ways. First, through the manipulation of warring parties, humanitarian assistance can directly feed into conflict by benefiting those who engage in violence, financing war efforts and freeing up local resources to prosecute war. Second, humanitarian assistance may allow parties to conflict to avoid compromising or negotiating since these parties are "protected from the pain and loss of life, which may cause them to sue for peace" (Roberts 1996, 59).

Third, the provision of humanitarian assistance may advertently or inadvertently affects power balances between belligerents and worsens tensions among communities. Fourth, humanitarian assistance may serve strategic purposes of belligerents by facilitating population displacement and legitimizing insurgents.

2.1.2. Negative impacts on local populations

Humanitarian assistance saves lives and alleviates human suffering, but it may worsen the situations of war-affected populations in the long term. First, a large amount of aid into war-torn societies inevitably distorts local systems of production and market mechanisms, leading to a dependency culture, whereby a society relies heavily on external aid (Slim 1997, online; Roberts 1996, 59). Food aid is often the culprit of this dependency culture since food aid (and not agricultural inputs, fishing gear or animal health services) tends to weaken the subsistence economy such as agriculture and many procedures may not return to production after a long period of food aid dependence (Prendergast 1996, 31-33).

Somalia provides an eloquent example where the arrival of a large amount of food aid decreased agricultural production, while local farmers were unable to gain reasonable prices for their agricultural surpluses (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 78). Relief agencies had purchased the food relief either from international intervention stock or from private suppliers at the lowest possible international price for emergency needs—with good intentions. The massive deliveries to Somalia, however, amounted to an immense dumping operation and did enormous damage to indigenous

agriculture and local farmers, who were struggling to achieve normality from drought and the wreck of civil war. (Middleton and O'Keefe 1998, 47). The damage is well illustrated by the price of maize in one local market, which fell to only 28 percent of the local cost of production in the early months of 1993. If any importation of relief supplies had been geared to increasing the purchase of food produced within the country at local market prices, and if imported supplies had correspondingly been purchased out, the massive damage may have been averted (Middleton and O'Keefe 1998, 47).

Second, humanitarian assistance may also undermine networks and relationships on which the social order and economic strength rested prior to conflict. External aid often creates disincentives to traditional intercommunal cooperation or exchange networks when it is delivered to recipients without recognizing the socioeconomic context, the historical trade patterns and exchange networks of the society (Prendergast 1996, 32). This fatally undermines economic incentives to a stable peace. Coultan (1996) comments,

> When people are in desperate need of immediate assistance,
> international interventions are appropriate and warmly
> welcomed. But the ability of many relief agencies to invest in
> locally sustainable "buffer capacity" is limited. Hierarchical
> direct emergency actions contribute to weakening indigenous
> resilience.

Third, humanitarian assistance often facilitates the concentration of populations, which also creates dependency among recipients. When aid agencies distribute relief goods at certain points, people tend to concentrate around those areas. Although the geographic concentration of people may, from a logistic point of view, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, it may foster dependency by distancing people from their normal

means of livelihood and weakening social cohesion (DAC 1997, 31). If these areas lack the agricultural infrastructure, humanitarian assistance becomes the only means of support among populations (Sanderson 1996, 182). When a CHE or famine ended, people in feeding areas far from their homes are unable to plant a new crop. This means that their vulnerability and dependence on aid agencies were extended for another season (Anderson 1998, 144). Besides, the concentration of food in certain areas and drawing people around them can generate "political dynamics," with control over the humanitarian assistance sowing the seeds of further conflict among different groups of people (Sanderson 1996, 182).

Finally, humanitarian assistance may feed into the war economy that benefits certain people and discourage them from seeking for peace. In conflict situations, peacetime economic activities shift to war-related patterns of production, employment, trade and services. When aid agencies arrive, demand for certain assets rises; for example, costs of hotel rooms, office space, housing, food, furniture and equipment are bid by the influx of expatriates. People who own or control these facilities and goods can become wealthy in the midst of the otherwise deteriorating economic conditions of war (Anderson 1999, 43). In addition, humanitarian assistance creates wage-earning jobs, such as translators, drivers and managers. When an economy is disrupted by war and few non-war economic opportunities exist, local individuals or groups who gain economically from the presence of humanitarian assistance can reinforce their interest in perpetuating the war economy (Anderson 1999, 43). By undermining incentives to peacetime economic activities, external aid may lay the basis for further conflict (MacFarlane 2001, xi).

2.1.3. Negative impacts on local politics

Humanitarian assistance and the modalities of its distribution can profoundly affect local politics, especially indigenous capacities, incentives to corruption and power balances in the authority structure (Prendergast 1996, 31). First, aid agencies can undermine local social structures and fledgling local authorities in areas of CHEs by setting up parallel administrations (Prendergast 1996, 30). Local administrative institutions are often by-passed and weakened owing to the alternative capacity of well-equipped international aid agencies (DAC 1997, 31). Furthermore, aid agencies import a large amount of goods that can be produced locally and create an imbalance between external and domestic resources. This may replace or undermine local capacities and local control to carry out resource allocation, as well as locally initiated peacebuilding and developmental activities (Smock 1997, online; Anderson 1999, 42-3; MacFarlane 2001, xi).

Second, humanitarian assistance may add a further incentive to corruption in local administrations (Cremer 1998, online). Powerful individuals within communities (e.g., elders, local authorities or village committees) may take advantage of their positions to take shares larger than their entitlements (Jaspars 2000, 18). There are various forms of misappropriation of humanitarian assistance. First, local authorities or community leaders may profit from "kick-back agreements," by which they order relief goods at excessive prices and gain the additional amount or part of it (Cremer 1998, online). Second, they may sell relief goods to dealers or distribute relief goods to persons not entitled to receive them in exchange for payment (Cremer 1998, online). Third, they may delay the spending of funds

intended for humanitarian assistance and use them in the meantime to make a profit. Investing these funds can be a lucrative form of embezzlement given the high inflation rates and high nominal interest rates in many developing countries (Cremer 1998, online). Fourth, local authorities may accept relief goods of poorer quality than was agreed in the contract and gain an additional profits result from delivering poor quality (Cremer 1998, online). Fifth and finally, local authorities may take advantage of the considerable differences between the official rate of exchange (which is used for statements of account provided to foreign donors) and the far more advantageous rate on the parallel or black market (Cremer 1998, online).

Finally, an aid-driven economy sometimes changes social power balances in the local politics. Rival political elites and factions may exploit external aid to gain leverage over national resources (e.g., lumber in Cambodia and diamonds in Sierra Leone) (Patrick 1999, 59). Such competition for power, propelled by external aid, may discourage efforts for building peace.

2.2. Negative impacts of political interests on humanitarian assistance

Political interests always profoundly influence and often undercut humanitarian action. According to MacFarlane (2000), politics has historically interacted with humanitarian action in at least two ways. In the first place, politics and "war as a continuation of politics" create human suffering, either inadvertently or because noncombatants are deliberately targeted, to which humanitarian actors respond (MacFarlane 2000, 11, 85).

Second, the political interests of parties to conflict, neighboring non-belligerents states and major powers tend to have a profound effect in shaping the scope and character of the humanitarian response to suffering (MacFarlane 2000, 11, 85). Humanitarian activities are often manipulated by political actors at local, regional and international levels, while the deficiencies in political will can be mostly found at the international level.

At the local level, humanitarian issues are perceived by warring parties to be closely connected to the pursuit of their self-interested objectives (MacFarlane 2000, 2). As discussed earlier, warring parties often manipulate humanitarian assistance to gain profits, finance war efforts and serve military purposes, resulting in reinforcing and perpetuating conflict. Warring parties also undermine humanitarian operations by attacking aid supplies, relief infrastructure, relief personnel and local production and marketing system (Prendergast 1996, 18). A main interest in such attacking is to maximize their own share of aid and limit that of their adversaries (MacFarlane 2000, 85; Curtis 2001, 3). Second, attacks are aimed to dissuade aid agencies from operating in a particular area or serving a particular population, as seen in Goma, Zaire (Prendergast 1996, 18). Third, attacks on food or production can create famines that would benefit some powerful groups or individuals (Macrae and Zwi 1994, 301). Fourth, by undermining production through attacks, war leaders can leave their populations dependent and compliant on them (Macrae and Zwi 1994, 301). Fifth, when such attacks prevail, warring parties can increase the need for aid agencies to buy into the extortionist protection rackets connected to military authorities (as in Somalia) (MacFarlane 2000, 35). Finally, warring parties attack to deny or block the provision of assistance in the hope of making the adversary more

amenable to compromise or surrender (Prendergast 1996, 18-19).

At the regional level, a major concern of non-belligerent states in the region adjacent to those affected by conflict is forced displacement, which potentially has a significant impact on their security and stability (MacFarlane 2000, xiii, 85). This concern, along with their geopolitical interest in the region, may affect their willingness to support humanitarian assistance and the level of their involvement in humanitarian action. Depending on their perceived interests in the course and outcome of the conflict, these neighboring states may manipulate or impede humanitarian activities. Contiguous states may also seek to employ a flow of refugees and displaced people as an instrument of their own regional policy (MacFarlane 2000, 3).

At the international level, the political interests of major donor governments play a critical role in defining the scope and character of humanitarian engagement in CHEs (MacFarlane 2000, xiii). Political neglect or political manipulation by international actors may constrain or negatively affect humanitarian action. First, with the lessening strategic stake in CHEs since the 1990s, there is an increasing tendency among major donor states toward political neglect to address the root causes of an emergency (Slim 1997, online; Keen 1998, 59). Since major powers are reluctant to accept risks for resolving violent conflict, they began to employ humanitarian assistance to replace rigorous military and diplomatic efforts (MacFarlane 2000, 3). Humanitarian organizations like the ICRC or UNHCR are then sent in to manage the crisis in "Band-Aid, palliative operations," even though they are not equipped to handle political crises like civil wars or the collapse of governments (Warner 1999, online). This means that these humanitarian

organizations manage CHEs by dealing with the symptoms, not the root causes, of the problem (Warner 1999, online).

In Rwanda, for instance, relief operations provided an "alibi for international inaction" in terms of the failure to prevent the genocide and the weak efforts to isolate and punish those responsible (Keen 1998, 60). Similarly in Bosnia, the major international actors (the UN, the USA and Russia) used humanitarianism as a "fig leaf" for the lack and indifference of their policies (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 68). As a consequence of political neglect, along with little efforts to address the root causes, humanitarian suffering may be prolonged or repeated.

Second, humanitarian activities may be discouraged, when international actors, just like local and regional actors, manipulate humanitarian assistance according to their national self-interest (Curtis 2001, 3; MacFarlane 2000, 85). While in some cases donor governments may engage in humanitarian action out of a concern to protect or to promote humanitarian values, in other cases they may do so based on self-interested calculations or foreign policy (MacFarlane 2000, 9). Donor governments may use their role in international humanitarian operations to isolate a certain group, to cover and make an excuse for military activities (such as the use of air attacks on Serb forces in Bosnia) or to divert attention from their domestic abuses (such as in Kenya, Nigeria and Turkey) (Keen 1998, 60; Shearer 2000, 198). As a result of such policies and perception of humanitarian action, the effectiveness of humanitarian operations is likely to be undermined.

Humanitarian aid policies and practices in Afghanistan are determined by Western foreign policy goals, rather than by the actual conditions required for principled humanitarian action (Atmar 2001, online).

While Afghanistan received the highest per capita aid in its history during the Cold War, humanitarian budgets were cut dramatically after the Soviets withdrawal from the country in 1989, despite continued human suffering. This cutback of aid is due to the change in Western foreign policy and their perception toward the Taliban "from heroic freedom fighters to brutal, sexist bandits, despite the fact that the cast of characters remains largely unchanged" (Atmar 2001, online). In response to the discriminatory policies and practices of the Taliban, donors and some aid agencies have isolated and imposed punitive conditionalities on the regime, employing humanitarian aid as a foreign-policy instrument (Curtis 2001, 4). In short, the humanitarian principles are secondary to foreign-policy interests and are abandoned when they conflict with the latter (Atmar 2001, online). Donors continue to use punitive conditionalities and base their humanitarian response on their narrow domestic and foreign policy concerns, even though these policies have not produced desired political and social changes and even have had negative humanitarian consequences in the country (Atmar 2001, online).

*   *   *

Political interests at local, regional and international levels have a profound impact on humanitarian response and its effectiveness. Parties to conflict often manipulate or disturb humanitarian activities to prevent aid deliveries to their adversaries, gain a larger share of aid and serve other political and military purposes. For regional actors, security and strategic issues are of great importance in deciding to support or impede humanitarian activities. International actors may also negatively affect humanitarian action when they

lack a political will to take action or when they try to manipulate humanitarian assistance according to their own interests. In short, the interests of local, regional and international political actors play an important role in determining the access, the scale and the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in response to humanitarian needs.

Chapter 3: Positive interaction between humanitarian assistance and politics

3.1. Positive impacts of humanitarian assistance on political and humanitarian aspects

In addition to the humanitarian mandate, namely, alleviating suffering and saving lives, humanitarian assistance has a "oft-ignored 'bright side'"; it can contribute to violence reduction, confidence-building measures and human rights protection (Weiss 1999, online).

First, if particular patterns of humanitarian assistance can increase the levels of violence, humanitarian assistance may also be employed to reduce potential and actual violence by decreasing the "need" for fighting forces and civilians to turn to violence in pursuit of sustenance (Keen 2000, 37; Keen and Wilson 1994, 216). This logic is supported by the fact that, in the absence of effective relief in Somalia and Sierra Leone in the early 1990s, destitution and hunger seemed to be important factors in persuading young men to join an armed band (Keen 1998, 60). Also, since the material conditions in which refugees live often influence their tendency toward radicalism, improving these conditions can reduce the appeal of rebel movements and make it more difficult for rebels to attract recruits (Keen 1998, 60). As an example, the experience of OLS shows that a flow of humanitarian assistance through OLS contributed to reducing some aspects of violence, even though it did not fully advance the peace agenda (Minear *et al.* 1990, 26).

Stolen aid may expand food supplies in local markets and in turn reduce levels of violence by bringing down food prices, thereby preventing

people from turning to violence in order to sustain themselves (Keen 2000, 37). That is to say, even if the channel of aid delivery is undesirable, the result may turn out to be positive from the perspective of social stability and levels of conflict (MacFarlane 2001, 19). In Mozambique, diverted aid may have reduced raiding and violence by impoverished government soldiers and enhanced the capacity of the government to provide protection for civilians (Keen and Wilson 1994, 216). These effects have to be considered with great caution, however, since the corresponding dangers inherent in diversion, in particular the danger of encouraging more raiding and exacerbating conflict.

Second, humanitarian assistance can serve as a confidence-building measure by enhancing trust between communities, regenerating ties of interdependence among them and fostering a sense of security conducive to compromise (McFarlane and Minear 1996, ix). Many aspects of life continue to connect people, rather than divide them, even in civil war: "common history, culture, language, and experience; shared institutions and values; economic and political interdependence; and habits of thinking and acting" (Anderson 1999, 24). When humanitarian assistance successfully endeavors to connect people, it can make a discernible contribution to the normalization of relations among communities torn by conflict and the building of confidence upon which durable political solutions may be based (Weiss 1999, online).

For instance, a cattle-vaccination program among the Mundari in Equatoria, Sudan, organized by Oxfam and a local NGO, appears to have contributed to relatively peaceful relations among local chiefs, who came to realize that they could not hope to gain access to vaccines unless peace prevailed in their respective areas (Keen and Wilson 1994, 216). In

Mozambique, humanitarian assistance also served as an "instrument of national reconciliation" by opening up channels of communication with communities residing in RENAMO-controlled areas and restoring basic community services for displaced persons and refugees returning to their homes (Ajello 1996, 197).

During the early efforts to reconstruct the market in Tskhinvali, South Ossetia, humanitarian assistance was used to encourage reconciliation and to rebuild ties between communities in conflict in the hope of restoring commerce between the Georgian and Osset populations in the region (MacFarlane 2001, 49). Other examples of shared interest which aid agencies aimed to strengthen are the rehabilitation of part of Tskhinvali's telephone system with links to infrastructure in Tbilisi and the reconstruction of a bridge linking the people and economies of the once-divided communities (Tbilisi 1998, 10).

A third positive impact of humanitarian assistance on conflict settings is that, if properly directed, humanitarian assistance can play a vital role in reducing human rights abuses and allowing people to enjoy some form of political protection (Keen and Wilson 1994, 217). Humanitarian operations encourage the presence of aid personnel as well as journalists in areas where they may witness and publicize acts of violence (Keen 1998, 60). The mere presence of outside humanitarians (and sometimes military forces to protect humanitarian activities) can enhance the protection of human rights (Weiss 1999, online).

3.2. Positive impacts of politics on humanitarian assistance

Although political interference frequently constitutes a fundamental obstacle to effective humanitarian operations, politics is not necessarily a negative force for humanitarian efforts (MacFarlane 2000, xiii). Political factors may on occasion broaden humanitarian access, accelerate efforts to meet human needs and induce a level of response not otherwise forthcoming (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, ix, 79).

At the local level, the interests of warring parties in reconciliation may lead them to support wider humanitarian access, as witnessed in Georgia (MacFarlane 2000, 3). At the regional level, when states have to bear the costs of hosting people displaced by conflict in the neighboring countries, they have a great interest in dealing with the causes of the conflict (MacFarlane 2000, 3). Both contiguous states and major powers farther afield likewise may have an incentive to expand the flow of aid resources to promote their own political objectives (MacFarlane 2000, 10). For instance, rather than distorting aid allocations, the perception of political actors may be expressed in terms of "international solidarity" with those in distress (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, ix). Such solidarity induces political pressure, which helps to expand humanitarian access and activities.

The success of international mediation in Cambodia and El Salvador paved the way to substantial outside resources for those displaced by war (Minear and Weiss 1995, 50). Also, OLS was the first case in which warring parties agreed to create a "corridor of tranquility" and allow humanitarian supplies to the cross lines of battle (Prendergast, 1997, 14). Since 1989, OLS has provided a channel for humanitarian assistance by NGOs and UN agencies

to war-affected populations. The international political will, along with the collaboration of the warring parties on humanitarian relief, facilitated humanitarian operations and laid the groundwork for reconstruction and development activities (Minear *et al.* 1990, 37).

Chapter 4: Analysis of minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive effects

Although the actual and potential positive effects of humanitarian assistance need to be recognized, the large majority of humanitarians now acknowledge the necessity to identify and address the negative elements of humanitarian assistance, which cause the very suffering it is meant to alleviate. In order to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive effects, humanitarian aid agencies, together with political actors, need to improve seven areas: (1) collaboration between humanitarian assistance and politics; (2) planning contextually sensitive programs; (3) accurate assessment and regular monitoring; (4) donor coordination; (5) addressing root causes; and (6) rethinking humanitarian principles.

4.1. Collaboration between humanitarian assistance and politics

For successful humanitarian operations, it is essential that humanitarian and political actions be conceived and implemented on "parallel tracks" that are mutually reinforcing and complementary (Minear and Weiss 1995, 50-51). There is a critique that integrating humanitarian assistance and politics means losing humanitarian principles in favor of political goals. However, in order to address CHEs that call for complex responses, neither humanitarian nor political action alone is sufficient in itself.

On the one hand, if aid agencies deny political realities—the practice for decades—they do so not only at their own peril, but also to the detriment

of the aid beneficiaries (Weiss 1999, online). Aid workers and aid supplies are not immune from the attack of belligerents and gangs in war zones (Eade 1996, online). Humanitarian activities can be manipulated or impeded by political actors for their own interests. Aid agencies can never ensure humanitarian assistance for recipients without a careful attention to the political interests of actors concerned and the dynamics of conflict (Minear 1989, online).

On the other hand, if political actors fail to embrace humane values, their political action and inaction may easily precipitate a humanitarian disaster (Minear and Weiss 1995, 50). With humanitarianism at the heart of political considerations, political strategies can contributes to—even though it does not guarantee—success in the humanitarian arena (Minear and Weiss 1995, 50). Successful humanitarian efforts can in turn promote political agendas, such as a sense of normalcy and a climate of reconciliation (Minear and Weiss 1995, 49). Humanitarian action and values require supportive politics to sustain them, while political action and interests can benefit from making space for humanitarian action (Minear and Weiss 1995, 51).

In order for donor governments to accept humanitarian responsibility, Kofi A. Annan, Secretary-General of the UN, notes that states need to engage in a "new, broader definition of national interests," going beyond traditional notions of sovereignty and the ways in which states have defined their national interests (Annan 1999, 2). In the era of CHEs, "the collective interest *is* the national interest," an attitude that helps to "induce states to find greater unity in the pursuit of common goals and values" (Annan 1999, 2). By regarding humanitarian assistance and protection as a high priority in their policy decisions, political actors can enhance humanitarian access and expand

available resources (MacFarlane 2000, 5).

To persuade or pressure political actors to accept their humanitarian responsibilities and expand the space for humanitarian action, advocacy and lobbying may be useful (MacFarlane 2000, 87). The calculations of political actors are not always immutable; they can be shaped through external and internal pressures on decision-makers from humanitarian aid agencies (MacFarlane 2000, 5, 89). Advocacy may influence the level of engagement of major powers in humanitarian action and help to create and maintain access for humanitarian agencies in the field (MacFarlane 2000, xiii). Humanitarians can also advocate political involvement to halt violence and ensure respect for humanity, justice and human rights (Weiss 1999, online). In the Haitian and Karabakh cases, effective lobbying in domestic arenas succeeded in encouraging national leaders to support humanitarian action more decisively (MacFarlane 2000, 87).

In summary, the extent to which aid operations can be effectual often depends on the willingness of humanitarian agencies to engage in the political process. The political participation by humanitarians is probably a precondition for their constructive and cooperative relations with political actors, since it sensitizes political actors to the humanitarian dimensions of their both action and inaction and facilitates humanitarian response (MacFarlane 2000, 30, 89). With the conceptual and practical collaboration between political and humanitarian actors, the "synergy" between the two can be improved to advance both humanitarian and political objectives.

4.2. Contextually sensitive planning

As discussed earlier, humanitarian assistance, whether as an inadvertent by-product or the result of manipulation by belligerents, may finance war efforts, affect the balance of power, aggravate tension between communities and undermine local strengths (DAC 1997, 30; Anderson 1999, 1). By planning and implementing aid programs that can weaken "dividers" and strengthen "connectors," aid agencies may be able to minimize such negative impacts of humanitarian assistance. Since each society has different "dividers" and "connectors," it is important for aid providers to take into account the political, social and economic context in which humanitarian operations are implemented. Here, possible strategies by aid agencies to prevent six areas of negative impacts will be analyzed: diversion, substitution effects, distributional impacts, buying security from local militia, legitimizing illegitimate authority and dependency.

4.2.1. Diversion

In order to reduce diversion, aid agencies need to aim at lessening the incentives of belligerents to manipulate aid, by reducing the opportunity and the economic gain that belligerents and other groups extract from aid. Careful planning and implementation of aid programs may reduce the incidence of diversion in some cases, while they may not make significant difference in other cases. Diversions by taxation and the inflation of population figures fall into the latter category. To minimize taxes on relief supplies by belligerents, possible strategies include direct aid distribution to

beneficiaries, distribution of small quantities on a regular basis and distribution to clearly defined target groups (e.g., groups that are traditionally prioritized by the target population) (Jaspars 2000, 37). These strategies, however, are probably not effective in changing attitudes of belligerents toward relief supplies and preventing them from imposing taxes.

In order to prevent diversion by the inflation of population figures, aid programs may also have a limited role to prevent it. It may be more effective to improve the modalities of assessment and monitoring, since poor or inadequate assessment and monitoring mechanisms create an environment for the easy diversion, especially in situations of mass concentrations of refugees or IDPs. Rigorous assessment and monitoring can help aid agencies attain the proper collection of data, although belligerents may not accept such activities by aid agencies in the area where these belligerents control (Prendergast 1996, 58).

On the other hand, in order to reduce the incentive to the diversion by theft, several strategies through program planning and implementation may be effective. First, the choices of relief commodities need to be accorded more attention, since certain kinds of commodities are more easily looted or more valuable than others and tend to draw more attention of warring commanders (Prendergast 1996, 72). Some agencies have consciously tried to lower the resale value of their aid goods without damaging their usefulness, thus undermining the incentives of thieves (Anderson 1999, 40). In Somalia, some aid agencies stopped delivering high-priced rice and substituted sorghum or other less valuable but equally nourishing products (Anderson 1999, 40). Since the resale of these products is not lucrative, the level of theft diminished as the food continued to sustain the health of recipients

(MacFarlane 2001, 34; Anderson 1999, 40).

Processing methods also can reduce the incidence of theft. The ICRC successfully limited the theft of rice in Somalia by wetting the rice, which thereafter would spoil quickly and could not be stored or shipped effectively (MacFarlane 2001, 34). Distribution of cooked food was another useful safeguard since it had no resale value and could not be stored (MacFarlane 2001, 34). Also, the ICRC distributed blankets to families, by cutting each blanket in half. Although theft had been common because blankets were scarce and profitable, by cutting the blankets in half, their resale value dropped. After they are delivered to families, families could easily sew the blankets back together (Anderson 1999, 40). Some aid workers also made theft so inconvenient that the effort required is not worth the return. They routinely punched a hole in each bag of grain with knives and removed the lids from the oil cans when shipments arrived. Families would then have to carry a bag of grain carefully without leaking the contents; whereas if thieves stole them in bulk and loaded them onto trucks, much of the contents would be lost (Anderson 1999, 40).

A second strategy to avoid theft is to improve the modality of aid deliveries. Aid providers need to adopt different, locally effective strategies to prevent both opportunity for and incentive to attacks on convoys and looting (Anderson 1998, 146). In some areas, they need to rely on the broad publicity of scheduled delivery times and quantities so that local people could control the aid resources and hold potential thieves accountable in the event of losses. In other places, aid agencies need to rely on secrecy, delivering goods without prior announcement of times or locations to avoid theft (Anderson 1998, 146). Strategies also include the use of a variety of entry-

points into the affected area, frequent change of delivery schedules and transportation of small quantities along different routes (Jaspars 2000, 37). Aid agencies may have to avoid storing large quantities of aid goods and distribute them immediately (Jaspars 2000, 37). In Cambodia, when one aid agency needed to take a large amount of cash to its distant office to pay local staff, the cash carried in the cargo plane arrived at the airport, but it was divided among several small vehicles (Anderson 1999, 41). Each vehicle took a different route to the office and made it too difficult for thieves to locate and attack these carriers. Even if they seized one or two vehicles, the losses were minimal and the gains to the thieves were not worth the effort (Anderson 1999, 41).

Conversely, some options initially thought to prevent theft have later proved to have a negative impact. They include hiring armed guards to ride with convoys or to protect warehouses, threatening to pull aid programs out of a region if goods are stolen and hiring local merchants to manage delivery (Anderson 1999, 42). In some cases, hiring armed guards and threatening to withdraw aid programs can intensify a war culture and hiring local merchants can reinforce a war economy by making the continuation of aid (and hence of the war that prompts it) profitable (Anderson 1999, 42). In other words, these options not only promote "dividers" rather than "connectors," but also deliver negative "ethical messages" that justify arms and the continuation of war.

A third strategy to minimize diversion through program planning and implementation concerns "who delivers aid and to whom." Jaspars (2000) discusses six types of distribution mechanisms, their benefits and their risks/limitations. First, when external aid agencies distribute humanitarian assistance to individuals, this can reduce risk of diversion and guarantee

access to assistance by the politically vulnerable (Jaspars 2000, 35). This is especially true in the case of distributing cooked food to individuals. This method requires no registration or ration cards, which are often extremely difficult to use and take too much time in certain conflict situations. It can also overcome lack of fuel, utensils, water, physical weakness and other problems. However, this mechanism may not only create population concentrations and health risks associated with overcrowding, but also increase risk of attack and military recruitment. Moreover, aid goods often need to be stored before they are delivered to individuals, which increases the probability of theft or looting (Jaspars 2000, 35).

Second, when aid agencies direct distribution to households based on registration and ratio cards, this can ensure that households receive relief supplies. It can allow aid agencies to control over beneficiary figures and face less risk of diversion by elders, the military or the administration in the community (Jaspars 2000, 35). By getting aid directly into the hands of families (including women heads of households), the decentralization of administration of humanitarian assistance may contribute to the erosion of the power of military authorities (Prendergast 1996, 78). However, this mechanism may result in overregistration of more powerful groups, leading to unequal distribution. It is also difficult to register mobile populations (Jaspars 2000, 35).

Third, distributing aid to community-based relief committees for further distribution to local people is faster than distributing it through registration. More importantly, it can empower local people and make them more responsible, creating social contracts through the election of committee members. Another benefit of this mechanism is that it can be specific to local

conditions (e.g., gender balance). However, there are also disadvantages. On occasion, local representatives may be under pressure to favor certain groups of people (their own relatives, the more powerful and military personnel), or may exclude outsiders (such as the displaced). It may also be difficult to establish truly representative committees in which the politically vulnerable are fairly represented (Jaspars 2000, 35).

Fourth, aid distribution by local NGOs to local people holds the possibility of strengthening civil society. In an acute emergency, local NGOs may be able to reach areas inaccessible to international staff and use local knowledge that the latter are ill-equipped. However, this mechanism may engender a large number of new NGOs, which makes coordination more difficult. Moreover, many local NGOs may not act impartially because of their ethnicity and political affiliations (Jaspars 2000, 35).

A fifth mechanism is aid distribution by traditional elders. The main benefits are that distribution here occurs according to social and cultural values and that it can be accounted for if the population unit is small. However, these elders may exclude outsiders (e.g., the displaced) and the socially marginalized, or take a larger share of the inputs because of their stance. Such risk may be further aggravated since this mechanism is difficult to monitor by external aid agencies (Jaspars 2000, 35).

Finally, if the local government distributes aid, and if the local infrastructure is sufficient and accountable, aid deliveries can be quick, efficient and fair. It also helps to build local capacity. However, there are several risks. First, if unaccountable, exclusion of certain groups can occur. Second, aid may be subject to taxation if resources are scarce. Third, this mechanism may be costly if the local infrastructure needs to be reinforced.

Fourth, there is a question of responsibility—the government may be the source of the emergency in the first place (e.g., forced displacement) (Jaspars 2000, 35).

In summary, all mechanisms have both merits and demerits. In order to protect relief supplies from diversion, Anderson (1998) supports negotiating aid programs, access and deliveries directly with local groups/traditional authorities, since this can hold local actors accountable and enhance local agency. Some concern that the distribution of aid goods at higher levels of social organization than the family may perpetuate existing power structures that are a "part of the conflict" (Prendergast 1996, 78). In addition, local authorities, including traditional authorities, often accept cooperation with warring groups out of self-interest and for protection (Cremer 1998, online). In any case, a key to improve aid distribution methods is to hold local authorities accountable to local people. Such accountability can be encouraged by promoting community participation, improving monitoring and informing local people of their rights.

4.2.2. Substitution effects

To lower the probability that warlords will use aid in pursuit of greed, three factors need to be discussed: the level of external supplies, the attitudes of belligerents and the kind of external aid. The first consideration is given to the level of external aid. Some argue that limiting external inputs to minimal levels can help prevent substitution effects (Anderson 1999, 52). Others argue that while it may be true that "excessively generous assistance" may encourage substitution effects, it is not obvious whether or not lower levels

of aid induce their commitment to civilian welfare and the movement of belligerents towards political settlement (MacFarlane 1999, 552). Even worse, by increasing the general level of desperation in a society, reducing aid might have the opposite effect. MacFarlane (1999) goes on to say that it is the attitudes of belligerents toward the well-being of their populations that affect their inclination toward substitution effects, rather than the level of external aid (552). Their attitude is closely related to "the nature and strength of the ties between the authorities and the populace, the nature of the objectives sought in war, and the degree to which these objectives resonate with the public and with alternative elites" (MacFarlane 1999, 552).

Second, based on the discussion above, if the attitudes of belligerents toward their population have to do with the incidence of substitution effects, aid agencies can aim to co-opt war commanders into assuming responsibility for civilian welfare. Aid agencies can establish systems that increase the commanders' awareness of and their involvement in ameliorating the welfare of their people (Anderson 1999, 52-3). They can also expose these commanders to the real impacts that their policies are having on people's lives and to increase their perception of a stake in being involved in the welfare of their own people. In particular, aid agencies can set up regular meetings with commanders or their representatives to discuss all aspects of humanitarian assistance to civilians and to take the authorities to visit project sites in order to interact with people there (Anderson 1999, 53). It is important to find ways in which aid agencies can promote, rather than substitute, the non-war actions by commanders (Anderson 1999, 50).

Third, aid agencies can be inventive in the types of external aid they provide. To design external supplies in a way that gives them use value but

little sale value may efficiently contain substitution effects (Anderson 1999, 52). Instead of supplying abundant external resources directly to a community, it may be important for aid agencies to focus on supporting local efforts to meet local needs.

4.2.3. Distributional impacts

Humanitarian assistance can unwittingly fuel conflict by deepening the fault lines of conflict, or tilting power balances in favor of those still willing to return to war (Boyce 1999, 367). Distributional impacts need to be analyzed at different levels: local-community level and local-government/insurgent level.

At the local-community level, the principle of impartiality dictates that humanitarian assistance should be delivered in proportion to the need of suffering groups. However, targeting specific categories of vulnerability while ignoring the rest of the population can create tension between recipient and non-recipient populations (e.g., between refugee and host communities). Solving this dilemma may require departures from strict vulnerability criteria in the distribution of humanitarian assistance (MacFarlane 2001, 27). Some argue that "disproportional responses," such as aid to host populations complementing aid to the displaced, may ease antagonisms, even if some aid is wasted (Tbilisi 1998, 12; MacFarlane 2001, 39-40). This means that for "anyone to gain, everyone must gain" (Anderson 1999, 47).

Probably, as MacFarlane (2001) argues, a best way to deal with this issue depends on "knowledge of local circumstances and the adjustment of programming to take these circumstances into account" (40). Through

contextually sensitive approaches to specific problems, aid agencies can direct humanitarian assistance toward linking people's interests and reinforcing their interdependence.

Here are three examples of innovative aid programs that strengthen "connectors." In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an aid agency that delivered humanitarian assistance to Gorazde had to pass through the Republic of Srbska to reach the distribution area. Each time a convoy drove this route, they had to pass by Serb villagers demonstrating their anger toward agency staff, although their need for outside aid was minimal (Anderson 1999, 48). However, after aid workers negotiated with leaders in the bypassed villages to buy the goods needed in Gorazde from those villages and the convoys began to carry locally produced goods to the people on the other side, they met no resistance. War-induced divisions had kept the two sides from finding arrangements themselves, but the external aid agency was able to arrange trade, connect people and benefit both sides (Anderson 1999, 48).

In Lebanon during the factional warfare, an aid agency established health clinics well behind the lines of fighting so that people could reach them without direct exposure to danger. During the sixteen years of open warfare, people had virtually no opportunity interact with those who lived on the other side and even after the first tenuous cease-fire finally established in 1990, since "suspicion and mistrust among groups were strong" (Anderson 1993, 34). The aid agency therefore considered shifting the locations of its clinics to border areas so that people from former warring factions could come to the same care facility. In due course, "[a]s they sat next to each other in waiting rooms, as they saw each other's sick children receive treatment, and as they received the same health care a their former enemies, perhaps their suspicious

could begin to subside and neighbors could be reacquainted across factional lines" (Anderson 1993, 34).

Again in Lebanon, both government and aid agencies were contracting local engineering and construction firms to carry out the massive rebuilding of war-damaged areas. Since these companies were often owned and run by families directly aligned with one of the factions that had been at war, every contract thus became a "focus of interfactional competition" (Anderson 1999, 49). In order to alleviate this problem, it was suggested that aid agencies stipulate that "preference would be given to contractors who demonstrated that they had hired people form different factional groups to work together" (Anderson 1999, 49).

Although such bridging activities may be extremely difficult in the case of people who experienced "ethnic cleansing," aid agencies need to explore methods of confidence building and region-wide approaches to problems (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 109). Instead of observing vulnerability criteria based on ethnicity and allowing differential benefits among ethnic groups, aid can be labeled "community based"—available to everyone in a given area where various groups shared needs (Anderson 1999, 47).

At local-government/insurgent level, past studies have shown that there is a "structural tendency towards disproportionality in assistance in civil wars" (MacFarlane 1999, 557). Some argue that disproportionality is desirable, while others argue that there is a need to affect warring parties as equally as possible. In either way, however, aid can lead to negative impacts.

When one party lacks assistance, it is likely to isolate itself from the attempt of the international community at mediation and to harden its position

against a peace settlement (as Azerbaijan did). It is argued that disproportionality in assistance "can serve the function of reassuring those who may otherwise resist a peace settlement" (Tbilisi 1998, 12; Weiss 1999, online). However, the consequent aid inflow may simply increase the possibilities for substitution effects and diversion, enhancing the capacity of the fighters to continue the conflict (MacFarlane 1999, 559).

For the other side favored with assistance, the generosity of assistance may allow the authorities to sustain war efforts far beyond what otherwise would have been possible (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 107). Sufficient assistance may also diminish its willingness to seek a resolution of conflict (as in the Armenian case) (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 107). Furthermore, there is a concern that external assistance may support the warring forces that are abusing human rights or harming the interest of their civilian populations (such as RENAMO in Mozambique) (Prendergast 1996, 39).

It is clear that merits and demerits of proportionality or disproportionality vary case by case. MacFarlane (1999) argues that the extent to which external assistance impacts on a conflict depends largely on the weight of this assistance in the overall economy of the societies in conflict (560). While external contributions constitute a significant proportion of state revenue in some instances, they may be marginal in other instances where there is substantial access to alternative resources.

4.2.4. Buying security from local militia

Payments to warring forces for protecting aid operations and personnel were proven to fuel the conflict and "it is now generally accepted that the costs of

such liaison with belligerents exceed the benefits in terms of both protection of relief personnel and maintaining control over supplies" (MacFarlane 2001, 36). Given the differing perspectives between humanitarians and belligerents toward humanitarian assistance and the difficulty in coordinating the two, linking the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the cooperation of belligerents is likely to cause serious problems.

Nevertheless, in some cases, to deter diversion and protect aid activities, aid personnel and beneficiaries may require armed protection. Alternative strategies to address the problem of paying militia for security include purchasing protection locally, applying conditionality to the delivery of assistance or threatening to withdraw aid in the face of violence. Unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence indicating that these alternative strategies are effective in minimizing negative effects (MacFarlane 2001, 40-1). Rather, in situations of severe conflict, minimizing the negative effects of buying protection may may be solved by the appropriate levels of political/military support by outside major states and international organizations for humanitarian activities (MacFarlane 2001, 36-40).

4.2.5. Legitimizing illegitimate authority

How aid workers in war zones should interact with illegitimate insurgents is another difficult question. Approaching belligerents with reluctance or hostility to avoid giving them legitimacy tends to yield further negative outcomes (Anderson 1999, 51). Aid agencies may also tend to take responsibility for governance in order to avoid legitimizing warlords, but it

may affect negatively the local institutions and social structures. Rather, aid agencies need to aim to support the ability of communities to hold their leaders accountable for civilian welfare (Anderson 1999, 51). Therefore, the question to be asked is not whether or not aid agencies should interact with illegitimate actors, but how aid agencies can interact with them in a way to hold them accountable for civilian welfare and encourage them to reduce violence (Anderson 1999, 51).

4.2.6. Dependency

In order to avoid dependency among aid recipients, aid programs need to be improved to carefully deal with local economic mechanisms and population displacement. First, to avoid undermining the peace economy and creating dependency, aid agencies can purchase aid goods locally rather than import them (Anderson 1999, 44). Before implementing this method, aid agencies need to assess the local capacity to supply the goods they need and the impact of their local purchases on the war economy. If their purchases support normal peacetime economic activities (such as agriculture), rather than special war-related enterprises (such as guard services for goods transported across warring lines), this method can help to promote peacetime systems and eschew dependency (Anderson 1999, 44).

Second, aid agencies can adjust aid programs on the basis of "price effects" (Anderson 1999, 44). In order to avoid bidding up prices in a way that reinforces incentives to the continuation of aid (and war), aid agencies may need to agree to fixed price and wage rates for local goods and services (Anderson 1999, 44). If they pin down these rates at reasonable levels that

resemble peacetime prices, the targeted society can preserve indigenous productive capacity and then manage the transition to a peacetime economy, without reinforcing incentives to wartime profits (Anderson 1999, 44). However, aid agencies need to be aware that keeping local wages and salaries low may convey an unintended "ethical message" of inequality, or "different values for different lives" (expatriate over local) (Anderson 1999, 58).

Third, in order to prevent dependency through population displacement, aid agencies may decentralize aid distributions, so that population concentrations are not created (Jaspars 2000, 37). Although concentrating distribution points can facilitate the speed and efficiency with which aid agencies can deliver humanitarian assistance, it is likely to create dependency and never cultivate people's coping strategies. Aid agencies need to find the most effective way to deliver aid for alleviating suffering in the long run.

Fourth, to avoid dependency, building people's coping capacity through community participation and empowerment is a high priority (Roberts 1996, 59). Anderson (1993) outlines the rationales for making capacity-building a central part of emergency response:

> Education, skills, and general know-how are capacities that, when applied to the physical resources of land, tools, seeds and equipment, affect people's productivity. Family and community structures through which people gain both physical and psychological support often make the difference as to who suffers most – and least in emergencies. People's experiences in decision-making and management affect their sense of efficacy and control and also have an important effect on productivity in normal times and on survival during emergencies (26).

Aid workers often adopt programs that assume that "victims of crises can do little or nothing for themselves," and thus the role for the "victims" to manage

any aspects of aid system is minimal or nonexistent (Anderson 1998, 140). By concentrating on the "delivery of aid goods *to* these people," rather than on "problem-solving *with* them," aid agencies place the beneficiaries of aid in a "passive, accepting role" (Anderson 1998, 140). Rather, aid providers must view beneficiaries not as recipients, but as resources for citizen-based peacemaking and supply aid in ways that support and strengthen their capacities to cope with problems (Anderson 1998, 139-42; Prendergast 1996, 124). By doing so, they can enable people both to survive immediate life-threatening emergencies and to strengthen and build a foundation for future independent development (Anderson 1998, 139-42).

Fifth, rebuilding social institutions and local decision-making mechanisms is also critical in laying the foundations for avoiding dependency and empowering people (MacFarlane 2001, xiii). According to Prendergast (1997), reducing people's vulnerability and building capacity is largely determined by the quality of the relationship of controlling authorities with civilian populations. The full participation and cooperation of local political parties and institutions are often a prerequisite for effective humanitarian assistance and building people's capacities in a CHE (Prendergast 1997, 147). Although heavy use of expatriate staff may be unavoidable in the beginning, the handover to local institutions must be a priority (DAC 1997, 31). Besides, contrary to the prevailing notion, external control and local capacity-building in emergency situations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For instance, when humanitarian agencies hire local people during crisis situations, they can include training for what could become peacetime employment. Also, aid agencies can reinforce such training programs by providing small-scale loans so that their local staff can set up new enterprises during the transition from

war to peace (Anderson 1999, 45). Trying to involve local structures and people in the design and implementation of aid programs tends to slow the process. However, it is well worth the effort in the long run, since "what remains after the wave of external responders is gone will be largely dependent on the level of collaboration with these local structures" (Prendergast 1996, 110; Keen and Wilson 1994, 219).

*   *   *

Improving planning and implementation of aid programs can help to minimize negative impacts of humanitarian assistance in many areas. Such strategies require analyzing the ways in which humanitarian assistance induces incentives to violence and misappropriation of aid resources. These strategies also need to aim to develop people's coping capacities for the short-term emergency and long-term development. Recognizing political, social and economic specificities of the conflict setting, aid agencies can design and implement contextually sensitive programs that can help to mitigate negative impacts and develop local "capacities for peace."

4.3. Accurate assessment and regular monitoring

The effectiveness of contextually sensitive programs greatly lies in the capacity of aid agencies for assessment and monitoring for humanitarian operations. Aid agencies need to focus their assessment on mainly two areas: impact assessment and capacity assessment.

First, as a basis for designing and implementing aid programs, aid providers need to conduct an "impact assessment" of humanitarian assistance on conflict and local communities. Since a number of humanitarian operations lacking such assessment in the 1990s fueled conflict, it is now seen as an important dimension in operating humanitarian activities (MacFarlane 2001, ix). There are a multitude of aspects that require impact assessment. For example, aid agencies need to develop a method for evaluating the potential and actual impacts of their aid programs on conflict, such as the capacity of the contending groups to pursue their own aims and the balance of power. Second, aid agencies need to assess their impact on political, economical and social spheres in the targeted societies. Third, external aspects — like political impact and political/military support aid agencies can expect from major states — need to be assessed. Accurate assessment in these areas can allow aid agencies to prevent negative impacts of humanitarian assistance, especially diversion, substitution effects, distributional impacts and dependency.

Griffiths *et al.* (1995) argue that independent experts should externally evaluate all humanitarian programs and the results of their evaluations be widely disseminated, even if they are embarrassing to agencies and individuals concerned (80). It is essential because aid agencies may tend to emphasize or inflate positive accomplishments and play down or ignore negative evaluations (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 80; Roberts 1996, 61). However well-intentioned, proper evaluation of humanitarian activities must focus not merely on motives, but also on consequences, whether unintended or deliberate (MacFarlane 2001, x).

Second, it may be suitable for aid providers to focus on "capacity

assessment," rather than conventional "needs assessment," to avoid dependency and build people's coping capacities (Anderson 1998, 142). The needs-based approach, which measures what outside inputs might be needed by the severity of a crisis, masks the structural causes of CHEs and even deepens or perpetuates these causes (Prendergast 1996, 8). This conventional model not only ignores "outsiders' historical roles in shaping the unequal internal relations that characterize the crisis," but also "restricts ownership of program activities to external agencies rather than focuses on the need for local communities to rebuild their own society" (Prendergast 1996, 8). This model may also fail to provide the relational analysis necessary to identify opportunities for the strategic involvement by outside actors in the target societies (Prendergast 1996, 8).

On the other hand, the "capacities assessment" is based on the respect for people's "competence, their skills in life management, and their minds and spirits" (Anderson 1998, 142). Since such assessment pays attention to "what a community is doing or has done, and what its current constraints are," it allows aid workers to rely much more on local capacities to address chronic crises (Prendergast 1996, 62). As a result, it can lessen the need for imported supplies and management, offer an avenue that is less costly than outsider-managed aid and make it easier for aid workers to withdraw when internal recovery becomes possible (Anderson 1998, 142). Another benefit of this approach is that it can be more sensitive to gender and other vulnerability analyses, taking these criteria as an integral part of program planning (Anderson 1999, 46).

In addition to the need for accurate assessment, a commitment to intensive, regular monitoring is indispensable for successful humanitarian

programs (Prendergast 1996, 84). First, such monitoring and reporting may help to prevent belligerents from diverting relief inputs intended for civilians and engaging in other mismanagement (Prendergast 1996, 144). For example, in southern Sudan, rates of diversion depended on whether international aid agencies are in place to monitor the distribution of relief shipments (MacFarlane 2001, 34). Substitution effects can also be limited to some extent by closer external monitoring and control of the budgets and expenditures of authorities that receive external assistance (MacFarlane 2001, 38). However, intensive monitoring may be difficult in some cases, since it is costly and may slow distribution, given the limited personnel available and the remote locations where aid goods must be distributed. Also, belligerents controlling the area may not permit such activity.

Second, monitoring and reporting can strengthen the internal mechanisms of accountability of aid agencies, belligerents and donor governments. By reporting publicly, aid agencies may raise the demand of the population that local authorities behave more responsibly within the framework of the aid relationship, which could reduce the likelihood of diversions of aid supplies (Prendergast 1996, 42). Also, such monitoring and reporting can ensure that aid agencies, local authorities and donor governments will meet minimum standards of civilian welfare.

Finally, deploying monitoring for humanitarian operations can contribute to protecting local populations from exploitation and repression by the fighting factions and other human rights abuses (Smock 1997, online). This measure requires the introduction of mechanisms that allow monitoring to be translated into corrective action and measures to curtail impunity for aggression, once the evidence of human rights abuses emerges (Keen and

Wilson 1994, 219). Such monitoring also needs to be accompanied by credible threats and commitment by the international community, which may be difficult to sustain (MacFarlane 2001, 38-9).

4.4. Donor coordination

Given the proliferation of humanitarian organizations and activities over the decades, donor coordination and cooperation are seen as imperative in humanitarian operations (Prendergast 1996, 12). By the early 1980s, in addition to all the UN agencies and the ICRC, there were ninety-five NGOs working on the Cambodian crisis in Thailand. By the late 1980s, close to 150 NGOs were operating in Mozambique alone (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 73). In the 1990s, some 300 NGOs were present on the Rwandan border after the genocide (Pasquier 2001, online). Involving so many participants, coordination has become necessary if humanitarian operations are to be run in a cohesive and effective manner (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74).

Although many aid practitioners believe in coordination, only a few accept to be coordinated (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74). Bradbury (1995) explains,

> The proliferation of NGOs involved in disaster relief has increased interagency competition for market resources. This has created a tension between the need for greater coordination and the need to maintain an independent profile. Competition erodes the possibilities for collective action, while the conditionalities of subcontracting relations subverts the quality of public debate and the ability of NGOs to act as critic and witness.

Interagency hostility can be found, as seen in a newspaper article quoting a

UN official as saying, "Sometimes I think that we've got two enemies in Mogadishu, General Aideed and Save the Children. And the General is easier to deal with" (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74). Coordination is often made more difficult by the hostility that exists not only among aid agencies, but also between the UN and NGO communities and between the host government and the relief community (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 73-4).

Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness of the need for coordination. First, coordination can reduce political manipulation and constraints on humanitarian activities. Unless agencies agree on minimum operating conditions, the potential for manipulation by political actors of aid agencies and the placement of agency resources will only increase (MacFarlane 2000, 30). Moreover, donor coordination can contribute to the effort to expand and sustain humanitarian access and activities in the face of political constraints (MacFarlane 2000, 88). In Liberia, the effort to establish minimum conditions for humanitarian operations and deflect the "divide and rule" strategies employed by the warring parties succeeded due to the coordination among the operating aid agencies (MacFarlane 2000, 88).

Second, coordination increases effectiveness for program planning and operations, while poor coordination increases costs, delays actions, centralizes decision-making and creates remarkable "inefficiencies, overheads, and sometimes corruption" (Prendergast 1996, 12). If aid agencies have a comparative advantage among different aid agencies, their different skills and capacities may assume greater or lesser importance at different times in a humanitarian operation (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74). For example, it may be effective to identify "who can respond to life-threatening suffering most quickly, who can move large amounts of relief material quickly, who can

provide protection for humanitarian operation and who can negotiate best on behalf of humanitarian interests" (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74). A rational division of responsibilities among aid agencies based on comparative strengths can enhance the effectiveness of aid operations (Griffiths *et al.* 1995, 74).

Third, the failures of aid agencies to coordinate and cooperate with each other convey an implicitly negative "ethical message" (Anderson 1999, 56). The message conveyed to people in a recipient community would be that "it is unnecessary to cooperate with people they do not like; our work has no space for tolerance of differences, and we do not and need not respect people with whom we disagree" (Anderson 1999, 56). These attitudes may discourage intergroup cooperation and "connectors."

Between donor governments and humanitarian aid agencies, there is also a need for coordination, communication and decision-making chains of command in order to maximize the role of humanitarian assistance (Prendergast 1996, 89). Without a commitment to such coordination, resource allocation tends to create a wasteful aid market that encourages parties to play one aid agency against the other—this is exactly what happened in Afghanistan (Weiss 1999, online). Coordination may also allow "joint assessments" between humanitarian actors and donor governments with the aim of developing a common understanding of the emergency situation and a strategy to effectively employ humanitarian assistance (Jaspars 2000, 34).

4.5. Addressing root causes

The negative impacts of humanitarian assistance on conflict are often linked to the failure to address the fundamental causes of CHEs. By redefining crises as "humanitarian" emergencies, political actors often employ humanitarian assistance as a "fig leaf" to cover a lack of political will to address root causes underlying crises. On the other hand, aid providers usually focus on "getting things back to normal," even where the conditions of "normalcy" had given rise to the emergency in the first place (Anderson 1998, 140). If humanitarian assistance is provided only to treat the symptoms of crises, leaving the root and proximate causes relatively intact, it may reinforce vulnerabilities and even lead to new areas of vulnerability by "creating privileged groups, undercutting coping systems, or encouraging unwarranted expectations about the availability of outside resources" (Anderson 1998, 140-1). Therefore, humanitarian assistance must be deployed more strategically to address the underlying causes of an emergency, which requires understanding the aims and interests of those involved, as well as the political, economic and social processes in targeted societies within which conflict arises.

Certain approaches seek to identify the underlying causes of conflict. Among them, three approaches will be discussed here: primordialism, instrumentalism and political economy of war. First, the primordialist approach explains that civil war results from "centuries of accumulated hatreds" among ethnic groups (Crawford, 1998, 10). It has often been argued that these hatreds exploded at the end of the Cold War because the repressive authorities that had constrained such hatreds for decades suddenly vanished

(Lipschutz, 1998, 54). Geertz (1973) further suggests that it is natural that there should be explosions of grievances when the diversity of cultures, languages and primordial attachments are neglected, as seen in newly independent states created out of colonies (259).

A second approach is instrumentalism, which considers an instrumental value of group identities and conflict. In stark contrast to primordialists, instrumentalists refuse to view ethnic communities as simply "given." Instead, they see these communities as constituted to serve particular purposes, whether unconsciously by the community members or by leaders who use the appeal to ethnicity to serve their own political and material ends (Rex 1997, 7). Conflict is often initiated by the elite or leaders, who manipulate ethnic or other identity lines to gain the support of the masses, mobilize people along these lines and try to protect privileges of their own or their community (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996, 8).

A third approach explains civil conflicts in terms of the functions of "political economy of war." According to Berdal and Malone (2000):

1) the aim of civil war is not necessarily to win; with the emergence of war economies, people who profit from violent economic activity become more eager to prolong war than to win it;

2) war is not a breakdown in a particular system, and it serves a range of different purposes, especially in politically fragmented and economically weak states (3-6).

This "war economy" approach is opposite to the prevailing view. Whereas the conventional view assumes that war is the "end" and abuses the "means," this view considers the "end" as the engagement in abuses or crimes that bring immediate rewards and the "means" as war and the perpetuation of war (Keen 2000, 29). Similarly, for the conventional view, war is the "breakdown of

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'normal' or 'peacetime' patterns of social, economic and political intercourse within society" (Berdal and Malone 2000, 3). Oppositely, this "war economy" approach assumes that the outbreak of war and its persistence represent the emergence of a new system or the continuation of an old system (Berdal and Malone 2000, 3).

Under these conditions, the wartime political economy benefits certain groups (rebels, government officials, traders and international actors who stand to gain from dealing with local actors), while it further impoverishes other sections of the community (Berdal and Malone 2000, 4; Keen 2000, 26-7). Conflict situations not only create opportunities for profit that are not available during peace, but also confer the "legitimacy" on "actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes" (Keen 2000, 29). Such activities include monopolistic trade, increase in marketing margins, exploitation of labor, the prospect of staking a direct claim to land and an increase in rent-seeking predation (Keen 2000, 29-31). During the war, insurgent groups may profit from the deals with transnational corporations, which may find it attractive to deal with these groups for the export of valued goods (e.g., timber and gems) without state interference—as in Liberia, Cambodia and Angola (MacFarlane 1999, 556). Criminal groups also take advantage of the lack of state control to produce and transship illegal goods like narcotics (MacFarlane 1999, 556). The involvement of international humanitarian aid agencies also creates another set of economic opportunities and benefits certain local actors (Keen 2000, 29-31). Under these circumstances, ending or winning war becomes undesirable for those benefit from the war economy; instead they have an incentive to sustain the abnormal situation and the flow of assistance and to undermine any normalization of the

situation that might reduce their resources (MacFarlane 1999, 556).

From 1992 to 1996, Liberian leader, Charles Taylor, is estimated to have benefited from the war for more than US$400 million per year (Berdal and Malone 2000, 5). In Angola since 1992, UNITA, in control of some 70 percent of the country's diamond production, has accumulated considerable wealth that has allowed it to continue the war (Berdal and Malone 2000, 5). Moreover, on the government side, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has also benefited from Angola's war economy by selectively granting attractive foreign exchange and import licenses, as well as by "the selling of weapons to UNITA" (Berdal and Malone 2000, 5). It is reported that this kind of "collusion between supposedly opposing parties" is not unique to the case of Angola. Between 1993 and 1997, many Khmer Rouge insurgents, Cambodian government officials and Thai army officers were "more concerned about enriching themselves thorough illegal logging activity and trading in gems than they were about bringing war to an end" (Berdal and Malone 2000, 5-6).

All three approaches to understanding conflict have their own strengths and weaknesses in explaining the root causes of conflict. Rather than oppose any of them, this thesis takes the position that there are mixed motives and causes, which depend on the context, in the hope to find the possibility for a better utility and a wider application of humanitarian assistance to conflict situations.

First, when "grievance" or ethnic hatred is an underlying cause of conflict, conflict can be exacerbated when aid agencies assist subgroups to the exclusion of others, thus reinforcing existing ethnic divisions between people. Since the background of ethnic hatred often reflects tension,

competition and suspicion between communities over scarce resources or social and political privileges, the historical discrimination or marginalization of certain groups must be addressed. Aid strategies can be employed to connect people from different ethnic groups in social and economic activities in a war-torn societies, create interdependency and benefits all the groups. Developing confidence-building measures and reconciliation programs through aid programs is also critical.

Second, according to the instrumentalist approach, a cause of conflict is the instrumental use of subnational identities (e.g., clan ethnicity, religion and language) by war leaders. Such instrumental use of identities is often driven by elite competition for political power or scarce resources and historical injustice for opportunity and assets among subgroups. Conflict can be further exacerbated by the manipulation of information and war propaganda by war leaders. Aid agencies need to design their programs in a way that can contribute to addressing these elements; for example, building communication between communities, developing confidence-building measures, wiping the image of demonization away from other communities and holding war leaders accountable for their deeds.

Third, if the "war economy" is the driving force for conflict, aid agencies need to focus on economic agendas in order to reduce the economic incentives of certain groups and the profits they derive from conflict. As discussed earlier, aid agencies may lessen the incentives to diversion and other exploitation of aid by reducing benefits and opportunities for such activities. Aid agencies may reduce the need for civilians to turn to violence in pursuit of sustenance by providing assistance for peacetime economic activities (e.g., providing training or employment that is not related to the war

economy) (Keen 2000, 37-8). Moreover, they may be able to reduce the legal (and moral) impunity that may be enjoyed by a variety of groups, by publicizing their illegal activities (Keen 2000, 37-8).

There are other strategies, which the international community, especially international political actors, can employ. They include curtailing the sales of primary commodities that are financing conflict, increasing diversification of the economies, making markets as competitive as possible, imposing sanctions, freezing bank accounts and restricting access to international commodity markets for illegitimate exports from countries in conflict (Collier 2000, 109-111; Keen 2000, 37-8).

Anderson (1993) argues that "Effective humanitarian assistance must be based in recognition of the human role in causing—and solving—emergencies, and must incorporate elements that focus on affecting human behavior as much as on the delivery of supplies and services" (30). To address root causes, whether conflict is caused by ethnic hatred, instrumental use of identity or political economy of war, it is important for aid agencies, along with political actors, to identify and address circumstances that underlie a conflict and the human roles that activate underlying elements of conflict.

4.6. Rethinking humanitarian principles

In order to pursue aid strategies that minimize the sustenance of conflict, two of the humanitarian principles, neutrality and impartiality, need to be reconsidered. According to Weller (1997), "Contrary to popular myth, humanitarian neutrality and impartiality are not absolute concepts," since

their application "depends on the type of international actor involved, the mandate according to which that actor operates, and the nature and extent of the international crisis or humanitarian emergency that is being addressed" (online). It is now widely acknowledged that neutral intervention avoids engagement with the political reality it confronts and that it "eschews the need for supporting participatory and accountable structures and institutions, and arguably makes matters worse" (Duffield and Prendergast 1994, 15).

Leader (2000) argues that, at a conceptual level, "neutrality" came to be diversified into three new humanitarian responses, which are more closely related to a political process and determined largely by the relationship between humanitarian and political action:

1. Neutrality elevated – a position which sees humanitarian action as for the relief of suffering only, which emphasises universal legal principles, and which sees humanitarian politics as tightly bound by rules of impartiality and neutrality. Thus the manipulation of humanitarian action by political actors should be minimised through operational rules.

2. Neutrality abandoned – a position which argues that humanitarian action should be subordinated to (good) political goals, as this will reduced suffering in the long run, and this mean taking sides.

3. Third-way humanitarianism – a position that seeks a middle way. I emphasises the role of humanitarian aid for developmental relief, peace-building and dealing with root causes. These are in effect political objectives, but this position resists taking sides. It thus tends to be most unclear about the nature and rules of a humanitarian politics (2).

With a move towards increased coherence between political and humanitarian action, these three responses represent two important developments. First, humanitarians now try to impose humanitarian principles on belligerents,

rather than, the other way around as in the original "deal" (Leader 2000, 2).

Second, the perception of potential political impacts, negative or positive, has

in effect "qualified the humanitarian imperative" (Leader 2000, 2-3). Some

fear that a loss of neutrality risks compromising humanitarian immunity and

threatens access to victims. However, it may be "unproductive and naïve" for

aid providers to believe that parties to conflict accept a stipulation of the

Geneva Conventions and Protocols that urges them to facilitate humanitarian

activities, as well as the humanitarian principle that victims on all sides of a

conflict have equal rights to aid (Curtis 2001, 13; Anderson 1999, 38-9).

Moreover, the expansion of the humanitarian sphere to include developmental

relief, peacebuilding and dealing with root causes may give rise to

ambiguities of the concept and necessitate the abandonment of the traditional

view of neutrality (Pasquier 2001, online; Leader 2000, 2). These expanded

goals are both political and humanitarian ones, toward which humanitarian

aid agencies and political actors need to collaborate. Although taking sides

based on political calculations is still debatable, aid agencies can "side with

the victims" (Curtis 2001, 13).

Second, the nature and quality of the principle of impartiality—which

claims that aid should be allocated purely on the basis of need, independent of

all other consideration, and should be given in proportion to that need—are

now questioned. The aforementioned study showed that humanitarian

assistance has never been provided in proportion to people's need.

Consequently, some scholars began to consider in the 1990s that humanitarian

assistance should not based on "need," but on "rights." In this view,

humanitarian action is now seen as being grounded in a "right to assistance"

— the right of persons in need to have access to assistance and of aid

organizations to provide such assistance (MacFarlane and Minear 1996, 101).

This "rights-based" approach is different from the traditional principles of humanitarian assistance and its universal right to assistance based on human need, since it demands that all humanitarian assistance be judged on how it contributes to the protection and promotion of human rights (Fox 2001, online). Slim (2001) considers the shift toward the rights-based approach as a "move from the sentimental, paternalistic and privileged discourse of philanthropy and charity, to the political, egalitarian and empowering ideology of rights and duties" (online). He also goes on to say that "grounding humanitarian action in rights, duties and laws, rather than in principles, makes the values of humanitarian work explicit to everyone, and gives humanitarianism an integrated moral, political and legal framework to affirm universal human values" (online). Thus, victims of conflict become "claimants of rights," rather than "objects of charity" (Slim 2001, online). The rights-based approach also means that humanitarian action has to shift its focus from satisfying people's needs to promoting their rights. At the same time, it is acknowledged that humanitarian action is no longer sufficient on its own and now expected to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Duffield 2000, 15).

In fact, however, there are no international legal instruments that refer to a generalized "right to assistance" (Porter 1999, online). For example, Article 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 18 of the second Additional Protocol oblige "warring parties to do all they can to facilitate relief action on behalf of a civilian population during conflicts," but place no obligations on donor states (Porter 1999, online). While several international covenants refer to the right to life, or freedom from hunger, the realization of

these rights depends on "international co-operation based on free consent" (Porter 1999, online). More and more studies, however, began to reach the conclusion that "a right to humanitarian assistance may be emerging in international public law" (Porter 1999, online) and that "a right to be assisted can be deducted from international humanitarian law" (Quénivet 1998, online).

Those who are against the rights-based approach believe that it conflicts with the universal right to relief based on needs and that it may even become morally justifiable to leave individuals without aid for political reasons (Fox 2001, online). Moreover, since this rights-based approach demands that all humanitarian assistance be judged by its contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights, it will allow for conditionality in aid deliveries (ECHO, 1999). As the Afghan example showed, aid conditionalities have made little impact in terms of enhancing human rights and instead have had negative humanitarian consequences (Atmar 2001, online).

To conclude, these concerns may be reasonable under the current circumstances where there is no lucid legal instrument to support the new approach, coupled with the doubt on the effectiveness of aid conditionalities. In either need-based or right-based approach, a priority should be given to "doing no harm"; otherwise, in the situation where humanitarian assistance exacerbates and prolongs conflict, aid agencies would only find "well-fed dead," as in Bosnia and the African Great Lakes (Weiss 1999, online). The right-based approach means that recipients have rights to access humanitarian assistance, as well as refuse if it is doing harm. If the legal instruments of the right-based approach are strengthened and agreed by the international

community, as advocates of rights-based humanitarianists argue, this new approach can be "potentially much more powerful than relying on the traditional principles," ensuring that every one has a right to assistance and an obligation to assist (Curtis 2001, 16).

Chapter 5: Humanitarian assistance as a strategy for conflict resolution

As we have seen above, humanitarian assistance is increasingly seen as complementary to peace efforts, rather than separate from them, since consolidating peace is an overriding goal for both humanitarians and political actors (Boyce 1999, 367; Tbilisi 1998, 2). This implies that, for aid agencies and donor governments, it is no longer enough for humanitarian assistance to be concerned with the relief of suffering alone. Humanitarian assistance is encouraged to aim to address root causes, protect human rights and contribute to peacebuilding, in cooperation with political actors, as part of an overall comprehensive strategy (Leader and Macrae 2000, 9).

Many Western governments, such as the Dutch, Canadian, British and Swedish, have come to foster such programmatic connections between humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution (Weiss 1999, online). Norway now endorses the view that humanitarian assistance, like other elements of foreign policy, should promote confidence building, peace and reconciliation in war-torn societies. Canada has created a peace-building unit within the global issues and security section of its foreign ministry that is linked closely to the peace-building fund (MacFarlane 2001, 67).

Under the present conditions, among the four positions on the spectrum, the two in the middle—minimalist and maximalist positions—may be feasible. These two positions analyze the impacts of humanitarian action on conflict and local community and implement aid programs to limit negative impacts. A priority is considered a minimalist position, especially when deep insecurity prevails. In such a situation, there is no space for conflict resolution or development activities and only emergency relief efforts are

plausible (Weiss 1999, online). Under the right circumstances, the maximalist approach could be viewed as an opportunity to address the roots of violence, rather than to place "emergency Band-Aids, however well funded and effective, on wounds" (Weiss 1999, online). In other words, humanitarian assistance can and should aim at more than just "doing no harm," but it should do so with a great care.

There is some skepticism toward the ambitious claims of the maximalist approach, since the failure of their efforts to link humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution may lead to additional disenchantment by politicians and the public, leading to the worst results (Weiss 1999, online). Nonetheless, placing humanitarian activities within a conflict-resolution framework could ultimately work in favor of humanitarian interests to bring substantially more benefits to victims than shortsighted or misplaced humanitarian action (Weiss 1999, online). The belief is that successful conflict management, rather than successful relief, would serve longer-term benefits for targeted populations.

The effectiveness of the minimalist and maximalist approaches tends to vary depending on different political levels, although they are closely interrelated. Efforts to encourage conflict transformation and sustainable peace are likely to work best at the local level. Aid agencies can encourage substantial community participation and implement their aid programs to strengthen "connectors" and weaken "dividers," based on understanding of the cultural, social, political and economic contexts. By doing so, humanitarian assistance can affect the incentives of local authorities and civil society actors to disengage themselves from violent activities, engage in peaceful activities and build bridges between communities (MacFarlane 2001,

50). Between warring parties, if successfully employed, humanitarian assistance can encourage disarmament and reintegration of combatants (as in Mozambique) and bring parties to negotiate or implement peace agreements (as in Bosnia-Herzegovina) (MacFarlane 2001, xiii).

However, the attempts of aid agencies at conflict resolution or transformation may be strongly affected by the context in which conflict occurs. On the one hand, when alternative resources are available to the belligerents, the impact of aid is limited. On the other hand, when aid constitutes a substantial increment to available resources, its impact on conflict is stronger (MacFarlane 2001, 33). The impact of aid on conflict also varies with the intensity of the commitment of warring parties to conflict and the strength of the constraints on them, whether political (e.g., opposition movements) or social (e.g., how extensively people associated their interests with the goals of political/military leaders in pursuing conflict) (MacFarlane 2001, 33).

At the regional level, humanitarian activities may be structured in such a way as to encourage neighboring states to engage in conflict reduction and stabilize the region, rather than to allow them to manipulate aid for their own interest. These activities may include burden-sharing strategy and financial and capacity-building support (MacFarlane 2001, 55-60).

At the international level, the effectiveness of the maximalist approach is closely related to the willingness of international political actors to engage in conflict management and resolution, including such undertakings as peacekeeping for protection and monitoring humanitarian assistance (MacFarlane 2001, viii). Other international strategies may include structural adjustment and other macroeconomic programming designed to

institutionalize the process of peace (MacFarlane 2001, xiii). The intention is to give belligerents incentives to alter their perspectives on the conflict and to encourage the implementation of agreements. To ensure the success of the aid strategies, donor governments need to reaffirm their commitment to multilateral institutions. Although the UN is subject to criticism that it depends on a small group of Western donors, its mandates and organizations alone have "the global perspectives required for a more equitable international response" (Porter 1999, online).

Conclusion

There is a growing awareness that humanitarian assistance and politics cannot or should not be separated. For one reason, neither political nor humanitarian action itself is sufficient to confront CHEs today. Second, these two dimensions inevitably interact with each other in conflict settings. Humanitarian assistance in CHEs always has political implications, whether as a direct consequence of its provision or by way of inadvertent side-effects, while political interests shape the nature and level of humanitarian response to suffering.

Whether or not humanitarian assistance negatively affects conflict and target communities often depends on the willingness of humanitarians to collaborate conceptually and practically with political actors. By taking political factors into account, aid agencies can enhance their understanding of the dynamics of conflict and the impacts of humanitarian assistance on political, social and economic spheres of the targeted societies, thereby minimizing negative impacts. The involvement of humanitarians in the political process may also allow them to sensitize political actors to humanitarian needs and expand a space for humanitarian activities.

On the other hand, political actors can be informed by a sense of humanity and humanitarian costs of their both action and inaction through advocacy by humanitarians. Although political actors may try to manipulate or constrain humanitarian efforts according to their self-interests, they do not necessarily place obstacles to humanitarian activities. With the commitment to humanitarian imperatives, political actors can facilitate humanitarian efforts to respond to the suffering and ultimately bring peace to war-torn

societies. That is to say, the collaboration between political and humanitarian actors can contribute to attaining mutual goals. The question is not, therefore, whether or not humanitarian and political actions interact with each other, but rather how this interaction can ensure more humane politics and more effective and politically astute humanitarian action.

In order to employ humanitarian assistance to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive effects, aid agencies need to aim to strengthen "connectors" and weaken "dividers." Improving aid programs in a contextually sensitive way, combined with accurate impact assessment, capacity assessment and intensive monitoring mechanisms, can serve to reduce incentives to violence or misappropriation of aid and avoid dependency. The cooperation and coordination among aid agencies, as well as between political actors and humanitarians, can contribute to designing and implementing such programs and addressing the root causes of conflict. To take a further step away from the fidelity to the traditional humanitarian principles, which may produce results inconsistent with the intention of humanitarians, there is a need for a clearer definition in law of the scope and role of humanitarian assistance in CHEs. Finally, when the time is right, humanitarians can seize an opportunity to go beyond minimalist approach of "doing no harm" and try to achieve maximalist aims. As part of a comprehensive strategy, including political, social, economies and moral forces, humanitarians can aim to work on the underlying causes of conflict, transform conflict and move societies toward peace settlement. The closer integration between political and humanitarian actions has opened up new possibilities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, thanks to the use of humanitarian assistance as a powerful lever.

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