ALTERNATIVES & SOLUTIONS
Topics Today

- Readings: Finish them ALL!
- Next week: Question for BB!
- Discussion: Linking Relief and Development (again).
- Mary Anderson’s book
- Jackson & Walker
- HPG Report
- Joanne Macrae
DO NO HARM

- Tom Weiss calls Mary Anderson one of the most thoughtful critics of relief. I think he is right.
- “Rising from the Ashes”
  - timely, simultaneously with the end of the Cold War
  - both natural and man-made disasters (LRD)
  - similar set up & also written in very simple style
  - capacities and vulnerabilities (close to coping mechanisms) throughout the programming process
  - clear link with capacities for peace & war
Do No Harm

- When international assistance is given in a context of a violent conflict, it becomes a part of that context and thus also of the conflict.
- How can humanitarian or development assistance be given in conflict situations in ways that rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict help local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict?
- Method: comparing case studies and see what we can learn from them. She compares them by focusing on the operational aspects! In other words, she is action oriented. Incorporates side effects.
DO NO HARM

Strong points:

- Overview of characteristics of War (notice she uses root causes differently from our course:
  - justice & proximate causes
  - root causes, contributing factors, and justifications)

- 3 Stages
  - What are we doing to ourselves?
  - We cannot/never trust them/the other
  - This is absurd; people get exhausted.

- Resource Transfers
- Implicit Ethical Messages
- Connectors and Dividers
- Outsiders: open mind to see capacities; not linked (neutral) with sides of the conflict
- Use/Explain scheme
DO NO HARM

- Weak points:
  - How to do it? How to understand the local population & its coping mechanisms? Interaction of insiders and outsiders
  - Macro vs Micro
  - Always unique situations
  - Too rosy?
  - Do no harm as “developmental” approach to relief is sometimes fiercely criticized as “do no aid”
This is an important theme this week and next week

How broad can the integration between Relief, Development and Security become?

- Deepening: more attention to protection
- Broadening has been over ambitious? should we get back to the narrow interpretation of Hum Relief? (i.e., back to the basics?)
  - Corruption of humanitarian principles
  - Neo-isolationist agendas
- Once again, this critique notices side-effects, but it is more conceptual than operational critique
Critique

- Reformist approaches provide excuse for disengagement from Northern countries
  - Not borne out by financial data. L.t. trend rises with waves, now we ‘re in one.
  - You need criticism to improve (both conceptually and operationally), keeping silent would be worse

- Reformists (unwittingly) foster containment
  - This can happen, but they are not the only or even the main actors in this respect. They cannot substitute for lack of political will.
  - Int. orgs need to become more politically astute, focus stronger on all root causes, contributing factors, etc.
Critique

- Ref. approaches ignore protracted nature of conflicts
  - Superficial pol. ec. analysis has led to ignorance about protracted nature
  - Many int. orgs. attempt to work in pockets of peace and/or peace actors.
  - Int. org need international pol. support
  - Don’t always be negative about the possibility to an end of conflict
Critique

- Ref. ignore the international dimensions of conflict
  - Yes, they run this risk, but this is often acknowledged. It is closely linked to insufficient political and economic analysis.
  - Equally wrong to focus on international aspects alone. You need a combination of international and local. How to establish better linkages?

- Ref. Assumption that aid can do harm is wrong
  - Read Mary Anderson: There can be dependency and exacerbation of conflict
  - However, don’t worry about psychological dependency too much. Disruption of market, wage structures, employment patterns is far more serious.
Critique

- You’re back with working with/on local actors and their capacities and coping mechanisms
- Aid can also reduce conflict
- Ref. intervention in local political process compromises neutrality and helping victims
  - Politically informed is not politically driven
  - Principles require continuous work: training of staff, explanation in the field, covert vs. overt criticism. You need a mix of actors

- There is a middle ground, criticism has been too fierce as an either/or approach. Check the relationship between societal and operational critique: they focus on different side effects
Topics Today

- Readings: Finish them ALL!!!!
- Next week: Question for BB!
- Discussion: Linking Relief and Development (again).
- Mary Anderson’s book
- Leith
- Jennifer
- More next week (HPG & Macrae)