

Humanitarian and Development Assistance in the Work of the International Movement of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent

The face of modern humanitarianism is changing dramatically. Protracted armed conflicts and increasingly frequent natural disasters, which do not respect the political borders, produce wide range of humanitarian needs. In many situations, meaningful engagement with the needs of affected populations requires more of a long-term thinking, going beyond the mere provision of urgently needed goods and services like food, shelter, basic healthcare etc. On the other hand, we are witnessing an unprecedented expansion of the humanitarian sector, reflected by a multiplicity of involved actors and expanding scope of their operations.

Against this background, I seek to explore how the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, one of the most well-known actors within the humanitarian sector, has responded to these changes, especially in the context of the debate on the humanitarian-development nexus. The Red Cross of today is not only saving the imperilled lives but also engaging in health promotion, recovery and rehabilitation, as well as in programs responding to problems of more social nature. In this thesis, I am analysing how this apparent departure from its original mission is affecting its humanitarian identity. I am also looking at the consequences of this trend, in particular with respect to the Fundamental Principles, which have determined the distinctive *modus operandi* of the Movement for over 150 years.

This research constitutes furthermore an attempt to reflect upon the work of the Movement and of its three components (the National Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross) in a more systematic and critical manner. Drawing on the arguments presented by rationalists and constructivists, I seek to analyse to what extent the behaviour and choices of the Movement and its individual members can be explained by self-interest and material considerations, or by norms, ideas and its organizational culture.

My analysis begins with a presentation of the purpose, structure and functions of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Far too often, scholars have either been treating the latter as a monolith, or they have been focusing only on its one component, namely the International Committee (ICRC). In this thesis, I therefore seek to shed more light on the relations between the different components of the Movement. This is then followed by a more general analysis of the changes affecting contemporary humanitarian sector, both in terms of its internal and external environment. The analysis of the issues currently shaping the provision of humanitarian assistance will eventually bring me to the debate on the

humanitarian-development nexus. While I will present the evolution of this debate, this will mainly serve as a background for a broader reflection on the extent to which the different components of the Movement are linking humanitarian and development assistance in their work in armed conflict, natural disasters, as well as in times of peace. The more general analysis will then be complemented by three specific case studies, where drawing on my professional experience, I present the most relevant aspects of the operational work of the Norwegian Red Cross, the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC.

This thesis concludes with an observation that appealing to the humanitarian imperative does not always allow to sufficiently explain certain choices made by the different components of the Movement. In fact, its humanitarian roots and ambition to prevent and alleviate human suffering do not preclude that the National Societies, their Federation and the ICRC can also be motivated by strategic interests and considerations of factors of more material character. As a political scientist, I do not aim to judge this behaviour. Rather, I hope that my observations can further enhance scholarship on international organisations, as well as it can be of value to practitioners with the Red Cross family and the broader humanitarian sector.

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