The Effects of a Narrative: Humanitarian Aid and Action in the Northern Uganda Conflict

Ayesha Nibbe  
Hawaii Pacific University  
*Thursday, January 19th, 3:00 pm, in Crawford Hall 115*

In the course of the conflict in northern Uganda, approximately 1.6 million Acholi were forcibly displaced to internal displacement (IDP) camps that were managed by humanitarian aid organizations. This work focuses on the socio-political effects of humanitarian aid in this warzone – but instead of recounting a list of “unintended effects” of aid, this talk highlights how effects of aid in northern Uganda were actually understandable outcomes of a particular narrative and set of discourses about the conflict that were intentionally created and shaped – a narrative that directed attention towards the humanitarian situation, not the political situation. This talk focuses on the effects and consequences of this sort of narrative, not only for the conflict in Northern Uganda, but for Africa as a whole. This research is based on over two years of fieldwork in Uganda -- in Gulu town, Kampala, and in the IDP camps – starting when the conflict was in full-swing and ending in Peace Talks.

*Ayesha Nibbe* is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Hawaii Pacific University. Her areas of interest are critical development theory, humanitarianism, African conflict (East Africa and the Horn), displacement, and the global politics of food and agriculture. Aside from Uganda and South Sudan, she has also conducted ethnographic research in India and Cuba. She recently completed her doctoral work at the University of California at Davis, focusing on the effects of humanitarian aid in the context of the conflict in Northern Uganda.

Presentation VIDEO: [http://vimeo.com/35726804](http://vimeo.com/35726804)