

Institution: University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 30 (History)
Title of case study: Using history to improve humanitarianism and emergency medicine
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Professor Bertrand Taithe's academic research on humanitarianism, medicine, conflict and disasters has had a direct impact on the policies and practices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and medical practitioners. His research has contributed to the governance agenda of major NGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and has informed international fora on the humanitarian response to disasters. It has made a demonstrable intellectual contribution to the world of think-tanks and other bodies such as the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute and has resulted in collaborative work between Taithe and NGOs such as Handicap International. Most recently Taithe has used his research findings to influence national and international policy innovations including the UK International Emergency Trauma Database.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The impact is based on research Taithe undertook at UoM from 2000 to date, building on earlier research at the University of Huddersfield 1997-1999.</p> <p>Taithe's research focuses on the history of compassion and relief work as well as the relationship between medical expertise and missionary work in emergency situations. The key research achievements were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To uncover a genealogy of humanitarian work from the mid-nineteenth century that is rooted in a missionary and colonial past (3.1-3.5). 2. To demonstrate that this genealogy is composed of technologies and techniques that are historically loaded but are still relevant to contemporary humanitarian practices (3.2, 3.5). 3. To show that the politics of humanitarian practices and medicine must not only be integrated into their broader political context, but that medical interventions have a role in the nature of broader political debates in the past (3.3). <p>Taithe's underpinning research is impact-led. Thus, his work on the political nature of amputation led to his participation in a research team funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) that collaborated on a study of amputations in Haiti with Handicap International in 2010. This applied research fed directly into the evaluation and practices of relief work in Haiti. Working closely with medical colleagues, Taithe co-led an interdisciplinary team in a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of surgical interventions in Haiti. This study was framed by a broader history of surgical intervention in war and disaster sites based on his previous academic research (3.1, 3.2). In particular it investigated the dangers associated with the transfer of war surgical processes to civilian disaster contexts and the political debates surrounding emergency surgery and uncoordinated medical humanitarian interventions that Taithe had previously researched in other contexts (3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). Taithe is working with 15 international NGOs and humanitarian agencies on a series of funding applications. (Agencies include CARE, Save the Children, Médecins sans Frontières, World Health Organisation, Centers for Disease Control, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, ALNAP, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of the Red Cross, CERAH, Emergency Nutrition Network, HPG, and Evidence Aid.) An anonymous reviewer of a related AHRC application commented: '[Taithe] has done more than anyone else to put humanitarian history on the map and bring it close to the profession so that it can deliver valuable lessons. His personal contribution to making the fast-growing humanitarian profession historically conscious is outstanding'.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research (AOR – Available on request)

- 3.1. Taithe, B. 'Reinventing (French) universalism: religion, humanitarianism and the 'French Doctors'', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 12, 2 (2004), 147-58. Journal article frequently cited in humanitarian studies (12 citations, Google Scholar), funded by a British Academy small grant. DOI: 10.1080/09639480410001693025.
- 3.2 Lachenal, G & Taithe, B. "Une généalogie missionnaire et coloniale de l'humanitaire: le cas Aujoulat au Cameroun, 1935-1973", *Le Mouvement Social* (2009), 45-63. Journal article researched and written during a funded visiting professorship at the Institut des Hautes Études Paris. (AOR)
- 3.3. Taithe, B. 'Humanitarianism and Colonialism: Religious Responses to the Algerian drought and famine of 1866-1870', in C Mauch, C Pfister eds., *Natural Hazards: Responses and Strategies in Global Perspective* (Lexington Books, Lanham, MC, 2009), 137-64. Book chapter. Research funded by a British Academy small grant. (AOR)
- 3.4. Taithe, B. 'La famine de 1866-1868: anatomie d'une catastrophe et construction médiatique d'un événement', *Revue d'histoire du dix-neuvième siècle*, 41, 2 (2010), 97-111. Journal article. Research funded by a British Academy small grant. (AOR)
- 3.5. Taithe, B. 'Pyrrhic Victories: Catholic Faith, modern expertise and secularizing technologies.' In *Sacred Aid, Faith, and Humanitarianism*, edited by Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 166-187. Based on research undertaken for the Mellon foundation funded by guest professorship at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota and for Luce foundation conferences on faith and humanitarianism. (AOR)

4. Details of the impact**Context**

Taithe's research on the history of humanitarianism, medicine, conflict and disasters has altered understandings not only of the past but also of the present. His analysis of the ways in which humanitarian relief is organised and carried out, particularly in terms of the technologies of humanitarian aid which he argues continue to be steeped in colonial and religious legacies, is crucial to a modern conception of humanitarianism. The influence of his reinterpretation of humanitarian response outside academia is evident in the take up of his research by policy makers in NGOs, governments and other bodies including those from the international medical community.

Pathways to impact

Taithe has presented his research at numerous non-academic fora since 2008, including the Berlin International NGO congress and Médecins sans Frontières' anniversary conference. His research has also been disseminated through the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at UoM. The networks he established, both as part of the HCRI and apart from it, have ensured that his research has achieved significant reach and impact. They have also resulted in his involvement in a series of collaborative projects with NGOs. Professor Taithe is a founding member of the Scientific Committee of the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG)'s project on the global history of humanitarian aid.

Reach and significance of the impact**Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute**

Alongside his Manchester colleague Professor Peter Gatrell, Taithe is the co-founder and first director of the interdisciplinary HCRI. Launched in 2008, the HCRI has engaged with representatives of governments; NGOs (including MSF, Oxfam, the Humanitarian Policy Group and the British Red Cross); think-tanks such as the Overseas Development Institute; medical practitioners; and members of leading research institutions. Recent HCRI conferences on the future of humanitarian aid in November 2012, and on Darfur and Haiti in 2010, have attracted

Impact case study (REF3b)

participants from governments; political opposition groups; the major NGOs active in these areas; and the World Health Organisation. The British Academy identified HCRI as a significant example of interdisciplinary work worthy of notice in its response to Sir John O'Reilly (Director General for Knowledge and Innovation at the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills) in May 2013 [5.4].

The HCRI is one of only five academic partners with whom the British Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have developed a research programme and a humanities-informed portfolio of training courses. This online course has around 80 students from 44 countries and offers a Masters qualification. HCRI has been chosen by UoM to provide one of its four MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses).

Impact on Médecins Sans Frontières

Taithe's research on French universalism and humanitarianism led to his involvement with MSF in 2004 when he was invited to contribute to the reform of international governance of the MSF international movement along with 19 other scholars [5.7]. His contribution on humanitarian autonomy and independence as key principles for action was part of the La Mancha process which involved a debate on the principles and values of MSF.

Following this consultation, MSF and its worldwide branches fine-tuned the coordination of its national networks which led to a new constitution of the Federation in 2006-2007. The La Mancha process in effect not only re-founded the structure of MSF international but primarily re-asserted its fundamental values and principles, the area on which Professor Taithe was asked to comment [5.7].

MSF is one of the largest global charities, delivering emergency aid in 65 countries. Professor Taithe's research has helped to shape its operation. He has been asked to contribute to the MSF reflection on 'Medical Care Under Fire', a research and communication campaign, and to internal debates on security and humanitarian aid, notably by contributing to the training week for mission leaders in 2013 and by participating in the first published document outlining the challenges of security in humanitarian context [5.5]. The Director of Unité de Recherche sur les Enjeux et Pratiques Humanitaires (UREPH), a section of MSF, attests that 'Professor Taithe.....has provided us with a very valuable historical perspective on our policies and practices and has thus had an impact on our understanding of them' [5.6]. In 2013 Professor Taithe was asked to join the scientific committee of the Fondation MSF in Paris [5.10].

Impact on NGO policy debates and policy formation

The contribution to the reform of MSF led to invitations to contribute plenary lectures to the Berlin International NGO congress in 2007 and 2012. On both occasions the Congress was attended by some 650 NGO volunteers, logisticians and medical staff. In 2012 Taithe spoke on the theme 'Tough Choices - Ethical Challenges in Humanitarian Aid'. He remains the only historian to have been invited twice to the Berlin Humanitarian Congress which is now the largest in Europe [5.7].

He also attended the MSF anniversary conference of MSF Holland in Amsterdam as a respondent in October 2010 and he contributed to NGO conferences in Geneva and the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies at Tufts, both in 2011. These focused on specific and practical humanitarian issues to facilitate the exchange of policies between often uncoordinated agencies. Taithe was also invited in 2012 to contribute to the training of NGO officers at the Geneva Center for Education and Research in Humanitarian Aid (CERAH).

His more recent publications on French missionaries, humanitarian faith-based organizations and the relationship between religion and humanitarian work since the 1860s (items 3.2-3.4 under 'references to the research') have also led to his participation in several Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Henry Luce Foundation conferences attended by Faith Based Organizations such as Islamic Relief, Caritas and the Muslim Charities Forum. ODI confirms 'Professor Taithe has had a direct impact on our understanding of the history of French humanitarianism in particular and of the legacy of colonialism for modern humanitarian action, but also more broadly in terms of

Impact case study (REF3b)

historical approaches to the aid sector' [5.9]. The Luce seminars led to an Oxford University Press book in 2012 (3.5) which raised many issues on the role of religion in humanitarian aid. The debate is ongoing and involves secular and religious NGOs. This work contributes to a complex reform trend in the world of NGO governance and the professionalization of humanitarian aid. In 2011 Prof Taithe was asked to become part of the steering group for the ODI project 'A Global History of Modern Humanitarian Action' [5.9]. Professor Taithe has contributed to these debates through his scholarship, publications and participation in conferences and also through the HCRI which is now one of the leading institutes in the field alongside those at Tufts, Harvard and Geneva.

Impact on surgical interventions in disaster areas

The findings of Professor Taithe's research into surgical interventions in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake have fed directly into current debates on the provision and professionalization of humanitarian aid. Handicap International attested that Taithe's work not only 'had an impact on our understanding of what are the typical behaviours of international relief organisations in setting up a response, but also what are key determinants leading victims to search for initial relief, and even more, literally "choose" what they assume would be the best services and NGOs to provide them with care and support' [5.8]. The results of Taithe's research were discussed at medical conferences such as the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies and referenced in medical publications as part of an ongoing campaign for professionalising medical units. The resulting articles were published in prestigious medical journals like *The Lancet* and *The Journal of Pre-Hospital and Disaster Medicine* [5.2, 5.3]. These articles have been cited in journal debates concerning, for example, the creation of trained surgical units ready for deployment [5.1]. The impact of this campaign is witnessed by the creation of a UK International Emergency Trauma Database, funded by the Department for International Development, which lists internationally accountable expert teams that can be called upon to attend situations of extreme emergency. This model is now emulated in several countries in the world, and the World Health Organisation is working to extend it.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

All claims referenced in the text.

- 5.1 Chu, Stokes, Trelles, Ford, 'Improving Effective Surgical Delivery in Humanitarian Disasters: Lessons from Haiti' PLoS Medicine, 8:4, April 2011, www.plosmedicine.org
- 5.2 Redmond, O'Dempsey, Taithe, 'Disasters and a register for foreign medical teams', *The Lancet*, 377, no. 9771 (2011) 1054-1055.
- 5.3 'A Qualitative and Quantitative study of the Surgical and Rehabilitation Response to the Earthquake in Haiti', January 2010, *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, Dec 2011
- 5.4 Supplement to the British Academy response to Sir John O'Reilly, May 2013, <http://www.britac.ac.uk/templates/asset-relay.cfm?frmAssetFileID=12587>
- 5.5 Abu Sa'da, Duroch, Taithe, 'Attacks on the Medical Mission: Examples of a Polymorph Reality, the Case of MSF', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 95: 889, Spring 2013.
- 5.6 Letter of support from the director Unité de Recherche sur les Enjeux et Pratiques Humanitaires (UREPH), MSF Switzerland
- 5.7 Letter of support for the work done by Bertrand Taithe for the La Mancha process by the Director of *La Mancha* for MSF. MSF Germany.
- 5.8 Letter of support for the work done by Bertrand Taithe from Handicap International
- 5.9 Letter of support for the work done by Bertrand Taithe from the head of the Humanitarian Partnership group, ODI.
- 5.10 Letter of support for the work done by Bertrand Taithe from the director of Centre de Réflexion sur l'Aide et les Savoirs Humanitaires, (CRASH) MSF France, USA, Australia, Japan.