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Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal?

A Mapping Study of Non-Western Donors

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List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCDP	Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DI	Development Initiatives
DSG	Donor Support Group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EMERCOM	Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergencies to the Russian Federation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FTS	Financial Tracking System
GA	United Nations General Assembly
GFDRR	World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBSA	India Brazil South Africa Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission for Haiti
MOFAT	South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCFA	UAE Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODSG	OCHA Donor Support Group
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TIKA	Turkish International Cooperation Agency
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNWRA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Introduction

“[I]n the humanitarian realm, countries that do not belong to the established donor club have little opportunity to influence the functioning of the humanitarian enterprise.” (Donini 2009)

A serious imbalance characterizes the international humanitarian system. Most of the international governance mechanisms where humanitarian assistance is discussed and shaped, such as donor support groups or the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), are closed circles of primarily Western humanitarian donors. States like China, Russia, Saudi Arabia or Brazil, all of whom have increased their humanitarian assistance provision, do not take part in these fora¹ (Development Initiatives (DI) 2010). Outside the diplomatic fields of the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), no meeting ground exists for established donors and their counterparts from the non-Western world to deliberate the normative and technical aspects of international humanitarian assistance. As a result, the current discourse overlooks the different traditions and approaches to humanitarian aid (Donini 2010), opening the door for uncoordinated donorship that may lead to duplications, gaps and other inefficiencies in humanitarian response.

Limited meeting ground for non-Western and established donors

Because of the emerging donorship from the non-Western world as well as the increasing social and economic power of the respective states, exclusion of non-Western donors² from humanitarian fora is no longer justifiable. Rather, this low level of cooperation between traditional and non-Western donors could undermine current humanitarian reform³ efforts and hamper the development of a more legitimate, truly universal and effective system.

Low level of cooperation undermines humanitarian system

Closer cooperation would change the current perception that humanitarianism today is a “Western dominated enterprise” (Holmes 2007, Donini et. al. 2008: 4). Furthermore, working together with non-Western donors potentially increases humanitarian access. The case of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar showed that neighboring countries and regional organizations – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in particular – often have pre-existing links and relevant

Potential benefits from enhanced cooperation

¹ For example, in the humanitarian response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Saudi Arabia emerged as the biggest contributor to the Haiti Emergency Response Fund followed by Brazil. However, the new Eastern European donors - although financially less important than donors like China or Saudi Arabia - are the only ones having access to existing donor fora, benefiting from efforts of the European Commission to facilitate knowledge exchange and cooperation.

² By using the term “non-Western donor” we do not imply that the approaches of donors included in this group are the same. For reasons of simplicity, a term to designate the group is needed, and we rejected the terms of “new”, “non-traditional” and “emerging” donors because most of them have a long tradition of aid giving. The term “non-DAC”, used by other studies on the subject, was deemed inappropriate as well, because the OECD DAC is only one out of several policy making fora in humanitarian aid.

³ The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator initiated humanitarian reform in 2005. The reform aims at making humanitarian response more effective through greater predictability, accountability and improved partnership between the United Nations and non-UN humanitarian organizations, such as humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement. www.humanitarianreform.org, accessed 03/08/2010.

cultural knowledge to successfully engage with disaster affected governments. Finally, working together in the relatively low-politics area of humanitarian assistance may also help to build mutual trust, which allows for cooperation in other issue areas.

The lack of understanding of non-Western approaches to humanitarianism is one crucial obstacle to closer collaboration. Existing research has either largely concentrated on quantitative analysis (Harmer et al 2005 and 2010, DI 2009) or focused on development aid, without taking the normative framework and institutional particularities of humanitarian assistance into account.⁴

The current project – “Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal?” – attempts to fill this gap, which previous research has also identified (Harmer/Martin 2010: 2, DI 2009). Shifting the focus to the individual donor rather than non-Western donorship as a general phenomenon, it aims to develop a better understanding of the norms, foreign policy interests, policies and institutions that shape the implementation of humanitarian assistance by some non-Western donor countries. This mapping study is the first part of the project. It aims to develop a research agenda for emerging donorship and looks at the humanitarian behavior of a selected number of countries that (re-)emerge as donors in the international humanitarian arena.

Shifting the focus to the individual donor

The following questions guide the mapping study:

- What is the current extent of non-Western donorship and cooperation between Western and non-Western donors?
- What are the main traits of some non-Western donors’ approach to humanitarian aid?
- Which non-Western donors should be studied in further detail, and what framework is needed to conduct such an analysis?

Guiding questions

In UN resolutions, codes and standards, governments have agreed that humanitarian assistance should be allocated according to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence (cf OCHA 2009). This normative framework, however, must not lead to the “incorrect assumption that [humanitarian aid] is [...] divorced from political power” (Paras 2007: 26). Rather, the decision as to where, how and why to provide humanitarian assistance is part of larger foreign policy considerations, which are informed by both norms and interests such as geopolitical concerns or the aim of a donor to demonstrate benevolent behavior. (Beasley 2002: 8-15, Macrae et. al. 2002, DI 2010: 6-7). The mapping study thus analyzes humanitarian assistance as a donor country’s foreign policy.

Humanitarian assistance as part of foreign policy

The paper is based on a review of existing literature, primary sources and semi-structured interviews with representatives from international organizations, non-

⁴ Two exceptions are the studies by Binder, Andrea and Björn Conrad (2009) *China’s potential role in humanitarian assistance*, Berlin: GPPi and Robyns, Alain and Véronique de Geoffroy (forthcoming), *Les bailleursemergents de l’aidehumanitaire – le cas des pays du Golfe*. Plaisians: Groupe URD, which among other also looks at political and religious factors influencing donorship dynamics.

Western and Western donors.⁵ These sources were complemented by informal conversations and observations at the Dubai International Humanitarian and Development conference (DIHAD) and other events focusing on non-Western donorship.

Methods

Chapter 2 reviews the current extent of non-Western donorship and their involvement with the established international humanitarian system. The next part (chapter 3) provides brief portraits of nine non-Western donors⁶, looking at their humanitarian engagement as part of their foreign policy. The final chapter (chapter 4) synthesizes the results of the study. On this basis, the chapter outlines the analytical framework and questions for further investigation for the case studies.⁷

Chapter
division

⁵ See p. 33 for the list of persons interviewed.

⁶ Brazil, China, India, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Arab Emirates

⁷ The case studies will be conducted in the second phase of the “Truly Universal?” project. For more information on the project, see http://www.gppi.net/approach/research/truly_universal/.

2 The view from afar: Non-Western donors and the traditional system

Non-Western donors have left their mark on the humanitarian system through growing contributions and have attracted the attention of humanitarian organizations. That said, cooperation between established and non-Western donors remains low. This chapter provides an overview of emerging donorship and analyzes non-Western engagement with existing multilateral humanitarian and donor cooperation fora.

2.1 The growing financial importance

Humanitarian contributions by non-Western donors have increased over the last couple of years. According to the Financial Tracking System (FTS), which is maintained by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),⁸ donors who are not members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) contributed on average 6% of global humanitarian assistance between 2000 and 2008 (DI 2009: 42). As the FTS figures remain incomplete,⁹ this share is likely to be an underestimation of the real contributions of non-Western donors.

Non-members of the OECD/DAC contribute at least 6% of humanitarian assistance

Recent studies report an upward trend of non-Western actors' contributions to humanitarian aid (Harmer/Martin 2010, Harvey et al 2010: 22). With the growing economic power of states like Brazil, China or India, this trend is likely to continue in the coming years.

Sustained increased engagement

But who are these non-Western donors? The financially most important contributors to humanitarian aid are found on the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait contributed a large share of non-Western humanitarian aid in the last decade, followed by states such as the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, China and India (DI 2009: 44).

The financially most important contributors

At the same time, the humanitarian system has seen a growing number of smaller contributors providing assistance to countries with whom they want to show solidarity, a phenomenon that arguably questions the once overt divide between "donors" and "host states".¹⁰ To date, 120 states have contributed to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and states like Nigeria or Gabon rank among the top ten contributors to the Haiti Emergency Response Fund, with contributions of around US\$ 1 million (DI, 2010).

Growing number of small donors

⁸ Cf. <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts>.

⁹ This is due to the voluntary reporting. The numbers are incomplete, especially for donors at the margins of the current international system. Despite this pitfall, it is the only source that provides an approximate picture of the extent and relative importance of these contributions.

¹⁰ The number of government donors funding humanitarian assistance has gone up from 67 per year to 94 in only four years, between 2005 and 2009. (Harvey et al 2010: 22)

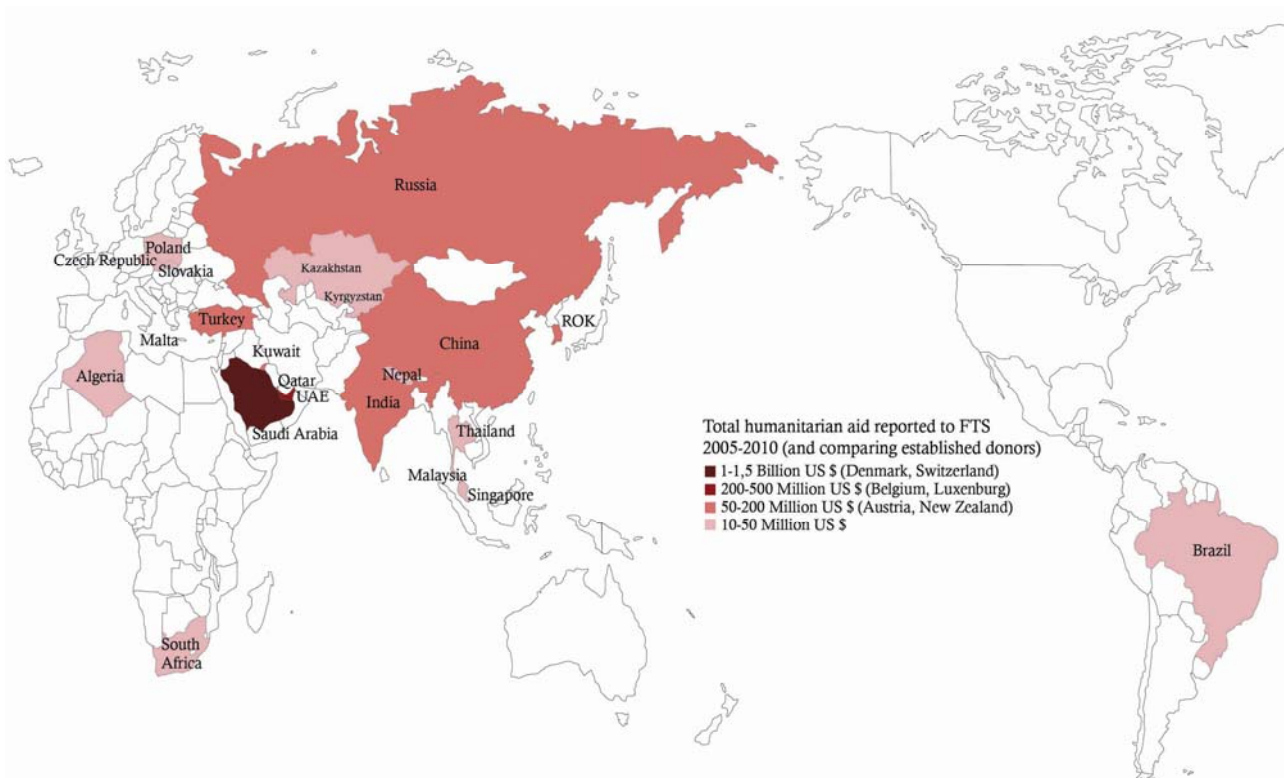


Illustration 1:

The financially most important “emerging” donors according to their total reported humanitarian aid from 2005-2010

2.2 Limited cooperation beyond efforts to “broaden the donor base”

The increasing financial potential of some non-Western donors has registered with major humanitarian organizations. To “broaden their donor base”, some humanitarian organizations have taken steps to enhance their cooperation with select new donors, especially the financially weighty Gulf States. For example, the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) successfully established relationships with donor governments in the Gulf. They have for instance reacted to the Gulf donors’ demands for publicly acknowledging their contributions through press releases and other public statements.¹¹ In 2007, Abdulaziz bin Mohamed Arrukban, a Saudi national and former WFP ambassador in Riyadh, was appointed UN Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs for the Middle East and North Africa. According to interviewees, his ability to broker between Gulf donors and the UN system is essential in getting contributions from these states.

Gulf donors, the centre of attention

Compared with the outreach to the Gulf, efforts by humanitarian agencies to build relations with other non-Western donors have been limited at best. In their donor relations departments, the amount of staff time allocated to building up relations with states like India, Brazil or China is negligible. One exception is the secretariat of the CERF, which has gradually replaced some of its Anglo-Saxon staff members

Outreach to other non-Western donors is limited

¹¹ See for example the overview of donations from the Middle East and Northern Africa in OCHA’s regional humanitarian update (OCHA ROMENACA 2009) and the UNRWA Arab Donors Unit update (2010), issued for the second time after a first Update in September 2009.

with non-Western personnel in order to lessen the perception of the fund as dominated by Western interests, a move welcomed by non-Western donors.

As for relations between established and non-Western donors, the past years have seen only limited rapprochement. The reasons for this differ from donor to donor, but usually they stem from an unwillingness of non-Western donors to join the existing system and an unwillingness of established donors to open their circles to what they fear to be potential spoilers. Apart from bilateral or trilateral initiatives, several fora need to be looked at.

The OECD/DAC shapes discourse and practice on humanitarian assistance through the definition of what counts as humanitarian assistance and peer reviews of humanitarian aid as a subcategory of official development assistance (ODA). Non-Western donors are reluctant to join the already established forum. Significant efforts to build up partnerships with non-members, particularly with China, rather concentrate on development cooperation and do not take into account humanitarian aid.

OECD/DAC

Some of the donor support groups request an annual minimum contribution of several millions US dollars to the operations of the respective humanitarian agency.¹² These relatively high thresholds may explain the absence of some non-Western donors. However, in the case of OCHA's Donor Support Group (ODSG), which requires a lower contribution of US\$ 500,000, financial reasons might not be the only explanation for the low participation of non-Western donors. The ODSG actively tries to reach out to new members, for example with regional humanitarian partnership meetings in Brazil, Indonesia, Singapore or Istanbul. However, these efforts have not yet produced the expected increase in participation. As a result, only three of the 24 members of the group are non-Western. Russia joined the group in 2010, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Korea in 2006.

Donor support groups

The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD) was set up in 2003 as a forum to share best practices and to discuss and agree on principles for giving humanitarian aid.¹³ South Korea is the only non-Western donor that has signed the GHD-principles.¹⁴ However, the GHD has established a list of five outreach priority countries (the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Croatia, Turkey and Brazil), showing that the GHD intends to enlarge its membership or at least seeks the dialogue with non-members. While these plans have not yet been put in practice, the current chairs intend to invite representatives of these priority countries to GHD meetings.

Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative

¹² For example, the donor support group of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) requires a minimum contribution of 10 million CHF to operations and the UNHCR Donor Support Group – also known as “the 20 million-plus club” - is open to members contributing at least 20 million US\$ to operations.

¹³ <http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org/>

¹⁴ Thanks to “newcomer sessions” organized by the European Commission to foster mutual learning and common initiatives (cf. GHD initiative 2008), emerging Eastern European donors are well established in the initiative now - with Estonia even co-chairing in 2010.

The Retreat on Challenges in International Humanitarian Assistance, organized twice - in 2008 and 2009 - by several Permanent Missions in Geneva, is an informal initiative among governments to exchange ideas about humanitarian issues. It brought together representatives of 50 donor and host states. Despite considerable efforts to include as many non-Western donors as possible, few attended.¹⁵

Retreat on Challenges in International Humanitarian Assistance

Direct cooperation between individual Western and non-Western donors has occurred only on an ad-hoc basis. Triangular projects – cooperation between the host country, a non-Western donor and an established donor – are also rare.¹⁶ One of the few examples is a trilateral initiative between the WFP, Brazil and Spain in response to the 2008 hurricanes in Haiti. Spain organized and paid for the transport of a shipment of rice, contributed in-kind by Brazil, and later distributed by the WFP in Haiti.¹⁷

Direct bilateral or triangular cooperation is ad hoc

2.3 Emergence of new and regional fora for donor cooperation?

This low level of participation in strategic multilateral humanitarian aid for a raises the question whether non-Western donors use alternative frameworks to cooperate or whether they are simply not inclined to cooperate more closely on humanitarian matters. Evidence shows that regional organizations and South-South cooperation fora are increasingly assuming a more prominent role in disaster response. For example, the ASEAN has a well-established common disaster management mechanism for the region. It was paramount in facilitating the international humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. The regionally anchored assistance efforts provided “a face-saving way for the Myanmar leadership to accept an international relief operation” (Belanger/Horsey 2008: 4).

Two regional examples: ASEAN disaster management mechanism...

Furthermore, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has had its own humanitarian affairs department since 2008. This department both implements humanitarian aid on behalf of the OIC in different countries and engages in policy making and dialogue facilitation, for instance among humanitarian NGOs in OIC member states (OIC 2008). The OIC member states stress the importance of developing a “clear strategy” on “cooperation and coordination between individual relief efforts of Islamic States and Islamic civil society institutions on the one hand, and international civil society institutions and organizations on the other hand” (OIC 2005).

... and the OIC humanitarian affairs department

The role of regional organizations in the coordination of humanitarian donors could become more important still, as echoed by the UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Catherine Bragg, who called on the League of Arab States to “take a proactive role in promoting international humanitarian coordination and funding” (UN News Centre 2010).

Regional cooperation fora could become more important

¹⁵ Participants list of the retreats, interviews.

¹⁶ This is different in development cooperation, where triangular cooperation is gaining momentum. (cf. OECD 2009: 1)

¹⁷ Interview

3 Zooming in: Mapping individual donors

To better understand the humanitarian behavior of non-Western donors, a closer look needs to be taken on the incentive structures and approaches of individual donors. This chapter thus provides brief portraits of nine important emerging donors: Brazil, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. These brief donor profiles also help to determine areas for further research.

3.1 Brazil

Parallel to its emergence as a regional power in Latin America, Brazil has developed an increasingly prominent profile as an active humanitarian donor. In 2009, Brazil co-hosted a regional meeting on humanitarian aid in Latin America with OCHA. In March 2010, as one of the biggest donors to the humanitarian response following the Haiti earthquake, Brazil was the only non-Western country co-chairing the United Nations donor conference on Haiti.

Increasingly prominent profile in Latin America

The response to the Haiti earthquake has become a strategic issue for Brazil. It was an opportunity for Brazilian government to stress the country's leading role on the continent, which they felt challenged by the engagement of the US military after the earthquake (Elizondo 2010). As a result, Brazil has pushed for a more important role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission for Haiti (MINUSTAH), which is been led by Brazil for several years now. To bolster this claim, Brazil has contributed its US\$ 28.9 million in humanitarian assistance to Haiti almost entirely through UN organizations. For example, the Haiti earthquake response was the first instance where Brazil has disbursed aid in response to a Consolidated Appeal. This approach is in line with the current government's strategy to promote multilateralism (John de Sousa 2008), reflecting aspirations to position Brazil as a reliable "global player of significance" (Alden/Vieira 2005: 1084), not least to validate its claim for a permanent seat in a reformed UN Security Council. Additionally, Brazil – similar to India and China – has been an active participant in both the support group of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and another disaster risk reduction forum managed by the World Bank, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). This engagement reflects the country's interest in multilateral solutions for disasters at home. Haiti could hence mark a general turning point in Brazil's humanitarian approach, which is thus far marked by in-kind government-to-government assistance.

Haiti: regional power play leading to increasing multi-lateral humanitarian engagement?

Brazil emphasizes following the priorities of the affected state. It wants to establish itself as a trustworthy South-South-cooperation partner for host states, avoiding traditional "donor-recipient hierarchies" (Rowlands 2008: 2). Furthermore, humanitarian aid giving is strategically embedded in the abovementioned desire to strengthen its regional leadership in Latin America and to increase dialogue with other world regions. Priority recipients of humanitarian aid are thus countries in

Emphasis on South-South cooperation

Latin America, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and the Portuguese-speaking African countries, Brazil's main partners for development cooperation.

Brazil's growing humanitarian engagement has triggered several changes in the country's administrative setup since 2006. An inter-ministerial working group, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, coordinates contributions from 11 ministries (Presidência da República, 2006). De facto, however, decision making power is increasingly shifting towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The MFA budget line for humanitarian aid has significantly increased from US\$ 1.7 million in 2007 to US\$ 28 million in 2010.¹⁸ Apart from the MFA budget line, all contributions need to be approved by Congress. However, Congress is currently debating a bill on disaster assistance that would allow the government to disburse international aid more quickly on the basis of provisional measures, to be approved by Congress ex-post (Brazilian Congress 2010). Congress was also under pressure to act quickly to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, as the loss of many Brazilian nationals working for MINUSTAH in the earthquake led to a wave of public attention.

Institutional consolidation

Brazil's strong thematic focus on (in-kind) food assistance is owed to its position as one of the world's biggest producers and exporters of agricultural products (cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung 2010). Brazil closely cooperates with the FAO and WFP, and agriculture is also at the center of its development cooperation strategy with the "Fome Zero" (Zero Hunger) campaign. Brazil seeks to move away from the in-kind focus and to strengthen local markets by purchasing food aid locally (IFRC 2009: 21). This attention to the longer term goal of economic development mirrors Brazil's aspiration to provide a more effective link between relief and development phases (IFRC 2009: 21)

Focus on food assistance and link between relief and development

The Haiti earthquake response was an opportunity for Brazil to position itself as an active donor. This engagement has not gone unnoticed by established donors. Cooperation with Brazil – perceived as "likeminded" – could become more regular. However, it remains to be seen how Brazil will position itself with respect to existing approaches. The country's initial refusal to sign the Accra Agenda on development, perceived as a "Northern" endeavor (John de Sousa 2010: 2-3), suggests that it might prefer alternative approaches for humanitarian aid as well.

Brazil as "likeminded" donor?

- How does the self-conception of Brazil as a "South-South partner" rather than a donor impact its humanitarian approach?
- What approaches to food aid and assistance does Brazil adopt, and how does this relate to the different approaches of traditional donors? Would food aid and assistance be a potential area for further cooperation and mutual learning?
- Which norms and interests influence decisions on where and how Brazil gives humanitarian aid?

Areas for further research

¹⁸ According to one Brazilian representative interviewed, the 21,7 million US\$ of total assistance reported to FTS between 2005 and 2010 are incomplete.

- How do regional rivalries with Argentina, Chile and the US affect Brazil's humanitarian approach?
- How far do Brazil's intentions to improve its internal emergency response system act as a driver for external engagement and cooperation?

3.2 China

It is likely that China's humanitarian aid contributions have been much higher than the US\$ 107 million reported to the FTS since 2005, mainly because figures are confidential as a "matter of state concern" (Harmer/Cotterell 2005: 15). The fact that China, the main ally of North Korea, registered only a marginal contribution to North Korea in the FTS points to this underreporting.

Under-reported humanitarian contributions

The Chinese government disburses most of its humanitarian aid bilaterally to governments, as well as to the Chinese Red Cross and other Red Cross Societies (cf Xinhua 2010). As for other non-Western donors, the choice of government-to-government assistance is the reflection of a strict focus on respecting the sovereignty of the affected state. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, however, China has repeatedly stressed the need for multilateral cooperation. In line with these statements, contributions to multilateral organizations have since become more frequent (Binder/Conrad 2009). Additionally, China participates actively in several fora on disaster risk reduction and technical response, such as ISDR, and its Search and Rescue team is among the most advanced in the world, certified by the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). In addition to this international engagement, China has demonstrated interest in increasing its regional role: For example, in 2009, it hosted an ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on Regulations concerning the Participation of Armed Forces in International Disaster Relief (cf. ASEAN 2009).

Growing multilateral and regional engagement

China has to reconcile conflicting interests related to its appearance as a "donor" on the international humanitarian scene. On the one hand, decision-makers are keen to portray China as a responsible member of the international community and aim for international recognition for their humanitarian commitment, suggesting an increasingly active donorship (Binder/Conrad 2009). On the other hand, China still claims its status as leader of the developing world. Interviewees suggested that the Chinese government is afraid that the country's status of "donor" might compromise its standing within the G77, as it might be perceived as "changing sides".

Conflicting interests when appearing as a "donor"

The humanitarian principle of humanity is embedded in Chinese culture, articulated in the Confucian saying that "a man of humanity and benevolence will care for others" (Quoted in He 2001). At the multilateral level, China refers to the humanitarian principles as a basis for its approach to giving aid. Despite this, established donors expect disagreement over norms and principles, largely because they analyze Chinese humanitarian aid – especially to African countries – as part of its often criticized development and economic engagement (Binder/Conrad 2009: 14).

Western suspicions regarding China's motivations

The decision-making procedures of the Chinese government relating to humanitarian assistance are insufficiently understood abroad. Formally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for “negotiating and managing” Chinese humanitarian aid, while decisions relating to emergency relief need to be approved by the State Council (Harmer/Cotterell 2005: 11). The Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Defense and the Department for Policy Planning are also involved in decision-making and implementation of humanitarian aid (Chin et al 2007: 6-7, Xinhua 2010).

Complex decision-making structures

Better cooperation with China on disaster relief could provide excellent opportunities for mutual learning. Given China’s experience in handling large-scale disasters internally, established donors and international organizations “have as much to learn from China” as vice versa (WFP Executive Director, 2004, quoted in Binder/Conrad, 2009: 14).

Opportunities for mutual learning?

- How do Confucian moral norms relate to the humanitarian principles and how important are they in shaping Chinese humanitarian policies and practices?
- Which decision-making procedures relating to humanitarian assistance exist in the Chinese government and what is their effect on international cooperation?
- Does the donation “competition” between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of China influence humanitarian aid?
- In what ways is Chinese humanitarian engagement different from its logic in development cooperation where mutual benefit is at the center?

Areas for further research

3.3 India

India has reported humanitarian contributions worth a total of US\$ 56.5 million over the past five years – likely to be a significant underestimation because the FTS does not include aid to Bhutan and Nepal where, according to one interviewee, India is in fact giving humanitarian assistance. Irrespective of the exact amount, India has in recent times quickly moved from a recipient to one of the most important non-Western donors in humanitarian aid.

Underreported humanitarian contributions

India’s move to increase its humanitarian and development engagement has been strategic. Decision-makers have made considerable efforts to establish the outside world’s perception of India as a donor rather than a recipient (Kragelund 2008: 574). In the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the government has “refused to accept humanitarian aid” (Harmer/Martin 2010: 21) and quickly provided aid to neighboring affected countries to underline its status as a humanitarian donor.

A conscious decision to become a donor

The Indian economic rise has been accompanied by a rediscovery of a pride in Indian values and culture, which also influences the country’s concept of humanitarian assistance. In a speech during the humanitarian aid segment of the UN General Assembly in 2007, for example, the Indian delegate explicitly referred to the concept of the “oneness of all human beings,” espoused by spiritual and political leaders such as Buddha and Gandhi as the basis for humanitarian aid.

Cultural and religious concepts

Furthermore, the Hindu concept of *daan*, or “gift without expectation of return”, led to tensions during the Tsunami response, as it runs counter to international norms of accountability (CCDP 2009).

As for most non-Western donors, the bulk of Indian humanitarian aid goes to strategically important neighbors such as Bhutan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh. This corresponds to the geographic area where India seeks greater economic cooperation through infrastructure and development projects (Varadarajan 2010: 63). A particularly interesting case is Afghanistan, where India’s rivalry with Pakistan plays out and where India competes with China over regional leadership and access to commodities (Davidson 2010: 72-73). While China mostly relies on direct economic investment, India’s strategy focuses on health projects and food aid (Davidson 2010: 72-73). Indian food assistance to Afghanistan – for example the contributions through the WFP worth US\$ 10 million in the past two years – needs to be analyzed in this context.

The country’s colonial past, its experience as a humanitarian aid recipient and its leading role in the non-aligned movement have shaped the way India conceives its aid and relates to international institutions. India puts a strong emphasis on the primary responsibility of the affected state to respond to disasters and state sovereignty. The country insists that aid needs to be given in a non-political manner. Following the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, the response of the international aid community was not sufficiently coordinated and sidelined India’s own response. This resulted in Indian skepticism towards the effectiveness of international humanitarian coordination and OCHA as one institution tasked with it (Price 2005).

Recent developments, however, point to a rapprochement between India and the multilateral humanitarian world. India contributes a relatively high amount to the CERF, between US\$ 500,000 and US\$ 1 million annually. While no data on multilateral contributions are available for the period prior to 2007, the reported in-kind aid worth US\$ 2.5 million to UNHCR for Sri Lanka in 2009 and the abovementioned contributions to the WFP indicate India’s potential as a multilateral humanitarian donor.

Similar to China, India’s increasing multilateral financial contributions have not led to any active participation in international humanitarian policy-making fora, with the partial exception of mechanisms focusing on domestic disaster risk reduction. Beyond this, cooperation with established donors to date has only taken place on an ad-hoc basis, for example through a common statement with Sweden at the UN General Assembly (India/Sweden 2008).

- How does India’s experience as a recipient country shape its humanitarian donor policy and practice?
- Is the Indian government under pressure to justify foreign aid given the scale of unmet needs within the country?
- Which cultural and religious norms influence India’s humanitarian policies and how do they relate to Western standards and practices?

Aid in the context of regional power politics

The shadow of the past: experiences with international aid and colonial history

Growing contributions to multilateral institutions

No active participation in humanitarian policy making fora

Areas for further research

- Are there attempts to centralize the currently dispersed decision-making processes on humanitarian aid in the Indian administration? Why did India abandon the idea of an “India International Development Cooperation Agency” (Mitra 2010)?

3.4 South Korea

The Republic of Korea is the only non-Western donor that has entered all the major multilateral humanitarian policy and norm-setting fora. It did so at a record pace in only four years. After joining the OCHA Donor Support Group in 2006, South Korea co-chaired OCHA’s partnership meeting in Seoul in 2007, recently subscribed to the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles and joined the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD in early 2010.

A well integrated non-Western donor

Over the past five years, the country contributed US\$ 114 million to international humanitarian aid efforts (according to the FTS), most of which went to Asia, with North Korea as a clear priority country. The contributions to its northern neighbor since 2005 are likely to be much higher than the reported US\$ 60 million. Food aid especially played a prominent role in Seoul’s “Sunshine Policy,” aimed at developing closer contacts between the two Koreas.¹⁹ South Korea uses humanitarian aid as an instrument to keep up a “minimal level of engagement” with its neighbor (Yoo 2009: 2).

Focus on North Korea

South Korea is committed to stepping up its humanitarian aid and extending it to other world regions, reflecting a desire to return to the world what the Korean people has received. As stated in the 2007 Overseas Emergency Relief Act, the Korean government subscribes to a needs-based approach to humanitarian aid, “not driven by visibility objectives” and delivered as part of a coordinated international response (OECD 2008: 25). This trust in the multilateral system is reflected by the fact that the Republic of Korea is currently the biggest non-Western donor to the CERF, with a total contribution of US\$ 14.5 million since 2006.

Strong multilateral commitment

Internally, South Korean aid is managed by the Humanitarian Aid Division, situated within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and set up in 2007. Similar to China, the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 is repeatedly cited as a trigger for South Korean decision-makers to recognize the “importance of a systematic response” (MOFAT 2010).

Increased domestic institutionalization since the Tsunami

Another interesting aspect of South Korea’s humanitarian role is its engagement in the extended circles of the ASEAN, the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN Regional Forum. According to one interviewee, South Korea sees its role as a “double bridge builder.” It seeks to mediate between recipients and donor states on the one hand and between established and newer donor states on the other.

Potential role as “double bridge builder”

- What is the actual level of South Korea’s humanitarian engagement?

¹⁹ The doctrine was abolished in 2008

- How does the importance of the relationship with North Korea influence South Korea’s humanitarian policies?
- In what way does South Korea shape the humanitarian discussions in the ASEAN+3 and the ASEAN Regional Forum?
- What were the factors enabling South Korea’s high level of engagement with the multilateral system? What lessons can be drawn for the cooperation with other non-Western donors?

Areas for further research

3.5 Russia

Russia attaches great importance to being seen as a “re-emerging” donor in development and humanitarian aid (cf. Alimov 2007). External disaster assistance has been part of the Russian foreign policy profile since 1993, and has not declined since then (McFarlane 2008: 2). With a reported contribution of US\$ 140 million over the past five years, Russia currently appears to be one of the biggest non-Western donors after the Gulf States (DI 2009).

A “re-emerging donor”

Regional foreign policy interests play an important role in humanitarian policy decisions. Most of Russia’s reported aid goes to countries in its immediate area of interest - Tajikistan, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. This focus on former provinces of the Soviet Union is also reflected in, and may be reinforced by, the fact that Russian humanitarian aid is managed by the Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergencies to the Russian Federation (EMERCOM), or more specifically its “Agency for the Support and Coordination of Russian Participation in International Humanitarian Operations” (EMERCOM 2010). The agency grew out of the Russian Rescue Corps, a domestic search and rescue arm which first intervened outside the national territory in the Georgia-Ossetia conflict in 1993 (EMERCOM 2010). With the Civil Defense Ministry as the main actor in Russian humanitarian assistance, Russia’s internal setup is different from other non-Western donors, where usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs oversees humanitarian aid.

Focus on Central Asia

In official documents and speeches, Russian representatives repeatedly refer to the humanitarian principles (cf. EMERCOM 2010). Other elements, however, suggest that there are important conceptual differences between Russia and many Western donors. Examples include an understanding of humanitarian assistance as the “willingness of the strong to help the weak,” and the criticism voiced at the 2007 General Assembly that the close cooperation between the United Nations bodies and NGOs led to a “lack of accountability” (GA 2007). Another potential point of friction between Russia and its established donor counterparts relate to the internal tensions in the Chechnya province, which continue despite the official end of the hostilities in spring 2009 (Barry 2009).

Conceptual differences and tensions with Western donors

These conceptual differences are the main reason why many established donors show reluctance to cooperate more closely with Russia. As a result, Russia rather turns to other non-Western partners for partnering on humanitarian aid. For example, in the response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Venezuela and Russia

A bumpy road to cooperation

joined forces to deliver Venezuelan in-kind food aid from Caracas to Port-au-Prince using EMERCOM airplanes (Reliefweb 2010). That said, with contributions worth US\$ 4.4 million since 2005, Russia is by far the biggest non-Western contributor to OCHA's operations. Despite this longstanding commitment, Russia has only recently joined the OCHA Donor Support Group.

- How do earlier Russian and Soviet humanitarian and civil defense practices influence Russia's current approaches?
- How does the Russian concept of humanitarian assistance differ from that of established donors, and what consequences do these differences have for closer cooperation?
- How do differences in the internal institutional set-up (responsibility of Ministry of Foreign Affairs vs. Ministry for Civil Defense) influence humanitarian policies and practice?
- How does Russia deal with humanitarian crises in its own "sphere of influence," and how does this affect its humanitarian policies and relations to other donors?
- How will the Russian membership in the OCHA Donor Support Group influence the relationship with established donors?

Areas for further research

3.6 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, by far the biggest non-Western humanitarian donor, has contributed more humanitarian aid than many established donors. With US\$ 1.3 billion reported as humanitarian aid over the past five years, the Kingdom is among the main donors, appearing between Germany and Switzerland on the FTS ranking. Of these contributions, US\$ 500 million went to the WFP food crisis appeal, and US\$ 70 million were channeled through the Saudi Red Crescent Society. Humanitarian aid to multilateral humanitarian institutions has a long tradition. The Kingdom was the top donor to the – then smaller – World Food Program from 1975-1978 and one of the main contributors to UNHCR in 1981 (Hüfner 2009a and b). Research suggests however that Saudi Arabia carefully chooses which crises it supports through the multilateral system (Harmer/Martin 2010: 10) and has high demands vis-à-vis the channeling organizations in terms of accountability and efficiency of processing the funds.²⁰

A large donor carefully choosing its multilateral contributions

Most of Saudi aid reported over the past five years went to Islamic states. Bangladesh and Yemen have received impressive Saudi government-to-government cash contributions of US\$ 100 million each in response to the cyclone in 2007 and the 2008 floods respectively. The pledged US\$ 100 million to several UN programs and offices in Pakistan and the important contributions to the Occupied Palestinian Territories are just two other examples of this focus. That said, Saudi decision makers are determined to extend their regional and international efforts and seek international recognition for this step (General

Extending reach of aid

²⁰ Interviews

Assembly, 2007). When the Kingdom emerged as one of the main contributors to the Haiti Emergency Response Fund in 2010, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Humanitarian Envoy, Abdulaziz bin Mohamed Arrukban, stressed that Saudi Arabia “stands ready and prepared to support people in need of humanitarian assistance on the basis of core humanitarian principles and regardless of nationality, race or religion” (Reliefweb/OCHA 2010).

Internal decision making on aid is not institutionalized but driven by a limited number of individuals. Available evidence suggests that King Abdullah himself makes most decisions regarding contributions to multilateral organizations.²¹ For strategically important crises, the government creates “Saudi Relief Committees”, usually controlled by Prince Nayef. These committees disburse funds both from the government and those collected from the Saudi public. Another member of the royal family, Prince Faisal, is the president of the Saudi Red Crescent Society.

Involvement of the Royal Family

The role of domestic public opinion and the religious establishment in shaping humanitarian decisions needs further research (cf. Wurm 2008). Apparently, domestic perceptions of the International Committee of the Red Cross as a Christian organization dissuaded Saudi Arabia from making significant contributions to the ICRC.

Internal perception of aid

Saudi Arabia is not cooperating with Western donors and remains largely absent from any voluntary cooperation fora, although the contributions required to join these are extremely low compared to Saudi Arabia’s potential. Traditional actors are still unsure about how to position themselves towards what they see as a very different approach to humanitarianism. This is mainly because it is unclear what Saudi Arabia counts as humanitarian assistance and how it delineates from other activities of Islamic charitable work such as building mosques. A better understanding of Saudi interests, norms and decision making structures is thus an important first step to increase mutual trust and foster cooperation.

No cooperation with Western donors

- What is Saudi Arabia’s concept of humanitarian assistance and how does it differ from the approaches of established donors?
- According to which criteria does Saudi Arabia decide whether or not to channel funds through multilateral and pooled funding mechanisms?
- Why did Saudi Arabia’s contribute US\$ 50 million to the Haiti Emergency Response Fund?
- How do the accountability standards demanded by Saudi Arabia compare and relate to accountability standards demanded by Western donors? Where does the quest for accountability come from?
- What dynamics within the Saudi royal family influence humanitarian decision-making?
- How does the opinion of the Saudi public and its religious establishment influence humanitarian decisions?

Areas for further research

²¹ Interviews

3.7 South Africa

At present, humanitarian action has a relatively low profile within South African foreign policy. Based on budget forecasts, South Africa will spend about US\$ 3.5 million on humanitarian aid in 2011 (Appropriation Bill 2010). The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) shapes South African foreign policy, emphasizing regional cooperation with a strong developmental focus (Shoeman 2003: 359). Major focus areas of South African foreign policy therefore include peace-keeping, reconstruction, trade and investment and the ‘African Renaissance’. Consistent with this stance, its humanitarian aid also overwhelmingly favors African countries, with a clear preference for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

A low-profile humanitarian donor

At the same time, South Africa has consciously used soft-power instruments to position itself as a norms-driven actor. For example, the country took up a prominent role in the Kimberley diamond certification process and advocates for limitations to arms production and for African development (Flemes 2007: 25, Shoeman 2003: 355).

Positioning as norms-driven actor

With an 80% share of the SADC economy, South Africa stands to benefit significantly from trade increases, economic development and stability of its neighbors (Adebajo et al 2007: 21). The regional dynamic is thus key in understanding South Africa’s aid disbursement patterns. Economically and militarily dominant, South African leadership in Africa is not always welcomed by those it purports to lead (Geldenhuys 2008: 11). To alleviate fears of hegemony, South Africa has constructed a “cooperative” leadership, acting through international and multilateral organizations (Shoeman 2003: 354). Since 2005, reported contributions from South Africa to other African countries have always been contributed through multilateral organizations such as the FAO, UNICEF and UNHCR. The only bilateral donations it made in this period were to non-African governments.

“Cooperative” leadership and a strong preference for multilateral aid

Further research is required to understand how South African humanitarian aid is coordinated. The idea of establishing a coordinating development agency has been on the table since 2006 but has yet to materialize (ANC 2007: 2). Broad priorities are set by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, but money is transferred through a plethora of government departments, with no central tracking system (Braude et al 2008: 7). As a consequence, most established actors view South Africa as inactive in humanitarian policy. Despite this, many interviewees suggested that South Africa should be viewed as a donor with considerable potential for the future owed to its unique position within Africa, a clear ambition to foster its reputation and a strong preference for multilateralism.

Dispersed decision-making and dormant humanitarian potential

- What are the internal decision-making processes and structures for distribution of humanitarian aid?
- In practice, how does South Africa’s perception of itself as “development partner” rather than donor influence its humanitarian approach?

Areas for further research

- What factors influence how South Africa chooses its humanitarian contributions to countries on the African continent?
- Has the presidency of Jacob Zuma since 2008 significantly changed the multilateralist legacy of Mbeki?

3.8 Turkey

Similarly to other non-Western donors, the real level of Turkish humanitarian contributions is difficult to assess. The reported contributions of US\$ 118 million over the past five years are likely to be an underestimation. According to its own statistics, Turkey has already provided double that amount in only two years (MFA 2010). The most significant reported contributions have gone to Pakistan, Lebanon, Indonesia and Iraq, reflecting Ankara's traditionally strong ties with the Islamic world (Harmer/Martin 2010: 20). For example, officials described humanitarian assistance to Pakistan as a "natural manifestation of our excellent bilateral relations with friendly and brotherly Pakistan" (MFA 2009).

Ties with
Islamic regions

The Turkish government aims to further increase contributions to international organizations (MFA 2010). With contributions close to US\$ 2 million over the past five years, Turkey is the second largest non-Western donor to OCHA, topped only by Russia. In addition to this important multilateral contribution, Turkey uses bilateral government-to-government aid as an instrument of bilateral foreign policy.

Aim of scaling
up multilateral
aid

Similar to China, India and Brazil, the responsibility for humanitarian aid decision- and policymaking lies with several ministries. All in-kind and cash contributions need to be approved by the Turkish cabinet, and depending on the aid modality, up to ten ministries are involved in decision making (MFA 2006). These internal modalities, including the role of the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), need to be studied in further detail.

Dispersed
internal
decision
making
potential

The new status as "emerging donor" is an important factor in Turkey's identity as an increasingly self-confident international player (MFA 2010, Gül 2008). Its humanitarian engagement needs further analysis in light of the country's growing importance as a regional middle power and mediator in several conflicts in the Middle East, while at the same time maintaining its strong links with the EU and NATO (Crisis Group 2010). This multitude of foreign policy identities enables Turkey to build bridges between different regional traditions of giving in some of the world's most severely disaster and conflict ridden regions. The president of the Turkish Red Crescent society is very active in fostering cooperation through a recently created regional mechanism among Red Crescent Societies in the Caucasus region and among OIC Red Crescent Societies (Islamic Committee of the Crescent 2010, Regional Cooperation Program 2010). Turkey has generally stepped up its involvement with the OIC, where humanitarian aid has gained momentum since the election of a Turkish national, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, as the Secretary General in 2004.

Increased
regional ties

Turkey has been warmly welcomed as a new player in the multilateral humanitarian arena. This is probably owed to its clear commitment to humanitarian principles. Turkey has repeatedly stressed the importance of providing humanitarian aid “indiscriminate of race, religion, language and gender” (MFA 2010). It is probably also owed to the country’s commitment to coordination. John Holmes has openly and repeatedly encouraged Turkey to join the OCHA Donor Support Group, and the group held an outreach event in Istanbul in 2006. Despite these efforts, Turkey has not joined the OCHA Donor Support Group, nor is it active in other humanitarian for a – a situation that requires further investigation.

Turkey – the next member of the OCHA Donor Support Group?

- What role does humanitarian aid play in efforts of the Turkish government to strengthen ties with Africa?
- What are the internal decision-making processes for humanitarian aid?
- How does Turkish humanitarian aid relate to its efforts to access the European Union?
- Why have outreach efforts by traditional donors to include Turkey in its decision-making fora not been successful?

Areas for further research

3.9 United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is establishing itself as an important humanitarian player – not only through large contributions (US\$ 349 million reported over the past five years), but also by actively shaping policy discussions on aid. The UAE is determined to gain recognition as a “generous and important donor country” on the international scene (OCFA 2010: 8). Such international recognition is also sought in competition with other emirates, most importantly Qatar. The UAE has managed to build relationships with established donors and multilateral organizations alike – as demonstrated by the fact that the Global Humanitarian Appeal was exceptionally launched in Abu Dhabi in 2009.²²

Seeking recognition as a “generous and important donor country”

Most of the UAE’s official aid went to Arab and Islamic countries, in line with UAE foreign policy favoring the “brotherly relationship” with those states (Al-Mashat 2007: 465). UAE foreign aid policy is also influenced by domestic factors. Particularly, the government shows a desire to respond to disasters affecting the home countries of large migrant communities, which make up approximately 85% of the population in the UAE (Al-Mashat 2008). Contributions to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines reflect this focus (cf. Emirates News Agency 2009). Furthermore, humanitarian aid plays a prominent role in UAE society and gets much attention from the ruling families, with a multi-million dollar award “celebrating the universality of humanity” (IRIN News 2008) and public calls for contributions, so-called “telethons” (Robyns/deGeoffroy, forthcoming). To get a full picture of the UAE landscape of charities,

Domestic factors influencing decision making

²² The Global Humanitarian Appeal, a compilation of the strategic action plans and related funding requests of humanitarian organizations for all major humanitarian crisis in a specific year, is usually launched in Geneva or New York. See <http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/>.

understanding federal dynamics between the emirates – in particular Dubai and Abu Dhabi – is key. Each emirate controls its own policies and programs through charities linked to the individual rulers. Different government entities in the individual emirates also have a say in humanitarian aid decision-making.

The UAE is determined to take an active part in “setting the international humanitarian and development aid agendas” (OCFA 2010: 8), for example through organizing an annual conference on humanitarian aid, the DIHAD, but also by participating actively at the multilateral policy level. By 2006, the UAE had joined the OCHA Donor Support Group, where it is one of three non-Western donors. Similarly, in 2009, the UAE was the only non-Western and Islamic donor to be part of the otherwise exclusively Western UNHCR Donor Support Group of those contributing more than US\$ 20 million to UNHCR.

A donor determined to set international agendas

In 2008, the government established the UAE Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid (OCFA) as an umbrella for UAE-based charities and organizations. Its main task is to document past foreign aid activities (cf. OCFA 2010b) and to better coordinate UAE foreign aid to “increase the impact of the UAE’s humanitarian funding” (OCFA 2010a: 8). A second task is to form an alliance among the plethora of Emirati charities “to ensure that aid reaches those most in need” (OCFA 2010a: 8). The government hired several international and European staff members with significant experience working for the UN system to set up the agency. The link between OCFA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as decision-making within the ministry, remains unclear.

Improved internal and external cooperation, but decision making remains unclear

The relations with representatives of other donors and multilateral agencies in the country, however, seem to go through OCFA. Within a very short time, the agency has built up relations with Oxfam, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Sweden, Norway and others through common workshops, trainings and donor meetings on international humanitarian standards and other issues. This first steps towards cooperation with Western donors and organizations is in line with the UAE’s foreign policy framework of peaceful and “constructive engagement” with other states (Al-Mashat 2008).

Clear outreach to other donors

- How does the UAE leadership make decisions on humanitarian aid?
- How does the work of OCFA relate to and influence the humanitarian policies of the government?
- What dynamics between the different emirates (Abu Dhabi and Dubai in particular) shape official humanitarian aid from the UAE?
- How closely are charities linked to the government, and how do they cooperate directly with established donors?
- Against the backdrop of regional competition between the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, as well as smaller Gulf states such as Qatar, how does the relationship between multilateral institutions and the UAE impact the country’s relationship with other Gulf States?

Areas for further research

4 Commonalities in non-Western donorship and their implications for the case study framework

The short donor portraits above identified questions for further research in order to better understand the great variety of approaches of individual non-Western donors to humanitarian assistance. They have also brought to light several commonalities of non-Western aid. This section synthesizes these commonalities and elaborates the analytical framework for further in-depth country case studies to be conducted in the next step of the project.

4.1 Explaining humanitarian donorship

As seen in the brief donor portraits, both normative-ideational and material factors influence the humanitarian approach of the respective country. “Analytical eclecticism” is the only approach in international relations theory that brings together rationalist and constructivist arguments (Katzenstein and Okawara 2001; Jupille et al. 2003; Zürn and Checkel 2005). It is thus the most appropriate approach to inform the analysis of humanitarian donor behavior. To implement such an analytical approach, it is useful to look at different aspects of the humanitarian “role” of donors (Aggestam 1999): the role implementation, the role conception and the role expectations they are confronted with by traditional humanitarian actors. The analysis of the role of donors within the humanitarian system will help to identify obstacles, levers and possible areas of cooperation.

Combining
normative-
ideational and
material
factors

Within this framework, the following core research questions will guide the case studies:

- *Role implementation:* How does the non-Western donor implement humanitarian activities? What approach and focus (thematic and regional) has the donor chosen, and how does the donor interact with the traditional international humanitarian system?
- *Role conception:* Why does the donor see its own humanitarian role the way it does? What norms and interests are behind its humanitarian engagement?
- *Role expectation:* How do the traditional donors perceive the respective donor? What humanitarian behavior do they expect? Is this expectation an obstacle or a lever for closer cooperation? What other obstacles and levers for closer cooperation can be drawn from the analysis?
- *Towards cooperation:* What could be areas in humanitarian assistance for improved cooperation between the respective donor and its Western counterparts? What could a common cooperation portfolio look like?

Core research
questions

4.2 *Shedding light into a “black box”*

To identify possible areas for cooperation, the case study first needs to develop a clear understanding of the non-Western donor and its humanitarian policies and practices through analysis of the donor’s role implementation and role conception.

4.2.1 *Role implementation: the humanitarian “practice”*

A critical first analytical step is to understand the humanitarian practice, or role implementation, of the donor in question. This includes internal institutions, decision-making structures and policies as well as the donor’s priorities and modalities for providing aid.

Our research thus far suggests that unfamiliarity with non-Western donors’ internal institutional setup, policies influencing humanitarian aid and decision-making procedures obstruct closer cooperation. The portraits above showed that most non-Western donors lack a clearly structured internal aid architecture. The limited institutionalization of humanitarian aid sets them apart from the established donors who usually have highly institutionalized aid bureaucracies. However, as the brief profiles of Brazil and the United Arab Emirates show, some non-Western donors recognize that institutionalized procedures for decision- and policy-making are important; such procedures enable donors to respond faster and track contributions (cf. chapter 3.1 and 3.9). In other non-Western donor countries, decisions tend to be taken either by a very small number of individuals, as is the case in Saudi Arabia, or by a large number of only loosely coordinated government agencies. The resulting lack of clear counterparts for Western aid institutions complicates relationship-building and contributes to a low level of bilateral donor cooperation. Furthermore, diplomats of non-Western donors based in Geneva and New York lack clear mandates and instructions for how to engage in multilateral humanitarian policy-making. As a result, most non-Western representatives engage minimally, if at all, in the respective multilateral cooperation fora.

Internal institutional setup, policies and decision making procedures

- Which state actors are involved in making decisions on humanitarian aid?
- Which actors are involved in implementing and providing humanitarian aid?
- What dynamics among these individuals, departments and state organizations influence these decisions?
- Which internal legal, fiscal and policy documents guide the implementation of humanitarian aid?

Key questions

The donor’s priorities and modalities for giving humanitarian assistance to other countries is another critical area. This involves questions related to the geographic distribution of aid, its thematic focus, preferred partners, the forms of aid given (financial versus in-kind) and the channels used. Research suggests that most non-Western donors still prefer giving humanitarian aid in-kind rather than in cash (Harmer/Martin 2010: 1). Some argue that in-kind contributions distributed through existing bilateral channels are easier to administer than working through multilateral mechanisms, partly because their understanding of the relevant

Priorities and modalities for giving humanitarian assistance

humanitarian funding instruments is often limited.²³ Our research also suggests that some established donors are hesitant to cooperate with their non-Western counterparts because the former are uncertain about the humanitarian aid priorities and modalities of the latter. Established donors are suspicious about the influence of political priorities on aid and adherence to humanitarian principles. Most of the donors studied mainly gave aid in their – growing or traditional – sphere of influence as regional powers. The regional reach of aid was apparent for Russia, Saudi Arabia, India or the United Arab Emirates, while Brazilian aid went more and more to strategically important regions in West Africa as well.

- What are the aid modalities (bilateral or multilateral channels, in-kind or cash contributions) of the respective donor?
- What are the geographic priorities of donorship?
- What are thematic priority areas of humanitarian aid?
- Which are the main implementing partners of a state’s humanitarian aid, both domestically (NGOs, charities, Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies) and internationally (multilateral or regional institutions, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies)?
- Does the donor favor any particular approach to humanitarian assistance?

Key questions

Large-scale natural disasters have changed and are changing the humanitarian approach of several of the countries studied above. For example, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami has changed the approach to humanitarian assistance in China and South Korea, while the 2010 Haiti earthquake altered the approaches of the United Arab Emirates, India and Brazil (cf. chapter 3).

Media-prominent disasters as triggers of change?

- What effects do major media-prominent crises like the 2004 Tsunami or the 2010 earthquake in Haiti have on the internal institutional arrangements of non-Western donors?

Key question

4.2.2 *Role conception: the humanitarian “self”*

To understand why donors implement their humanitarian aid the way they do, it is necessary to analyze their self-understanding, or role conception, as humanitarian donors. Relevant factors include the official definition of humanitarian assistance, the principles and norms humanitarian actors refer to (including religious and cultural traditions of charitable work), and the general foreign policy identity and international positioning of the donor.

Traditional donors conceptualize humanitarian assistance as being apart from other forms of foreign assistance (development aid, peacekeeping, etc.). They define humanitarian assistance as short-term activities that aim to save lives and alleviate immediate suffering. For most of the non-Western donors studied, the separation between short-term humanitarian aid and other forms of aid was not explicitly stated. Further research is required to determine the general

Concept of humanitarian assistance

²³ Interviews

understanding of humanitarian assistance among non-Western decision-makers. Brazil, for example, explicitly seeks to provide an alternative model to the dominant separation between humanitarian and development aid in order to allow for a better transition from relief to development.

- How does the state define humanitarian assistance?
- What implications does this definition have on the safeguarding of humanitarian principles and approaches to integrate humanitarian, development and peacekeeping activities?

Key questions

Since norms and values largely influence humanitarian aid, an analysis of the underlying principles is critical to understanding the humanitarian practices of non-Western donors. This is particularly important as many Western donors are strongly wedded to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, and doubts about the commitment of non-Western donors to these principles are a key hurdle to enhanced cooperation.²⁴ Such suspicion exists despite the fact that most non-Western donors refer to the humanitarian principles in GA RES 46/182 as the normative foundation of their assistance policies and do not perceive them as a “Western construct”. At the same time, several researchers have pointed out that operational interpretation of the humanitarian principles varies widely among traditional donors (CCCP, FIC 2004: 5-6, Spaak/Otto 2009: 35). The humanitarian principles are not specific enough to clearly “distinguish appropriate from inappropriate behavior” (Boekle/Rittberger et al. 1999: 7). There is currently no dialogue between established and non-Western donors on the meaning of these principles, as established donors fear that discussing the principles could undermine them. Understanding the non-Western concept of humanitarian assistance and the norms and values which underpin their application of humanitarian principles is a first step towards enabling such a dialogue.

International norms, values and humanitarian principles

Besides international norms and values, a country’s humanitarianism is intrinsically linked to its cultural and religious norms and values (CCDP 2009: 3). Christian ethics of charity shaped the early days of the big international NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement (Walker, Maxwell 2009, p. 15, Cockayne 2002), just as the institutionalization of Islamic charitable duties, such as Zakat or Sadaqa, are at the root of the big charitable organizations in the Islamic world (Benthall 1999: 36).

Cultural and religious norms and values

Underlying religious and cultural norms can influence state behavior in two ways. First, these norms build the background for the ways decision-makers understand humanitarianism and subsequently the state’s role and identity on the international humanitarian scene. Second, the domestic population scrutinizes the behavior of decision-makers through the lens of their own concept. Therefore, the perceived religious, secular or cultural backgrounds of recipient organizations matter.

Influence of norms and principles on state behavior

²⁴ Interviews

- What principles, norms and values do state representatives and internal documents refer to?
- What is the understanding of humanitarian principles by policy- and decision makers?
- How do humanitarian principles influence decisions on how and where to allocate humanitarian aid?
- What religious and cultural factors inform the humanitarian aid concept of both state agents and the society of the non-Western donor?
- What part do they play when choosing where and how to implement aid?

Key questions

As non-Western donors appear or reappear on the institutionalized multilateral humanitarian stage, they are forced to position themselves in relation to the current “humanitarian order” – its history, norms and expectations (cf Barnett 2010). Principles and norms of humanitarianism have a “constitutive effect”. They define the social identity of a “good donor” as one working according to internationally accepted principles (Risse 2000: 5). Showing international solidarity is essential in shaping a state’s identity in international politics. Most decision-makers are thus concerned that their state is recognized by other states as a norm-compliant, legitimate member of international society (Franck 1990: 191, Boekle/Rittberger 1999: 10). At the same time, several non-Western donors are eager to set themselves apart from established donors by working with affected states on a more equal footing, following principles of non-interference, rooted in the Non-Aligned Movement (Harmer/Cotterell2005).

Humanitarian aid as way of positioning a state in a pre-existing international regime

- How does the donor perceive the multilateral humanitarian system and its organizations?
- What role does humanitarian behavior play in the state’s desire to position itself internationally in a certain way?
- What role could regional and new multilateral for a (such as the G20) realistically play as an alternative forum for cooperation on humanitarian assistance?

Key questions

Although the use of humanitarian assistance to further a donor’s foreign policy goals is generally frowned upon, foreign policy interests affect donor behavior to the same extent as norms and values. This holds true for traditional and (re-) emerging donors. For example, the preoccupation of the Brazilian government to be seen as the “voice” of the developing world (John de Sousa 2008: 1) or China’s leading role within the G77 shape certain aspects of their behavior as humanitarian donors. In addition, as discussed earlier, for several non-Western donors, government-to-government assistance fulfills an important function in improving bilateral relations. Finally, some non-Western donors tend to participate more actively in multilateral fora for technical areas of disaster response, such as search and rescue and disaster risk reduction, because it helps them to learn from domestic disaster response. Such foreign policy considerations can explain

Humanitarian aid in the context of a non-Western donor’s larger foreign policy interests

geographic patterns of aid distribution as well as preferences for certain types of aid.

- What foreign policy identities build the background to the state's humanitarian engagement?
- How do such interests influence humanitarian policy making?
- How does humanitarian aid relate to other foreign policy goals of the state?
- Are these goals an explanatory factor for certain geographic or thematic preferences, or for preferring certain aid modalities?

Key questions

Decisions on humanitarian assistance by both established and non-Western donors are also influenced by domestic public opinion (cf. Putnam 1988: 434, Holsti 1996, Risse-Kappen 1991, Russett 1990). Media coverage of a particular disaster, for example, can compel domestic populations to pressure the government to *do something* on their behalf. Also, as evidenced by the United Arab Emirates case, large expatriate communities from a disaster-affected state can push decision-makers to respond to a particular crisis. Furthermore, it might be difficult for leaders in countries that are themselves affected by crises to justify sending humanitarian aid abroad when there are unmet humanitarian and development needs domestically. However, the extent of this influence is dependent on the domestic political system. The role of the public in shaping foreign policy behavior is generally bigger in liberal democracies than in authoritarian states. Yet, the UAE case shows that it is worth investigating the relationship between public opinion and approaches to humanitarian assistance for all donors.

Humanitarian aid as a way of appealing to the domestic population

- What role does public opinion play in the decision of policy makers to allocate aid in a certain way and to certain emergencies?
- Which channels do elite and other population groups have to influence humanitarian policy-making?

Key questions

4.2.3 Towards increased cooperation: the shadow of the future and experiences from the past

The ultimate aim of the in-depth country case studies is to identify options for future cooperation between the respective non-Western donor and traditional donors.

The number and severity of natural disasters – and in turn the level of vulnerability – will increase in the coming years due to the impact of climate change, chronic poverty and social injustice in many parts of the world (cf. Harvey et al 2010: 13-14). This growing “shadow of the future” (Axelrod/Keohane 1985) raises the likelihood of international cooperation in humanitarian assistance: States are interested in sharing costs and assuring international solidarity should they themselves be affected by a future large-scale disaster. In other words, increased vulnerabilities and the need for more humanitarian assistance will promote cooperation between non-Western and traditional donors over time. On the other

Mutual role expectations shape bi- and multilateral cooperation

hand, future cooperation between non-Western and traditional donors is influenced by their mutual role expectations. These expectations are nurtured by past cooperation experiences with the respective countries, for example in development, economic or security issues. That is, the behavior of Russia, China, Brazil or Saudi Arabia in other global policy areas determines the expectations that traditional donors have regarding their humanitarian behavior and vice-versa. A low level of past cooperation in other issue areas also hinders cooperation in the field of humanitarian assistance, since states are unsure what to expect from each other. In this case, the vicious circle of low cooperation and mistrust needs to be broken by a conscious effort from both sides.

That is, the country case studies need to analyze the extent to which the non-Western donor cooperates on a bi- or multilateral basis in the humanitarian sphere and the role expectations it has vis-à-vis (key) traditional donors and (key) traditional donors have towards them.

- How and where does the state coordinate its humanitarian assistance in multilateral and regional fora?
- Which are the areas of low cooperation and non-involvement in the humanitarian realm?
- What other relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives between the non-Western donors and established donors exist?
- What factors – including expectations from established donors – explain the current level of cooperation?

Key questions

Based on the analysis of the humanitarian behavior of the respective non-Western donor, the role expectation with which it is confronted and the obstacles and levers for cooperation, the case study authors will develop a “portfolio” for possible common activities to improve cooperation between the respective non-Western donor and established donors on a practical level, with the aim of achieving a more inclusive and better coordinated humanitarian assistance system. Case study authors will identify areas of common interest, but also look at issues which would require discussion among non-Western and established donors. The common activities can take place in bilateral, regional or multilateral fora in existing or new multilateral or regional settings.

Developing a “portfolio” for future cooperation

- Which regional and multilateral bodies is the state actively participating in?
- What is the (potential) role of the regional organization/forum as a cooperation body on humanitarian aid?
- What areas of common interest could serve as entry points for better cooperation?
- Which issues require dialogue among all actors to work towards a more universal multilateral humanitarian system?
- What existing multilateral, regional or bilateral fora lend themselves to implement such cooperation?

Key questions

- Which new fora should be or could be created?
- What are the enabling factors and obstacles to enhanced cooperation in this area? What are suitable strategies to build on enabling factors for cooperation and address obstacles to enhanced cooperation?
- What concrete steps need to be taken by individual actors to put these strategies into practice?

5 Conclusion

Closer cooperation is possible, scholars argue, if there is a mix of complementary and competitive interests between states (Axelrod/Keohane 1985: 226). In an inherently normative enterprise like humanitarian assistance, a mixture of common and conflicting norms and values also helps to explain the level of coordination between states. As the brief portraits showed, non-Western donors share a number of interests and norms with traditional donors, such as the desire to help people in peril, contribute to the stabilization of neighboring regions or strengthen ties with other governments. However, there is also a good share of competition and conflicting norms. Non-Western donors are eager to safeguard the sovereignty of affected states. Conversely, traditional donors emphasize the rights of affected individuals to get access to aid, and they have a hard time recognizing the increasing (regional) influence of countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, India or Russia. Overall, the relations between non-Western and traditional donors are currently marked by a focus on the competitive interests and conflicting norms rather than commonalities, leading to mistrust and a low level of cooperation.

Shared and conflicting norms and interests

Yet the mapping study shows that specific interests and norm sets of individual non-Western donors vary to such a degree that a one-size-fits-all effort to increase cooperation between traditional and emerging donors is problematic. Rather, in-depth country case studies need to analyze humanitarian motivations of specific states and the expectations from traditional donors in detail. This analysis helps to identify possible steps to improve cooperation with the respective non-Western donor. This is the goal for the five case studies to be conducted in the next step of the “Truly Universal?” research project.

Next step: In-depth country studies to analyze humanitarian approaches

The selection of these five case studies is based on three criteria. First, the respective donor to be studied should show a certain level of humanitarian engagement. Second, the country needs to be an emerging regional power with the potential to build a bridge between donors and host states through its regional influence and economic as well as political importance. Finally, the five case studies should be distributed across several continents. These selection criteria ensure that the results of the project are complementary to earlier research conducted on non-Western donors. According to these criteria, Brazil, China, India, Saudi Arabia and South Africa are selected as case study countries.²⁵

Case study selection: Brazil, China, India, Saudi Arabia and South Africa

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence – to which states have subscribed in UN resolutions (Tsui 2010: 13) – were first defined by the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement as operational principles. “Universality” is one additional principle that remains specific to the movement up until now. It means that the movement is worldwide, that national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies work together in an inclusive manner and equally share responsibilities (IFRC 2010). Better knowledge of selected non-Western donors will help us to determine whether and how universality in this sense should also become a principle guiding donor cooperation.

“Universality” as a guiding principle for donor cooperation?

²⁵ The current project funding allows us to conduct two case studies. We prioritize India and Saudi Arabia.

Sources

List of interviewees

- Joachim Ahrens, Programme Officer for the Arabian Peninsula, SDC
- Sana'a Ashour, Head of Policy Development, Islamic Relief Germany
- Joumana Al Atwani, UNRWA Jordan
- Shoko Arakaki, Head of Donor Relations, OCHA New York
- Anand Balanchandran, Global Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO
- Martin Barber, UAE Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid
- Fouad Bawaba, Regional Communication Officer, ICRC Kuwait
- Per Byman, Division for Humanitarian Assistance, Sida
- Rodrigo Cardoso, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN in New York
- Jonathan Cauldwell, Public Sector Alliances & Resource Mobilisation, UNICEF
- Michael Curtis, European Commission, DG ECHO
- Toni Frisch, Humanitarian Aid Department, SDC
- Martin Gallagher, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN in Geneva
- Pierre Gerber, External Resources Division, ICRC
- H.E. Achamkulangare Gopinathan, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of India to the UN in Geneva
- Haakon Gram-Johannessen, Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN in Geneva
- Jakob Hallgren, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN in Geneva
- Kam Woon-An, Permanent Mission of South Korea to the UN in Geneva
- Nance Kyloh, USAID representative, U.S. Mission to the UN in Geneva
- Pete Manfield, OCHA Regional Office South Africa
- Feena May, External Resources Division, ICRC
- Kadi Metsandi, Permanent Mission of Estonia to the UN in Geneva
- Heather Monnet, Global Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO
- Madeleine Moulin, Donor Relations Section, OCHA Geneva
- Panos Moutzidis, Donor Relations Section, UNHCR
- Ivana Mrdja, Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Linda Muller, Global Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO
- Cathy Sabethy, Donor Relations Section, OCHA Geneva
- Julia Stewart-David, DG ECHO, European Commission
- Marina Throne-Holst, Donor Relations Section, OCHA Geneva
- Otávio Trinidad, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN in Geneva
- Kris Tsau, Polio Plus Division, Rotary Foundation
- Mohammed Zigby, UAE Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid (OCFA)

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