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## The Conditionality of Irish aid towards Sudan

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### Abstract

The study of development aid must take into account the wider political and economic context within which any aid policy is operating, and the influence of the major financial institutions whose terms of conditionality have had the effect of transforming the structure of the economies of a vast number of countries. The aim of the study to present the implications of conditionality of aid and policy in general as well as conditionality in Irish Aid in particular towards Sudan..It considers development policy in relation to both economic conditionality and political conditionality. .The study will demonstrate a clear trend in Irish policy towards the norms of other large western sates during the 1990s .Also the study will refer to all the various kinds of contributions that Ireland has made to Sudan focused programmes including Irish contribution to the United Nations relief, to World Bank and IMF projects.

The research focuses on the approach of Irish aid from both a national and a global perspective. A large proportion of Irish aid is administered multilaterally through the European Union and other international organizations but it is beyond the scope of this study to cover this area. The focus will be on the impact of Irish development assistance in Sudan. Irish aid administered by the Irish Government and national voluntary aid organisations, and the international financial institutions the World Bank and the IMF, and refers to documentation relating to these institutions.

The global economic recession has fostered a climate where support for development aid is set against domestic social needs of donor countries. Furthermore, Africa in particular has experienced a decline in its share of the world export markets, Sudan has been chosen as case study to examine the impact of Irish Aid.

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## Acronyms

ACP:	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries
CDF:	the Cooperative Development Foundation
CFSP:	Common Foreign and Security Policy
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFA:	Department of Foreign Affairs
ESAF:	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
IBRD:	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC:	the International Red Cross Society
IDA:	the International Development Association
IFC :	International Finance Corporation and the
IMF :	International Monetary Fund
INGOs:	International Non-Governmental Organizations.
MIGA:	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODA:	Official Development Assistance
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAP:	Structural Adjustment Plan
UK:	the United Kingdom
UN:	the United Nations
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's' Fund
WB :	the World Bank

## **Introduction**

This research is constituted by a study of the impact of Irish development assistance in Sudan. The information was derived from Sudanese fieldwork and from a review of relevant documentation. Source materials included formal interviews with Sudanese government officials, conversations with aid workers attached to Irish funded NGOs and documentation collected in Khartoum. The main concern was to evaluate the effects of Irish aid in Sudan.

The chief research questions addressed in this research are:

- i. To what degree has Irish Aid in Sudan been effective?
- ii. Did Irish Aid achieve its objectives, including those associated with any “conditionality”?
- iii. What insights can the Sudan experience offer that might inform more general debates about the effects of foreign aid?

The use of an appropriate and consistent methodology forms the centre-stone of quality research. Before undertaking any in-depth study, it is imperative to consider how research and analysis will be undertaken and the merits of the options chosen over others. The strategies selected for this research undertaking are briefly outlined. First, though, a short discussion of published work on Irish Aid will indicate the ways in which this study will contribute to scholarship in the field.

The famine experience of the Irish people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, more recently, the transformation of an underdeveloped economy to a fast growing economy have, arguably, enhanced Irish understanding of the economic and social needs of developing countries. Official sources believe these historical memories of what the Irish people have experienced in the past influence public willingness to assist developing countries that are facing comparable developmental challenges.

And, indeed, opinion polls indicate that public support for overseas development assistance is unusually high (Riddell, 2007).

In the early 1970s, Ireland Official Development Assistance (ODA) was distributed mainly through multilateral organisations such as the development agencies of the United Nations and the ICRC. The year 1973, in which Ireland joined the European Community, was a turning point for Irish Aid. From that point on, ODA had become more systematic and Ireland started to participate and contribute to the development policies and programmes of the Community. Moreover, budgetary allocations to the existing resources of the ODA increased considerably. A major step forward at that time was the establishment of the Bilateral Aid Programme. Accordingly, Irish people accepted the responsibility for long-term projects and programmes of aid with their associated financial commitments.

The Irish government established the Irish Aid Programme to support developing countries. Today, this programme works in partnership with the governments and communities in the developing world in the continuous efforts to relieve poverty and providing basic needs. Partnership is certainly a key element in the success of aid programmes, official sources insist.

This research builds on a fairly limited base of existing scholarship that addresses Irish Aid's activities in Africa and, more specifically, Irish Aid undertakings in Sudan. There is of course a much more extensive scholarly literature that has developed over the last four decades that debates the broader field of the role that aid plays in development. Here, a brief discussion on the Irish-focused literature will attempt to show how this research is intended to represent an advance on existing knowledge.

The historical evolution of contemporary Irish policies on official development assistance (ODA) has been traced by Kevin O' Sullivan to the relief efforts organised by non-governmental organisations to help alleviate the famine arising from the Nigerian Civil War. A further source of stimulation to Irish policy makers was Ireland's assumption of the presidency of the European Economic Community in 1975, at the time of the Lome negotiations between the Community and the developing world.

This coincidence of timing and Irish leadership during the negotiations helped to encourage Irish officials to accord to ODA a central status in foreign relations. Its focus on Africa, O'Sullivan argues, was also a consequence of Irish involvement in the Lome settlement as well as a reflection of Irish missionary engagement with the continent (O'Sullivan, 2007).

Helen O' Neill (1994 and 2004) has provided periodic surveys of Irish foreign aid, essentially considering shifts in policy and budgetary allocations, as well as explanations for the choice of the priority countries to which the larger allocations of aid have been directed. Her concerns have mainly been with the broad picture and in particular with explaining the fluctuations in overall budgetary allocations during the 1990s. Her comments on Sudan are limited to noting the original criteria that informed its selection as a priority country for Irish Aid and its low physical quality of life indices. She also suggests that pragmatic, rather than principled considerations, informed the choice of those sectors within Sudan with which there has been Irish Aid engagement, mainly in agriculture and rural development.

The most comprehensive general survey of Irish Aid is a paper by Jill Morony (1997). In three chapters, she discusses the general evolution of Irish ODA policy, the relationships with each of the 'priority' countries and the relationships between Irish Aid and trade. Her treatment is largely uncritical and draws heavily on Irish Aid's own reports and statements. Her comments on Sudan are very brief, noting the targeting of Irish Aid resources at the Central State region and their focus on health, education, forestry, and water. She does note though that, at the time of her writing, in the late 1990's, support for developmental activity in Sudan was rather exceptional: many other donors by this juncture had withdrawn as a consequence of political sanctions imposed upon Sudan to induce democratic reform. As Morony (1997) notes in her final chapter, Irish Aid policy has generally resisted the economic and political conditionalities that have accumulated around the programmes of the larger donors, partly a consequence of the relatively weak linkages that exist between Irish Aid flows

and Irish commercial and strategic concerns. As Morony observes, Irish Aid is unusual in being so ‘untied’ to such preoccupations.

The most substantive academic treatment of Irish Aid does focus on the Sudanese programmes. Rob Kevlihan’s (2004) analysis of Irish bilateral aid to Sudan divides the history of the Irish programme into three phases. ‘First generation’ projects reflected a bias towards technical assistance, directed mainly to dairy and animal production, which resulted in improvements which would have been impossible to sustain without continued external support. ‘Second generation’ projects addressed basic needs and poverty alleviation, more centrally, with water supply and community forestry in Gezira province representing the main activities. ‘Third generation’ Irish Aid activities undertaken after 1993, encouraged the development of partnerships with civil society organisations, and with efforts to tap into local sources of finance. Kevlihan’s narrative ends with the formal closure of Irish Aid’s bilateral relations with Sudan in 1998.

The chronological emphasis in the primary research undertaken in this research takes up the story at the point at which it ends in Kevlihan’s analysis, that is it is largely concerned with the subsequent evolution of Irish Aid-funded activities in Sudan with an especial attention directed at the work of Irish development NGO’s in the Sudan, particularly Concern, Trócaire and GOAL. It also considers the legacy of some of the projects detailed by Kevlihan, especially with respect to community forestry. In contrast to existing studies, the researcher has attempted to collect Sudanese data more, and to observe directly the impact of aid projects. Finally, because its timeframe includes the period when Irish Aid began to assume a more conditional character, the research takes up the issue of conditionality and addresses it more critically than has been the case in existing studies on Irish Aid programmes.

Generally speaking, the researcher has followed the course of action prescribed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), in planning this

research. They do provide a fairly detailed outline for the design of naturalistic inquiry, which includes the following general steps:

- i. Determine a focus for the inquiry. This should establish a boundary for the study, and provide inclusion-exclusion criteria for new information. Boundaries, however, can be altered, and typically are.
- ii. Determine the fit of the research paradigm to the research focus. The researcher must compare the characteristics of the qualitative paradigm with the goals of the research.
- iii. Determine where and from whom data will be collected.
- iv. Determine what the successive phases of the inquiry will be. Phase one, for example, might feature open-ended data collection, while successive phases will be more focused.
- v. Determine what additional instrumentation may be used, beyond the researcher as the human instrument.
- vi. Plan data collection and recording modes. This must include how detailed and specific research questions will be, and how faithfully data will be reproduced.
- vii. Plan which data analysis procedures will be used.
- viii. Plan the logistics of data collection, including scheduling and budgeting.
- ix. Plan the techniques that will be used to determine trustworthiness.

This research is based chiefly on two kinds of primary data. Official reports from donor agencies and official institutions in Sudan supplied much of the required information about the underlying intentions and the range of activities with respect to Irish-funded development assistance. To a degree, Irish Aid, as well as the major NGOs working in the field, conduct their own evaluations. But these are done on a project- by-project basis and usually refer narrowly to success or failure in achieving project objectives, rather than to more general kinds of impact.

Sudanese official documents were helpful in illuminating the wider localised contexts within which particular Irish-sponsored projects have been situated. The documents also helped to suggest what some of their long-term consequences might be. The information from these kinds of documentation constitutes the main empirical source for this research. The information is supplemented with insights provided by interviews with Sudanese civil servants and agency employees, undertaken mainly during a short field visit to Sudan during July-August 2006.

The researcher interviewed two diplomats working in the field of development co-operation in the Sudan embassy in London. The researcher also conducted a conversation with an official in the Sudan's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Khartoum. Finally, the researcher spoke with agency workers employed by the main Irish NGO's that are active in Sudan. A full list of the interviews conducted appears in the Bibliography.

The researcher conducted open-ended conversations with each of these informants. This seemed a more practical course of action than what Frankfort and Nachmias (1996) call the *schedule-instructed* interview method where the number of questions and wording of the questions are identical for all respondents. The aim here was not to survey a representative cross section of officials or agency workers, but rather, to elicit information about particular projects.

Before the interview discussion began, a short list of questions was given to each interviewee. These questions concerned the nature of foreign aid, including information about the volume and the purpose of Irish aid and type of projects undertaken. The interviews with Sudanese officials were quite challenging, as some of the officials used few words in answering questions, or refused to answer questions.

The choice of Irish Aid as a case study through which to explore the effects of development aid was influenced by several considerations. Irish Aid represents, on the face of things, a good

example of a relatively disinterested donor, that is a donor whose choice of targets and whose more general considerations of policy are not shaped by narrow concerns of national interest (though, as we shall see, national interest may have played a part in prompting Irish ODA policies). So if we want to explore the benign effects of aid through a best case study, Irish practice represents a sensible choice. Irish Aid deliberately targets poverty alleviation with its selection of targets unencumbered by sectional economic concerns or strategic ambitions. Indeed, one hypothesis this thesis explores is that, the relatively altruistic intentions that underlie Irish commitment to ODA helps to explain the benign quality of its impact.

Why the focus on Sudan? Partly, this was a choice influenced by the researcher's own background; he is a Sudanese national living with his family in Ireland. But the consideration of Sudan has particular merits. The Irish Aid programme was one of the earliest of Ireland's commitments to ODA. The fact that official bilateral assistance was terminated in 1998 enables the researcher to appreciate the impact of aid more easily, particularly when it comes to evaluating the long term impact of projects several years after the cessation of external support. More over, Sudan is exceptional amongst Irish Aid "priority" countries (which it ceased to be after 1993) in the degree to which it was affected by official efforts to use aid as a source of political leverage: indeed with respect to Ireland, Sudan is the only country in which aid has been withdrawn as a sanction. Ostensibly therefore, it seemed to embody a good case to assess the merits of making the disbursement of aid conditional on the fulfilment of economic and political policy changes. Finally, the scale of development aid in Sudan has actually been overtaken by the quantity of emergency relief in recent years; the country's experience represents an illuminating history through which the distinctions in effects between these two kinds of aid activities can be explored.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to present the implications of conditionality of aid policy in general as well as conditionality in Irish aid policy towards Sudan. The study considers development

policy in relation to both economic conditionality and political conditionality. The study will demonstrate a clear trend in Irish policy towards the norms of other larger western states during the 1990s. Also, the study will refer to all the various kinds of contributions that Ireland has made to Sudan-focussed programmes, including Irish contributions to United Nations relief, to World Bank and IMF projects.

The maintenance of independent foreign policy by small states has always been a difficult objective to achieve. Dominated economically and politically by larger and more powerful states, smaller states frequently have treaded carefully in order to maintain an appropriate balance between the necessity of maintaining cordial relationships with great powers, protecting their own interests and advancing their own foreign policy aims at the same time.

The history of Ireland is characterised by colonialism, famine and emigration, and more recently, by industrialisation, rapid economic growth and increasing participation in international affairs. Irish history varies significantly from that of most European countries, and may have more in common with many African nations than other European Union member states, several of which are former colonial powers. Ireland, as a small Western European state with a colonial history in certain respects comparable to so many developing countries, has traditionally considered itself to have a particular understanding for the plight of such countries. However, the institution of a development assistance programme by Ireland in the early 1970s was undoubtedly driven to a large degree by its newfound membership of the European Community.

### **What is conditionality?**

Conditionality is frequently criticised, primarily for compelling poor countries to pursue policies that are not always in their interests. Some critics of ‘aid conditionality’ see it as a form of imperialism. The problem is that many donors believe conditionality is indispensable in making relief work. Part of the

reason for the increases in aid in the late 1990s was the notion that aid could be linked to free market economic policies. The leaders of developing countries often believe that such policies are detrimental to their interests. If developing countries are to implement programmes that perpetuate poverty, they argue, what is the benefit of receiving aid?

In the early eighties, developing countries found themselves in the heart of the debt crisis as a result of sharp increases in interest rates. Western governments turned to the IMF and the World Bank to act as the lead agencies for the developing countries in dealing with this issue. These institutions provided continued funding for indebted countries in return for strict adherence to reform belt. Typically, these reforms were induced by using structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), in which, loan and assistance was conditioned on adherence by the recipient government to detailed fiscal, monetary and economic policies. The first generation of conditionality was referred to by commentators as economic conditionality. Economic conditionality was based on the IMF's and World Bank's analysis of the failure of developing countries to develop. The prescriptions known as the Washington Consensus are predicated on the assumption that the debt crisis in every developing country is essentially caused by excessive government spending. The prescriptions include fiscal discipline, and they accord priority to health, education and infrastructure over defence and administration.

In the period from 1983 to 1985, criticism on economic conditionality was expressed by UN agencies with poverty related mandates such as the UNICEF, and the International Labour Organisation. Controversy centred on the methods prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank and their effects on the poorest sections within these developing countries (Tony German & Judith Randel, 2001).

Since the adoption, in 1996, of the "Shaping the 21st Century Development Partnership Strategy" by DAC, donor policy statements have strongly emphasised developing countries'

'ownership' of policy. The 1999 DAC report refers to a concerted move in the donor community to re-think on the donor-driven development cooperation modalities, and the need for developing countries to take the lead. But how does this talk of ownership tie with the fact that aid has always been subject to conditions imposed by donors and the reality that conditionality has become more, not less, pervasive over the last decade (Tony German & Judith Randel, 2001: 2).

Today, conditionality is inherent to the whole concept of aid. Whether Official Development Assistant (ODA) is given for particular projects or given as programme aid in the form of debt relief or budget support, there is always an implicit expectation that it will be used in certain ways or that it will lead to a particular course of action on the recipient country which files to meet the set conditions.

Stokke defines the key element of conditionality as the use of pressure, by the donor, in terms of threatening to terminate aid, or actually terminating or reducing it, if conditions are not met by the recipient. Foreign aid is used as a lever to promote objectives set by the donors, which the recipient government would not otherwise have agreed to (Tony German & Judith Randel, 2000: 3). The donors may set the pursuit of such objectives by the recipient as a condition for entering into the aid relationship (*ex ante* conditionality) or expectations of the recipient's progress towards meeting these objectives may be expressed beforehand and followed up afterwards (*ex post* conditionality).

First generation conditionality embraces, primarily, economic orthodoxies. Second generation conditionality includes systemic or institutional change objectives ultimately involving the system of recipient government, policy, spending priorities, participatory objectives and value-based objectives, such as human rights and gender equity (Tony German & Judith Randel, 2000: 3).

Second Generation conditionality, which became prevalent in the 1990s, covers wider political conditionality. The rationale for economic conditionality was that, the crises in developing

countries in the 1970s were being brought about mainly as a result of excessive government spending, budget deficits and inflation, and overvalued currency and insufficient exports, rather than as a consequence of the declining terms of international trade arguably experienced by developing countries. Although these conditions were expressed in technical terms, in fact, the mechanisms prescribed reflected a neo-liberal economic perspective and were thus highly political. The lack of reciprocity in conditionality was clear in the lack of attention to the need for structural adjustment in international economic relations (Stokke, 1995: 3).

As this economic and quasi-technical prescription failed to work, another rationale came to the fore, which was the role of the State. Economic policy reform therefore had to be combined with political and administrative reform. This forms the bridge between first and second-generation conditionality.

Economic conditionality, linked principally to structural adjustment, has been the main focus of donor attention over the last three decades. Under structural adjustment in return for aid, developing countries are urged to reduce the size of the state, adjust their exchange rates, privatise state owned ventures and liberalise markets (Action Aid, 2000:4). The argument was that, such measures were prerequisites for economic growth, which was a requirement for poverty reduction, although under adjustment, there was little talk about poverty at all and no analysis of SAPs' impact on poverty. Economic conditionality, based on prevailing economic orthodoxies dominated by OECD countries, in particular, the USA, and policed by the IMF and to a lesser extent, the World Bank, is deeply rooted in the whole aid regime (Action Aid, 2000:4). Conditionality is viewed as a central feature of IMF assistance programmes, essential to the success of these programmes.

The debate on conditionality has raised both pragmatic and conceptual questions. The key pragmatic questions are: how effective has conditionality been in helping the IMF or the World

Bank assistance programmes achieve their aims? and how can it be made more effective? On a very basic conceptual level, there is the question of the “proper” relation between the IMF and sovereign member countries that wish to borrow, with the nature of IMF conditionality indicating (or perhaps even defining) what that relationship is in practice. There is the related question as to the extent to which the IMF can or should take political factors into consideration in designing assistance programmes, a question that touches on the IMF’s institutional self-image as technocratic and apolitical. The conceptual debate is very much tied to the more pragmatic issues, since questions on the proper role of IMF’s conditionality are motivated in no small part by the desire to improve its effectiveness. More concretely, programme success depends on successful implementation, which in turn, reflects the political constraints, raising the question of the extent to which programme design should take these constraints into account.

Intricately tied up with the question of reform of conditionality is that of programme “ownership” by a country that participates in an IMF or World Bank programme. Ownership of a programme, which, like most other terms, may sound unambiguously positive, means different things to different people. It can however, be roughly defined as the extent to which a country can pursue reforms independently of any incentives provided by multilateral lenders. Here too, conceptual and political dimensions are related to one another, with country’s ownership of a program seen as fundamental to programs with which the IMF “should” be involved. There is also the pragmatic question of effectiveness. Ownership is widely seen not simply as greatly increasing the chances of programme success, but as crucial to success since, without ownership, programmes are very likely to fail. In short, reform of conditionality, even from a very pragmatic perspective, requires an understanding of the “politics” of conditionality in the various senses of the term: The role of conditionality in the proper relations between the IMF and borrowing member countries; the effect of domestic political constraints on the design of conditionality and the extent to which the IMF can and should take these political constraints into account in program design.

Unfortunately, none of these questions has received as much discussion in the overall debate on conditionality as they deserve. The theme of the discussion of conditionality and ownership that has taken place is often unclear. It is argued that, both conditionality and ownership are central to assistance programmes. There has been a significant amount of intellectual effort in IMF's documents to argue that the two "go hand-in-hand," (Action Aid, 2000:4), with much of it striking an outside observer as displaying extraordinary mental and verbal gymnastics. Moreover, the tension between conditionality and ownership is only one of the points on which the debate on the reform of conditionality is often not clear.

As a result of this consensus, the structural adjustment conditionality has become the dominant mode for aid. However, SAPs did not really originate within the aid regime other than through adjustment conditionality for loans by the IMF, an institution with no development mandate, let alone on poverty.

The less benign analysis is that, at the heart of instruction based upon the status quo, is a desire (led by the already wealthy, especially large corporations) to bring every country in line with a globalised market economy, regardless of the human cost involved, in order to maximise returns to the corporate sector.

Most developing countries have now undergone a period of adjustment and the prevailing orthodoxy has changed. Clearly, adjustment policy implementation by the donors is more sophisticated. Globalisation is now seen as the economic opportunity, which developing countries must embrace, if they are to achieve sustainable growth and poverty reduction (Action Aid, 2000:4).

As this economic and quasi-technical prescription failed to work, another rationale came to the fore, which was the role of the State. Economic policy reform therefore had to be combined with political and administrative reform. This forms the bridge between the first and second generation conditionality (Action Aid, 2000:4).

The severity of the economic crisis, and the political and cultural conflicts, play important roles in determining the success of any adjustment programme.

Political conditionality has been a long established aspect of aid. While now, it has focused more on the second generation issues above. During the Cold War, the rationale for aid was overwhelmingly to prevent the spread of communism (or in the case of Soviet aid, capitalism) to particular states. The rationale for this shift is not entirely clear. Perhaps some donors came to realize that, stability of economic reforms required political support and, therefore, put new emphasis on governance issues. Since the end of the cold war, political conditionality has changed. In a uni-polar world, there is no Eastern Bloc offering alternative funds and support. In the United States, political circles for aid linked to cold war rivalries, has declined. In the post cold war era, the emphasis has been promoting (western style) democracy and other values held by donors, such as reduced military expenditure, environment standards and gender equity. One rationale might be that, there is a match between economic and political liberalism, that the one is a corollary of the other (Action Aid, 2000: 6).

The rationales for post- Cold War conditionality are varied. Stokke (????) suggests that, for some donors, conditionality around human rights and good governance emerged as another justification, which governments could give to their electorates for aid (Action Aid, 2000: 6).

It may be true that some aid departments have thought this, but it is not very plausible.

As well as a values-based rationale, increasingly, donors have come to see human rights, good governance and democratisation as the path to development and the set of conditions (prerequisites as the Bank puts it in the CDF), which need to be present for aid to be effective.

How can one understand the role of the bilateral single state donor within a broader aid context? What can the bilateral donor expect to achieve in diplomatic bargaining? Is there any point in focusing

exclusively on the bilateral donor, when its achievements and influences are so difficult to isolate from those of other actors and factors? Studying the role of the bilateral donor involves considerable methodological challenges. In this chapter, we will address the effects of conditionality of foreign assistance and the extent to which this conditionality has influenced aid flows.

The conditionality of aid should not be confused with aid tying. There is a distinction between the two: Tied aid is when the donor country benefits economically from the aid. This occurs because the receiving country has to buy goods and services from the donor country to get the aid in the first place. In building a dam, for example, the donor country may insist that their companies, experts and equipment are used. Conditional aid serves the political interests of the donor country by influencing a wider range of political, religious and cultural affairs of the recipient countries.

Today, over two decades later, it is appropriate to evaluate this new position in the context of bilateral aid. What is the role of the bilateral donor, at a time when political scientists and ODA bureaucrats are talking about increased interdependence and globalisation, and what is the pre-eminence of multilateral actors in shaping new aid policies? What role should or could bilateralism play? (OECD, 1997).

The use of conditionality as a tool has been widely questioned, while indeed, development aid in general has come under increasing attack and scrutiny. Most previous studies have dealt with multilateral conditionality with highly aggregated figures, whereas little has been done focusing on bilateral actors (Selbervik, 1997).

What is aid conditionality? What have been the arguments and motives for conditioning aid? Has the content of the concept changed over time?

Conditionality was one of the big aid slogans of the 1980s and 1990s. Development researchers, especially those of an applied orientation, produced numerous papers, articles, and books on the topic, and often offered their own definition of the concept.

According to Tony Killick, conditionality was an ugly recent addition to the English language with which government officials in indebted countries have become all too familiar (Killick, 1996:3).

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976:211) a condition is a “Stipulation, thing upon the fulfilment of which depends that of another”. The essentially coercive nature of conditionality is underlined in such definitions. A main element is that the donor is seeking to induce the recipient to pursue certain goals and to adopt certain policies set by the donor to which the recipient would otherwise not have given equally high priority.

Multilateral institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have made extensive use of the concept and the strategy, where as bilateral donors have generally been more hesitant.

Agreements between the IMF, often in co-operation with the World Bank, and the indebted countries about loans, debt relief, balance of payments support, became increasingly linked to economic stability and economic and structural reforms-the structural adjustment programmes. In modern aid terminology, conditionality is not so much a single strategy, but a set of strategies that the donor can employ to induce political and economic changes in recipient countries. The nature of conditionality is underlined in these definitions. A main element is that the donor is seeking to induce the recipient to pursue certain goals and to adopt certain policies set by the donor to which the recipient would otherwise not have given equally high priority (Nelson and Eglington, 1992).

Economic conditionality was soon extended to include political conditionality. This second generation of conditionality, also known as the new conditionality, emerged in the 1990s. Political conditionality made development aid conditional on the

implementation of political reforms in the recipient countries. Demands related to the second generation of conditionality centred on the promotion and fulfilment of human rights, democracy and good governance objectives. As noted earlier, conditionality can either refer to objectives that must be achieved before aid begins, or it can involve undertakings in the future, after an aid agreement.

*Ex ante* conditionality means that the donor sets the pursuit of certain objectives, such as human rights, democracy and good governance, as a condition before an aid relationship can be established.

*Ex post* conditionality is really a contradiction in terms, because, strictly speaking, conditions can only be imposed in advance.

What it does mean is that a donor expresses before hand, but clearly and implicitly, that there is an expectation that certain conditions will be met, and that the donor will consider afterwards what reaction to make if these conditions are not met.

The donor's response to the recipient's meeting or failing to meet the demands can be negative or positive.

Obviously, negative conditionality means that the donor threatens to terminate, suspend or reduce aid flows, if the recipient does not meet pre-set conditions. In the view of many scholars, the concept of conditionality covers only negative conditionality (Stokke 1995). When the mass media writes or speaks on conditionality, what is generally meant and understood is this kind of negative conditionality.

It may be termed positive conditionality when the donor promises additional aid as a reward for good behaviour, for the adoption of given policies or the achievement of certain goals set by the donor. For example, additional aid resources can be earmarked for democracy and human rights measures, or given as a direct reward to a government, by increasing the general volume of aid or support and debt relief.

Withholding debt relief is the most common form of donor sanction when negative conditionality is applied. This choice of reaction is based on the argument that, sanctions at that macro level affects the government more directly than would, for

example, withdrawing project support. The latter would present the donor with the double penalty dilemma whereby, innocent recipients would also be adversely affected.

Positive and negative conditionality can be seen as two sides of the same coin: a negative or positive reaction from the donor, depending on whether or not the conditions are met, is a kind of reward or punishment, as the case may be. Negative and positive conditionality can be used separately or in conjunction. A donor may use conditionality as a reward for good behaviour and then try to support and accelerate a positive trend or ongoing process in a particular country by taking positive measures. This does not necessarily mean that the same country will be punished if certain conditions are not met.

Applying positive conditionality will involve certain technical and budgetary problems. If the overall level of the aid budget is normally stable from year to year, and additional aid is to be given so as to reward a recipient country for positive development, this can cause budgetary strains. In a likely scenario that overall aid budgets will not increase in the near future, rewarding one country in line with the positive conditionality logic would entail reduced aid flows elsewhere. By implication, negative conditionality would thus have to be applied to other countries (leading to reduced volumes elsewhere), if the terms of positive conditionality are to be fulfilled towards those who perform well. A further operational complication would present itself to a donor if a positive trend is discernible in one area and a negative trend in another, within the same country. Although conditionality can be applied at various levels, a broad distinction can be drawn between macro and micro levels. Some scholars have distinguished between four levels of conditionality (Stokke 1995).

- Systemic and national level.
- Sectoral level.
- Project and programme level.
- Administrative level.

That distinction is based on degree of political interference, and the argument that intervention at a lower level is less serious than intervention at a higher level (Selbervik, 1997).

The trend in recent years has been towards a higher degree of political interference, and also towards an increasing numbers of strings attached at lower levels.

Aid has, in fact, never been unconditional. Long before the conditionality concept became part of the aid terminology, conditions were applied, particularly at what are referred to as levels three and four. The overall trend in recent years has been towards intervention at higher levels and an escalation in the number of conditions applied at all levels, also at the lower levels. This has occurred in response to growing demands for greater effectiveness, improvement in quality, and procedures to be observed in projects and programmes. The increasing number of conditions may well come in conflict with new objectives such as, ownership and recipient responsibility, perhaps acting to undermine them. Having more and more strings attached and more stringent follow-up routines may mean increasingly complex management of detail by the donor and the recipient alike, when simplification was in fact the objective. At worst, donors may end up steering projects and programmes in detail.

For Sudan, for example, the 1980s and the 1990s were a period of economic and political reforms. In many of the reform processes, both the bilateral and the multilateral donors were heavily involved. The donors were able to induce many reforms, and the main instrument to accomplish these aims has been conditionality in different forms.

Irish policy towards Sudan has gone through notable changes from the mid-1980s to date.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a gradual change and adjustment to what may be termed as the international conditionality regime, which represents a fundamental change from previous principles. The novelty in the 1980s and the 1990s was the change of attitude towards interference and, more explicitly, the recipient country's national policy in the context of aid, concerning national economic policy, good governance, democratization and human rights.

The policy on how aid can be used as a tool for political reform and human rights promotion, and how to react in extreme cases, is rarely spelled out in detail. The main instrument to achieve these goals has been positive measures. Sanctions are normally applied as a last resort, only. Aid as an instrument for economic reforms is even less clearly treated in official policy documents. Indeed, conditionality has become more of a swear word within the same donor circles (Tony German & Judith Randel, 2000).

This study supports the main criticisms of conditionality: the donors' lack of credibility when pursuing a conditionality policy and the lack of ownership at the recipient end, which is indispensable for achieving sustainable results.

### **Ireland and Aid Conditionality**

Ostensibly, Irish Aid to Sudan might be supposed to represent a weak case for studying the effects of conditionality, both economic and political. Up to the official termination of official bilateral aid in 1998, with respect to Sudan, Ireland imposed no commitments to specific economic policies in its aid to Sudan. As we shall soon see, the scale of its programme would hardly have embodied sufficient leverage to induce compliance even if it has been inclined to. But, in fact, Ireland has been relatively vigorous in its backing of various multilateral programmes which have attempted to induce market reform in developing countries with grants and loans. In this sense, it can hardly be described as a disinterested actor. It is true, though, that Irish Aid, unlike some bilateral programmes, has never premised on the consumption or deployment of Irish goods and services in the recipient country: in this sense, Irish ODA is disinterested, economically. Irish Aid programmes focused on the necessity of meeting basic needs in its priority countries. The priority countries are among the poorest in the world. Initially, this policy was relatively low key with the government publicly recognising the need for and the value of economic adjustment policies in developing countries, but not tying its own bilateral assistance to IMF agreements (Kevlihan, 2004:8).

Irish government policy, in relation to economic conditionality, was assisted by Ireland's long standing policy of all assistance transfers being in grant rather than loan form.

However, Ireland is owed money from developing countries relating to export credit insurance, in which Irish companies are indemnified against any credit risk from overseas customers by the Irish government. In the event of default, Irish companies were reimbursed by the Irish government, which assumed the debt.

Irish policy towards economic conditionality remained unchanged throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, until 1994. In that year, the government committed itself to become a contributor to the IMF Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) for the first time. The Irish government's relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions is dealt with by the Department of Finance, rather than the Department of Foreign Affairs. In relation to the World Bank, the Irish government had been funding its constituent parts, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), since 1980, the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), separately (Kevlihan, 2001: 73).

In 1994, funding to the IBRD, the commercial lending arm of the World Bank, was halted, while funding for the IDA continued on an annual basis. The IFC engages in private sector development, while MIGA is mandated to provide investment guarantees to private sector and technical assistance. Payment did not fall, due to these agencies during this period. In 1995 the Irish government supported the World Bank group, in particular, the IDA, on account of its commitment to poverty alleviation and long term development in the poorest countries.

Generally, Irish policy from the 1980s to 1994, was, as a bilateral donor, not to oppose the principle of economic conditionality, while not itself imposing conditions on the recipient or its aid.

The year 1994 was a significant year: Ireland withdrew its financial support for IBRD, while paradoxically committing itself to contribute to the ESAF. The provision of multilateral and bilateral

relief represented a major change in Irish aid policy, with debt relief becoming an integral part of Irish Aid.

Finally, the Irish government has moved from passive acceptance of the status quo to the active acceptance of the principle of economic conditionality, though Irish bilateral aid continues to remain untied to adherence to structural adjustment programmes. For example, Ireland now includes in its ODA objectives, the promotion of trading capacity amongst least developed countries, partly so that they themselves can implement World Trade Organization agreements (Irish Aid, 13 February 2007)

### **Conditionality and Irish Programme In Sudan**

The Irish aid programme to Sudan first started in the 1986 and, for the first ten years, was focused on the application of Irish technical expertise in the agricultural field. The programme was implemented predominantly in Gezira state in central Sudan. Ultimately, attempts to modernise the agricultural sector and the establishment of dairy co-operatives, were unsuccessful because of instability of policies as a result of the political situation.

The agriculture sector in Sudan faced many problems and obstacles which led to the decline and deterioration of the Algezira scheme. Some of these problems were administrative, some economic, and others were political:

- i. Lack of modernization and renewal of channels;
- ii. Cultivation decreased in quantity and quality;
- iii. Overlap and difference between project management and irrigation management;
- iv. The politicization of administration and a lack of independence;
- v. The low level of service for workers in the project of inspectors and others;
- vi. Lack of a clear relationship between the farmer and management.

Also, the banking system in Sudan concentrated greatly on short-term loans (12- 18 months) and was mainly engaged in import and export trade.

However, from the beginning of 1986 onwards, the focus of Irish program started changing in favour of the basic needs, which mainly focused on the poorest areas in the Gezira, Sennar, White Nile, and Blue Nile (Kevlihan, 2001:77).

Ultimately, the programme developed a number of different components, including village water supply, community forestry, fuel-efficient stoves, village infrastructure and the construction and outfitting of classrooms and health clinics, and some preventative health initiatives, including support for Expanded Programme of Immunisation and training in Primary Health Care. In addition, a local co-financing scheme which supports NGOs and community groups was made available. All activities were centred on community- based groups, rather than the central government. The Irish aid programme did not even maintain an office in the capital Khartoum as all activities were carried out regionally and at local levels.

Ireland had a much lower profile role in Sudan than in its other priority countries in Africa. Its bilateral expenditure in Sudan in 1994 was just £94,414, plus NGO co-financing amounting to £102,668.

However, basic need was very great in Sudan and even the modest level of Irish Aid was of help to the people of Central State only, at whom it was targeted, especially in the fields of health care, education, forestry and water.

On the humanitarian grounds, Irish Aid to Sudan demonstrated a more reasonable approach than that of most donor countries.

During the 1990s, most of the African countries lost their strategic interest granted by the Cold War bipolarity, while their share in world trade-whether legal or illegal, has decreased.

Today, in a post-Cold war era, when the military conflict is no longer a palatable way to solve global crises, Western governments are seeking a low-risk way to achieve their aims in the world. Aid represents such an instrument.

This section explores the Irish political and development response to Sudan, which is a classic case of a complex political emergency. As we shall see, starting from 1990, Irish bilateral assistance focused increasingly on the understanding, at least amongst Irish officials, that its continued provision would depend upon political reforms and progress towards peacemaking in Sudan. The absence of such progress would lead to the termination, in 1998, of the official bilateral aid, though Irish ODA would continue to flow, often on a comparable scale to NGOs that are active in humanitarian relief projects in the Sudan. The practical difficulties of terminating aid programmes once they begin are very evident in this case study.

From its beginnings in the 1970s, and it is not surprising given that Irish missionaries became a pioneer in Ireland's participation in developing countries, the Irish Aid programme was imbued with a strong humanitarian motive. Early ministerial speeches and departmental documents stressed a 'moral obligation' to help 'poor countries and poor people' and to 'promote the development of developing countries, (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2003); language that may have reflected an historical heritage of missionary paternalism. Interestingly, the promotion of human rights, a huge issue at the global level today, was included in the goals of Irish Aid programme as early as 1979. Reducing poverty and meeting basic needs, the equitable distribution of benefits of the internal economic development, and promoting self-reliance were repeatedly cited as the main objectives of the programme from the first days. Such language might suggest that, we should attribute Irish commitment to development aid as an aspect of a broader idealist commitment to global citizenship, rather in the same vein as Ireland's conspicuous role in international peacekeeping operations. However, as we have noted, seeking to build and sustain a civil global order is very much in the national interest of a small and vulnerable country.

Ireland bilateral aid programme has focused on a small number of so-called priority countries. Five were selected in 1974: Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Sudan and India. India quickly fell for practical reasons, mainly because its size was considered inappropriate for

the small Irish programme. But Sudan was dropped in 1993 because of the political situation (O'Neill, 2004).

Sudan, a country which experienced decades of protracted civil war and was accused of supporting international terrorism and of human rights violations, faced sanctions policies imposed by the international community. After Ireland removed Sudan from its list of priority countries, development aid was replaced by humanitarian assistance.

Approaches of the major donor agencies in Sudan varied according to their basic mandates. However, the European Union and many other donors believe that the rejection of the consideration of any dialogue with the government as counter-productive, and preferred to address the issues that concerned them through political dialogue as part of the new approach, often called 'constructive engagement' (European Commission, 2005).

In the approach taken by the European Union to the Sudan, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) considerations are closely linked, and multiple paths followed in parallel courses. Sudan belongs to the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. However the Lomé Convention suspended cooperation with Sudan in 1990. The European Union decided that development cooperation could not be resumed before the Sudanese government shows some progress in its respect for human rights, the process of democratization, and in its efforts to find a peaceful solution to the civil war.

Irish aid to the Sudan was affected by the policies of other donors, especially its European Union partners. However, while the other Western donors began to apply political conditions for development assistance from the period 1988-1989 onwards, Irish aid simply reduced its bilateral assistance to the Sudan in this period from (Ir£925k in 1988 to Ir£345k in 1989). However, in 1990, bilateral assistance to the Sudan increased to Ir £ 0.443m, despite an overall reduction in the total bilateral assistance distributed to all countries in that year (Kevlihan, 2001:77).

The period 1990 to 1992 saw Irish bilateral assistance to Sudan at around Ir £ 0.5 million annually. But this remained a relatively constant percentage of overall bilateral assistance.

This would appear to indicate a static approach involving no change in Irish programme activities in Sudan during this period. The year 1993, however, shows a significant decline in relative terms, with Sudan accounting for only 4.7 percent of bilateral aid in context of a greatly expanded aid budget in that year. This pattern of decline continued through the year 1997, with Sudan receiving a successively smaller share of bilateral assistance granted, while approximately retaining its absolute amount of assistance received. This trend in expenditure from 1990 is represented in subsequent policy statements as a deliberate policy towards Sudan.

The expenditure from 1990 is represented in the subsequent policy statements as a deliberate policy with regard to Sudan (Kevlihan, 2001:77). According to the 1993 Irish Aid Consolidation and Growth - A Strategy Plan:

Sudan was referred to as a special category priority in which Ireland in common with our EC partners, has limited our development assistance in recent years (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1994: 13).

However, the Irish Government had not stopped funding development activities and it also had not closed down its operations as other bilateral and multilateral donors had done. Irish Aid in the 1994 annual report confirmed that, the project assistance continued at a reduced level, and focused on the poorest people in society.

In addition, independently of direct bilateral assistance, in the framework of the funding locally managed for NGOs, the co-financing scheme became available in 1999, reflecting the sharp increases in the funding available to the co-financing in general. This is important because two of the four projects funded in 1993 were run by the Irish Aid local project office. The remaining two projects in that year were directly co-financed from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, and involved Irish international NGOs, Oxfam (UK and Ireland) and Concern who were also operational on the ground at the time. These projects run by INGOs and managed by the local co-financing scheme based in

Dublin, continued in parallel with the scheme administered locally in the subsequent year. In 1993, the locally managed scheme grew and served to supplement direct bilateral development assistance to Sudan. However, the policy of political conditionality applied to bilateral assistance to Sudan was reiterated in 1995 (Government of Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, 1995: 22).

The policy of conditionality was explicitly applied to Sudan in the same document. Central to the Irish programme is the respect by partner governments for the human rights. In that context, aid to Sudan was to remain focused on community level programmes pending a significant improvement in the human rights situation (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1996:30).

Clearly, a cap was placed on the Sudan programme. In real terms, it was unofficially de-prioritised. This is reflected by the fact that it was classified as just another project country, than a priority country for the first time in the 1995 annual report (DFA, 1995:22).

In actuality, in Sudan, however, the bilateral programme continued at its existing level, with little change in core operation and small increases in effective funding at its discretion through the country management of the co-financing scheme. While this may appear contradictory, it seemed to imply an ability on the part of Sudan field operations to take advantage of a new alternative trench of funding opening up through the implementation of the locally managed co-financing scheme to circumvent the restrictions imposed on direct bilateral aid. This may have been facilitated by the division of labour within the DFA itself, whereby the co-financing scheme was managed separately from the direct bilateral assistance country programme.

This shift towards limiting official development assistance while channelling increased funds through NGOs and local organisation, though not necessarily deliberate, nonetheless represented an innovative approach by the Irish government in Sudan, when compared to other bilateral donors.

It stood in contrast to the strictly limited humanitarian approach of both the British and United States governments, which, in

particular, simply placed a moratorium on development assistance, regardless of channels of funding (government or non-government) to be used, what could be characterised as a pragmatic response to a difficult and complex issue in accordance with policy as set out in the White Paper (Kevlihan, 2001:79).

The 1996 annual report echoed the sentiments of the White Paper and reports in relation to Sudan, while the 1997 report went further in mentioning concerns in common with EU partners in relation to the political and human rights situation (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1997). Conditional bilateral assistance represented a further significant development in Irish policy. It indicated further shifts towards interventionism, rather than strict adherence to the principle of state sovereignty. Though the nature of Irish concerns regarding to political situation in Sudan were not clearly enumerated by the Irish government, EU statements from the period emphasised the need for the political settlement to the ongoing conflict.

The Irish government's position hardened further in the following year. The 1997 report stated that, the projects being implemented in Sudan were approaching the end of their planned duration and that the bilateral aid programme was to phase out in 1998. The programme subsequently closed down at the end of 1998 with the last Irish Aid consultant pulling out. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that human rights unit within the department had no role in the shutdown decision, despite the fact that the Irish government actions since 1993 were ostensibly based on human rights concern (Molly, 1997). Informally, in addition to human rights concerns, another rationale presented for the decision to shutdown was the perception that an environment, such as Sudan with its civil war, sustainable development could not be successful. This did not seem to prevent effective programming throughout the 1980s and 1990s. If it is to be assumed that successful development cannot occur in a country at war, future Irish development aid to other African countries that have recently been at war, including Ethiopia and Uganda, would have had to have been re-evaluated.

### **Consequences of Shutdown Decision of The Irish Bilateral Development Activity in Sudan**

The final decision on the part of the Irish Government to halt development bilateral activity in Sudan appears to be a withdrawal from what has been a pragmatic approach to the issue of conditionality, up to then.

While NGOs co-financing continued to be available for projects of development nature in Sudan, the co-financing scheme would now be managed from Dublin. NGO's co-financing scheme would be available only to the Irish NGOs and mission groups.

The result was that it would be available only to the Irish NGOs operational in Sudan (Goal, Oxfam, Concern, Trocaire, World Vision and church groups) and not to locally based organizations, as have been the case so far, except to the extent that the Irish external agency was working in cooperation with local groups in applying for the assistance (Kevlihan, 2001:80).

As a result, development assistance under NGOs co-financing for Sudan would vary depending on the amount available for co-financing overall in the central fund and on the quality of the proposals submitted by Irish NGOs operational in Sudan against proposals from other countries. The pattern of development assistance channelled through NGOs in Sudan would therefore be similar in variability to the period prior to 1992. Some years' financing would be significant, and that of other years, can be non-existent, altogether.

This has been exacerbated by the fact that, only two qualified INGOs: Oxfam and Goal, along with a small number of Irish clergy, were operational on the ground in areas controlled by the Government of Sudan, the part of the country previously broadly served by the bilateral assistance programme.

Development assistance, therefore, ceased to be a meaningful component of the Irish assistance because of the lack of specific allocations for Sudan, except to a small number of Irish NGOs and mission groups, especially in the north of the country. Instead, the assistance would be restricted to emergency and humanitarian relief only.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Irish state policy regarding political conditionality began to shift at the beginning of 1993 and developed into the strict application of political conditionality in 1998. Conditionality, as initially applied by the Irish Government to Sudan from 1993 onwards, was imposed in a practical fashion that appeared to alleviate government concerns about human rights.

The shutdown of the Irish Aid programme in the Sudan in 1998 represents a poor decision motivated by the desire of the Irish policy makers to conform to international standards rather than the rational study of the effectiveness of the existing programme and the impact of the decision to close. It happened only one year after a major investment by the Chinese state oil company as the major stakeholder in the Sudanese Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company. This was followed by around \$15 billion of Chinese investment in Sudanese infrastructure, including agribusiness in the historic irrigated zone (Raine, 2009: 184-185). In this context, termination of bilateral aid relations by members of the European Union, as well as the Union itself, represented a very weak political gesture; retention of a degree of influence over policy implementation through maintaining contacts with Sudanese officials concerned with developmental priorities would have been sensible. More general studies on conditionality suggest that, imposed conditions that are at odds with the predispositions of officials and politicians in developing countries are often resisted after the disbursement of funds (which then continue) to be disbursed anyway. What does seem to be the case is that, building long established donor-recipient relationships between officials and donors is indispensable in creating the setting in which a genuine policy consensus between them can develop (Riddell, 2007: 244-245); the Irish record in Sudan helped to promote such relationships as was evident from the conversations this researcher had with the officials of the Department of Agriculture in Khartoum, years after the termination of bilateral aid.

Political conditions are especially likely to engender resistance as they often concern issues that are only indirectly related to the goals and objectives of specific aid projects.

In alignment with this reasoning, in early 1998, 17 NGOs working in the government controlled North presented a paper policy for discussion to donors, including the British, Dutch, the European Union, the United States and other donor countries. This paper represents the views of the majority of NGOs working in Northern Sudan at the time, which expressed the desire to see a change in what is seen as an excessively rigid donor policy.

The major recommendations were stated as follows:

- i. Funding of projects should benefit all
- ii. Donors should fund programmes that aim at securing livelihoods, preventing future displacement and mitigating the effects of the past displacement.
- iii. Projects recommended include household security, capacity building, education, agriculture recovery, and environmental protection.

The Programme, as implemented by the Irish Government in the 1990s, in many respects confirms these recommendations, although it was being implemented directly by Irish aid, and not by INGOs. Irish Aid programme did not discriminate with reference to race or cause of displacement. In fact, the programme focuses on a specific geographical area primarily in the central region near Gezira, Sennar, Blue Nile and White Nile States (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1997).

The area of operations has been criticised because of its relative prosperity compared to many other parts of the country. It is a region of comparative stability in a country embroiled in civil war. However, the projects are funded, which included the village water supply, infrastructure of village, and community, clearly fit into the types of activities which INGOs sought to encourage donors to fund (Kevlihan, 2001).

It should however be noted that ,criticising the Irish decision towards the Sudan does not mean it is a criticism of the application

of conditionality covering all situations and circumstances, as some scholars.

Programmes of the type implemented by Irish aid in the Sudan, by their own personnel at the lowest level of interaction and community in many ways outside the influence of the central government, are certainly less effective levers regarding the recalcitrant governments.

Not funding local NGOs in developmental activities through the application of political conditionality towards recipient governments will clearly be of limited impact as far as the recipient is concerned. In these circumstances, the donor is in effect assisting in the double punishment of potential beneficiaries firstly for having to live in a society that is governed by a government that does not respect human rights. Secondly, by doing so, they are rejecting access to programmes that might potentially improve their position in life. Continuing to fund programmes that support community-based structures, and which are outside of the control of central government, cannot be considered to support the hand of the government, nor can they assist in continued violations of human rights by that government.

Indeed, it is possible that, well-designed programmes focused on capacitating and empowerment, could actually assist in the development of civil society within states, a potentially positive development on the road to an improved human rights situation.

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