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Humanitarian NGO-networks: Identifying powerful political actors in an international policy field

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**Humanitarian NGO-Networks
Identifying Powerful Political Actors
in an International Policy-field**

von

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Abstract

Humanitarian assistance is a growing policy-field, where the humanitarian non-governmental actors gained a new, politically influential role. These actors have established networks in order to increase and facilitate cooperation and coordination mechanisms among them. This study identifies a number of humanitarian NGO-networks which actively participate in humanitarian policy decision-making processes. In order to identify the common motives and (political) interests of humanitarian NGO-networks a cross-section of internationally active humanitarian NGOs is identified. A typology of international humanitarian NGOs is starting with an analysis of German humanitarian NGOs. The analysis of the humanitarian networks shows that contrary to the often propagated cooperation between Northern and Southern non-governmental actors this is actually not realized at the network level. There, NGOs of the industrialized West, i.e. from the donor countries, are the almost exclusive participants in the humanitarian decision-making process.

Zusammenfassung

Humanitäre Hilfe ist ein im Wachsen begriffenes Politikfeld, in dem die humanitären nicht-staatlichen Akteure eine neue politisch einflußreiche Rolle einnehmen. Diese Akteure sind inzwischen in Netzwerke organisiert, um die Kooperation und Koordination zwischen ihnen zu erhöhen und zu erleichtern. In dem Papier wird eine Anzahl humanitärer NGO-Netzwerke identifiziert, die aktiv an Entscheidungsprozessen humanitärer Politik beteiligt sind. Aus einem Querschnitt von international tätigen humanitären NGOs werden die gemeinsamen Motive und (politischen) Interessen humanitärer NGO-Netzwerke herausgearbeitet. Mittels einer Analyse deutscher Hilfsorganisationen wird eine Typologie internationaler humanitärer NGOs entwickelt. Die Analyse der humanitären Netzwerke läßt den Schluß zu, daß die viel beschworene Kooperation zwischen nicht-staatlichen Akteuren des Nordens und des Südens auf jener Netzwerkebene nicht umgesetzt wird. Vielmehr nehmen dort die NGOs des industrialisierten Nordens, d.h. aus den Geberländern, eine eher exklusiv partizipatorische Rolle im Entscheidungsprozeß zu humanitärer Hilfe ein.

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1. Introduction and Problematization

Since the 1980s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are booming. Besides their numeric proliferation, NGOs have gained access to national and international decision making processes, being represented at organs of international organizations and have established their own fora at global conferences¹. Since the beginning of the 90s, comprehensive cooperation mechanisms between humanitarian state actors and non-governmental actors have been established in the field of humanitarian assistance to adapt to the changes of the globally growing humanitarian demand. With regard to the large number of those cooperation- and coordination bodies Martin Salm even speaks of the “institutionalization of solidarity” (1997:194). The Non-Governmental Organization Committee on UNICEF, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations at the UN-ECOSOC or the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) of the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) are few examples for the integration of NGOs at international organization level. Moreover, national NGO platforms have been firmly established with the Liaison Committee (LC) to the European Union, at the national level NGOs, respectively humanitarian NGOs, are integrated into political decision-making processes in the Western donor-countries such as in Germany, where the Committee for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CCHA) has been set up within the organizational structure of the Foreign Ministry.

This emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), nationally and internationally, and their increasing influence in their policy areas is a phenomenon that has been discussed for at least two decades in political theory. The theoretical and practical implications of NGOs as actors in political arenas which have formerly been dominated exclusively by the state has led to the emergence of a “dialectical relationship” (Donini, 1995: 421) between these two types of actors. With regard to the analysis of the changing relationship between state and non-governmental actors, recent discussions focus on the

¹ e.g. 1992 at the Global Environment Conference in Rio de Janeiro, the Viennese Conference on Human Rights in 1993 or the 4th Conference on Women 1995 in Beijing, where more than 1750 NGOs were accredited.

emergence of NGO-networks and their influence in different policy areas². This paper will focus on the emergence of Northern humanitarian NGO-networks, their members, their goals and interests and their field of activity. In order to assess these new developments and their political consequences a number of questions immediately arise:

1. Who are the members of these humanitarian networks?
2. Are these networks open, i.e. accessible for “all” humanitarian NGOs or are they rather “closed shops” with only a few members participating exclusively in humanitarian policy decision-making?
3. Finally, what implications has the establishment of NGO networks for the humanitarian system as a whole?

Preceding the analysis of these issues the political background accounting for the emergence of humanitarian networks is given.

2. Coping with the Politicization of Humanitarian Assistance

Due to the intention to deliver humanitarian assistance as soon as possible, state- and non-governmental actors engaged increasingly in emergency relief during the first half of the 1990s. While the year 1994 can be marked as the “high time” for international humanitarian assistance, more relief organizations than ever were present in various emergency-zones, bringing the different humanitarian actors into much closer contact with one another - maybe closer than ever before. This “unbound humanitarianism” (African Rights, 1994: 6) is the result of an unprecedented growth of humanitarian NGOs who became major executioners of relief activities financed by official and private sources (Donini, 1995: 426; Eberwein/Chojnacki, 1998:2). This is likely a consequence of the international media coverage of humanitarian disasters like in Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, and North-Korea etc., and about the concerted relief actions that generated a higher visibility of humanitarian relief action and a greater public awareness in the donor countries.

² Usually in „low“ policy areas such as ecology, social politics, or human rights.

Over the past decade, humanitarian assistance underwent significant changes. Originally designed to save lives quickly, humanitarian assistance is nowadays provided in extreme crisis situations, caused not only by natural disasters but also civil conflicts, political unrest, breaches of humanitarian law, and even genocide. Despite these facts, the change of the humanitarian environment cannot and should not solely be related to the systemic changes of 1989/90: Although humanitarian assistance has been an unpolitical and clearly philanthropic matter, the causes of humanitarian disasters have often been linked to political unrest or instability. During the times of the Cold War, the non-governmental actors delivered relief assistance in these disaster regions where political actors refrained from action for political security reasons or e.g. to avoid the block confrontation. With the disappearance of the bipolar political system this situation changed for the state actors. Today, international humanitarian relief organizations have to cope with humanitarian catastrophes affected by ethnic tensions and political unrest. Yet, more and more civilians are affected by human-made disasters, thus leading to a growing humanitarian demand. Additionally, the considerable prolongation of the duration of civil wars - not their increasing number, contrary to a common notion (Eberwein/Chojnacki, 1998: 32, 40) - calls for intensive international humanitarian action. The term complex disaster defines that field of activity of relief workers today, that gains most of the public and the political attention. This usually sets the international (Western) machinery of sympathy and solidarity into motion as soon as the public awareness is mobilized by the media. A complex emergency is a chronic crisis where inter- and inner-state, armed conflicts are linked to a partial or complete break-down of the respective state authority, an insufficient economic and ecological environment in the region, and where the ability of the society for self-help is not (any longer) existent or sufficient. Direct side-effects of such emergencies are usually massive refugee flows, famine, and the break down of societal structures in the respective region, which again has repercussions in the neighboring societies.

However, in retrospective it became clear, that a larger global humanitarian community and their concerted - yet sometimes not very coherently prepared - relief operations, didn't necessarily meet the needs of the affected population effectively or improve the humanitarian crisis situation: " This great number of actors is at once a resource and a problem: 'Many recent relief programmes have been characterised by a lack of coherence,

both among UN agencies and among NGOs” (APRODEV, 1996). In addition, critical self-analyses of several complex emergency cases and the relief activities taken showed that humanitarian assistance, i.e. the interference of Northern relief actors per se, can prolong the duration of the actual complex emergency.

The actors had to adapt to this changed environment, inter alia by developing cooperation schemes with the new or other partners on site. This was done either by working-out common standards for international relief cooperation, e.g. the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, the consolidated appeals process at the UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and by developing common training modules for relief workers etc. Or from case to case by establishing central coordination bureaus of cooperating relief agencies at the humanitarian emergency site or near-by. Being at the site, these offices had close contact to relief workers as well as to the people in need and could thus gather and disburse important information on the development of the relief work done to the humanitarian community, i.e. the donors and relief organizations. Yet, integrated cooperation between NGOs and governmental actors was not that self-evident since rather different (political) interests had to be combined. Ideally and traditionally, NGOs perceive themselves as members of the civil society, i.e. as civil counterpart to governmental actors. The institutionalization of cooperation mechanisms with governmental actors would draw NGOs inevitably into the governmental realm, blurring the divide between these different societal actors. Considering this background of governmental vs. societal actors, cooperation between state actors and NGOs in the politicized humanitarian context would have obvious effects for the NGOs as well as the donor-governments:

1. The instrumentalization of the non-governmental aid through politics.
2. A humanitarian self-obligation governmental actors have to comply with in cases of emergency and which members of the civil society appeal to.

ad 1: Many humanitarian NGOs feel that governmental engagement is compromising humanitarianism. This is especially the case, when the respective emergency is of international security concern and state actors take massive action in concerted international humanitarian assistance. Then, the innate political interest of state-actors is contradictory to

the basic principles of humanitarian assistance: impartiality of the actors and the provided assistance, their neutrality, and humanity. Since relief assistance in armed conflicts or failing states is a political issue, NGOs are inevitably drawn into donor governments' foreign politics. This is especially so when their relief operations are bi-laterally financed by a donor-government. Scherrer (1996: 88) points out, that states might perceive and use NGOs as a safe tool for realizing international politics in these politically insecure and unstable environments. This is because NGOs are much more flexible than governmental actors, either by negotiating their presence - even with de facto authorities such as war lords (Donini, 1995: 426) - or by relying on their local partners.

Moreover, the quick delivery of governmental humanitarian assistance might conceal an actually missing initiative for a political solution of a crisis. According to the saying that "the one who pays the piper, calls the tune", governmental sponsors are left with at least some control over location, region, type and duration of the respective relief activity. The humanitarian community is aware of the fact that the financial support of donor-governments inevitably leads to a competition among the NGOs for the scarce financial resources who rely on a few Northern donor-governments for the vast majority of their funding³. David Rieff characterizes the dilemma of the non-governmental actors as such: "An NGO simply must be in certain areas that the donors are paying attention to. If they are not, there is the sense that they are doing something wrong, that perhaps their projects are after all really not so worthwhile." (Rieff, 1995: 5).

This situation is a challenge and dilemma for the NGOs who resent to become a mere executing tool of state interests. NGOs are not willing to give up their role as counter-part to state-actors and their national and political interests.

Ad 2: NGOs appeal to the states' proclaimed humanitarian self-obligation, and thereby are eventually influencing political decision-making processes in favor of their own humanitarian goals. Two different humanitarian crisis-settings can be identified when NGOs

³ For a brief analysis of the overall financial funding situation of the humanitarian actors see Forman/Parhad, 1997, whose figures eventually convey the tough competition for humanitarian funds: "Since 1990, over \$30 billion has been spent on humanitarian assistance, with more than 80% coming from OECD governments. Annual aggregate funding levels peaked at around \$7 billion in 1994, and have since leveled off at \$3-4 billion per year."

appeal to the governmental humanitarian self-obligation. NGOs call in governmental support - be that finance, goods, means of transportation or political or diplomatic intervention - either in cases where the dimension and/or the duration of a humanitarian crisis is stretching the NGOs' resources to the limit. Or in cases of gross violations of human rights when NGOs are active in advocacy⁴ and are pressing governments to take a (political) stand against it.

Obviously, humanitarian assistance has irreversibly become a political issue, a policy-field (Eberwein 1997) linked to other policy areas such as development or international security. The humanitarian interests of governmental and non-governmental actors became entwined. As a result, humanitarian actors had to adapt to this change in order to meet the traditional goal of humanitarian assistance: help a needy population efficiently even in a highly politicized context and for the NGOs was also important to guard it against mere political or market-oriented interests. One initiative of the humanitarian community was to institutionalize cooperation platforms among the partners and aim at the coherent coordination and standardization of concerted relief action. Thus, humanitarian NGOs followed the motto: "joining with others increases effectiveness" (Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union, 1996) and formed national and international networks to increase their political influence by integrating their goals and interests, and coordinate their representation in the political arena to function as a considerable counterpart vis-à-vis state actors, on one side. The association in such a cooperation and coordination entity was perceived as a means to overcome "the assumption that there is an inherent inefficiency as well as duplication in the work of NGOs" (APRODEV, 1996).

3. The Genesis of Humanitarian NGO-Networks

Especially in the industrialized North, i.e. in the Western donor-countries, cooperation mechanisms between state actors and humanitarian NGOs have been established. Thus,

⁴ NGO-activities on advocacy - usually concerning the violation of human rights - can range from merely documenting violations of human rights observed by relief workers present on site to an active lobbying

NGOs are included one way or the other in national humanitarian politics. On one hand, NGOs neither want nor intend to lose their role as a civil counterpart vis-à-vis state actors and their national and political interests. On the other hand, NGOs want to succeed in their new, political role as active participants in humanitarian politics. The formation of networks seemed to provide an appropriate framework to achieve these goals. As Roland Koch (1997: 17) already mentioned networks can act as a counterpart to oligopole structures, if they are not already a part of them. This is also true for the humanitarian sector, where humanitarian NGOs are integrated in humanitarian decision-making processes at national and international level.

Thus, it seems that the formation and the growing influence of humanitarian NGO-networks is reflecting the changing relationship between state and non-governmental actors in the humanitarian policy-field. Three motives for the foundation of such humanitarian networks can be easily isolated:

First, the pooling of resources and information for more efficient relief assistance.

Second, the need for standardization and coherence among the operational relief organizations, making cooperation and coordination of relief activities in the field easier.

Third, to be recognized as an institutionalized counterpart to political interests of donor-governments, by integrating the common interests of its non-governmental members thus working synergistically to achieve a long-term goal (Edwards & Hulme, 1996: 225) and thus meeting “the need for collective, coordinated and policy-oriented action by the NGO sector as a whole” (Bennett, 1995: xx). With regard to this emergence and proliferation of NGO-networks, the question is Who are their members? Furthermore, are these conglomerates open to “all”, or have humanitarian NGO-networks rather become “closed shops” where an exclusive group of member-NGOs dominates the decision-making process as Koch already implies (s. a.). Therefore, it is first of all necessary to clarify, how the term “network” is applied in this article.

3.1. Defining the Term “NGO-Network”

The term network has become a very popular catch-word, the definitions and applications being manifold. Originally used as the graphic description of the direction and intensity of an exchange relationship between two or more actors in a small social group, the network approach is increasingly utilized for analyses in the social sciences. There, the application of networks ranges from the analysis of corporate cooperation links or the explanation of transformation processes of Eastern economies to the analysis of policy-formulation processes in so-called policy-networks at large. A number of different types of networks have been distinguished: networks of goods and services, e.g. in economic analyses, networks for information exchange, and networks of common values and norms, such as principled issue networks which Kathryn Sikking (1993) describes. The most general definition of a network seems to be that it consists of a number of entities that have a relationship of a certain kind with each other (Pappi, 1993: 85). The analysis of such a network describes those relationships, e. g. by trying to evaluate their intensity, duration, direction, the type of communication and cooperation of its members, and the determination of the members' actions.

Moreover, the term network has been used to describe and characterize international relations. Yet, in this “classic application the term is used rather as a ‘metaphor’ to accentuate the relevance of a multitude of linked actors, without providing a precise idea about the nature of neither the “threads” nor the ‘pattern’ of the web” (Nölke, 1994: 315). While describing these relations as international inter-organizational networks, a more concrete definition has been suggested: a group of more than two organizations which have a significant amount of transnational interactions (Nölke, loc.cit.). The latter approach is related to the policy-network analysis that is applied in political science to explain the development and implementation of policies. However, even here, the term policy-network is diffuse. On the one side policy-networks are perceived not so much as an analytical approach but rather as indicative of actual structural change in the political order. Accordingly, policies develop in a process, where numerous public and private organizations are involved and can merely be implemented in a network-like environment where powerful private actors are included (Pappi, 1993: 88; Kenis/Schneider, 1991: 41). On the other side,

policy-network are perceived as a general means that describe the relationships, links, and coordination and cooperation schemes that developed between governmental and non-governmental actors at different levels of policy development and implementation (Jordan/Schubert, 1992; Jansen/Schubert, 1995: 11). To sum this up, policy-networks can be either perceived as a form of modern policy-development and governance, or as a means for the structural analysis in a policy-field. A general and cautious definition provided by Franz Urban Pappi (1993: 93) could be utilized for both policy-network approaches as well as for this paper's aim: "Policy-networks per se are merely those actors who are interested in a certain policy, and who can engage in different kinds of relations, e.g. coalitions."

It is these coalitions, this article is referring to when using the term networks. Their actors and the respective policy-field, i.e. -issue are specified even more, by applying the term humanitarian NGO-network⁵.

The characteristics, goals, field of action, and membership of humanitarian cooperation and coordination schemes that developed in this diverse and very dynamic environment are manifold. Humanitarian networks can consist either merely of non-governmental actors or state-actors, or of non-governmental and state actors together. They can operate at the national or international level. Parallely, humanitarian networks can either consist of single-national or international membership. Moreover, these conglomerates can coordinate humanitarian action in a certain region or in the case of specific disasters. Additionally, they can reflect their members' specialization either in a certain field of action such as development or medical relief, or the members' origin and founding motives such as denominational networks. Finally, these coalitions can be attached to inter-governmental organizations or be bilaterally established with the respective donor-government to lobby for the humanitarian cause and for project funding.

5 Bearing in mind, that humanitarian NGO-networks are situated and operate on three different levels, i.e. the international and national one as well as on the emergency-affected regional level, this paper presupposes, that these NGO-coalitions have a certain continuance or permanence, in the sense that they are not founded on a temporal basis.

With regard to this diversity of network characteristics as well as to the basic motives for networking, it is assumed that a humanitarian network might be more efficient and successful, if it is either

1. relatively homogeneous, meaning it should consist of members with similar interests in the issue as well as similar goals and operational activities that can be easily coordinated, or
2. Its members should represent a comprehensive cross-section of the humanitarian discipline, i.e. being able to cover the broad range of humanitarian relief action, so that as many aspects as possible can be taken into consideration.

3.2. Defining a Common Denominator of the Humanitarian Community

As a result of the changed humanitarian environment, humanitarian assistance developed into an increasingly complex and intertwined policy-field including multiple issues and approaches. This means that humanitarian assistance might still begin in a state where a disaster triggered a humanitarian emergency, yet it continues through stages of rehabilitation and development and even prevention of future emergencies.

Setting the diversity of humanitarian networks and its members against the perceived need for coherence and standardization, i.e. homogeneity, the exchange of information and resources, and the formulation of common strategies and (political) interests, a typology that defines the characteristics of these non-governmental actors is useful. Essential elements for this typology are their motives, their origins, and field of activity and issues of the humanitarian policy field that are perceived as relevant by the actors.

Five different fields of activities are commonly understood to compose the relief discipline (Natsios, 1995: 407, Sphere Progress Report No. 2):

1. Nutrition
2. Food aid
3. Shelter, clothing, house-hold items
4. Water and sanitation

5. Medical care.

As a result, humanitarian NGOs generally use a variety of approaches and are involved in a whole range of activities. In addition to delivering short-term relief, they are engaged in fund-raising from national and international donors, long-term development cooperation programs, local institutional and social development projects as well as advocacy. Each of these activities requires different operational strategies, skills and funding which is actually reflected in the divers profiles of humanitarian NGOs. Since national and international networking, i.e. cooperation and coordination of humanitarian assistance, calls for cohesion, one necessary goal is to define common conceptual and operational aims. In this particular paper we use a bottom-up approach to attain a basic cross-section of common humanitarian actors. Bearing in mind that humanitarian assistance is a policy-field that can be executed at three different political levels, i.e. at the international, inter-organizational level, the national level of the donor countries and at the national level of the recipient's countries, the humanitarian NGO-community is quite large. Therefore, it seems to be only feasible, to generate a typology of humanitarian NGOs from a small sample located in one of the donor countries of the North.

4. Typology of (German) Humanitarian NGOs

Methodologically, the author developed this profile of humanitarian NGOs by analyzing 16 German humanitarian NGOs represented in the national Committee for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CCHA). The information used to develop a profile of these NGOs, i.e. their origin, conception, and operational dimensions is based upon information material provided by the NGOs themselves as well as in personal interviews.

ADRA-Katastrophenhilfe is the relief organization of the Adventist society. Christian values are the basis of their humanitarian goals. ADRA's projects are concentrating on five main fields of activity: immediate humanitarian assistance in cases of natural disaster and man-made disasters, provision of basic medical care, food security, community-based development cooperation, and education. ADRA-Germany belongs to the international

ADRA-Network, which consists of 27 national ADRA offices and which has projects in over 100 countries. Moreover, ADRA-Germany is working closely together with ADRA International located in the United States.

Nationally, ADRA Germany belongs to the CCHA and VENRO. It cooperated inter alia with ASB, World Vision, and Caritas in the past. On the European level it is a member of EURONAIID, and VOICE. At international level, ADRA Germany cooperates with the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and World Vision International.

Ärzte ohne Grenzen is the German branch of the largest international medical relief organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). One of the main goals of MSF is to provide quick and non-bureaucratic medical assistance to victims of natural disasters, wars or of a societal break-down. Besides their operational activities, MSF has engaged in advocacy against the violation of humanitarian and international law. Currently, MSF-Germany does not have its own relief projects. However, German relief workers are participating in a number of European MSF-projects. Thus, it is the responsibility of MSF-Germany to allocate resources, i.e. recruit and prepare potential German relief workers, promote the MSF-idea and -concepts, and to collect financial resources for operational projects and to co-finance them.

Nationally, Ärzte ohne Grenzen is a member of the CCHA and it is an invited guest of VENRO-working group for humanitarian assistance. It cooperated with Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe, MHD, the DRK, and DWH. At the European level, it is a member of the Dialogue Group with ECHO. Internationally, MSF is one of the few NGOs represented at the UN Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The **Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund** (ASB) is traditionally connected to the history of the German labor movement and committed to the idea of social welfare. This organization neither attached to a specific political party nor a church. One of the founding motives of ASB which is reflected in its international humanitarian engagement of today: the mission to improve the socio-political environment of a society. Their operational projects range from short-term humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to development cooperation, and socio-structural assistance. One of ASB principles is to provide help for self-help.

Being one of the oldest German welfare organizations, ASB has developed cooperational ties to numerous other humanitarian NGOs, e.g. the German Red Cross, Johanniter-Unfallhilfe, Caritas, Technisches Hilfswerk etc. ASB is a member of the national CCHA and is an invited guest to the VENRO working group for humanitarian assistance. Moreover, it is a member of the international NGO-network VOICE and associated with Solidar, the European network of those labor organizations engaged in welfare. ASB belongs to SAINT (Samaritans International) design to function as the umbrella organization for other organizations with a similar historical and operational background and as a forum for communication. The coordination bureau of SAINT is located with ASB.

Care-Germany was founded in 1979/80 as the German branch of this American organization. Care-Germany has three main areas of activity: according to the tradition of the original Care-idea of 1945 this organization takes care of displaced persons, refugees, and the victims of wars. Moreover, it provides quick assistance to victims of natural disasters and runs long-term projects aiming at poverty reduction and the promotion of self-sufficiency and sustainable development. Close cooperation with local organizations and the affected population is an important criterion for the realization of a Care project.

Care-Germany is a member of Care International, which consists of ten national offices from Europe, North America, Australia, and Japan. Care International maintains contacts to multi- and bilateral donors, i.e. international organizations and donor governments and its General Secretariat in Brussels can coordinate the activities of over 60 Care bureaus worldwide. Nationally, Care-Germany is a member of the CCHA and VENRO. Parallely, its international entity, Care International, is a member of the European networks ICVA and the SCHR.

The **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit** (gtz, German Agency for Technical Cooperation) is a private service enterprise of the Federal Republic attached to the Ministry of Development Cooperation. It executes its projects either by order of the German Government, in cooperation with private firms, or initiates its own projects. The gtz follows closely the political development agenda set out by the German government. Accordingly, the main emphasis of gtz-projects is on development cooperation, disaster prevention and mitigation e.g. poverty reduction, the preservation of the environment, and

the promotion of education. Although being a development organization, originally, gtz provides short-term emergency relief and aid for refugees, too. Gtz cooperated with a number of German relief organizations in the past, such as Technisches Hilfswerk, Caritas or German Agro Action as well as local organizations, firms or governments. Being an organization attached to the state, however, gtz is not a member of pure NGO-networks. Despite that, it is a member of the national CCHA where German governmental and non-governmental humanitarian actors are assembled.

Although the **Deutsche Welthungerhilfe** (DWH, German Agro Action) is closely linked to political, social and economic decision-makers of Germany⁶, it is a party-political independent and interdenominational NGO. Traditionally, German Agro Action has an operational emphasis on development programs. Thus, food security, sustainable development, and the preservation of the environment are main objectives of this NGO. Yet, due to the nexus between disasters, armed conflicts, and poverty DWH felt it necessary to link its respective development initiatives with disaster relief and -prevention. Therefore, DWH is engaged in short-term humanitarian assistance - mainly through the provision of food stuffs purchased at local markets in the region - in order to prevent the development of so-called hunger camps and to eventually encourage the self-help of the affected population through rehabilitation projects. German Agro Action is cooperating closely with local relief and development organizations.

German Agro Action is a member of the national networks CCHA and VENRO and a member of the European NGO-network VOICE. It has an observer status with the Board of the WFP.

The **Deutscher Caritas Verband** (DCV) is the association of the German Catholic relief organizations. In 1967, DCV received the sole responsibility for the coordination and planning of the German Catholic disaster relief action from the Conference of German Bishops. It is responsible for the execution of disaster relief, rehabilitation, development projects, and socio-structural aid. Usually, the projects of DCV are executed in close

⁶ Thus, the German President is traditionally the protector of this organization and its members represent a cross-section of important and influential German political, social and economic governmental and non-governmental organizations.

cooperation with local Caritas or other church organizations such as Misereor, Adveniat or Missio as well as with the Diakonisches Werk of the Evangelic Church.

DCV is a member of the CCHA and VENRO, and is represented internationally by Caritas Internationalis, a network of 140 national Caritas associations. The latter has consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, and the European Council and it is a member of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum. Caritas Internationalis has permanent observer status with CIDSE (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité), ICVA, ICRC, and the IFRC and maintains regular relationships with the WCC (World Council of Churches).

According to the Geneva Convention, the **Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (DRK)** is the national aid-organization of the Federal Republic of Germany. The principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, freedom, and voluntarism are the basis for its work and they have been accepted as the general principles of international humanitarian assistance. Being traditionally specialized in medical assistance and health care, the DRK is internationally engaged in short-term humanitarian assistance in cases of disasters. Moreover, DRK contributes to the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in armed conflicts. Furthermore, the German Red Cross is running long-term projects aiming at development, disaster prevention, and rehabilitation, usually in cooperation with the national sister society.

DRK is a member of the national CCHA and an invited member to the VENRO working group on humanitarian assistance. Being a recognized member of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Geneva, which coordinates the international cooperation of the different national societies' assistance activities the DRK is participating from IFRC's memberships and cooperational ties to numerous international organizations, e.g. the UN-IASC, UNHCR, UNICEF, ECOSOC, and SCHR.

The **Diakonische Werk-Katastrophenhilfe (DW)** is the umbrella- and relief organization of the Protestant church in Germany. It provides humanitarian assistance based on the Christian understanding, that a human being has the right to receive humanitarian assistance on the one hand and the right to provide assistance on the other. Diakonisches

Werk provides quick disaster relief and is also engaged in development assistance and disaster prevention inter alia through popular projects like Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World). Moreover, Diakonisches Werk is committed to human rights work and is supporting violated victims. Diakonisches Werk is usually executing its operational projects through local partner organizations and churches. Diakonisches Werk belongs to several international Christian networks.

Nationally, Diakonisches Werk-Katastrophenhilfe is a member of the CCHA and of the VENRO working-group on humanitarian assistance. It has cooperational ties inter alia to Bread for the World, Caritas, Fakt, and the Swedish SIDA. At European level it belongs to EURONAIID, APRODEV, and VOICE. Internationally, Diakonisches Werk is affiliated with ACT International (Action of Churches Together), and it is cooperating with Caritas Internationalis.

On the occasion of the relief assistance to Afghanistan, **Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe** was founded in 1981 inter alia by several members of the German parliament, academics and clerics of different denominations. Still today, refugees are the main target-group Help is giving its assistance to. Help's field of activity ranges from the provision of quick disaster relief to victims of armed conflicts and disasters, the supply of food and medicine and it runs long-term developmental projects such as the reconstruction of local health systems and infra-structures, educational programs and most recently, mine sweeping. One major principle of Help is to provide help for self-help, thus the organization is always cooperating with a local one, using its knowledge of local habits, needs and access to resources.

Help is a member of the national networks CCHA and VENRO.

The **Johanniter-Unfallhilfe's** relief branch Johanniter International (Join) is a specialized association of the Diakonisches Werk of the Protestant Church in Germany. While running its own relief projects, Join is also the executing organ for relief operations of Diakonisches Werk. In cases of disasters, Johanniter-International is specialized in medical aid as well as in technical assistance and logistics. Traditionally, Join is tied to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The core motives for its humanitarian work are defined by basic Christian values. Long-term projects are aimed at the improvement of the health system and the infrastructure. These projects are generally realized in close cooperation with local sister

organizations or other local institutions and initiatives, regardless of their denominational affiliation.

The Johanniter are represented in the CCHA and have good cooperational ties to other German relief organizations, especially to the Malteser Hilfsdienst. Moreover, they belong to a worldwide network of national sister organizations affiliated to the Order and are member of the European NGO-network VOICE and invited guests to the VENRO working group on humanitarian assistance. Being associated with Diakonisches Werk, the Johanniter profit from its international ties to the international Christian networks.

Komitee Cap Anamur was originally founded as an organization to help, respectively save refugees. It is lobbying vehemently for their political asylum in Germany. Today, Cap Anamur's field of action is ranging from the provision of relief aid to victims of natural disasters and armed conflict, rehabilitation of infrastructure, food security and health systems and community based development cooperation. The central humanitarian goal of Cap Anamur is to help people in need. A paramount principle of Cap Anamur is to give all financial resources to the victims and nothing to governments. Consequently, Cap Anamur rejects all financial support from governmental donors and finances its projects solely through private donations. The small organization executes its projects through local grass-root movements, cooperates with small communities, or operates with the support of influential local persons.

Cap Anamur is a member of the CCHA and an invited member of the VENRO working-group for humanitarian assistance. Despite that, Cap Anamur is rarely present at the respective meetings.

The **Malteser Hilfsdienst** (MHD) has been founded by Caritas and the Order of Malta, thus, their humanitarian goals are also based on Christian belief and the tradition of this catholic hospice order. The MHD coordinates and manages short-term disaster assistance and emergency aid, relief for refugees, and long-term development projects. In case of international emergency aid actions, the Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta (ECOM) is providing medical and technical assistance - specializing here in the provision of drinking water. ECOM consists of eight European Maltese organizations. The MHD runs the ECOM secretariat and its operational center (Wittmann, 1997: 24). When executing its relief and/or

rehabilitation projects, MHD cooperates with local NGOs regardless of their denominational ties.

The MHD is a part of the international network of the Maltese Community, which consists of 42 national associations. Moreover, the Maltese Order - being a sovereign institution - maintains diplomatic relations with over 70 states. Nationally MHD is a member of the CCHA, VENRO, the Catholic Council on Catastrophes and has good cooperational ties to the respective member organizations. Furthermore, it is a member of the international VOICE-network and the Malteser have worked together with peace missions of the United Nations on behalf of the German Foreign Ministry.

Medico International was originally founded to deliver medicine and medical aid to victims of armed conflicts. This field of action was extended to disaster relief, the (re-) construction of community based health services, and socio-political reconstruction, e.g. building schools, support for small peasants and of local food security, and self-sufficient development. Medico is working exclusively with local, community based organizations and contracted partners. Moreover, Medico has a tradition in and is strongly involved in advocacy and it is lending financial and judicial support to victims of violations.

Medico International is a member of CCHA, VENRO, and the international networks VOICE and HAI (Health Action International). Moreover, it cooperates and coordinates its work with other organizations at the respective relief sights, e. g in the Western Sahara, where a NGO consortium of five European relief organizations was formed, who cooperate closely and well with each other.

The **Technisches Hilfswerk** (THW) is a semi-private relief organization attached to the Ministry of the Interior. The THW is providing assistance to refugees, is engaged in disaster mitigation, runs scouting missions, and is analyzing potential dangers and damages and developing action plans. It is specialized in technical assistance in disaster relief, i.e. in the provision of drinking water and sanitation and the reconstruction of buildings and the infrastructure. Outside of Germany, the THW acts on behalf of the German government. In 1990 the Ministry of Interior and UNHCR signed a treaty of cooperation according to which the UN-Agency can ask for THW-assistance to support UNHCR relief-action.

World Vision Germany was founded in 1979 and it is an autonomous national office belonging to World Vision International, consisting of 46 national offices. World Vision's work is based on Christianity and charity, yet World Vision is an interdenominational organization. World Vision Germany is an organization which is primarily engaged in development assistance, yet is also active in disaster relief. World Vision's main approach to sustainable development is the sponsoring of a child, which is financially covering the care of the respective child as well as the support for long-term development projects for the social environment of the child and its family. Generally, World Vision International is representing the organization at the international level.

Nationally, World Vision Germany belongs to the CCHA, Deutscher Spendenrat, and is an unofficial member of the Ecumenical Council of German Churches. At the European level, this organization joined VENRO and VOICE, yet World Vision Germany has not signed the FPA with ECHO. World Vision International has a consultative status with ECOSOC, UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, and WHO.

5. Profiles of Humanitarian NGOs

When comparing these German humanitarian NGOs, three major organizational approaches can be isolated for the German NGOs' international operations:

1. an autonomous German office belonging at the same time to an international "organizational family". The German office has its own operational programs which comply with the internationally valid organizational goals and motives. Moreover, the German office is allocating funds in Germany and by making the organizational ideas and goals public it is promoting the organization's visibility in Germany itself.

If necessary, the German office can co-finance relief or development programs of international organizational partners and vice versa. Usually an international headquarters or office represents and supports the interests of the “organizational family” at the international level, i.e. international organizations or cooperation platforms. Generally, such organizations operate in close cooperation with their local organizational partner. If there shouldn’t exist one yet, a new branch will be founded, if possible. The common operational strategy of these organizations is that short-term relief projects are handed over to the authority of the local branch of the organizational family as soon as possible, which will then carry it on into long-term sustainable development project.

Generally, these international humanitarian families or federations provide strong financial backing for the national bureaus. As a matter of fact, these organizational-families usually originate in donor-countries, i.e. countries of the industrialized North.

Hence, some of them even have been identified the epitome of international non-governmental oligopolies that control most of the international humanitarian market being major international financiers of humanitarian relief assistance (Donini, 1995: 439, footnote 22).

2. national-based humanitarian NGOs without an international family generally originate from citizen’s action committees. These mostly smaller NGOs have their own relief programs with a traditional operational emphasis regarding their field of activity, such as small community-based development projects, the improvement of the local infrastructure, health system, and the education of the people, the support for small farmers, or the supply of food-stuffs or medical aid. Moreover, these organizations usually have

Box 1: some international organizational families resp. federations⁷:

- ADRA International
- Care International
- Caritas International
- IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross- and Red Crescent Societies
- Médecins Sans Frontières
- Oxfam Federation
- Save the Children Federation
- World Vision International

⁷ Compare also P. J. Simmons, 1998: 92, who however, included networks like APRODEV or CIDSE into his identification of the Big Eight in emergency relief. Note, that Simmon’s identification differs from the one in this paper that uses the term organizational family or federation.

traditional geographical regions they operate in. Having usually a very small operational staff, if any, these organizations are usually executing their projects in community-based cooperation through contracted local partner NGOs or grass-root movements whose operational activities related to the relief program are then financed by the Northern NGO. Since these NGOs have no administrative backing by an international family they join few and selected NGO-networks that correspond with their specialized operational interests.

3. A specific German organizational form of humanitarian relief organizations are the Governmental Organized NGOs (GONGOs). Despite their very close relationship to the state these organizations, e.g. the gtz or THW, understand themselves as relatively independent NGOs. The GONGOs are usually highly specialized in a certain field of activity and operate on the basis of the political agenda of the ministry they are attached to. They can either provide assistance on behalf of the German government or initiate their own projects. Usually these organizations have a large financial budget supported by the government. Given their quasi-governmental status, these organizations are not members of international NGO-networks. Yet, their close relationship to the government is a support for the GONGOs at the international organization's level.

Having isolated these three organizational approaches of German NGOs, their ties to either an organizational "family" that functions as an umbrella or their affiliation to other national or international NGO-Networks is obvious. All of the organizations are providing short-term humanitarian assistance, i.e. disaster relief. It seems that during the 1990s most of the NGOs have broadened their field of activity to adapt to the dynamic changes of the humanitarian environment and to meet the humanitarian demand. As a consequence, the diversity of the organizations broadened. Thus, there are humanitarian NGOs with a religious and philanthropic motivation, and others whose origin is related to development cooperation, welfare or medical and technical disaster relief. Hence, the original, clear-cut conceptual and operational provenance of today's humanitarian actors is blurred, contributing eventually to the great variety of NGOs. Still, most of the organizations maintained a specialization in one or more of the operational humanitarian activities defined above, usually deriving from its history or operational motives. Due to their specialization,

the NGOs can rely on their acquired experiences and proficiencies, in case of complex emergencies which call for a broad spectrum of humanitarian activities.

Yet, regardless of the large variety of relief approaches, four important conceptual similarities can be defined, that reflect the diversity of the humanitarian need and function as a fundamental basis for the common interest of the humanitarian NGOs:

- direct and quick disaster relief.
- developmental cooperation
- restoration of peace and rehabilitation of the society
- provision of help for self-help.

Usually, humanitarian NGOs - like other social movements - see strongly to it that their individuality and their own organizational approach towards helping needy people isn't lost or mixed up with those of other humanitarian NGOs. Thus, they are able to maintain a clear and individual public profile required in the competition for private donations. With regard to this rather individualistic interest⁸ of the humanitarian NGOs, their need for the coordination of humanitarian actions was rather small. Only when the good image of humanitarian NGOs was endangered by misconduct or failure of one or the other member of the either national or international humanitarian community, the resentment against coordination diminished.

Eventually this lead to the establishment and institutionalization of national and international coordination and cooperation bodies of humanitarian actors, again striving for better coordination, coherence and the definition of standards in international disaster relief, on the other side to represent and to lobby for the interests of the non-governmental actors in the political arena.

⁸ This is also applicable for organizational families, which adhere to their organizational "ideology" granting them an individual image that enables that family to stand out against other NGOs in the policy-field.

6. International Networks of Humanitarian Assistance

Until now, the analysis of humanitarian relief organizations, their organizational structure and conceptual approaches reveals clearly the practical need for mutual cooperation among transnational relief organizations and thus a tendency to associate in humanitarian networks to develop conceptual and operational standards and to identify common political positions to strengthen their position vis-à-vis donors. Since these networks represent a considerable number of actors of the humanitarian community, there is a need to identify those networks, their field of activity and last yet not less important their member organizations. The humanitarian networks identified in this paper are solely European NGO-networks, i.e. their headquarters are situated in Europe and their work is focused on the European humanitarian policy-field. Sources for identifying these humanitarian networks were the Internet, their own publications, and member-NGOs referring to the work of the respective network.

6.1. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is one of the oldest international NGO-associations located in Geneva. It has been founded in 1962 as a merger of the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations Interested in Migration, the Standing Conference of Voluntary Agencies Working for refugees, and the International Committee for World Refugee Year (1959-1961). Today, ICVA is a network of approximately 100 international NGOs (see Appendix, No. 1), which are operationally involved in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. On one side, ICVA serves as a forum for cooperation, information sharing, and consultation among its members, on the other side, it cooperates with other NGO-networks, donor-governments, and multilateral organizations. Consequently, ICVA is not an operational association implementing its own humanitarian or developmental projects, yet, ICVA supports its members by supplying a coordination and information platform for the operational NGOs: “Integral to this mission is the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms, the support and promotion of field coordination, and the development and dissemination of Codes of Conduct, professional standards and other field performance guidelines” (ICVA, 1997: 2). For instance, ICVA has consultative status with ECOSOC, ILO, UNCTAD, UNICEF, and the Council of Europe. It has cooperational ties to

the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, OAU, OECD, DHA/OCHA, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, World Bank, and the IFRC. ICVA itself is inter alia a member of the African ELC International (Environmental Liaison Centre), the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), the Federation of Semi-Official and Private International Institutions established in Geneva, and the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on UNICEF.

6.2. Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)

The Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) consists of eight of the largest international humanitarian NGOs (see Appendix No. 2) committed to disaster assistance. SCHR's objective is to promote the communication and cooperation among its members. Moreover, common positions and strategies towards important humanitarian conceptual and operational problems are outlined. The results are then presented to national governments, humanitarian organizations of the UN system, and other NGOs. For instance, the SCHR is co-author of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the NGOs in Disaster Relief, which has been adopted by many relief organizations⁹ meanwhile as a normative standard for their operational work. SCHR is also one of the three NGO-conglomerates represented at the UN-IASC.

The Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the European Union (CLONGD or LC) unites 15 national platforms of over 880 NGOs, which are committed to disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and development cooperation. Thus, the LC functions as an interface between the national NGO-networks, i.e. the platforms represented at the Committee, and as well as an international NGO-network lobbying at EU-level. The LC represents its non-governmental members in the political dialogue with the several EU-institutions, inter alia the Commission, to which ECHO belongs administratively. Hence, two different types of networks are linked to the Liaison Committee: the national ones

⁹ By March 1998, 149 humanitarian organizations from Northern and Southern countries have signed the Code of Conduct, while the following eight agencies are sponsors of the Code: the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Relief Services, the International Save the Children Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam, and the World Council of Churches (IFRC, 1998:58).

located at the platform level and international ones like the LC's special structure for emergency aid:

6.3. Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE)

The Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE) that has been established as an integral part of the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the EU in 1992. It is a network of European NGOs, whose field of activity is humanitarian assistance. According to VOICE's definition humanitarian aid is comprised of emergency aid, rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and conflict prevention (VOICE, 1998a: 1). VOICE intends to foster the cooperation and dialogue between its 65 member organizations (see Appendix, No. 3) on the one side, on the other common positions are formulated and VOICE functions as the NGO-link primarily to the EU, thus contributing "to the framing and monitoring of a humanitarian policy" (VOICE, loc. cit.). Thus, VOICE has been invited by ECHO to participate in the preparation of some "global plans", where ECHO strategies are defined towards a particular region or country. VOICE's role was to „provide information for the membership". Another important involvement of VOICE with ECHO is the political dialogue concerning the revision of the Framework for Partnership Agreement (FPA). Thus, VOICE set up ad hoc groups in spring 1997 that work continuously on issues related to that revision and VOICE plans to stay in that revision process until the preparation of the final document which should suit ECHO and its non-governmental partners (VOICE 1998b: 4). Moreover, VOICE has ties to other humanitarian networks or NGO-conglomerates, such as the IFRC and InterAction¹⁰.

10 Whereas the above NGO-conglomerates are primarily European ones, InterAction is an association of 159 US American non-governmental organizations or private and voluntary organizations that are engaged in sustainable development and disaster relief. It is mentioned here because it is one of the largest and thus powerful humanitarian NGO-networks in the US. Besides promoting and coordinating its members' activities and programs, InterAction is one of the three NGO-networks being a member of the UN-IASC and is also cooperating with other humanitarian NGO-networks.

6.4. Association of World Council of Churches Related Development Organisations in Europe (APRODEV)

The Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe (APRODEV), founded in 1990, is open to those European Protestant organizations which are also members of the World Council of Churches and whose work is related to Third-World development issues. Currently, APRODEV has 16 full members and two with observer status (compare Appendix No. 4). APRODEV's mandate is to represent its members at the European institutions that deal with Third World issues. Moreover, it explicitly functions as a coordination body among its members and other NGOs outside APRODEV and Europe. Politically, APRODEV is lobbying in the area of European development policies as well as funding. It is a member of Action by Churches Together (ACT), a global network of Churches and affiliated agencies, "meeting human need through coordinated emergency response and common identity" (APRODEV, 1998). APRODEV has general consultative status with UNCTAD and cooperates *inter alia* with other organizations whose offices are also based at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva.

6.5. Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE)

The Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE) has been founded in 1965. It is a network of 16 Catholic developmental organizations (see Appendix No. 5). There are two associated members and two organizations with permanent observer status. CIDSE's aims are to coordinate and exchange information between its European and North American members, to "support on the basis of integral development, the effort of individuals and peoples themselves to attain economic, social and political rights and cultural and spiritual aspirations, combat causes and consequences of underdevelopment and injustice in all forms", and to "endeavor for change in macro-politics (world market) in favour of the poor and calls for ecological and social transformation of society..." (Yearbook of International Organizations, 1998/99). Through working groups CIDSE supports and

finances numerous development projects¹¹ as well as projects for development education. Moreover CIDSE is engaged in lobbying and advocacy activities.

CIDSE has cooperational ties to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the NGO Forum on Cambodia, the European Commission and Parliament. It has special consultative status with ECOSOC, liaison status with FAO and belongs to the general consultative status with UNCTAD.

According to P. J. Simmons (1998: 92) CIDSE and APRODEV belong to the so called Big Eight in the humanitarian relief market, each controlling about \$500 millions of the \$8 billion annual turn-over.

6.6. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the unique conglomerate of the 190 national Red Cross and Red Crescent (see Appendix No. 6). One of its functions is the coordination of the societies' relief operations after natural disasters, providing structural assistance, and running development cooperation projects. The field of activity of the IFRC ranges from disaster response to development. Thus, the IFRC mobilizes international relief action, and manages as well as coordinates international relief operations, e.g. by distributing food and goods, financial resources, supplying information, or by sending independent emergency response units specialized in certain fields of emergency response. Furthermore, IFRC's programs support national societies to develop their own capacities. Moreover, the IFRC is representing the national societies on the international political floor. The IFRC is represented at several other humanitarian platforms, such as the ICRC, the UN-IASC, UNHCR, UNICEF, ECOSOC and it has permanent observer status at the ICVA.

¹¹ CIDSE supports more than 6000 development projects per year (Yearbook of International Organizations, 1998/99).

7. Conclusion

Summing up, it can be noted that humanitarianism has been drawn into politics. It rather developed into a multi-issue field of activity. As a consequence, humanitarian NGOs have increasingly become involved in the political decision-making processes. Close institutionalized cooperation mechanisms of state and civil societal actors in networks appears to be a the common and quite successful approach to integrate their different interests.

The analysis reveals, that humanitarian NGOs have and seized the opportunity to act via national and international networks as influential and actively participating political partners respectively actors in an internationalized policy-field. International integration of humanitarian NGOs into humanitarian policy processes is quite complex and complicated because of the large number of internationally active NGOs. Therefore, large yet few NGO-networks are usually acting as representatives of their members at the international organization level and vis-à-vis donor-governments. Consequently, most international NGO-networks' headquarters can be found in Brussels and Geneva, the latter being like a "humanitarian bee-hive" in Europe. At the EU-level, networking apparently turned out to be a means of the NGOs to participate and influence the humanitarian politics of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). The European NGOs are for instance heavily committed to participate in the re-drafting of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), contributing to this process through critique, suggestions, and discussion of several issues that regulate the cooperation among ECHO and the contracted NGOs.

This inclusion of non-governmental actors into the political decision making process could be interpreted as an indicator of the changing relationship between today's state actors and members of the civil society. One interpretation is that transnational crises and global disasters cannot be managed satisfactorily by state actors alone. Since, non-governmental actors have become attractive dialog- and cooperation partners for governments and international organizations, it implies that each issue-area of international politics is no longer dominated by political ideas and interests of the states alone. Thus, non-state-actors have gained direct access to the political decision-making processes (Zürn 1992: 49; Spiro

1995, 48). Another interpretation is that the NGOs perceive their active participation in policy making as one of their new roles.

However, the overview over a few yet politically quite influential, financially powerful and internationally active humanitarian NGO-networks calls for some critical remarks, too:

As simple as it may sound, humanitarian networks do provide - and apparently quite successfully so - a platform for mutual dialog and cooperation where the member organizations can actually work-out coherent goals and approaches as well as develop standards for the operational field of activity. Yet, this forum for the exchange of information, resources and discussion is provided first of all to the respective members of the networks. There are further exclusive signs to be detected:

With the exception of ICVA, the member NGOs of the above networks are generally originating from Western industrialized countries, i.e. donor countries. Consequently, those networks could be characterized as so-called “closed shops” where access is limited, i. e. not open to all humanitarian NGOs. Factors limiting access to those humanitarian networks are first of all the membership dues which all networks require from their constituency. Furthermore, the national or regional origin of an organization might exclude it from the membership or a certain affiliation to a Church or denomination is necessary. For instance, VOICE consists only of European NGOs, CIDSE and APRODEV are the Christian networks.

As surprising as it may appear, an exclusive humanitarian community - regarding the constituency of humanitarian NGO-networks - exists in Europe. Humanitarian assistance and the participation in political decision-making processes is obviously an almost exclusive matter of the humanitarian actors from the industrialized North – bearing the exception of ICVA in mind whose members originate from Northern *and* Southern countries. The so often proclaimed direct cooperation and integration of non-governmental actors with grass-root movements and NGOs from affected countries does not exist at this network level, where, inter alia, decisions and strategies are elaborated that have political implication for

the humanitarian policy-field. Whereas there is no or very little¹² direct cooperation with indigenous NGOs at the network-level, it very well exists at the operational level. This leads to the conclusion that there actually exists a gap between the commitment of humanitarian NGOs to cooperate closely with local organizations and interest-groups in the affected region versus the exclusive political involvement of Northern humanitarian NGOs at the European network level.

12 Bearing in mind that ICVA is the one European NGO-network with members from other countries than the industrialized North.

8. Appendix

8.1. Member Organizations of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) - and their respective headquarters or general secretariat

- ◆ Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) - (*USA*)
- ◆ African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) - (*Lesotho*)
- ◆ African Development Programme (ADP) - (*Ghana*)
- ◆ All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) - (*Kenya*)
- ◆ African Network for Integrated Development (ANID) - (*Senegal*)
- ◆ American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) - (*USA*)
- ◆ Asian Institute for Rural Development (AIRD) - (*India*)
- ◆ Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) - (*Philippines*)
- ◆ Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP) - (*Costa Rica*)
- ◆ Asociación Latinoamericana para los Derechos Humanos (ALDHU) - (*Ecuador*)
- ◆ Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) - (*India*)
- ◆ Austcare - Australian Care for Refugees - (*Australia*)
- ◆ Australian Council for Overseas Aid ACFOA) - (*Australia*)
- ◆ Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) - (*Canada*)
- ◆ Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) - (*Canada*)
- ◆ Care International - (*Belgium*)
- ◆ Centre de Recherche et d'Information pour le Développement (CRID) - (*France*)
- ◆ Children's Aid Direct - (*UK*)
- ◆ Chinese Refugees' Relief Association (CCRA)
- ◆ Christian Children's Fund Inc. (CCF) - (*USA*)
- ◆ Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) - (*Ethiopia*)
- ◆ Church World Service (CWS) - (*USA*)
- ◆ Conseil des Organisations Non Gouvernementales d'Appui au Développement (CONGAD) - (*Senegal*)
- ◆ Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEEAL) - (*Mexico*)

- ◆ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - *(Denmark)*
- ◆ Diakonia (World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Sisterhoods) - *(Sweden)*
- ◆ European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid (EURONAIID) - *(Netherlands)*
- ◆ Forum of African Development Organizations (FAVDO) – *(Senegal)*
- ◆ Freedom from the Debt Coalition (FDC) - *(Philippines)*
- ◆ Fundación Augusto Cesar Sandino (FACS) - *(Nicaragua)*
- ◆ Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) - *(USA)*
- ◆ Human Appeal International (HAI) – *(United Arab Emirates)*
- ◆ HelpAge International (HAI) - *(UK)*
- ◆ InterAction - American Council for Voluntary International Action - *(USA)*
- ◆ International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) - *(Saudi Arabia)*
- ◆ International Rescue Committee (IRC) - *(USA)*
- ◆ International Social Service (ISS) - *(Switzerland)*
- ◆ Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA) - *(Sudan)*
- ◆ Japanese NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) - *(Japan)*
- ◆ Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) - *(USA)*
- ◆ Lutheran World Federation (LWF) - *(Switzerland)*
- ◆ Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVID) - *(Netherlands)*
- ◆ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) - *(Norway)*
- ◆ Ockenden Venture - *(UK)*
- ◆ Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement International (OISCA) - *(Japan)*
- ◆ Oxfam, UK & Ireland - *(UK)*
- ◆ Philippine Development NGOs for International Concerns (PHILINK) - *(Philippines)*
- ◆ Rädda Barnen International (Save the Children) - *(Sweden)*
- ◆ Refugee Council - *(UK)*
- ◆ Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (SSM) - *(Sri Lanka)*
- ◆ SOLIDARIOS Consejo de Fundaciones Americanas de Desarrollo - *(Dominican Republic)*
- ◆ Swedish Organization for Individual Relief - *(Sweden)*
- ◆ World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) - *(Switzerland)*

- ◆ World Council of Churches (WCC) -
(*Switzerland*)
- ◆ World University Service -
(*Switzerland*)
- ◆ World ORT Union (Organization for
Rehabilitation through Training) -
(*UK/Switzerland*)
- ◆ World Vision International - (*USA*)

Associated member: Refugee Studies Programme

Permanent Observer Status: Caritas International, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Médecins sans Frontières International (MSF)

8.2. Member Organizations of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) - *and their respective headquarters or general secretariat*

- ◆ Care International - (*Belgium*)
- ◆ Caritas Internationalis - (*Vatican*)
- ◆ Internationale Föderation der Rotkreuz- und Rothalbmondgesellschaften (IFRC) - (*Switzerland*)
- ◆ International Save the Children Alliance - (*UK*)
- ◆ Lutheran World Federation (LWF) - (*Switzerland*)
- ◆ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International - (*Belgium*)
- ◆ Oxfam International - (*UK*)
- ◆ World Council of Churches (WCC) - (*Switzerland*)

8.3. Member Organizations of the Voluntary Organisation in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE) - *and their respective headquarters or general secretariat*

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim (ACF) – *(France)*
- ◆ Action by Churches Together (ACT) - *(Switzerland)*
- ◆ ActionAid - *(UK)*
- ◆ Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) - *(USA)*
- ◆ Associazione Amici dei Bambini (AIBI) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Fundação de Assistência Médica Internacional (AMI) – *(Portugal)*
- ◆ Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) - *(Germany)*
- ◆ ASF-Dansk Folkehjaelp (Arbejdernes Samariter Forening) - *(Denmark)*
- ◆ Atlas - *(France)*
- ◆ International Service Volunteers' Association (AVSI) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Catholic Fund For Overseas Development (CAFOD) - *(UK)*
- ◆ Caritas, *Germany*
- ◆ Caritas, *Netherlands*
- ◆ Caritas, *Spain*
- ◆ Caritas, *Sweden*
- ◆ Comitato Collaborazione Medica (CCM) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ CESVI - Cooperazione e Sviluppo - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Christian Aid - *(UK)*
- ◆ CIPEO (Comitato Italiano Permanente Emergenze Oltremare) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Comitato Internazionale per lo sviluppo di populi (CISP) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Concern Universal - *(UK)*
- ◆ Concern Worldwide - *(Ireland)*
- ◆ COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Comitato di Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario (COSV) - *(Italy)*
- ◆ Danchurchaid - *(Denmark)*
- ◆ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) - *(Denmark)*
- ◆ Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWH) - *(Germany)*
- ◆ Diakonie Emergency Aid - *(Germany)*
- ◆ Disaster Relief Agency - *(Netherlands)*
- ◆ Dutch Interchurch Aid - *(Netherlands)*
- ◆ France-Libertés - *(France)*
- ◆ GOAL - *(Ireland)*
- ◆ Handicap International (HI) - *(Belgium)*
- ◆ Health Unlimited
- ◆ Help Age International (HAI) - *(UK)*

- ◆ Intersos (Asociazione Umanitaria per l'Emergenza - *Italy*)
- ◆ Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe (JUH) - *Germany*
- ◆ Lutheran World Federation (LWF) - *Switzerland*
- ◆ Lutherhjälpen Church of Sweden Aid - *Sweden*
- ◆ Malteser Hilfsdienst (MHD) - *Germany*
- ◆ Médecins Du Monde International (MDM) - *France*
- ◆ Medico International - *Germany*
- ◆ Medicus Mundi (MMI) - *Belgium*
- ◆ Memisa Medicus Mundi - *Netherlands*
- ◆ MLAL - Movimento Laici americana Latina - *Italy*
- ◆ Movimondo - *Italy*
- ◆ Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL) - *Spain*
- ◆ Norwegian People's Aid - *Norway*
- ◆ OHM
- ◆ Oxfam, *Belgium*
- ◆ Oxfam, *UK and Ireland*
- ◆ Pharmaciens Sans Frontières - *France*
- ◆ PMU Interlife
- ◆ Save the Children Fund, *UK*
- ◆ Save the Children Fund International (SCF) - *UK*
- ◆ SECOURS International De Caritas - *Belgium*
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- ◆ Star of Hope International (SHI) - *Sweden*
- ◆ Tear Fund - *UK*
- ◆ Trócaire - *Ireland*
- ◆ Volontari Nel Mondo - FOCSIV Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario - *Italy*
- ◆ World Vision, *Austria*
- ◆ World Vision, *Germany*
- ◆ WorldVision, *Ireland*
- ◆ World Vision, *UK*

8.4. Members of the Association of World Council of Churches Related Development Organisations in Europe (APRODEV) - *and their respective headquarters or general secretariat*

- ◆ Brot für Alle - (*Switzerland*)
- ◆ Brot für die Welt - (*Germany*)
- ◆ Christian Aid - (*UK*)
- ◆ Church of Sweden Aid - (*Sweden*)
- ◆ Danchurchaid - (*Denmark*)
- ◆ Diakonia - (*Sweden*)
- ◆ Dutch Interchurchaid - (*Netherlands*)
- ◆ EZE (Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe) - (*Germany*)
- ◆ Finnchurchaid - (*Finland*)
- ◆ Hungarian Interchurch Aid - (*Hungary*)
- ◆ ICCO - (*Netherlands*)
- ◆ Icelandic Churchaid - (*Iceland*)
- ◆ Norwegian Church Aid - (*Norway*)

Observer Members: Lutheran World Service (LWS) - (*UK*), World Council of Churches (WCC) - (*Switzerland*)

8.5. Members of the Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE) - *and their respective headquarters or general secretariat*

- ◆ Bilance - (*Netherlands*)
- ◆ Broederlijk Delen - (*Belgium*)
- ◆ Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD) - (*UK*)
- ◆ Comité Catholique Contre La Faim Et Pour Le Développement (C.C.F.D.) - (*France*)
- ◆ Catholic Relief Service (CRS) - (*USA*)
- ◆ Catholic Relief Service Geneva - (*Switzerland*)
- ◆ Entraide et Fraternité - (*Belgium*)
- ◆ Fastenopfer der Schweizer Katholiken - (*Switzerland*)
- ◆ Volontari Nel Mondo - Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontari (FOCSIV) - (*Italy*)
- ◆ Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz für Internationalke Entwicklung und Mission - (*Austria*)
- ◆ Manos Unidas - (*Spain*)
- ◆ Misereor - (*Germany*)
- ◆ Développement et Paix - (*Canada*)
- ◆ Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) - (*UK*)
- ◆ Trocaire - (*Ireland*)
- ◆ Conseiller Ecclesiastique - (*France*)

Associated Members: Bridderlech Delen - (*Luxembourg*), Caritas Aotearoa - (*New Zealand*)

Permanent Observers: Bischöfliche Aktion Adveniat - (*Germany*), Caritas Internationalis - (*Vatican*)

8.6. Members of the International Federation of the Red Cross (✚) and Red Crescent Societies (☾)

☾ - Afghanistan	✚ - Cameroon	✚ - France
✚ - Albania	✚ - Canada	✚ - Gambia
☾ - Algeria	✚ - Cape Verde	✚ - Georgia
✚ - Andorra	✚ - Central African Republic	✚ - Germany
✚ - Angola		✚ - Ghana
✚ - Antigua and Barbuda	✚ - Chad	✚ - Greece
✚ - Argentina	✚ - Chile	✚ - Grenada
✚ - Armenia	✚ - China, P. R.	✚ - Guatemala
✚ - Australia	✚ - Colombia	✚ - Guinea
✚ - Austria	✚ - Congo	✚ - Guinea-Bissau
☾ - Azerbaijan	✚ - Congo, Dem. Rep.	✚ - Guyana
✚ - Bahamas	✚ - Costa Rica	✚ - Haiti
☾ - Bahrain	✚ - Côte D'Ivoire	✚ - Honduras
☾ - Bangladesh	✚ - Croatia	✚ - Hungary
✚ - Barbados	✚ - Cuba	✚ - Iceland
✚ - Belarus	✚ - Czech Republic	✚ - India
✚ - Belgium	✚ - Denmark	✚ - Indonesia
✚ - Belize	☾ - Djibouti	☾ - Iran, Islamic Rep. of
✚ - Benin	✚ - Dominica	☾ - Iraq
✚ - Bolivia	✚ - Dominican Rep.	✚ - Ireland
✚ - Botswana	✚ - Ecuador	✚ - Italy
✚ - Brazil	☾ - Egypt	✚ - Jamaica
☾ - Brunei Darussalam	✚ - El Salvador	✚ - Japan
✚ - Bulgaria	✚ - Equatorial Guinea	☾ - Jordan
✚ - Burkina Faso	✚ - Estonia	✚ - Kenya
✚ - Burundi	✚ - Ethiopia	✚ - Kiribati
✚ - Cambodia	✚ - Fiji	✚ - Korea, Dem. People's Rep. of
	✚ - Finland	

- ✚ - Korea, Republic of
- (- Kuwait
- (- Kyrgyzstan
- ✚ - Lao, People's Dem. Rep. of
- ✚ - Latvia
- ✚ - Lebanon
- ✚ - Lesotho
- ✚ - Liberia
- (- Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- ✚ - Liechtenstein
- ✚ - Lithuania
- ✚ - Luxembourg
- ✚ - Macedonia, The former Yugoslav Rep. of
- ✚ - Madagascar
- ✚ - Malawi
- (- Malaysia
- ✚ - Mali
- ✚ - Malta
- (- Mauritania
- ✚ - Mauritius
- ✚ - Mexico
- ✚ - Monaco
- ✚ - Mongolia
- (- Morocco
- ✚ - Mozambique
- ✚ - Myanmar
- ✚ - Namibia
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- ✚ - Netherlands
- ✚ - New Zealand
- ✚ - Nicaragua
- ✚ - Niger
- ✚ - Nigeria
- ✚ - Norway
- (- Pakistan
- ✚ - Palau
- ✚ - Panama
- ✚ - Papua New-Guinea
- ✚ - Paraguay
- ✚ - Peru
- ✚ - Philippines
- ✚ - Poland
- ✚ - Portugal
- (- Qatar
- ✚ - Republic of St. Marino
- ✚ - Romania
- ✚ - Russian Federation
- ✚ - Rwanda
- ✚ - Samoa
- ✚ - Sao Tomé and Príncipe
- (- Saudi Arabia
- ✚ - Senegal
- ✚ - Seychelles
- ✚ - Sierra Leone
- ✚ - Singapore
- ✚ - Slovakia
- ✚ - Slovenia
- ✚ - Solomon Islands
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- ✚ - South Africa
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