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The reputation of the biggest donors of official development assistance

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ABSTRACT

The global crisis of trust has led to a shift in the paradigms of shaping competitiveness. The states as entities of global competition, in times of growing demand for trust, conduct activities in various areas in order to build their position in the world. One of these tools is international public relations and its specialisation, which is the country's social responsibility. One of the most important tools of social responsibility of the country is the official development assistance (ODA). The aim of this article is to verify the role of the social responsibility of the state in shaping the reputation of the largest donors of official development assistance.

Keywords: country's reputation, international public relations, country's social responsibility official development assistance, donors.

1. Introduction

The last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century brought many changes in international relations. This is a consequence of globalization and indepth internationalisation of modern international relations (Zajączkowski, 2006). The problem of the increasing disproportion between developing and developed countries has been very popular in international discourse. An expression of this is the deep involvement of many countries in both: the discussion on possible ways to overcome or at least mitigate the effects of underdevelopment, as well as the actions taken in that direction (Andrzejczak, 2011). Development economics is a discipline related to the development of less- and medium-developed countries (Legiędź, 2013). However, it deals not only with economic indicators or economic growth. The most important issue is the impro-

vement of social potential done by, for example, investing in the area of health, education or better public safety (Bell, 1987). Development economics as an area of study became important after the Second World War. However, its main assumptions have been evaluated during the years due to changes in the world and state economies (Piasecki, 2007). In the 1980s, one of the most important modifications of the neo-classical model took place. It was done as a result of the recognition of new market failures. Stiglitz paid attention to the problem of information asymmetry in economics. The information asymmetry had an influence on decreasing competitiveness of developing economies on the international market and gave them worst position compared to developed economies (Stiglitz, 1989).

Furthermore, modern economies must face also other kinds of problems. One of the most important issues is the global crisis of trust⁸.

⁸ Global crisis of trust – a process of reducing public trust in the government, media, business and non-governmental organizations. More on the subject: Edelman, 2017, *Edelman Trust Barometer – trust in crisis*.

The main consequence of the global crisis of trust is the change in the paradigms of shaping processes in the global economic life. This situation also applies to countries that have become part of the global competition. The growing demand for trust among global public opinion, which includes, among others, investors and consumers, has contributed to increasing the role of reputation and credibility in shaping the decision-making processes of these entities. As W. Olins (2000) and M. Mazzucato (2011) note, there are more and more connections between the state and the private sector, which leads to a change of roles between the state and the enterprise. W. Olins (2000) refers to the similarities in the activities of states and enterprises, which are mainly visible in the area of communicating with partners. On the other hand, M. Mazzucato (2011) undermines the conviction promoted in the public discourse that the minimal involvement of the state, limited only to ensuring the free operation of the private sector, is appropriate for the development of innovation. This is a consequence of the image of inefficient public administration functioning in public opinion and the dynamic private sector operating in competitive conditions. As previously stated, the modern state also operates under competitive conditions. This is a consequence of processes such as globalization, mediatisation and democratisation. In this light, the competitive potential and position of the country can support the functioning of the private sector and contribute to its success in the global market. Although M. Mazzucato writes mainly for innovation, it should be noted that the state can support the private sector in many other areas, such as seeking out markets in the global area and inflow of investments. In the era of the global trust crisis, one of the factors determining the success of the state in these areas is its reputation.

Developing cooperation between countries is treated as an important factor in the foreign policy of the state. Commonly, we used to say that the rich global North helps the poor global South⁹. Development policy has different goals to meet – they have both economic and political, as well as social dimensions (Zajączkowski, 2006). Theoretician and practice experts underline that official development assistance contributes to the stimulation of trade between donor and recipient countries (not only in the context of goods but also services). For such a situation, some conditions must be fulfilled,

like historical, political, economic and cultural presence of the donor countries in the recipient countries of ODA (Zajączkowski, 2006).

The authors of this study have conducted research to check if there is any connection between the amount of ODA given to developing countries and the worldwide reputation position. The general view is that the countries which are most developed and have the highest GDP (for example, the USA, Germany, Japan) are also the largest donors in the provision of official development assistance (ODA). At the same time, it is worth checking the position of such countries in the reputation ranking. The years 2000-2015 shall be considered as the period of study. Choosing 2000 as a starting year is connected with the Millennium Summit (6-8 September 2000), during which the United Nations countries signed the Millennium Declaration and set the Millennium Goals. They should have been reached by 2015. The explanation of the end year of the research is also connected with the available database.

The analysis is divided into three parts. In the first part, the authors check how much economically strong countries spend on ODA (in millions of USD). Accordingly, the authors present a table with the biggest global donors of official development assistance in 2000-2015. Next, the same countries are checked in the context of a percentage of the Gross National Income (GNI) spend on ODA (presented in the table). A method to choose the leaders is the average of ODA/GNI interest. The authors are aware of the disadvantages of such an approach, but it is widely used in literature and practice. The last part of the research presents the position of global donors in the Country Rep-Trak ranking. In order to check the relationship between the size of development assistance and the reputation of states, the Pearson correlation coefficient will be applied. That approach will be used to draw a conclusion concerning the existence of a connection between the amount of ODA and reputation.

2. Definition and forms of Official Development Assistance

We can assume that official development assistance is a tool for achieving economic growth and development in developing countries (Andrzejczak, 2010). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has developed a definition of official develop-

⁹ The poor global South – a common term for poor African, Asian and Latin American countries. The difference between them and the rich global North is not only the GDP per capita but also shorter life expectancy, access to education and public health sector, level of illiteracy and other social indicators.

ment assistance¹⁰, which is widely adopted in literature and practice. A special entity of the OECD – known as the Development Assistance Committee – defines ODA as flows to countries and territories placed on the special list¹¹ and multilateral institutions. Furthermore, there are additional criteria, such as:

- the flow must be provided by an official agency of the donor country, i.e., by a local government or by their executive agencies,
- it must be administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective for the flow,
- it must be concessional in its character, which means that it should convey a grant element of at least 25% of the entire flow.

Such a definition has been adapted by many authors to specific conditions of donor countries. W. Easterly, a famous researcher specialising in development economics, claims that development assistance can be considered as money, advice and conditions provided by rich nations and international financial institutions (such as the IMF¹² or the World Bank), which is designed to achieve economic development in poor nations (Easterly, 2007). For him, it is obvious that economic growth translates into social improvement.

According to C. Lancaster, development assistance is a transfer of concessional resources, usually from a foreign government or international institutions to a government or non-governmental organization in a recipient country (Lancaster, 1999). The reasons for sending flows may be different: diplomatic, commercial, cultural or just developmental. It is commonly used to fund expenditures that further development (or just justified by that) in the country receiving the aid. In fact, most of such assistance has been used for financing discrete investment projects, like building roads, hospitals, schools and so on (Lancaster, 1999).

P. Deszczyński offers the closest approach to DAC OECD's definition in Polish literature. He understands official development assistance flow as:

- a donation of at least 25%,
- expenditure of the public finance sector¹³,

- a donation supporting economic growth and social development in developing countries,
- a donation given to countries mentioned in special DAC ODA Recipients list¹⁴.

The same author offers classification of official development flows. Official development assistance can be divided according to a number of criteria, such as the source of origin, form, degree of freedom in using resources and purpose (Kopiński, 2011). Due to the source of origin, it could be distinguished as bilateral, multilateral and private assistance. Bilateral means that there is a direct connection between the donor country and the recipient country. This kind of assistance is given to reach specific development goals. Therefore, it stands out as assistance for specific sectors of the economy, for example, education, health, safety, as well as general assistance given, for example, for improving infrastructure (Andrzejczak, 2010).

If the flows come to the recipient country thanks to international organizations, it is a multi-lateral channel. From practice we know that the most important institutions in the context of providing ODA are the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU) (Andrzejczak, 2010). Private assistance does not count as official development assistance. It consists of private flows, charitable donations and funds from philanthropic organizations (Kopiński, 2011). Due to the form of providing funds, we can distinguish financial, material and technical assistance. Such classification is similar to the approach given by E. Latoszek, which is presented below.

Considering the criterion of the degree of freedom in using ODA, we can see that there is untied aid and tied aid. The former does not cause any relations or connections between countries. It is the most preferable form of ODA. All countries (at least in theory) try to avoid tied aid, claiming that it is less effective and raises moral doubts (Kopiński, 2011).

The last classification concerns the criterion of purpose. Assistance can be divided into project aid and program aid. P. Deszczyński (2011) describes the first category as support given to make a specific investment in some sectors of

¹⁰ Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistance/officialdevelopmentassistance/officialdevelopmentassistance/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>.

¹¹ DAC List of ODA Recipients – available at: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2018to2020_flows_En.pdf.

¹² The International Monetary Fund.

¹³ In different countries we understand different institutions as a unit of public financial sector, for example, in Polish classification it could be the institutions mentioned here: <https://www.lexlege.pl/ustawa-o-finansach-publicznych/art-9/>.

¹⁴ More about P. Deszczyński's approach is available here: Deszczyński P., 2011, *Konceptualne podstawy pomocy rozwojowej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, Poznań and Deszczyński P., 2001, *Kraje rozwijające się w koncepcjach ekonomicznych SPD*, Wyd. Akademii Ekonomicznej w Poznaniu, Poznań.

the recipient country, e.g., building a school or hospital. In project aid, recipient countries may perform important reforms in any sector of the economy, e.g., changing the pension system. A separate category is humanitarian aid. In general, it entails saving and protecting people during the disasters caused by natural conditions or human activities (Kopiński, 2011). It should be given just in case of an emergency and does not show a lasting character. In terms of this form, theorists and practitioners have many reservations.

Another Polish economist, E. Latoszek represents a significantly different approach. According to her research, official development assistance is a form of the flow for development funds from developed countries to countries considered as less- or medium-developed (Latoszek, 2010). Such a definition covers far more flows than the classical approach, and thus prof. Latoszek's classification of the ODA forms is much different from the OECD scheme, followed by many international authors.

Table 1: Forms of ODA by E. Latoszek

Financial	Material	Technical
donation	consumption good	workshop
credit	investment good	consulting
debt relief	food aid	expertise

Source: Latoszek E., 2010, *Pomoc rozwojowa dla krajów rozwijających się na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa.

3. Official development assistance as a tool for building the country's reputation

Research on the country's reputation is a relatively young issue, especially in the discipline of economics. It may be considered from two main perspectives, i.e. the consumer and the investor perspective. In the case of the former one, a good example is R.D. Schooler's research (1965) from the mid-1960s, which formed the basis for the concept of the country-of-origin effect. It concerns consumer's decision-making in relation to the willingness to purchase products from different countries or regions. This phenomenon applies to both products and services. An example here can be German cars, Swiss watches or French wines. With the current progress of globalization, this concept could seem out of date, an example of which can be one of the most recognisable products in the global environment, which is Apple's iPhone. Its components are manufactured practically all over the world. That is why today's talks about the so-called brand's country-of-origin effect, which concerns values, quality management systems and business culture related to a given country.

In the case of the investor's dimension, reputation is more related to the assessment of the state's credibility, including its stability, which allows for assessing the risk related to investments in a given country. In the economic life practice, an increase in interest in this issue was visible in the 1990s, when credit rating agencies began assessing the creditworthiness of states regularly. In both cases, there are links between the actions of the state and the private

sector. In the first case, the strategy implemented by the state may contribute to an increase in the demand for goods and services from a given country among consumers on the global market. In the second case, changes in the credibility of the state affect ratings that may have an impact on confidence in the enterprises of a given country and the level of inflow of foreign direct and portfolio investments.

States use a range of tools to build their reputation. One of them is the activities of the country in the so-called concept of country social responsibility. It is one of the tools of international public relations and deals with solving global problems. International public relations are the activities of an organization, institution or government whose aim is, based on building relationships and communicating with audiences from other countries, building mutual understanding in the international environment and growing global trust (Leszczyński 2018). The United Nations (2018) covers 20 major global problems, including the refugee and migration problem, climate change, peace and security or democracy and human rights. Each of these issues is the main responsibility of states, their societies, and governments.

Based on the results of studies conducted in 2017 (Leszczyński, 2017), it can be concluded that countries that are socially responsible enjoy a better reputation in global public opinion. An example could be official development assistance, in which the correlation coefficient between its size and the country's reputation was 0.874. On the other hand, in the case of the share of funds for development assistance in

GNI, it was equal to 0.863⁸. In both cases, the correlation is assessed as very strong. Another example is the state's involvement in activities for environmental protection. Research on the state of the environment and actions for its protection by states give grounds for stating that the country's social responsibility in this area is also related to the improvement in its reputation. The analysis of the correlation carried out among the European Union countries (Leszczyński, 2016) shows that the average relationships between the two categories oscillate between 0.56-0.8. The presented data make it possible to state that socially responsible actions of states lead to improvement in their reputation in global public opinion.

4. Global donors of ODA and their reputation

The vast majority of the world's volume of development assistance is passed on by the members of the DAC. The analysis of spending on ODA may be conducted in two ways. Both ways are broadly used in literature and practice. International statistics concerning development show not only the amount of dollars⁹ spend year by year, but also the sum in some periods of time. In the first stage, we can compare the amount of money given to developing countries each year, and in the second – the GNI interest given as ODA. The second approach is more popular in international discourse, since it is more precise as it also shows the donors' economic potential. Spending one million dollars on development purposes by the country like France or the UK is different from Lithuania or Bulgaria. Due to the time range of this paper, the authors decide to sum all flows in the years 2000-2015 and also to check the average percentage of the GNI spend on ODA in the same years.

Based on the previous considerations, it should be noted that the actual amount of aid funds transferred to developing countries is a result of current economic, political and social events in the donor countries. Table 2 presents countries which spend most on development. The authors choose them according to their own research based on the OECD Statistics database. Some countries have provided ODA for years, while some have been donors for a rela-

tively short time.

Six biggest donors of official development assistance are also the countries with the biggest economies around the world. All of them are united in the G8 group¹⁰. It proves the assumption that the biggest donors are at the same time the strongest economies. Position no 7 – which is Saudi Arabia – is very surprising. Although it is a UN member, this country does not participate in the Development Assistance Committee. Furthermore, such countries do not have any obligations resulting from membership in any international organizations (like for example European Union member states in the area of development and cooperation). On the one hand, it is worthy of praise that they actively participate in the global fight against economic underdevelopment, but on the other hand, since they do not have any obligations, they do not show all the statistics and detailed databases (just the amount of spending, without the classification of how much they spend on each form of ODA). The same situation is with the United Arab Emirates. Detailed research on the structure of recipients based on the OECD Statistics and Saudi reports showed that Arabian donors help mainly other Arab recipients¹¹ (like Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen). Norway and Switzerland are known as neutral countries in the context of political relations, but both of them represent the group of developed countries, so their contribution in the worldwide ODA system is not surprising. The same situation takes place in the case of Australia and New Zealand. A surprise in the list is certainly South Korea. This small country, with a relatively small population, is quite economically and politically stable. In comparison to its neighbour from the Korean peninsula, it represents a developed economy and democratic standards. Even such a country sees the benefits of participating in development cooperation, what is a great example for other smaller but stable countries around the world.

As has been mentioned before, at next level authors decide to check percentage of GNI spends of ODA. Checking such indicator helps to decide if countries which spend a lot of millions of dollars, pay equivalently to their economic potential. The results are presented in Table 3.

⁸ A survey conducted among European Union countries.

⁹ To keep order, all donors report their flows not in own currencies but in the international measure currency, which is millions of USD.

¹⁰ In G8 there is also Italy, Japan and Russia, with the last country not being a donor of ODA.

¹¹ Religious common basis is an important context of understanding.

Table 2: The biggest donors of ODA worldwide

Position	Sum of ODA in years 2000-2015 (in millions of USD)	Country
1	385 843,29	USA
2	180 523,36	United Kingdom
3	177 282,47	Germany
4	164 369,21	Japan
5	152 473,20	France
6	60 011,66	Canada
7	55 746,40	Saudi Arabia
8	54 933,52	Norway
9	44 648,26	Australia
10	33 687,40	Switzerland
11	25 540,45	UAE
12	19 621,60	Turkey
13	14 690,12	South Korea
14	4 854,15	New Zealand

Source: Own analysis based on the OECD Statistics, 2018.

Table 3: An average share of ODA/GNI for the selected countries in 2000-2015

Position	Country *	The average share of ODA/GNI (%)
1	Norway	0.94
2	UAE	0.63
3	United Kingdom	0.48
4	Switzerland	0.41
5	France	0.41
6	Germany	0.35
7	Australia	0.29
8	Canada	0.29
9	Japan	0.21
10	Turkey	0.18
11	USA	0.17
12	South Korea	0.09

Note: * This list does not contain data for New Zealand and Saudi Arabia for lack of information in the OECD Statistic resources as an official database provider.

Source: Own analysis based on the OECD Statistics, 2018.

If we compare the top positions in Table 2 and 3, we can easily see that top donors in millions of USD are not exactly the same as their GNI potential. In fact, only Norway spends a lot in the context of benchmark target. The UN community and then the EU member states set the goal of 0.7% GNI to spend on ODA each year. According to such commitment, we can see how much the main donors can do (only some of them fulfilled the obligation, including the DAC member states). Close to that is also the UAE, however, they have participated in ODA for a relatively short time. The UK is on the third position, with an average share of 0.48 GNI. It is worth mentioning that since 2013, year by year they reach the level of 0.7% ODA/GNI. The biggest surprise in the list is the USA. In absolute numbers, they are on the top (they spend twice

as much as the UK), but taking into account its economic potential, the amount of ODA given is in fact not so high. As the greatest economy around the world, they can spend much more on such a purpose than 0.17 % of their GNI.

The research results presented in the second sub-chapter regarding the links between development assistance and reputation concerned the European Union countries (Leszczyński 2016; 2017). Therefore, the authors of the article decided to verify the trend identified in the earlier studies and check whether it is visible at the level of specific cases. The study was conducted at two levels, on the one hand, referring to the concept of the state's reputation as a result of long-term activities, which included the average share of development assistance in the GNI and the total expenditure on

development assistance of individual donors in the years 2000-2015. On the other hand, the relationships between the size of development assistance and the reputation of states for each of the analysed cases were examined. This approach allows for more accurate identification of the relationships between the reputation of the state and its social responsibility. The countries that are the largest donors of development assistance in the world were selected for the analysis.

The study included the results of the Country RepTrak 2015 report published by the Reputation Institute. The document includes

the opinions of 48,000 citizens from the G8 countries. 55 countries with the largest economies in the world were assessed by them in two dimensions, i.e. emotional and rational. In the emotional terms, one can find feelings, admiration, respect and trust in the country. On the other hand, in the case of the rational reputation, they assess such elements as the advancement of the economy, attractiveness of the environment and effectiveness of the government (Reputation Institute, 2015). The results of the analysed countries are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Reputation of the biggest global ODA donors

Country	Country RepTrak place	Country RepTrak score
Canada	1	78.1
Norway	2	77.1
Switzerland	4	76.4
Australia	5	76.3
United Kingdom	13	69.5
Germany	15	69
Japan	16	69
France	19	64.4
USA	22	56.5
UAE	34	51.9
South Korea	36	50.8
Turkey	39	49.8
Saudi Arabia	48	41

Source: Reputation Institute, 2015, Country RepTrak 2015.

It should be noted that 4 out of the 13 largest donors are in the top ten countries with the best reputation. In turn, in the first 20, it is up to 8 countries. This may suggest that there are positive relationships between reputation and the amount of development assistance. The analysis of correlations in the case of development assistance in millions of dollars indicates the lack of relationships between these categories (Pearson's correlation 0.045). However, if we take into account development assistance measured as a share in the GNI, the correlation

in this case is 0.369. Although it is weak and statistically insignificant, it can be seen that these compounds are present.

Using the second method, it can be seen that the relationships in the case of the relationship between the reputation and social responsibility of specific states show greater strength. In this situation, in most cases, stronger relationships occur when development assistance measured in millions of dollars is taken into account. The results are presented in table 6.

Table 5: Correlation between country reputation, ODA as a % of gross national income and ODA in million US dollars in 2000-2015 – global scores

Country	Country RepTrak score	ODA in millions of USD*	ODA as a % of GNI**
Pearson's correlation coefficient with Country RepTrak scores	1	0.045	0.369

Note: * The total expenditure on ODA in the years 2000-2015; ** Average result in the years 2000-2015.

Source: Own study based on Reputation Institute, 2015, Country RepTrak 2015, OECD, 2018.

Based on the presented research results, it can be noticed that development assistance can be a tool for building the state's reputation. The analysis of specific cases helped to identify the relationship between social responsibility and the reputation of the state. It should be noted that in each case these relationships are not as strong. In order to verify this relationship, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the increase in the share of development assistance in the GNI states and in millions of dollars in 2009-2015 and the results of the correlation between development assistance and reputation. In the case of development assistance in millions of dollars, the correlation

is 0.712, while in the share terms it is 0.623. On this basis, it can be concluded that the strongest links between development assistance and the state's reputation are in the case of countries that increased their spending on development assistance during this period. These results allow stating that development assistance can be a numerical value of the social responsibility of the state, which is a tool for building its reputation. On this basis, it can be concluded that in 2009-2015 increases in expenditure on development assistance were related to the improvement of the countries' reputation in global public opinion.

Table 6: Correlation between country reputation, ODA as a % of gross national income and ODA in million US dollars in 2009-2015 – by country

Country*	ODA in millions of USD	ODA as a % of GNI	Average score
Australia	0.511253	0.197018	0.354135
France	0.254399	0.214688	0.234544
Japan	0.514562	0.280624	0.397593
Canada	0.367693	-0.1564	0.105647
South Korea	0.718718	0.900795	0.809756
Germany	0.593707	0.534545	0.564126
Norway	0.567104	0.04681	0.306957
USA	0.074669	-0.80849	-0.36691
Switzerland	0.718531	0.445565	0.582048
Turkey	0.715325	0.670636	0.69298
United Kingdom	0.778545	0.729978	0.754261

Note: * Due to incomplete data from the Country RepTrak reports, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates were eliminated from the analysis.
Source: Reputation Institute, 2015, Country RepTrak 2015.

5. Conclusions

Official development assistance is part of development economics, which has played a significantly increasing role in modern international discourse. Almost every country around the world is part of this system – some of them as donors and more of them as recipients put on a special DAC Recipients list made by the Development Assistance Committee. It should be noticed that the biggest economies (such as G8) are at the same time the biggest donors (in absolute values) measured by millions of USD spent on ODA. However, although some countries like the USA or the UK spend a lot, their results measured by the percentage of the GNI spent on ODA are not so impressive. Top positions from table 2 and 3 are not the same, which may bring us to a conclusion that many countries do not use their economic potential to play a key role in development cooperation.

Analysing the results of the study, it may be seen that in the case of the approach based on the concept of reputation as the sum of long-

term experience of public opinion, the links between development assistance and the reputation of the state are small. However, if an analysis of individual cases is made, it may be seen that in 2009-2015 there were positive and, in some cases, strong links between development assistance and reputation. What was also identified was the variable conditioning the strength of correlation in these years, which was the expenditure on development assistance. On this basis, it was concluded that the amount of development assistance in 2009-2015 on the example of the analysed cases increased its impact on the reputation of the state. This may lead to the conclusion that there is a connection between reputation and development assistance, and what is more, its strength in 2009-2015 increased along with the increase in the state's expenditure on development assistance. On this basis, it can be stated that development assistance is a quantitative exemplification of the social involvement of the state, which affects the assessment of its reputation.

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