Federating EU Development Cooperation?

Europe's Contributions to International Development Effectiveness

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Summary

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The European Union (EU) has long strived to act collectively in the face of international challenges such as poverty, hunger and state fragility beyond its borders. While the EU member states and institutions seek coherent responses to these challenges, they also have partly competing agendas. Yet there has been increasing agreement on collective action. To understand this agreement, this thesis asks how policy professionals contribute to the advocacy of policy norms for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states. The research analyses policy processes in EU development cooperation since the early 2000s. In development cooperation the EU's effectiveness has been particularly contested because of the combination of competing ideas about the EU's role and about how to achieve effective and sustainable development. The research finds that, while formal decisions about collective action remain in the hands of member states, transnational networks of policy professionals in the EU institutions, member state bureaucracies and civil society contribute to shaping the terms of debate regarding the EU's role in effective development cooperation. These network interactions, which form around institutional decision-making centres, transcend the organisational boundaries of member state bureaucracies, EU institutions and civil society organisations. These findings fill a gap in our understanding of how EU norms governing collective external action are advocated as existing research has tended to focus on how institutional structure facilitate state coordination. By concentrating on the cases of Germany and the United Kingdom and their engagement with the EU institutions, the research revises existing, dominant views on norm advocacy in EU external action: It links the previously little related concepts of norm advocacy and discursive networks to analyse the agency and scope of policy professionals in the advocacy of EU policy norms; and it provides new empirical insights into the role of these policy professionals for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states in development cooperation.

Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Figures and Tables

Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries
AfC	Agenda for Change
AHWPH	Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation
APF	African Peace Facility
AU	African Union
BGR	Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
BOND	British Overseas NGOs for Development
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CODEV	Working Party on Development Cooperation
CONCORD	Confederation for Relief and Development
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DED	Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst
DEval	Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit
DEVE	Committee on Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DG	Directorate-General
DG Dev	Directorate General for Development and Relations with ACP States
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DIE / GDI	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik / German Development Institute
EC	European Community
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community

EDC	European Defence Community
EDCSP	European Development Cooperation Strengthening Programme
EDD	European Development Days
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Community
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service
ERD	European Report on Development
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
ETTG	European Think Tank Group
EU	European Union
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FRIDE	Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GNI	Gross National Income
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
G7/8	Group of 7/8
HLF	High Level Forum [on Aid Effectiveness]
HR / VP	High Representative [of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy] / Vice President [of the European Commission]
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IDC	International Development Committee [of the House of Commons]
IDDRI	Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales

KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MAR	Multilateral Aid Review
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MIC	Middle Income Country
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIEO	New International Economic Order
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNE	Seconded National Expert
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCF	United Nations Development Cooperation Forum
UK	United Kingdom
UKAN	United Kingdom Aid Network
UKREP	United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union
US	United States [of America]
VENRO	Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen e.V.
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Introduction

The European Union (EU)[1] and its role in the world have long been disputed at various political levels as well as in academic writing. Research on the EU's international action has attracted attention as both capacities and expectations have grown and mutually reinforced each other (Hill, 1993). Expectations are based on the collective capacity of the EU as a whole and have grown with institutional reforms intended to employ this capacity. As 'hard' integration – in the sense of creating institutions that claim jurisdiction over existing national structures (see Haas, 1958) – has remained limited (with the exception of trade), observers have concentrated on the EU's efforts to overcoming collective action problems under existing institutional provisions and their reforms (e.g., Bodenstein, *et al.*, 2017; Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker, 2017; Henökl and Trondal, 2015; Niemann and Bretherton, 2013).

European governance in the field of external action is characterised by differentiated institutional structures that combine supra-, transnational and intergovernmental elements. Despite institutional reforms, disappointment about what is considered inconsistent and ineffective external action of the EU has prevailed. As hopes for cohesive and effective EU external action have remained unfulfilled, it led to questions about whether (external) effectiveness should be considered the yardstick for assessing the EU's actions (Bickerton, 2011). Such concerns highlight the process dimension of *politically* integrating Europe against resistance, mostly from within member states (see Majone, 2014). Effectiveness as a functional driver of integration stands in competition with a logic of diversity (see Hoffmann, 1966).[2] This tension places a strong emphasis on the dynamics of internal

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[1] Following the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (TEU) of 1992, the EU is defined as the totality of its constituent member states and the supranational institutions which they created. The latter formed the European Community (EC), which, *de jure*, ceased to exist with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009.

[2] In a nutshell, Stanley Hoffmann (1966) argues that the obstacles to integration primarily lie in the differences in member states' 'national situations', which consist of domestic politics and institutional systems, and the external identities and interests determined by geography and history. He sustains that interaction among member states on issues of relations with the international system exacerbate these tensions and reproduce the differences. That is what he calls the 'logic of diversity', which contests the functional 'logic of integration', subsuming the attraction of the regional integrationist forces.

contestation. While this emphasis may be bemoaned (Keuleers*, et al.*, 2016), given the contestation and the absence of a hierarchical institutional order, it is surprising that there is any agreement on collective action. In other words, it is puzzling that a system which allegedly provides little incentive for collective action, continues to produce common policy norms. Yet it remains largely unclear *how*.

This puzzle points to a gap in our understanding of how EU norms governing collective external action are advocated. To fill this gap, this research examines the role of policy professionals. While these actors have very limited individual power over either policy coordination or formal agreements between the member states, they are involved in those processes leading to common policy norms. This thesis therefore asks the following research question:

> *How do policy professionals contribute to the advocacy of policy norms for collective action*
> *between the EU institutions and the member states?*

As processes of norm advocacy presuppose and precede collective action, answering this question adds to our understanding of collective EU action and the obstacles to it, in particular, how and to what extent the agency of policy professional contributes towards common EU external action.

Norm advocacy for collective action is endemic where hard rules and institutions are missing. Attention regarding this kind of 'informal' policy-making has predominantly focused on member state representatives and their interactions (Björkdahl, 2008; Chelotti, 2016a; Cross, 2011; Elgström, 2000; 2017; Mérand*, et al.*, 2011). The focus on dedicated state representatives has also found its way into European integration theory as 'new intergovernmentalism' (Bickerton*, et al.*, 2014). However, this focus is surprising given that a wider range of policy professionals seems relevant at the formulation and advocacy stage, which transcends the boundaries of member states (Bugdahn, 2008; Carbone, 2007; Chou and Riddervold, 2015; Riddervold, 2016; Wolff, 2015). Thus, it seems insufficient to concentrate on the negotiations between member state representatives. While they are responsible for the endorsement of EU policy norms – in the sense that every agreement goes through their hands – a multitude of professionals potentially contributes to a policy norm. Is there evidence that professionals beyond the more prominent networks of dedicated member state representatives contribute to finding agreement? And if so, how and in what ways do they contribute? What is the nature of this contribution and under what conditions does it become effective?

Norm advocacy through such a wide group of actors, who not all engage directly, provides a methodological challenge. The research looks at those processes that lead to the advocacy of policy

norms at the EU level between a multitude of professionals from EU institutions, member state governments and bureaucracies, and non-state and civil society organisations. It therefore concentrates on the competition over meaning, which underpins those policy norms that are aimed at improving the effectiveness of the EU's collective action in external relations, and which deeply reaches into the working-level interactions of issue professionals. This involves looking at the discursive actions and interactions of these policy professionals, both public and non-public, which collectively shape discourses on EU effectiveness. Competition over how effectiveness justifies collective action has been at the heart of EU external policy-making. Looking at such discourse construction dynamics means broadening the focus on the transnational policy process, which deals with the construction of international policy norms (Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Stone, 2013; Stone and Ladi, 2015; Wiener, 2014). It is based on the participation of wider groups of actors, state and non-state, external and internal, subject to an ambiguous institutional environment that is not directly congruent with organisational structures. Therefore, the research disaggregates organisational units, especially member states and EU institutions, to understand their multiple and at times contradicting contributions.

Empirically, the research focuses on a policy sector which is at the heart of EU external action but has often been left to specialists: international development cooperation. Governance in European development cooperation is a case where agreement on 'soft' common policy norms for the EU and its member states exists in place of 'hard' integration. Collective action in EU development cooperation has been an enduring question because the institutional structure provides it with a complex challenge (Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; European Think Tanks Group (ETTG), 2014; Gänzle*, et al.*, 2012; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). While common institutional structures for policy-making exist since the late 1950s, member state policies have been legally independent. As a result of this so called 'parallel competence', collective action faces institutional and legal obstacles, which have made Europeanisation difficult (Bretherton, 2013; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). Despite this legal separation, EU institutions and member states are part of institutional structures and have taken obligations both inside the EU and outside, which brings them together but also puts partly competing expectations on them. Since Maastricht, attention has been devoted to improving the effectiveness of EU development cooperation by focusing on the coordination between the policies of the EU institutions and the member states. Reforms have not overcome problems of collective action, and yet the creation of and the agreement on common norms have repeatedly increased hopes among observers (e.g., Carbone, 2008a; Gänzle*, et al.*, 2012). Thus, this research investigates empirically how the EU

agrees on common policy norms in development cooperation, and how and on what grounds agreement shifts.

For the case of development cooperation, I show how competition over effectiveness has been a key driver of common action of EU institutions and member states, and institutional innovations. The effectiveness of, and the conditions for, effective development cooperation have been central in debates of international development (see Riddell, 2007). The effectiveness of aid (or its lack thereof) became a strong concern after the end of the Cold War (Burnside and Dollar, 2000), which was considered to emancipate the provision of aid from political ties. Yet what makes EU development cooperation more effective is not evident but highly contested due to different priorities, benchmarks, 'measurements' etc. This contestation is a constant process of formulation and reformulation, interpretation and reinterpretation, which happens simultaneously to and as part of the policy process. It involves competition between stakeholders for concrete policies based on interests and identities, and within institutional structures, which are themselves elusive and in constant flux. What makes debates on effective EU development cooperation so contentious is the combination of, on the one hand, ambiguity and uncertainty about the effectiveness of development cooperation (e.g., Bigsten and Tengstam, 2015; Riddell, 2007; Sjöstedt, 2013; Sjöstedt and Sundström, 2017) and, on the other hand, the lack of a consensus over what role the EU (and its institutions) should have in international development. Moreover, debates on the EU's effectiveness in development cooperation are built on multiple underlying and related discussions. These debates include, for instance, the purpose of aid, the goal of development, the relationship of development cooperation with other policy areas, the effectiveness and role of the EU in the world, and the function of European integration.

While debates about effectiveness in development cooperation exist outside the EU, EU actors compete over how these principles fit with the question of an added value of EU integration. Effectiveness is used in the competition for advancing (or contesting) interests and ideas of actors, such as promoting more and stronger common EU structures, by justifying propositions based on the contribution to (EU) effectiveness. Therefore, any understanding of effective EU development cooperation must be seen as the result of political competition between actors. Such understandings are not simply established by individual actors but as a form of collective agency. This agency is the result of actors' dynamic interactions through which meaning is constituted (see Wiener, 2008; 2014). This interactive process is based on multiple, complex and possibly competing 'real-world'

interdependences, which are structured by networks. Different parts of such a network become active depending on their contribution to the discursive competition of relevant actors.

EU development cooperation is treated as a case study of external action. This thesis follows processes of finding and maintaining agreement on collective action over a longer period. The benefit of the case study approach is that it generates qualitative insights into the dynamism of how actors compete over the EU's international action. It illustrates mechanisms and dynamics of how actors engage and connect with each other, provide arguments and support, and circumvent formal structures. Looking at a longer period shows how these actors react to changes in the international environment and of the institutional relations to which they both contribute and are subjected. Which arguments matter for norm advocacy is limited by the discursive environment that is itself set through the interactions of numerous actors (see Diez, 2014). These interactions are not sufficiently represented when looking exclusively at the EU level. Hence, the presented approach suggests broadening the focus of analysis to include a wider range of actors and their network relationships. In this thesis, I look at the effects of interdependences at the transnational and national levels for discourse coordination, and what affects them. This perspective suggests how decisions on external action are based on the participation of wider discursive networks beyond the institutional decision-making centre. The research thus contributes to the debates about EU policy coordination in the international arena, the institutionalisation of policy-making practices, and processes of, as well as obstacles to, common European external action.

The contribution of this research is twofold. First, it generates new insights on the agency of policy professionals in EU development cooperation and discusses them in relation to existing research on norm advocacy processes in the EU. Second, it provides an analytical-methodological tool for understanding such processes in EU external relations by drawing on existing insights in global and transnational governance, which has not been done systematically before. The aim of this research is to add to the limited institutionalist perspective that has become so dominant in this area. The remainder of this introduction (1) circumscribes the wider framework in which this thesis is situated and clarifies the key concepts, norm advocacy, institutions and policy networks; (2) outlines the research design, methodology, methods and related caveats; (3) introduces the case study of EU development cooperation and the related discourse on effectiveness; and (4) provides a brief outline of the subsequent chapters.

Conceptual framework

Agreeing on standards of behaviour, codes of practice or policy norms for external action, which apply to the EU and its member states, is not the same as 'traditional' law-making with its highly institutionalised rules and processes. Institutional structures of external action have remained ambiguous and are in constant flux; the system changes continuously while agreement is pursued. Institutional order has thus little to say about the process of norm advocacy. This section addresses open conceptual questions regarding this 'informal' process: What are policy norms and how do they matter? What does 'policy-making' mean if not law-making and how can it be conceptualised? How do actors participate in these informal policy-making and norm advocacy processes? How do institutions affect informal policy-making and participation of actors? How does the level of analysis matter? While several of these questions will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 1, this section provides some working definitions of the most important concepts and offers a critical reading of their relationships to each other. In particular, it summarises the critique of institutionalist, state-centric approaches in norm advocacy research in the field of EU external action and foreign policy, which is advanced in this thesis, and introduces an alternative approach.

International or regional policy norms set standards for the appropriate behaviour of state actors (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Wiener, 2008). Policy norms are understood as formulations intended to inform political procedures and guide policy practices (Wiener, 2008, p. 67). In terms of terminology, there is some ambiguity between norms, principles and policies. While often defined differently, they are sometimes used interchangeably. For instance, Antje Wiener (2008) presents a typology of norms that range from highly generalisable fundamental norms, to mid-level organising principles and finally specific standardised procedures or practices. What is relevant for all these types of norms is that they are understood as collective expectations about appropriate behaviour in international politics (Florini, 1996; Katzenstein, 1996b, p. 5). The understanding of norms for the purpose of this thesis is concerned with more specific policy norms (or principles) that consist of codified, common expectations and understandings to enable collective action in international politics.

Talking about policy norms requires a different understanding and conception of 'policy-making'. Dynamics of contestation lie at the heart of any policy process. The policy process can be understood as a struggle about agreeing on common policy norms. Processes regarding the contestation and coordination of policy norms have been prominent in international governance

research (Djelic and Quack, 2010; Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Slaughter, 2004; Stone and Ladi, 2015) and also in research on EU external action (e.g., Björkdahl, 2008; Elgström, 2000; 2017). In the transnational context the institutional environment is more ambiguous than in the national context. The process of norm advocacy is thus understood as an informal process in the sense that formal, institutionalised and binding mechanisms for the participation and power of actors are less conclusive or even missing. Consequently, the results of such processes are standards of good – or 'normal' – behaviour rather than legally codified and enforceable norms. However, if institutional structures are less decisive in structuring these 'informal' policy processes, the question arises what else matters for norm advocacy in transnational governance.

Due to the institutional ambiguity and uncertainty, observers have tended to approach norm advocacy in transnational governance through networks, often between states and state representatives, i.e., inter- or transgovernmental networks (e.g., Eberlein and Newman, 2008; Hobolth and Martinsen, 2013; Slaughter and Hale, 2010). The network approach copes with varying degrees of institutionalisation, ranging from the national context, where it gained prominence (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b), to more densely institutionalised international systems, such as the EU (Jordan and Schout, 2006; Peterson and Bomberg, 1999), to the global level (Slaughter, 2004; Stone, 2013; Stone and Ladi, 2015). Research on networks in the EU context highlight the *relative* institutional ambiguity and uncertainty in specific policy areas, e.g., in environmental policy (Andonova and Tuta, 2014; Jordan and Schout, 2006). While such ambiguity and uncertainty has justified a focus on states and their interactions when it comes to 'norm negotiations' (see Elgström, 2000), with institutional ambiguity also comes a widening of the range of actors beyond state representatives who seek to participate in norm advocacy (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Slaughter, 2004; Stone, 2013).

While all these actors are part of a densely institutionalised international environment, which shapes their relative position, available resources and access to formal decision-making centres, the process is more competitive than organisational structure suggests. Thus, the primary value of a network-oriented approach is that it copes with processes that are more 'independent' of institutional or organisational structures. In the (new) institutionalist tradition, institutional structures shape policy outputs in that they constrain and constitute the choices of actors (Hall and Taylor, 1996). This function becomes less conclusive where structures are more ambiguous and/or adjust in the process, for example, as a result of policy processes (see Schmidt, 2010). Institutional structures matter for norm advocacy but, in contrast to institutionalist approaches, they are understood to provide the

nodal point, an institutionalised decision centre, around which policy professionals gather to shape policy norms (see chapter 1). Networks are less tied to organisational boundaries provided by institutions, states and organisations more generally. Transnational organising is dominated by competition and coordination within professional networks (Djelic and Quack, 2010; Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Stone, 2013; 2015; Stone and Maxwell, 2005). Thereby, networks on the organisational level (between organisations) are not simply a more abstract version of networks of issue professionals, but networks of issue professionals have distinct dynamics (Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016). Thus, a concentration on lower analytical levels helps to identify agency in networks. It suggests moving beyond the highly aggregate organisational boundaries of states and EU institutions to concentrate on more issue-specific, professional units and their agency in networks. This suggests that a central element for network research in transnational governance seems to be the level of analysis (see Peterson and Bomberg, 1999).

In the area of EU external action, much attention has been devoted to the intergovernmental formulation and coordination practice of state actors (Chelotti, 2016a; Cross, 2011; Elgström, 2017; Kuus, 2014; Mérand, *et al.*, 2011). This focus has provided deep insights into practices of 'norm negotiations' between few, relatively homogenous diplomats and member state representatives. However, while EU foreign and security policy, and diplomacy are traditionally dominated by member state diplomats, a wider range of national state but also non-state and EU institutional actors become involved and exert influence (Calcara, 2017; Chou and Riddervold, 2015; Riddervold, 2016; Tocci, 2016; Wilkinson, *et al.*, 2017). This is even more so in areas such as trade and commercial policy, environmental policy and climate mitigation, international migration, and humanitarian aid and development cooperation where there is predominantly professional engagement. Generally, there is a bureaucratic core; around this core there are public and private development agencies and consultancies, both more general and specialised; then there are private NGOs, churches, foundations and philanthropists. In the EU, coordination and networks form among and between these primary groups, e.g., bureaucracies, NGOs, implementing agencies, and so on.

As an empirical phenomenon, we observe repeated, stable interactions and shared identities of policy professionals who not only engage across organisational but also national boundaries and become a constituent part of global governance (Djelic and Quack, 2010; Finnemore, 1996; Katzenstein, 1996a; Stone, 2013; Zürn and Checkel, 2005). Policy professionals come across each other, meet and share their ideas inevitably in international organisations and on the ground in third

countries where they engage with the same interlocutors. Due to the absence of a predominantly national focus, it has been suggested that these policy professionals have a particularly strong sense of shared identity which transcends organisational and national boundaries (Stone, 2013; Stone and Maxwell, 2005). These policy professionals also change their affiliations from member state bureaucracies to EU institutions, e.g., as seconded national experts (see Murdoch*, et al.*, 2016), or between think tanks and bureaucracies (as was the case for several of the interviewees in this study). As Jan Beyers (2005) suggests, the multiple embeddedness of member state representatives, including in the domestic context, means that they are part of different networks, and face different incentives and normative orientations on different levels. The national context of elite orientation matters because this is where many actors have their primary networks, see their career prospects, and have been professionally and personally formed. Nevertheless, they are also capable of adjusting their orientation to different contexts (Murdoch*, et al.*, 2016).

As the complex interactions between professionals suggests, a concentration on a network between professionals as an institutionalised group necessarily omits their participation and interlinkage in the wider structure. In his seminal work, Mark Granovetter (1973) remarked that most network analyses deal with strong ties that form small, well-defined groups. This corresponds to the focus in much network-oriented analysis of norm advocacy on well-defined (sub-)networks, which are often defined by institutional structures, such as member state representatives in the Council working groups (Elgström, 2017). Granovetter (1973) suggested, instead, looking at interactions *between* groups to analyse segments of social structure that are not easily defined by well-circumscribed groups but reveal relevant interdependences. Interactions between organisations can thus be understood in terms of such weak links between members of well-defined (sub-)networks. In every-day policy-making institutional, government and non-governmental actors engage regularly across organisational boundaries in various networks and share common identities as policy professionals. This has also effects on how they engage, which is often based on technical knowledge and expertise (Howorth, 2004; Stone, 2004; 2013; Stone and Maxwell, 2005; Zwolski, 2014). With few exceptions (e.g., Wolff, 2015), research on EU norm advocacy in external action has hardly conceptualised the agency of policy professionals as situated in a dynamic network that crosses organisational boundaries. Doing this requires moving to a meso level of analysis that places the various links and sub-networks between policy professionals within a wider network.

In a nutshell, the conceptual critique presented in this research refers to the institutionalist and state-centric approaches in norm advocacy research in the field of EU external action and foreign policy. Network-oriented approaches to analysing norm advocacy have often concentrated on interactions between members of a primary group of professionals, especially member state representatives in the Council, but also well-defined advocacy networks etc. While these approaches have produced great insights into the practice of interactions between policy professionals, they necessarily omit the wider interdependences and network interactions of these professionals. Yet these wider interactions matter for norm advocacy given that more actors outside the institutional structure seek to shape policy norms. Instead, this research seeks to capture the nature of norm advocacy more widely, including a wider range of actors and their relations, especially within the domestic arena and transnational actors, and therefore moves to a meso level of analysis. While moving to such a level of analysis means that (sociological) questions of personal interaction or communication matter less, instead, structural and discursive elements move into focus. The contribution of this perspective is that it identifies the agency of policy professionals who have been less visible within the EU institutional structure.

Research design and methodology

Norm advocacy through a wide group of actors, who not all engage directly, provides a methodological challenge as it cannot be easily studied as practices and direct discursive interactions between an identifiable, well-defined group of actors, such as norm advocacy processes among state representatives in the Council (e.g., Cross, 2011; Elgström, 2000; 2017). For this reason, this research adopts an in-depth case study approach which follows the advocacy of norms for collective EU development cooperation over a longer period. In particular, it looks at individual policy tools advanced at the EU level that have aimed at policy approximation in the EU. As norm advocacy cannot be easily studied in a wider, less cohesive network, this research looks at actors' discursive actions, both public and those in less public settings where professionals directly engage with each other.

While the case study approach offers deep insights into an empirical phenomenon, it comes with limitations on the theoretical implications of findings. Yet the goal of this research is not to make a wider theoretical claim to the functioning of policy-making (in the positivist sense). The main contribution is to develop and apply an analytical-methodological approach for analysing processes

on which institutionalised decision-making is based. A research design that follows logically from the conceptual framework targets the collective agency behind policy norms at the analytical meso-level below the organisational level (see Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016). It focuses on those actors and their networks responsible for the substantive formulation and coordination of individual policies and policy practices. Such an approach responds to the gap that the institutionalist tradition of understanding transnational policy-making along organisational lines has created, and thus needs to break up both states and EU institutions as monolithic actors and look beyond the interactions of top-level executives.

There are two primary methodological challenges involved. The first challenge involves capturing the process of policy norm construction, the second is identifying the participating actors. First, researching the coordination of (soft) norms has both ontological and epistemological implications. Ontologically, this research assumes that norms exist and these norms guide policy practice. This follows from social constructivist premises about the function of norms in the international arena (see Wiener, 2008; 2016). Epistemologically, the challenge is how to get hold of this seemingly elusive process. Contestation of norms becomes visible in every-day (inter-)actions. Central to the contestation is discourse, which is the principle channel for contestation. It involves expressing and promoting alternatives, arguing against propositions, avoiding certain narratives etc. While I look at how actors use discursive 'acts', i.e., means of language and speech acts (how they connect 'a' to 'b'), the thesis does not provide a discourse analysis as such. The main part of the analysis deals with how formulations 'move' between actors. This approach focuses less on how formulations highlight, reframe, challenge or ignore certain aspects, such as specific narratives, concepts or arguments, but on how actors practically promote their interpretations.

Second, how does one identify relevant actors and network relationships? While attention for policy professionals may be conceptually justified, moving away from the aggregate organisational level to an analytical mid-level means that there is a multitude of individuals involved who potentially contribute to an organisational position. Other approaches rely on state representatives, such high-level executives (e.g., government ministers), who are often equated with the state they represent. In terms of agency, they matter because they play an important role for political prioritisation and will. Thus, while they are important to understand priorities of their organisations, and interest and norm negotiation among each other, following from the conceptual framework, my concern is with those officials who engage with each other on a frequent basis to work on coordinating substantive

positions. Such coordination in the EU has been found to take place largely at the working level (Chelotti, 2016a; Riddervold, 2016). Therefore, I focus on mid-level officials who are policy specialists and engage with each other on substantive grounds. While this means that they are firmly part of their respective organisational hierarchies, they are the officials who control the subject matter in a way that allows for coordination.

Despite the potentially large number of professionals that comes with such an approach, it is only specific groups of actors that take part in formulating, coordinating and advocating a position on a certain issue while most other professionals hardly actively engage. These officials do not formulate policies in a vacuum, but formulations are a result of their coordination efforts. Therefore, I focus on the (professional) networks of these issue professionals, i.e., 'at home' in their own organisations (e.g., EU and national bureaucracies), and with colleagues working on the same subject and like-minded allies. There are overlaps between these (sub-)networks and drawing the (imaginary) boundaries of and between them is a challenge. I concentrate on EU and national links, ties and interactions in the sector for engaging with each other to get a better idea of support structures in networks. These interactions are related to the formal organisational structure, but they are not identical. It includes the formal and informal support structures of policy professionals, understanding the hierarchies that they report to, intra-organisation coordination mechanisms and relations with external actors.

This approach requires a closer look not only at the EU's organisation but at the organisation of member states for engaging within the EU. Therefore, I look at two national contexts in detail: Germany and Britain. This concentration serves to illustrate the wider conceptual point about transnational policy processes. Yet, while this selection is only covering a part of the picture, it is not arbitrary. It is exemplary. Although Germany is a founding member while Britain joined the European Community (EC) later, the influence of both countries on EU development cooperation has been significant. Both countries have a long tradition in development, and they are among the world's largest and most influential development actors. While France long dominated EC/EU development policy, Germany and Britain became the strongest actors arguing for change. However, they have received only little attention compared to France's constituent impact on EU development cooperation (Claeys, 2004; Dimier, 2014) – possibly with the exception of Britain's accession (see chapter 2). While outspoken German and British advocacy seems obvious with respect to their size, financial contribution, international presence etc., it was not inevitable, given Germany's avoidance

of political conflict and Britain's reluctance to engage at the European level. Yet, despite their individual weight, they did not seek to challenge and change EU development policy through political top-down pressure alone but through multiple network interactions.

There is evidently much that distinguishes the two countries, which is a useful to illustrate the different functions of domestic institutions and international networks, preceding discourses and experiences, and integration with the EU. Thus, how actors in these two member states have affected the EU's role conception in development cooperation differs greatly, which turns them into valuable case studies. Germany is a relevant case due to its propensity to seek consensus and the circumstance that both the EU and development cooperation have been part of its post-war 'civilian power' image (Maull, 1990). Britain and its engagement in the EU, in contrast, had been strongly driven by perceptions of public opinion, ultimately reflected in the decision to leave the EU following a referendum in June 2016. Not tending towards consensus, British actors have not only been prepared to 'go it alone' but also see themselves as global leaders in international cooperation, which has always offered alternatives to the EU (Ireton, 2013; see also Smith, 2017). Nevertheless, Britain has been active in EU development cooperation. Britain also has a different organisation of domestic interest mediation, which favours transnational societal engagement, whereas Germany traditionally seeks to affiliate societal interests closely. Yet this study does not offer a formal, structured comparison between the two cases. Instead, they serve as illustrations, which highlight how different interdependences of actors affect their engagement in the EU.

To get a sense of organisational priorities, (thematic) traditions, dominant discourse etc., on the one hand, and negotiation and advocacy positions, on the other hand, I draw on available texts. Such text is not taken as an authoritative interpretation of policy shifts (see Wiener, 2008) but rather as part of the competition over the interpretation. Sources of text include official documentation, such as documents of the European Commission (e.g., Communications, Staff Working Papers/Documents, reports, press releases, public speeches), resolutions of the European Parliament, official documents and press releases of the Council and the EEAS, official documentation from the member states, the OECD-DAC peer reviews of members' development programmes etc. I also draw on a myriad of reports, blog posts and press statements of non-state actors, especially non-governmental organisations (NGOs), development advocacy groups and networks, and specialised think tanks and their networks, such as the European Think Tank Group (ETTG). These texts serve different functions. They range from advocating marginalised positions, over establishing and

supporting national standpoints to codifying a European norm. As much as these documents are part of, and constitute, discursive competition, they are themselves the result of competition.

To understand how these documents become part of discursive competition, and what competition underlies them, I draw on interviews where possible. The disaggregation to the meso level is also reflected in the selection and designation of interviews. The empirical research is complemented by insights from interviews with policy specialists in Brussels, Bonn/Berlin and London to capture the views of policy professionals inside and outside government who work on the outlined policies or follow politics as (expert) observers. Several rounds of semi-structured interviews were conducted between March 2015 and November 2016 (see Annex for details). They included officials in the Commission's bureaucracy responsible for development cooperation, and officials and civil servants in the EEAS in Brussels; civil servants in national aid and development cooperation administrations, especially national ministries for development cooperation or departments for development cooperation; and representatives from NGO networks both on a national and European level, development-oriented think tanks, researchers and consultants. The interviews were conducted in a 'semi' standardised form, using open-ended questions, which gave the respondents latitude in defining their terms, giving their own account and introducing their own notions of relevance. Following Lewis Dexter (1970), the eagerness to let the interviewees indicate what the problem, the question and the situation was according to them was necessary given that it was a central aim of the research to understand the specialists' way of defining and justifying policy problems, solutions and arguments to promote their views. This is expected to point to underlying conflicts of and between publications, official documents, reports etc., which are expected to represent a collective idea or preference of a certain organisation, despite conflicting views.

The employed categories (see Annex) are necessarily 'wider' than the analytical focus in order to maintain anonymity and clarity, but the interviews are therefore disaggregated according to place, i.e., Brussels, London and Bonn, to present the context in which these organisations and their members 'usually' operate. This disaggregation allows us to account for conflicting ideas and preferences within one organisation or between different representatives of one 'type' of organisation. This is also what guided the selection of interviews whose main functions were a) to put choices (and non-choices) for public formulations into context and b) shed light on the interactions, networks and power of actors. These interviews were then interpreted based on interview protocols regarding professional networks, discourses on EU coordination and effectiveness, and the role of

other professionals in the policy process. In addition to these formal interviews, the research findings have been triangulated by several verbal and written follow-ups, informal discussions, personal communications, exchanges of correspondence with various policy professionals and observers, and non-participant observations in relevant conferences and events, such as the European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels in 2015 and 2017.

Regarding the choice of participants, there are some caveats involved. First, this research concentrates on the European 'side' of the network. This is primarily because I was interested in what is at the core of intra-EU relations between the EU and member state levels. While aid effectiveness has been a donor-dominated discourse and EU donors make up a significant part of this, there is also agency of other actors, e.g., the ACP Secretariat, governments of individual third countries, and non-European civil society. Their interactions do not only affect the overall discourse, but extra-European actors are also part of the discursive networks. However, their agency in discursive networks varies depending on the discourse. With respect to aid effectiveness their voice was often marginalised (yet it slightly increased with the turn to development effectiveness and the SDGs). Second, as outlined above, within the EU 'side' of the network, this research concentrates on only two EU member states, Germany and Britain. While these countries have been decisive regarding the discussed case (i.e., the dominant discourse on effectiveness), actors in other member states have also played a role, e.g., in France and the Netherlands, which will be acknowledged. However, this analysis concentrates on what I identified as the primary actors in these networks.

Finally, there is a caveat regarding actors' preferences. The research looks at actors' choices of supporting or contesting certain policy formulations. These decisions do not necessarily reveal their 'true' preferences as actors also act strategically to achieve a certain objective. Nevertheless, what formulations actors choose to disseminate (or not) tells us something about their collective preferences of and ideas about the EU's role for effective development cooperation, which are otherwise not directly observable. Thus, from an epistemological perspective, this requires an interpretivist approach towards texts and speech acts. Embarking on such an approach means acknowledging that there are limits to the generalisability of findings. It also implies recognising that academic 'observers' are equally part of the social world and contribute to its construction. Thus, there is an important dynamic component. While I seek to pin down the structure of actors' interactions, the networks and power relations within and between clusters of actors are subject to competing institutional interdependencies and thus in constant flux.

Development cooperation

This research looks at the empirical case of development cooperation and follows the EU's efforts for improving collective action in this area that has formally been a Community competence only since Maastricht. The empirical analysis serves to substantiate the outlined criticism of a concentration on inter- and transgovernmental coordination processes. While EU development cooperation could be regarded as an 'easy case' (e.g., ambiguous institutional environment; low political prominence; wide range of stakeholders, including advocacy and knowledge actors; and the formal role of EU institutions in facilitating collective action), it a) helps to refine the conceptual framework and generates some more general perspectives on EU external action; and b) creates new insights into this specific policy area as it has hardly been approached in this way before.

On the most basic level, development cooperation describes jointly-agreed efforts, mainly between countries, with the purpose of bringing about economic and social development. Traditionally, this has meant the provision of aid in the form of grants, concessional loans and technical assistance from 'rich' countries in the North to 'poor' countries in the Global South. Development cooperation has become increasingly global and multidimensional as growing numbers of different kinds of actors identify more factors required for development and different rationales for cooperation (Riddell, 2007). This makes development cooperation not only a complex but an inherently political task (Carothers and de Gramont, 2013). This task goes beyond the narrow understanding of development aid, defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as Official Development Assistance (ODA). It encompasses external and internal policies in areas such as trade and finance, foreign and security policy, agriculture and fisheries, environment and climate change, migration etc. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were agreed by the members of the United Nations (UN) in December 2015 define international development as a universal task, which seeks to overcome the distinction between 'donors' and 'recipients'.

However, despite popular criticism (e.g., Moyo, 2009), aid and development cooperation continue to play a prominent role in the promotion of international development (see UN, 2015), and particularly (Western) Europeans have defended its continued importance (e.g., BMZ, 2017b; European Commission, 2016a). The EU's role in development cooperation is complex and a result of the parallel advancement of development cooperation and European integration after the Second World War (see chapter 2). This parallel advancement has meant that European integration and

development cooperation became closely intertwined and development cooperation became part of the 'idea' of Europe (Holland and Doidge, 2012, p. 246). As a result, when speaking of European development cooperation, it usually means one of three things: (1) the development cooperation policies of European countries; (2) the cooperation policies of the EU institutions; or (3) the collective action of EU member states and institutions in international development. It is this collective action which is the primary subject of this research.

EU member states conduct development cooperation with third countries based on their national political commitments and legal obligations. This cooperation became more standardised through the OECD-DAC, founded in 1961 with the purpose of providing not just a degree of standardisation but also oversight of the multitude of cooperation policies of Western Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.[3] These countries have conducted both bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. While the former describes the cooperation between two countries based on contractual agreements for financial and technical assistance, the latter describes their (financial) engagement within international organisations, institutions and funds. Despite long-term interactions with third countries, in *ad hoc* fora and international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank, the OECD-DAC and the EU, national differences have persisted. There have been particularly pronounced cleavages between the three largest EU member states, France, Germany and Britain, due to the close geopolitical linkages of development cooperation in these countries; the Scandinavian countries, which have traditionally prioritised social development and poverty eradication in their external action; and the member states in the Mediterranean and in Central and Eastern Europe, which have been or still are recipients of financial transfers.

In addition, the EU conducts its own development cooperation, which has been funded through a formally voluntary, extra-budgetary fund, the European Development Fund (EDF), and from the EU budget, for the period of this research, mainly through the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The EDF has been subject to slightly different rules than then budget-funded polices. However, both funds have been administered and implemented by the European Commission. With the Treaty on European Union (TEU), signed in Maastricht in 1992, the EU was formally given competence in development cooperation in *parallel* to member states' development policies

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[3] Ireland completed the accession process to the OECD-DAC in 1985, Spain in 1991, Luxembourg in 1992, Greece in 1999, South Korea in 2010, Iceland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia in 2013, and Hungary in 2016.

(Hoebink, 2004c; Holland, 2002). Legally, development cooperation is different from other shared competences such as environment or energy (TFEU Art. 4) in that the EU's competence to carry out activities and conduct a common policy cannot result in member states being prevented from exercising theirs (at the time of writing the only other being the areas of research, technological development and space). Since the Lisbon Treaty reforming the TEU, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, the Commission shares parts of its task with the EU's diplomatic service, the European External Action Service (EEAS), which has come with a more explicit blending of development cooperation with foreign policy and a shift in institutional and working habits.

This institutional set-up is a challenge for collective action. The question is whether it is fit for overcoming grown fragmentation of external action (Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; European Think Tanks Group (ETTG), 2014). Fragmentation refers to the growing, scattered presence of increasingly heterogeneous types of actors with partly competing goals, modalities and instruments (see Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2016b). In other words, there are more actors beyond states engaged in international development cooperation, and these actors have different approaches and priorities guiding their engagement. Such heterogeneity, which includes the diversity between EU member states, for example, following the various membership enlargements, has been considered to reduce the effectiveness of development cooperation (Bigsten and Tengstam, 2015; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2016a; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2017). This reasoning has underpinned much of the institutional innovations in EU policy for collective action in development cooperation. The Maastricht Treaty not only established an EU competence but also assigned the Commission a role in promoting coordination, complementarity and coherence – the so-called Maastricht 'Cs' (Hoebink, 2004a). This was reiterated in the Lisbon Treaty. Yet the EU's *acquis communautaire* in development cooperation that followed from this mostly consists of a range of policy norms in the form of recommendations for the member states to be transposed and applied in their national development cooperation policies. These are usually the outcome of Commission proposals, e.g., through so-called Communications, which become part of Council Conclusions that endorse or qualify them. While these documents are not legally binding, they provide a point of reference, especially for Commission policy.

This kind of common policy-making to deal with mutual interdependences has significantly increased since Maastricht and was reinforced after Lisbon (see Furness and Vollmer, 2013; Gänzle*, et al.*, 2012; Orbie, 2008). In the early/mid-2000s, joint policy-making had an effect in the form of EU-wide policy norms for coordination and the approximation of policies in the EU, which created much

enthusiasm among observers (Carbone, 2008a). As a result, common policies have become increasingly promoted in the EU, even though national implementation – or 'Europeanisation' – has remained deficient (Bretherton, 2013; Krüger and Steingass, 2018; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). Thus, increased collective action and common policy-making in development cooperation have not overcome fragmentation within the system of European development cooperation. Observers have continually concentrated on how institutional reforms and innovations are suitable to overcome obstacles to member state coordination and policy approximation in development cooperation (Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; Furness and Gänzle, 2017; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). One of the main perceived shortcomings of EU collective action is the lack of hierarchy; despite common policies, fragmentation remained or even increased after major reform steps (e.g., CONCORD, 2012; Council of the European Union, 2009; European Commission, 2011e; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2014; Mackie, 2013; Moe Fejerskov and Keijzer, 2013). Most accounts thereby focus on the institutional structure, especially the incentive structure for collective action and find missing incentives for actors both on EU side and in member states to follow coordination policy norms (Carbone and Quartapelle, 2016; Koch*, et al.*, 2017; Koch and Molenaers, 2016; Krüger and Steingass, 2018).

What a focus on the EU institutional structure and its impact on member states misses is the dynamic process of how norms for common EU development cooperation have been constructed and advocated, which potentially involves agency of actors that is not directly visible in this structure. Otherwise, it remains puzzling how a system that – apparently – provides little incentive for collective action, has produced norms for collective action whereas institutional reforms have hardly overcome shortcomings of EU collective action in development cooperation. This suggests that the institutional order only provides limited insights into the pursuit of common development cooperation in the EU. The inability to overcome obstacles for collective action points to a fundamental issue with common norms, namely, their deeply contested nature despite formal agreement between EU institutions and member states. That is why it is important to look beyond formal agreements at the process of competition over and coordinating norms for collective action in EU development cooperation.

Outline of the thesis

This last part provides a brief overview of the individual chapters. The first chapter sets out a conceptual framework for analysing the role of policy professionals in EU norm advocacy based on

transnational policy-making, networks and discourse construction. The chapter advances an agency-oriented framework for processes of discursive construction of and competition over policy norms. These processes take place around the decision-making centres that are constituted by the EU's institutional structure (nodes). What is distinct about this approach is that institutions as determinants for policy-making move to the background. Instead, the focus is on collective agency through network interactions. This makes visible the agency of policy professionals who have hardly any role in the EU's institutional structure. Networks are understood as arenas of mutual interdependence where actors structure discourse to legitimise their preferences both cognitively and normatively through multiple interactions in bureaucratic coordination and in public communication. The framework establishes how and under what conditions their agency matters in the transnational governance of institutionalised international systems. While individuals and groups at the centre of EU policy construction seek solutions for overcoming collective action problems among themselves and control the policy discourse on the EU level, they interact with actors across organisational boundaries to enhance their power of policy norms.

The second chapter introduces the debate about norm advocacy in international cooperation at the transnational level. It chronologically traces the role of European integration in development cooperation for member states and EU institutions. The integration of development cooperation has incrementally evolved within a complex institutionalised system with multiple levels and centres. The European transnational level became relevant for international cooperation at the beginning of the European integration process as French negotiators sought to upload their priorities to the European level. This became the origin of a transnational centre of supranational bureaucrats to which other state and non-state actors from the EC, partner countries and beyond became attracted and sought to shape and challenge it. It is not the purpose of this chapter to review the entire history of the integration of development cooperation in Europe. The chapter particularly concentrates on the emergence of norms for collective action and outlines the concurrent expansion of policy professionals and their interlinkages in the transnational arena. This reveals wider patterns of the construction of policy norm over time, especially on what grounds different actors in Europe stipulate the construction of common policies and institutional inventions in development cooperation. As a second objective, the chapter introduces those structures and actors that become relevant in the subsequent analytical chapters.

The aim of the third chapter is to look for evidence of how, in what ways and under what conditions policy professionals have contributed to norm advocacy for collective action at the transnational level. The chapter looks in detail at the discursive competition over the EU's role for effective development cooperation. The EU's role for effective development cooperation has become subject to competition between various actors, especially EU institutions and member states, but also non-state actors, following the Maastricht Treaty. Especially the Commission regarded the international discourse on effectiveness as a driver for collective action in international development. As a result, the EU formulated and re-formulated policies, which aimed at enhancing the coordination and thus the effectiveness of European development cooperation, and which stood in conflict with the interests and identities of other actors. The chapter concentrates on initiatives for policy coordination between the early/mid-2000s and the mid-2010s and traces how professionals became engaged in norm advocacy through discursive coordination and competition. Discursive coordination and competition were expressed in articulations of common norms for effective EU development cooperation. This occurred under different internal and external developments, which affected the discursive environment in which contestation took place. Depending on the discursive and institutional context different professionals became relevant, and hence different ways of communicative action. The chapter shows how a transnational hub emerged around Commission officials to promote common policy norms. While this was initially more political, with increasing pressure from member states and, following Lisbon, from within the EU institutions, norm advocacy became more technical and coordinative. Instead, discursive shifts in the EU and internationally, opened windows of opportunities for actors to contest these policy norms and promote competing ones.

The fourth and fifth chapters look at Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively, and analyse the participation of national professionals in and responses to EU policy initiatives. The fourth chapter opens with a discussion about professionals based within the German national arena. The aim of the chapter is to understand how the transnational agency of policy professionals is affected by the national arena in Germany. The chapter therefore looks at the domestic institutional structures and discourses of which these professionals are part. In particular, the final part of the chapter concentrates on the role of professionals in Germany regarding initiatives for policy coordination at the EU level since approximately 2007. This chapter seeks to understand in what ways state and non-state professionals participate, how their participation matters for transnational norm advocacy and what affects their participation, especially national discourses, practices and institutional structures.

It shows how these professionals supported the advocacy of coordination through capacity-building and in networks at the European level. This support was based on political commitments to implementing aid effectiveness principles but also due to a general conviction for enhancing the efficiency of global governance. The EU represented a channel for German policy professionals to pursue these arguments, which were rooted in a national ambition for a 'global structural policy'. German officials engaged actively where norm advocacy was more coordinative and bureaucratic. Yet the fragmented aid administration was a challenge where coordination was more communicative.

In the case of Britain, it was puzzling how the country had become so active in EU development cooperation despite its general reluctance to engage in the EU more comprehensively. The fifth chapter is structured analogous to the previous chapter. It follows development policy professionals who participate in EU norm advocacy in the British arena of institutional structures and discourses of which they are part. Before the EU referendum of 2016, British professionals were proactive in contributing to EU development policy norms. The chapter concentrates on how British policy professionals used the window of opportunity to promote nationally relevant norms of accountability and transparency. While British officials were ambivalent about policy harmonisation in the EU, even when it was widely accepted as an international aid effectiveness principle, they did not block a compromise on EU joint programming but only refrained from promoting it nationally. Instead, the chapter shows how a wider international discursive network on transparency, which officials helped to build, supported their arguments in the EU to establish a results framework against oppositions. To avoid the stigma of looking 'awkward', they also used expertise and capacity-building on the EU level to promote it. The key finding is that a central channel for British participation was a wider societal network, which meant that norm advocacy occurred simultaneously at multiple institutional hubs with a strong communicative dimension rather than a concentration on bureaucratic, intra-EU discursive coordination. This norm advocacy, however, did not change the overall political attitude towards an EU's role in development cooperation, which remained defensive.

The final part of the thesis summarises the empirical findings, addresses their implications and outlines the wider contribution to learning in the fields of EU governance in external action and beyond. It addresses the 'so what' question, which follows from the theory-guided empirical analysis presented in this thesis. This includes conceptual reflections on the role of networks, in particular, when and how they matter in institutionalised international communities such as European development cooperation. In this way, the research not only adds new empirical insights to the study

of EU development policy-making, but it also connects conceptual insights from transnational governance and policy-making to the study of the EU's role in the world, which were previously unconnected. This has filled a gap in our knowledge about EU collective action in that it has made visible the (collective) agency of professionals who are not directly represented by the EU institutional structure and yet play a key role in EU norm advocacy. This final part ends with an outlook on the role of shifts in development cooperation, EU governance and European integration, especially Brexit, which is highly relevant given that British actors played an important role in the contestation of norms for collective EU action.

1 Institutions, Discourses, Networks

Introduction

Originally, the 'European project' was not primarily driven by an external purpose, let alone a mission for global development. However, the entanglement of European integration with processes within the wider international system has expanded through a widening trade agenda, the enlargement of membership, externalities of internal policies, such as the common commercial and agricultural policy, and the advancement a common foreign and security policy. As a result, Europe's role in the world has become an extremely popular area of research, strongly motivated by the question of what drives the EU's quest for collective action (see Keuleers, *et al.*, 2016). Therein, the role of internal institutional dynamics has taken a predominate position (Bickerton, 2011; Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker, 2017; Menon, 2011; Smith, 2004).

This chapter seeks to reassess the debates about internal institutional dynamics – and thus the perceived benefits of institutional reform – by taking a step back and reflect on how institutions fit in the wider process of competition over policies, their formulation and advocacy. This requires broadening the analytical focus by moving away from the EU level to consider a wider range of actors at the transnational and national level beyond those who are responsible for the ultimate decision-making. While these actors play a predominant role in the institutional design of EU external action, their norm advocacy and negotiations depend in various ways on the participation of other professionals across state and non-state organisations. The aim of this chapter is to sketch out an analytical framework for understanding policy construction and contestation that is relevant for the EU's international role. Thus, the chapter assesses tools for understanding how actors construct and compete over the *purpose* of EU external relations and proposes how to link them to establish a coherent framework. In the first section (I), the chapter briefly conceptualises the policy process in EU external action and outlines different sources of contestation over the EU's role. This sets the scene for the subsequent theoretical and analytical discussions.

The second section (II) starts from the premises of (new) institutionalism. It then suggests going beyond institutional constraints for understanding actors' mutual construction of EU external policies. From a theoretically perspective, this chapter is founded on two basic premises, which will be discussed at greater detail in the second section: discourses frame or structure what actors can argue (Hajer, 1993), and the interactions of actors contribute to discourse formation (Habermas, 1984). Thus, justifications behind the promotion of competing policy norms are related to existing discourses. In turn, the outcome of this competition contributes to the wider discourse. Understanding this outcome requires looking at the interactions of participating actors, i.e., their actions, reactions and relative power in context, but also what is the purpose of their interactions. These factors affect the extent to which their interactions contribute to the wider discourse or lead to a consensus on policy and the EU's role at the EU level. In all this, competition about the EU's role is not generally direct but occurs through competition over policy norms, e.g., on the merit of policy coordination in the EU.

In the third section (III), the chapter offers an agency-oriented framework, which conceptualises power as part of interdependences within network relationships with partly conflicting demands on actors. This departs from institutionalism in the sense that it understands institutional structures as means that empower actors in the process of policy contestation. Due to the complex interdependences in EU development cooperation, various actors engage in policy construction and contestation through advocacy, consultation, implementation, evaluation etc. This provides the grounds for understanding interdependence in terms of a transnational discursive network. Transnational networks of European development policy communities have received little attention, even though scholarship on policy networks and network governance has been burgeoning in EU studies for some time (Peterson, 1995; Peterson and Bomberg, 1999). Networks matter in EU policy-making in that they can bridge the gap between distinct political entities to construct common policies through joint policy formulation on which subsequent decisions are based. While much of the network governance in development cooperation can be subsumed under bureaucratic politics, considering their embeddedness in a wider transnational network becomes relevant when it affects power among bureaucratic actors, especially as the wider network affects the discursive environment in which bureaucratic politics take place.

In this way, the chapter a) adds to the theoretical and conceptual understanding of EU policy processes that are embedded in a wider international context and b) offers a conceptual framework

for analysis for the subsequent empirical research. This framework draws on different theoretical and ontological approaches. Before turning to the theoretical foundations, the first section establishes some basic conceptual clarity.

I   EU policy-making and contestation

The EU has established an international presence and 'role' over time. Besides trade and aid, its activities have increasingly included a political dimension, diplomacy, and security and military elements. While the EU's external activities have grown, there is a highly asymmetric degree of integration between different foreign policy areas. As a result, the EU has become characterised by a 'variable and multidimensional presence' in the international arena (Allen and Smith, 1990, p. 20), which has continued despite institutional reforms. This variable and multidimensional presence has occurred because member states have sought to 'upload' domestic preferences to the Community/EU level in the face of international challenges, but also as institutional actors offered solutions for collective responses. Concerning development cooperation, for instance, France sought to share the burden of its decolonisation, which turned into an international activity of the Community (see chapter 2). On this basis, the European Commission later promoted common policy norms and institutional inventions. The process of creating an international role has thus been incremental, which has motivated calls for and attempts at putting EU external action on more strategic basis (Biscop, 2016; Cornish and Edwards, 2005).

As a result of integrating external policies, there has been common policy-making regarding the EU's external policies between member states with the collaboration of the EU institutions. This common policy-making has also led to the advocacy of common policy norms that apply to the EU and its member states with the aim of strengthening collective action and improving the EU's collective capacity. Consequently, policy-making and norm advocacy process at the EU level have received significant attention. Due to the limited supranationalisation, member state government representatives have been identified to dominate policy-making and norm advocacy processes in EU external action (Bickerton*, et al.*, 2011; Elgström, 2017; Mérand*, et al.*, 2011). For example, practices between state representatives came into focus of academic attention, paying specific attention to

professional norms that make them more capable of overcoming problems of collective action in negotiations with each other (Chelotti, 2016a; Cross, 2011; Elgström, 2017; Kuus, 2014). While this perspective disaggregates organisational structures to the individual actors, it often continues to understand transnational processes in intergovernmental terms along organisational lines.

However, the EU constitutes a historically grown, multi-sector and multi-level system of policy-making, which is characterised by a multitude of actors, a large degree of differentiation, multiple centres and a reluctance to coordinate authoritatively by legislation. EU external policy-making, in particular, is characterised by high levels of fragmentation, uncertainty and multiple centres due to the varying participation of a range of actors in different but related policy areas, for example, trade, development cooperation, foreign and security policy (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014; Smith, 2014). In this context, public policies are agreed on and delivered by different and, at times, autonomous types of actors via hybrid arrangements. Even where actors, such as the EU institutions, lack formal decision-making competence, they seek to engage in the process of policy formulation as formulations at early stages become important determinants of eventual EU policy outcomes (Chou and Riddervold, 2015; Peterson, 1995; Riddervold, 2016). Areas of shared or parallel competences in the EU, which are characterised by high levels of fragmentation and uncertainty, such as development cooperation, do not provide for centralised policy-making; neither do they offer a single arena for political competition. Instead, actors compete for support in multiple arenas across the EU, member states and the international level.

Formulating policies and policy instruments happens as actors seek to remake political reality 'but without necessarily building on a consensus of the participating actors as to the "why" and "what for"' (Voß and Simons, 2014, p. 742). This is even more so when different 'types' of actors engage in this process, e.g., bureaucrats, civil society and businesses. However, even actors who are or have become very similar, such as member state representatives in the Council of the EU, are likely to have different expectations. As Voß and Simons (2014, p. 742) put it:

> even when actors deal with the 'same' kinds of things, hook up to the 'same' infrastructure, handle the 'same' kind of information, participate in the 'same' meetings, and interact with the 'same' organisations, they may still do so for different reasons, with different understandings of what they do and why they do it, and also with different expectations as to what constitutes a successful outcome of their engagement. Actors may remain embedded in particular worlds of scientific research, advocacy, party politics, administration, consulting, or business, and they may remain adversaries in terms of

> classical lines of political conflict, such as public versus private, environment versus economy – yet still become members of a constituency whose joint work brings the instrument into existence.

Thus, actors may achieve agreement on individual policies, but they have very different understandings of their purpose. Such understandings are likely to be affected by actors' prior attitudes towards and experience in the EU, and their (potentially) competing embeddedness outside, especially on the national level (Beyers, 2005).

Competing embeddedness and interdependences point to the relevance of wider political and discursive processes beyond EU decision-making. These political processes consist of competition over meaning of policy problems and their solutions. Such competition over meaning becomes evident in the member states. Even when there is agreement on common policy norms, member state policies 'at home' often tend to deviate significantly from these agreements. The question of compliance to European policy norms or principles has been lingering, especially where the EU seeks to enhance coordination without supranationalisation or (regulatory) harmonisation (e.g., Andonova and Tuta, 2014; Carbone and Quartapelle, 2016; Krüger and Steingass, 2018). As a result, the concept of 'Europeanisation' has received significant attention when trying to understand the incremental approximation of formally independent policies – or the resistance to it despite functional pressures or overlapping interests. In his seminal contribution, Robert Ladrech (1994) defines 'Europeanisation' as the process in which political dynamics of the Community become part of the organisational logic of national politics. Regarding development cooperation, while there has been some convergence of national policies (Furness and Olsen, 2016; Olsen, 2013), the literature suggests that adaptation of national policies to the EU is generally limited or 'shallow' (Bretherton, 2013; Lightfoot and Szent-Iványi, 2014; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). There have been suggestions as to why this is the case, which point to incompatible incentives along the path from decision-making in Brussels to implementation by the member states in the field (Carbone, 2013a; Delputte and Orbie, 2014), or limited links of national constituencies to EU norms (Carbone and Quartapelle, 2016; Krüger and Steingass, 2018).

Despite persistent national differences, there has been substantive EU-level agreement on common policy norms and institutional inventions. Subsequent treaty changes have put the EU's international role increasingly at the centre of attention. This role has come to be seen as a driver for European integration in the 21st century (Bickerton, 2011; Bickerton, *et al.*, 2011; Keohane, *et al.*, 2014). Such conceptual reflections coincide with the growing realisation among European elites that the changing global conditions require joined-up international action if Europe wants to continue to

play a significant role in the future (e.g., Biscop and Andersson, 2008; European Think Tanks Group (ETTG), 2014). In development cooperation, there have been increasing agreements on 'all-EU' policies since the Maastricht Treaty, which created some optimism among observers (Carbone, 2008a; Gänzle, *et al.*, 2012). The Lisbon Treaty reforms further increased optimism regarding the EU capacity for collective action (Duke, 2012; Edwards, 2013; Niemann and Bretherton, 2013; Smith, 2013b). 'Europeanisation' processes have led to an alignment of domestic institutional practices and structures, especially of national executives whose engagement has become tuned towards constructive, depoliticised mutual interactions (Bickerton, 2012; Ladrech, 2010). Thus, while effects in terms of national policy approximation seem to be mixed, the increasing ability of actors to engage in and with 'Europe' may have resulted in a more efficient 'uploading' of national preferences in EU policy-making process and enhanced the capacity for achieving agreement on common policies on the supranational level.

As a consequence, member states should not be perceived as monolithic when considering competition over meaning-making. Instead, different actors in member states are subject to partly competing demands and discourses as they engage in wider circles of actors who play a role for and participate in the policy process. This dependence on partly competing demands also affects the competition over the EU's role in development cooperation and in promoting collective action, which is not self-evident. The role that the EU as an organisation and EU institutional actors should play in particular policies is far from straight forward. On the one hand, there are competing ideas about the effectiveness of collective action compared to the separate, independent engagement of member states (see Hoffmann, 1966; Macaj and Nicolaïdis, 2014). Stanley Hoffmann (1966) understood this as a contest between a logic of integration and a logic of diversity. On the other hand, while the EU is exceptional in its scope, policy norms are simultaneously constructed on a global level and in competing international fora. These engagements are not fully distinct or independent from interactions in the EU. Instead, even in development cooperation alone, there is a significant overlap (see, for example, Farrell, 2012; Holland, 2008; Verschaeve and Orbie, 2018). EU member states are also members of other relevant international organisations, such as the OECD-DAC, the World Bank and the UN, which discuss and set standards also in international development. Thus, different centres of political and discursive competition may offer different solutions.

As a result, contestation of common policy norms in the EU is based on diverging views of participating actors as to the 'why' and 'what for', which persists despite achieving agreement and

improving the structures for achieving agreement. What affects the 'why' and 'what for' of common policy norms will depend on actors' contexts, their ideational 'baggage', their networks and hierarchies, and professional formation and incentives, which are shaped within multiple independences and interactions.

II   Institutions, discourse and agency

Institutionalist approaches, which gained popularity in global governance research thanks to the seminal work by James March and Johan Olsen (1989; 1998), have arguably come to dominate EU research (Pollack, 2009). As, with the so called 'governance turn', attention moved away from processes of integration to policy processes, institutional structures emerged as the preeminent explanatory factor for understanding policies in that they constrain or alternatively constitute the behaviour of actors. While the EU's densely-institutionalised structure certainly influences actors and their behaviour, this chapter suggests that seeing European institutional structures as the dominant factor behind EU policies somewhat misrepresents the role of these institutions for how they affect the interactions of actors, which is due to the dominant focus on interactions within the decision-making centres. This misrepresentation is especially the case where institutionalisation and common policy-making in the EU are only one form of interdependence to which policy-makers are subjected. Instead, EU institutions, member states and civil society actors are also subject to various interdependences on the national and international level, which add to the competing demands imposed on these actors and offer rival solutions.

This section sets out the theoretical foundations for a framework of how common policies are constructed and contested in the EU. It departs from traditional (new) institutionalist accounts of EU decision-making to understand how actors promote certain policies to win support in situations of overlapping interdependences. Thereby, the section compiles various critiques of dominant institutionalist approaches to policy-making and shows how these approaches benefit a state-centric perspective on EU external action because they leave little space for the contribution of actors who are not formally involved. The first part of this section briefly discusses the contribution of institutionalist approaches to EU policy-making. The discussion highlights the relevance of institutions

when it comes to structuring collective behaviour around decision-making processes. However, going beyond decision-making, which is dominated by member states, towards wider processes of norm advocacy means a) challenging what *is* a contribution to policy-making and b) rethinking agency outside of institutionalist limits. Taking social constructivist insights into account, this section turns to the role of discourses in the wider political process and highlights the importance of agency in their construction.

New Institutionalism(s)

Understanding European policy-making and policies as a function of the EU's institutional framework received increasing attention with the accelerating institutionalisation of the EU and advances in International Relations scholarship (see Jupille and Caporaso, 1999). With the 'rediscovering' of institutionalism (March and Olsen, 1989) and its subsequent advancement came a diversification within the 'institutionalist' school of thought. While it had been originally dominated by a rational choice variant, proponents came to understand the institutional organisation of a polity as the principal factor structuring collective behaviour and generating outcomes (Hall and Taylor, 1996). This approach became generally known as historical institutionalism. The 'structuralism', which is implicit in the institutions of a polity, stands in contrast to the 'functionalist' explanations of institutional design, which had been proposed by rational choice approaches and regarded political outcomes as a response to the needs of the system. Hence, the focus of historical institutionalism has rested on the effects of institutions over time (Pierson, 1996; 2004). Proponents, most prominently Paul Pierson, have argued that institutional choices in the past became locked-in and thus constrain the choices of actors at later points in time, causing a logic of path dependence. In this way, the approach privileges (formal) structure over agency.

Pierson (1996) has been among the most influential analysts who adopted institutionalism explicitly for the EU context when he presented a historical institutionalist account of the development of supranational governance in Europe. He argued that, over time, cumulative institutional effects of the EU's organisation and rule-making machinery reduced the capacities of national governments to control the course of integration. 'Gaps' between the preferences of member state governments, and subsequent institutions and policies, occur as policy environments

and/or governments change, while institutions remain more resistant to change. This resistance is supported where societal actors develop a vested interest in the continuation of specific policies. For instance, in his work, Pierson (1996) highlights the creation of multi-dimensional relationships between societal actors and EU institutions, such as the European Court of Justice and the Commission, which lead to information asymmetries that benefit EU institutional actors *vis-a-vis* national governments. While his work explicitly focuses on the process of integration, institutional effects like 'path dependence' and 'lock-in' have become increasingly popular when explaining EU policies and policy-making, including in EU development cooperation (Claeys, 2004; Dimier, 2006; 2014).

Both rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism are based on a highly restrictive set of assumptions about the nature of actors and institutions. Therein, actors follow a 'logic of consequences' (March and Olsen, 1989; 1998). The constructivist turn (see Wendt, 1994; 1999) has significantly added to the institutionalist debate, primarily in the form of sociological institutionalism. Institutions, broadly defined, are social structures, which provide agents with complex understandings of their interests and identities (Checkel, 1999; 2005; Egeberg, 1999). Therefore, actors tend to follow a 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 1998, pp. 951-2). What is relevant for this discussion is the premise that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment with its collectively shared, intersubjectively constructed and reproduced systems of meaning-making (see Wendt, 1987). Instead, actors' properties, i.e., interests, preferences and identities, are endogenously constructed through intersubjective interaction and not exogenously given (Wendt, 1994; 1999). In other words, structure and agent are mutually constitutive (Giddens, 1984). This perspective places more emphasis on social norms, values and identity, the processes that affect them (e.g., socialisation), and their impact on the behaviour of agents. This perspective does not, however, preclude the role of interests. Instead, it emphasises that interests are not pre-given but rest on social norms, values and identity.

These developments have affected thinking in virtually all areas of European policy. Following the Maastricht Treaty, new institutionalism in its various forms has arguably become the dominant approach to understanding the EU (Pollack, 2009, p. 125). This came with a shift in scholarly attention away from integration theory to governance – the so-called 'governance turn' (see Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006). Looking at European policy-making through the lens of the EU's formal and informal institutions, structures, rules and norms has been promising as it offered a way of understanding some

of the pressing questions of the time: How are states 'tamed' in the EU despite diverging interests, why do policies exist despite their lack of effectiveness or member states' unwillingness to implement them, how do institutional actors have the capacity to influence policies, how can we understand unintended consequences of policies that diverge from their original purpose, etc. Given this range of questions, it is understandable that institutionalist approaches with their different emphases have become frequently adopted when seeking to explain EU policy responses, for example, during and after the Eurozone crisis (Verdun, 2015), with regard to enlargement (Sedelmeier, 2012), and when discussing foreign and security policy (Christiansen and Tonra, 2004; Menon, 2011; Smith, 2004).

Institutional adjustments and innovations have continued especially in foreign policy. As a result, institutionalist debates continued after the implementation of Lisbon Treaty reforms, which gave much attention to the recalibration of institutional balances in the EU foreign policy machinery (Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker, 2017; Henökl and Trondal, 2015). However, while institutions have proved to be 'sticky' during these reforms in the sense that there has been resistance for them to be changed, the reforms and institutional shifts opened another chapter for institutionalist debates about how changes contribute to effective policies.

Ideas, discourses, agency

The constructivist turn has also led to rethinking EU foreign policy and understanding the origins of policies (Christiansen *, et al.*, 1999; Christiansen and Tonra, 2004; Jørgensen, 1997). Although actors are constrained to some extent by existing institutions, norms and discourses, institutionalist approaches tend to overemphasise their roles as (exogenous) structures for rule-following, thereby limiting the role of actors in shaping and maintaining these institutions (Schmidt, 2008; 2010). Historical and sociological institutionalist approaches tend to understate the role of actors and agency because they lean towards the determinism that is inherent in structural approaches. In contrast, rational-choice institutionalist approaches ignore the role of norms, ideas and precedential beliefs.

That ideas somehow matter in international politics has been commonly acknowledged also outside social constructivist scholarship (see Goldstein and Keohane, 1993). This leads to questions of how norms and ideas matter, and how they interact with institutional structures, especially in densely institutionalised international relations as in the EU. Based on social constructivist premises, ideas

contribute to the construction of the EU polity (Jachtenfuchs, *et al.*, 1998) in that they can change or perpetuate institutional dynamics through discourse (Diez, 1999; 2001). Thus, whether formal institutions or informal norms shape who participates in decision-making, policies have always been shaped prior to formal decisions by constructing the 'terms of the debate'. Of course, there are limits to actors' construction of the terms of debate through existing discourses (Hajer, 1993), and actors do not have full control over their ideas as they can be misappropriated and misinterpreted in the process. However, under certain conditions, actors' interactions contribute to defining the terms of debate and consequently to norms, policies, structures and institutions.

Among social constructivist approaches, discourse analysis has been increasingly applied to understand how ideas and meanings are constructed in European foreign policy (Carta and Morin, 2014a; 2014b; Diez, 1999; 2001; 2014; Jørgensen, 2015; Larsen, 2004). However, the term discourse itself is widely contested, which leads to different theoretical approaches and methods. Traditionally, discourses have largely been seen from a structuralist perspective, as frameworks enabling the construction of certain policies and the exclusion of others (Larsen, 2004; Wæver, 2002). In this sense, EU policy actors are constrained in their choices of potential action by previous discourses (on the EU level and otherwise). This structuralist approach to discourse has been criticised for overlooking the creation of meaning (see Diez, 1999; 2001). To avoid the 'structuralist fallacy', Thomas Diez (2001) highlights the intersubjective construction of meaning by actors through discourse. In his work, he suggests ways of including the analysis of intersubjective meaning-making in the study of institutional dynamics in the EU by focusing on discursive action of actors. Discursive action involves more than the content of discourse, i.e., its ideas, words or 'text', but it includes the context and processes in which this content is structured. Discourses can be understood to consist of articulatory practices that re-produce and re-shape the context which is constitutive for actors' political articulations (Diez, 2014, p. 321). Thus, discourse formation becomes a cyclical process in which actors actively shape discourses through their interactions, but while they do so, they are subject to an existing discursive context.

More specifically, Diez (2014) understands discourse formation as a struggle over what is acceptable as a policy and what kind of policies can be legitimately pursued. He emphasises that this struggle is about the limits of acceptable and meaningful EU policies. These limits are not set by structure as such, but setting them happens 'through the enactment of the limits through a variety of actors in civil society, politics, the media, the arts and, not least, academia' (Diez, 2014, p. 330). These

groups of actors 'are not entirely separate from each other, but engage in transversal debates and struggles' (Diez, 2014, p. 330; see also Jørgensen, 2015). Thus, the 'enabling' and 'disabling' of articulations is set in a continuous political struggle in meaning production between these actors, which cuts across actors, borders and institutions.

There have been attempts at categorising actors' articulatory practices to better understand their contribution to discourse formation. Vivien Schmidt (2008; 2010) argues that, in the process of discourse formation, actors use articulatory practices for coordinative purposes and to communicate policies to legitimise them in the public sphere. In the EU, actors engage both in a 'coordinative' discourse of elite policy construction at the EU level and a 'communicative' discourse with the wider public involving national level discussion, contestation and legitimisation. Following Schmidt (2010, p. 3), the 'coordinative discourse' encompasses the actors that are immediately engaged in the construction of policy ideas through direct interactions. These are bureaucrats, government officials and other policy professionals. Individuals and groups at the centre of EU policy construction seek solutions for overcoming collective action problems among themselves and thereby largely control the policy discourse at the EU level. In this process, they compete over the underlying principles which structure policies and policy-making. This includes struggles about common procedural discourses, which cut across actors and institutions (Larsen, 2004). The process of elite policy construction is particularly relevant for compound polities, such as the EU (Schmidt, 2006). The 'communicative discourse' of actors' articulating policies in the public sphere encompasses actors who bring ideas to the public for deliberation, and – often retrospectively – legitimise policies. These actors range from political leaders to individuals in parliaments and civil society. Thus, we can expect different spheres of communicative action with different forms or 'styles' of communication.

Schmidt (2008; 2010) suggests 'discursive institutionalism' as a way of thinking about how agents promote ideas for changing or perpetuating institutional dynamics *from within*. Adding discourse to institution-building in this way allows us to shed light on processes of discursive construction of EU external policy by actors within the Brussels-based institutional context (see Schmidt, 2012). A discourse becomes institutionalised through the reiterative, communicative interactions of actors who reproduce the discourse to some extent. At the same time, actors partly retain freedom to adjust their articulations to justify competing discourses. Thus, discursive institutionalism offers a way of understanding the interdependence between processes of discourse formation and the institutional structure. It is through discourse that practices and norms become

institutionalised, and these discourses are, in turn, reproduced and transformed in a given institutional context, which structures social interaction.

According to this understanding, subjective interests, institutions and social norms are regarded as the background knowledge of agents (Schmidt, 2008). Agents challenge or perpetuate these existing norms and institutions by relying on what Schmidt (2008) calls 'foreground discursive abilities'. This is based on a 'logic of communication' or a 'logic of arguing' (Risse, 2000). These concepts are largely derived from the concept of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas (1984; 1985). Thus, actors structure a discourse to legitimise their ideas both cognitively and normatively by processes of argumentation, deliberation and persuasion, which is analytically distinct from strategic bargaining and rule-guided behaviour (Risse, 2000).

Such interaction requires a degree of argumentative rationality, which assumes that interests, preferences and identity of agents are not completely fixed. It suggests that actors may be goal-oriented but nevertheless susceptible to persuasion. Persuasion requires actors to share notions of validity of argumentative claims, such as 'factual' correctness, moral rightness, truthfulness and authenticity (Risse, 2000, pp. 9-10). However, where this is the case, debates tend to take place within a narrow understanding of what constitutes legitimate knowledge. As Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2014, p. 86) finds, 'We should avoid equating technocratic discourse with deliberation (in the Habermasian sense), as deliberation is never entirely free or unconstrained'. Thus, when looking at technocratic discourse, there does not need to be deliberation. At the same time, such discourse is not at simply a series of individual bargaining processes. While bargaining generally takes place in the EU context, for example about a text, and thus becomes part of discursive construction, the wider policy process cannot simply be reduced to a series of individual negotiations between clearly delimited negotiators with defined positions. Such a perspective overlooks the dynamism of discursive contestation. The positions of actors are subject to multiple interdependencies that are not limited to the 'negotiation situation'. This view challenges both notions of persuasion and bargaining. On the one hand, pure deliberation is unlikely where actors have multiple obligations and role conceptions, depending on the (overlapping) structures for (political) organisation that they are part of at a certain point (see also Beyers, 2005; Murdoch, *et al.*, 2016). On the other hand, actors' positions are not stable but shift over time as the discursive context shifts.

From this discussion on theorising competition over policy norms we assume that actors operate within both a discursive and an institutional context that affect their engagement. Following

Thomas Risse (2000), actors structure discourses by processes of argumentation with each other, which then constitutes the range and limits of mutually recognised formulations. Actors have space to act deliberately or even strategically, e.g., highlight, reframe, challenge or choose to ignore certain aspects within the wider discursive context, and create narratives in order to gain support among other relevant actors. Collectively, these acts affect the overall discursive context, usually on various levels simultaneously, but usually asymmetrically. This, in turn, reflects on the competition of actors, but 'ownership' over discourses is generally limited. Thus, the construction and contestation of policy norms is intersubjective and takes place within a dynamic context of collective understandings, which adjust dynamically, for instance, as a reaction to events or to changed arguments in competing centres. In contrast, institutions adjust more slowly so that their adjustment may be affected by different discursive dynamics.

Having outlined the theoretical foundations of this thesis, the next section discusses how actors practically seek to gain support for and compete over norm advocacy. This part is less about how actors act discursively, i.e., through means of language and speech acts (the thesis does not offer a discourse analysis as such). Instead, it is about how actors interact with others to seek support, advice, advocacy and legitimacy for their formulations or qualify and challenge competing narratives, and what structures these interactions.

III   Framework for analysis

The previous section pointed to the relevance of social interactions within institutional structures. Importantly, actors engage within competing structures of political organisation. This section takes a closer look at the interactions of actors at a disaggregated level, asks how they are structured, under what conditions they matter and how they matter. To understand policy-making and norm advocacy in situations of institutional interdependence, scholars have referred to networks, which have become a constitutive element of a 'new world order' (Slaughter, 2004), and European multi-level governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Peterson and Bomberg, 1999). While multi-level governance offers a heuristic of the entire system, the focus on networks contributes two things: identifying a locus of power within the wider system and conceptualising how actors relate to each other. This framework

follows the premise that networks at a disaggregated level are not identical to (networks at) the organisational level and thus help to understand norm advocacy in a way, which remains invisible at the structural level (see Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016).

Consequently, this section provides a framework for analysis that is based on the concept of networks in which policy professionals construct, challenge and advance discourses on policy norms through their interactions. Policy networks allow us to account for the multiple demands on actors that are a result of their various engagements on the international, European and national level. In this framework, institutional structures matter because they empower certain actors and their narratives, including but not limited to EU institutional actors, especially Commission officials. Since there has been little research on networks in EU development cooperation, with few exceptions (Elgström, 2017; Wolff, 2015), this section formulates expectations about how their functioning and interactions affect norm construction and contestation in European development cooperation. To do so, this section first looks at networks, what they are, their function, operation and their role in EU scholarship. Then, the section goes deeper into what shapes the functioning and operation of networks in different institutional contexts, especially how power is vested in networks, by looking at sources of interdependence between actors. This creates expectations about power relations within networks.

Transnational networks

Networks as a concept of social interaction have been known for a long time. Their prominence in social enquiry goes back at least to Stanley Milgram's *The Small World Problem* (1967), which discusses the path length for social networks of individuals in the United States. Policy networks found their way into the study of public policy through analyses of networks in national government. Therein, the comparative work by R. A. W. Rhodes and David Marsh on networks in British politics became very influential for understanding how networks in a particular policy area are structured to facilitate bargaining between stakeholders over policy design (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). An important development was that networks were not only understood as social reality that needed to be analysed and understood (see Atkinson and Coleman, 1992). While all social interaction can be understood in terms of networks, networks were increasingly seen as a distinct

form of organisation for public policy. While there are overlaps, Tanja Börzel (1998, p. 255, emphasis in original) clarified:

> The interest intermediation school conceives policy networks as a generic concept which applies to *all kinds* of relations between public and private actors. For the governance school, on the contrary, policy networks only characterize a *specific* form of public-private interaction in public policy (governance), namely the one based on non-hierarchical co-ordination, opposed to hierarchy and market as two inherently distinct modes of governance.

Hence, policy networks became a central characteristic of the so-called 'governance turn', which has been prominent in EU studies. Early on, the EU provided an ideal field of exploration for the study of network governance, which also contributed to the overall understanding of networks (Börzel, 1998; Peterson, 1995). However, advancing the study of networks was not confined to the EU and influential studies have come from other areas of international governance beyond state hierarchies (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Slaughter, 2004; Stone, 2013). What is important for all these studies is that traditional actors such as states, international bureaucracies, civil society and even multinational corporations seek to put capacities into policy networks, which create new arenas of collective policy construction and allow non-traditional actors to become part of this process.

A policy network describes a 'cluster of actors, each of which has an interest, or "stake" in a given […] policy sector and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure' (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999, p. 8). This description also points to the function of networks, namely, bringing together actors with a stake in a certain problem of collective action who have the capacity to overcome it. Thus, networks not only have an analytical but also a normative dimension, which means that they may be a desirable mode of interaction to ensure effective governance in certain situations (see Jordan and Schout, 2006). Analytically, observers have witnessed the formation of self-organising clusters in which actors have an incentive to negotiate collective agreements in situations of institutional fragmentation and high levels of uncertainty (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Peterson, 1995; Rhodes, 1996; 1997). Typically, policy networks emerge around complex, resource- and knowledge-intensive, often administrative, sector-specific policy problems. To understand policy coordination in situations of organisational interdependence and uncertainty, observers have argued that there is a benefit to analyse networks at the meso-level, i.e., inter-organisational rather than at the individual or systemic level (Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Qvist, 2017). Thus, networks function as a governing structure beyond hierarchy for allocating resources and exercising control.

The main drawback of networks from a governance perspective is that their application is limited to a set of actors and they do not cover a wider system (see Börzel, 1998). Thus, most work on networks only draws on one particular set of actors, often self-delimited and identifiable by an acronym or informal group name, a website and/or even secretariat staff. As Mark Granovetter (1973) remarks in his seminal work, most network models focus implicitly on strong ties, thus confining their applicability to small, well-defined groups. However, one can understand competition over policy norms within a transnational policy community as a set of multiple network relations, which are usually covered by existing concepts, for example, bureaucratic politics (Bach*, et al.*, 2016; Radaelli, 1999), transnational policy networks (Kingah*, et al.*, 2015), advocacy coalitions (Sabatier, 1988; 1998), epistemic communities (Haas, 1992; Zito, 2001) etc. Some of these concepts overlap and the empirical delimitation of networks can be difficult, especially as the analytical focus widens to account for wider interactions between groups. However, understanding how different network relationships or clusters of different sets of actors interact with each other, and how these interactions across networks affects interactions and power within a specific cluster (see also Granovetter, 1973) is constituent of contestation within a multi-level and multi-centre system. Thus, widening the focus to relations between groups and to the analysis of larger segments of the social structure that are not easily defined in terms of primary groups seems beneficial to understand norm advocacy and policy formulation in complex, multi-centre institutional structures that involve multiple types of actors and their networks.

The function of networks varies with the type of network. The type of network, in turn, depends on the structure in which networks form. Based on Rhodes' work, there have been attempts to characterise types of policy networks depending on i) the relative stability of membership; ii) the network's relative insularity; and iii) the strength of resource dependencies (Peterson, 1995, p. 77). As a result, there is a continuum from tightly integrated policy communities to loosely affiliated issue networks. While tightly integrated policy communities control policy formulation within a community of 'insiders' against 'outsiders', issue networks are more inclusive but also less stable and tend to form around *ad hoc* issues. Such networks have also been conceptualised as 'advocacy coalitions' (Sabatier, 1988; 1998) or 'advocacy networks' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). These terms suggest that networks embody both elements of structure *and* agency. In other words, networks can be conceived as a form of collective agency, which influence public policy through norm advocacy, as well as a structure within which social agents engage. Looking at the power or leverage of the collective agency of networks, networks have been used to understand the influence of actors outside of formal policy-

making processes. In particular, this provides ways of understanding how societal actors achieve participation in the public policy-making process.

Societal actors have been central to many network analyses because they have something to offer to actors in bureaucratic politics (see Kingah, *et al.*, 2015). What distinguishes networks as a mode of governance from lobbying or advocacy coalitions is that they are mechanisms of political resource mobilisation where the capacity from policy formulation to implementation is widely dispersed among public and non-public actors. In other words, while lobbying is also based on interdependence between actors, there is less of a dichotomy between rule-makers and those affected who seek to influence specific rules. This influences the kind of ties that actors seek. In networks, actors have intrinsic incentives to form stronger and more permanent ties. Networks bring actors together and allow for effective communication, coordination and resource allocation outside of a hierarchical set of relationships. However, despite having intrinsic incentives, actors can also manipulate incentives. While networks are not the result of intentional design by members (Kahler, 2009, p. 8), members shape the network and its structure by co-opting or excluding actors, providing information, sharing capacity etc. Access to transnational policy networks is partly contingent on whether information, knowledge and expertise generated and shared is a desired resource by those who control access. While bureaucratic actors tend to act as gatekeepers and managers of such a network (see below), at the same time, policy professionals with limited formal competence in civil society organisations (CSOs), such as foundations, charities and think tanks actively seek to get involved in policy construction whether as advocates or advisors (Bugdahn, 2008; Mezzetti and Ceschi, 2015; Stone, 2004).

While societal actors have often been conceptualised as constituent part of 'advocacy networks' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998), strict separations between advocacy and expertise are not always evident as limits are more fluid. For instance, some NGOs do not only function as advocacy actors but also qualify as 'experts'. The role of societal actors varies as they range from mostly advocacy actors with little role as knowledge providers, e.g., campaigning groups, to highly specialised knowledge producers, e.g., research institutes. In most cases, societal actors blend these functions and it becomes difficult to differentiate their role as advocacy actor and knowledge provider. In any case, knowledge is not a neutral resource informing the policy process (see below) but subject to competition between professionals who seek to enhance their claims to expertise (see Sending, 2015). Where these professionals lack formal competence, they seek to engage in the process of

policy formulation by providing statements, opinions and stakeholder views, which draw on networks that go beyond European policy professionals, e.g., local actors in third countries. Through sharing formulations, their interactions and engagement, societal actors have a way of transforming the terms of the debate (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 2). They play an important role in articulating, legitimising and promoting ideas of networks, serve as catalysts to construct consensual knowledge (Metz, 2015; Stone, 2013, p. 38), and thus function as 'norm entrepreneurs' (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). For instance, Stone and Maxwell (2005) stress the role of networks between think tanks in proactively marketing ideas and promoting institutional mechanisms for engaging with knowledge actors.

Scholars have argued that network interactions are particular because they are often based on technical knowledge and expertise (Howorth, 2004; Stone, 2004; 2013; Stone and Maxwell, 2005; Zwolski, 2014). Much of the legitimacy of network interactions and exchanges 'resides in claims to superior technical expertise and/or to increased effectiveness of service provision' (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992a, p. 265). The power and leverage of transnational networks is thus also based on the degree of professionalisation, which contributes to the diffusion and legitimisation of policy ideas across different organisations and against other organisational pressure that shapes behaviour (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 152). To keep control over policy formulation, actors seek to overcome and pre-empt (external) opposition by looking for technical solutions, thus framing problems in a technical way (Peterson, 1995, p. 79). This requires members to be experts. As policy 'experts' who share similar formative backgrounds, specialised knowledge and a common causal understanding, and who are confronted with situations of uncertainty, they tend to identify and bond with each other (Qvist, 2017; Stone, 2013; Stone and Maxwell, 2005). They share the goal of overcoming problems of collective action among themselves and seek to depoliticise and shield the policy process from outsiders. Thus, transnational networks may substantiate a managerial policy discourse (Metz, 2015; Wolff, 2015).

Peter Haas (1992) described the role of a particularly coherent type of network of professionals based on mutually recognised expert knowledge and its influence on policy-making. These so-called 'epistemic communities' are particular in that, although their members have different institutional and national affiliations, they tend to share cognitive and normative ideas about a common policy enterprise and thus engage on this basis with a focus on problem-solving. For example, Mai'a Cross (2011) observes particularly close networks of policy professionals, which are characterised by largely horizontal, argumentative and consensual interactions. Such an approach

tends to stress actors' professional norms for engaging with each other, e.g., consensus-seeking, deliberation etc. However, the difficulty with epistemic communities for the understanding of the functioning of policy networks is that, while these communities might well exist for circumscribed networks of very similar actors, it is analytically difficult to identify and delimit such a community in more complex networks of actors with different goals. Instead, while members of networks tend to be 'policy experts' in the sense that they have knowledge of the policy area and share an interest in overcoming problems of collective action, they possibly have very different ideas, interests and preferences for the outcome of their interactions (Voß and Simons, 2014, p. 742). These differences are not necessarily reconcilable through expert deliberation due to fundamentally diverging goals behind the participation of different actors.

Different institutional environments provide for different distributions of tasks between types of actors and different degrees of homogeneity, which not only affects the collective agency of the network but also its 'inner workings'. The discussion of the form and function of policy networks has already hinted at their operation. In their work on transnational networks in international politics, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998, p. 8) define the working of networks as a mode of social interaction that is 'characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange'. Börzel (1998, p. 255) similarly highlights the horizontal, i.e., 'non-hierarchical co-ordination' as a distinctive quality of networks as mode of governance. Importantly, the horizontal pattern of interaction is an ideal case that serves as a boundary condition for networks as a mode of governance. The functioning of networks is based on the premise that actors have an incentive to coordinate, organise and develop stable relations to maximise the mediation of their interests and beliefs and allocate relevant resources such as funds, expertise and advocacy to facilitate policy-making. Hence, non-public actors strive to participate in these networks while this enables public policy actors to gain access to resources and expertise to overcome collective action problems. Due to the nature of exchange, which is the basis for engagement in networks, and which is based on mutual dependency, networks are interspersed with power asymmetries.

Power and (inter-)dependence

Policy networks are (i) structures for allocating material and ideational resources; (ii) a medium for the diffusion of information, expertise and argumentation; and (iii) they increase the political leverage of policy advocates. In this context, the availability of resources, information asymmetries, and actors' other relationships and networks become relevant. To understand the functioning of networks thus requires taking account of power that is vested in networks. That power is inherently situational, and therefore dynamic and potentially unstable, is what makes it such a central concept for understanding networks (Knoke, 1990, p. 2). Access and participation in networks are not entirely based on legal or formal power and competences. This stands in contrast to fixed sets of power relationships, which are intrinsic to hierarchies. While networks are generally non-hierarchical, power asymmetries play an important role as network participants develop dependences through their participation. As networks are subject to institutional structures, while institutions do not authoritatively structure engagement, they empower actors.

Thus, while power is a central element of networks, it is not immediately evident. In addition, it is neither symmetric nor homogenous. Policy networks have different centres of gravity, are interspersed with power asymmetries and sub-networks. Power within a network therefore 'depends on [the] structural position in a field of connections to other agents as well as actor capability or attributes' (Kahler, 2009, p. 3). These capabilities or attributes can be conceptualised as resources. Resources, in a wider sense, range from the abilities of individuals to persuade others and enhance the legitimacy of arguments in the eyes of third actors, to more structural resources, such as access to expertise and control over funds. For instance, Andreas Dür and Dirk De Bièvre (2007) argue for the case of EU trade policy that although NGOs have gained access to policy-makers, their influence is small as they do not dispose of resources with which they can threaten or enhance political actors' chances of re-election or re-appointment. Thus, different resources are required by different actors to participate in the policy process. This lays the grounds for exchange, which constitutes network interactions and creates (inter)dependences (see Metz, 2015). Such resource interdependence becomes a defining element of network relations and determines the relative power of different actors at a certain point, which is not necessarily equivalent to their formal competences, immediately evident or stable over time.

As suggested earlier, advice, argumentation and advocacy are key resources for actors in institutions of transnational policy-making, especially technical knowledge and expertise. However, expertise is not self-evident and can have different functions for the interactions of actors. Expertise may be the basis of argumentative persuasion between actors who share causal beliefs, notions of validity and common policy goals as members of 'epistemic communities' (Haas, 1992; Zito, 2001). This has been observed, for instance, for interactions among member state representatives in Brussels (Cross, 2011). Crucially, however, persuasion of actors, as in epistemic communities, is not necessary for expertise to matter. Several observers have highlighted bureaucratic expert authority in transnational governance (Boswell, 2009; Chou and Riddervold, 2015; Hobolth and Martinsen, 2013; Nay, 2012; Radaelli, 1999; Riddervold, 2016; Zwolski, 2014). Bureaucratic actors can 'capitalise on policy-oriented information and knowledge to strengthen their influence within their own environment' (Nay, 2012, p. 53). This becomes more likely as they have control over significant human and financial resources to generate information, and pool and control access to it.

Among bureaucratic actors, transnational bureaucracies such as the Commission play a crucial role as knowledge hubs, providers of expertise and capacity, network manager and policy entrepreneurs because of their position within the multi-level administrative system (Egeberg and Trondal, 2009; 2011; Hobolth and Martinsen, 2013). Therein, expertise is an important resource to substantiate and signal bureaucratic authority. As Claudio Radaelli (1999, p. 767) remarks, 'Knowledge enters the policy process in combination with interests, never alone.' Transnational administrations are not simply technocratic actors. They have an interest in actively engaging with problems of collective action and structuring a policy field (Boswell, 2009; Hartlapp, *et al.*, 2014) and therefore seek to pursue 'de-politicization' strategies (Kassim and Le Galès, 2010; Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007; Wolff, 2015). Transnational bureaucratic actors with some degree of autonomous control over human and financial resources thus seek to involve (external) actors that provide relevant expertise and contribute to managerial discourses. This turns bureaucratic actors into policy entrepreneurs. It has been suggested that the Commission can shape policies even in policy areas that are dominated by member states when it is 'at the table' and its bureaucratic expert authority is recognised by others (Chou and Riddervold, 2015; Riddervold, 2016; Zwolski, 2014).

For expertise to be recognised by others in the policy process and to translate into bureaucratic authority, it needs to carry authoritative weight. This is based on the premise that expertise is not merely informing rational policy objectives but used for political argumentation (see

Boswell, 2009; Sending, 2015). Actors therefore seek to demonstrate the relevance of expertise and its operational usefulness in the policy process, which also depends on 'packaging' and framing (Court and Young, 2005; Metz, 2015). For expertise, this implies that it matters who says it and how it is said, e.g., whether policy-makers can 'use' the information in their day-to-day activities. This expectation of expertise remains largely instrumental. That means it is different from that expectation characterising epistemic communities, which is formative. However, the formative function of expertise matters beyond narrow epistemic networks and communities. Expertise is not neutral but subject to contested social process by which certain knowledge claims come to be considered authoritative (see Kuus, 2014; Sending, 2015). A variety of 'knowledge actors', who are operating across governance fields and levels, seek to supply expertise in various forms while simultaneously promoting their own claims to be issue experts. This process highlights the discursive, and formative, component of expertise (Stone, 2013, p. 50). Thus, relevant knowledge and policy-oriented expertise are not merely resources that can be 'exchanged' for funds, organisational support, access etc., which (external) experts and policy professionals require to perform their tasks and participate in the policy process. These interactions also construct the discursive frame by which certain knowledge claims come to be considered authoritative.

The various societal actors that are potentially involved, from multinational corporations, and large, recognised and globally-active NGOs, to state-funded think tanks, individual consultants, and small, independent charities, have different needs and offer different capacities. For example, coordinative and technical 'behind-closed-door' engagement between officials enhances the role of 'tailored', expedient expertise of researchers and consultants while enhancing politicisation and transparency puts individual, well-recognised NGOs in a more powerful position to offer their networks for norm advocacy. The changing demands of the interactions between bureaucratic actors may, therefore, not only affect how these actors engage with societal actors but also impact on the workings of networks among societal actors when engaging with transnational bureaucracies.

Conclusions

The EU's external policy-making occurs within a highly complex institutional set-up in which different types of actors at different levels and in multiple centres coordinate policies. While eventual EU decisions are subject to the political gatekeeping by designated member state officials, norm advocacy is based on the participation of actors within a wider transnational network. To understand this wider policy process, this chapter has proposed an analytical framework of 'discursive networks'. This framework understands the engagement of various actors in terms of discursive competition over meaning-making. This discursive competition happens within a space whose structure is not as readily visible as the formal institutional structures of the EU. Instead, this space is constructed by the interactions and (sub-)networks of a multitude of actors and it is structured by the power relationships between them.

Figure 1. Triangular relationship between institutions, discourses and networks
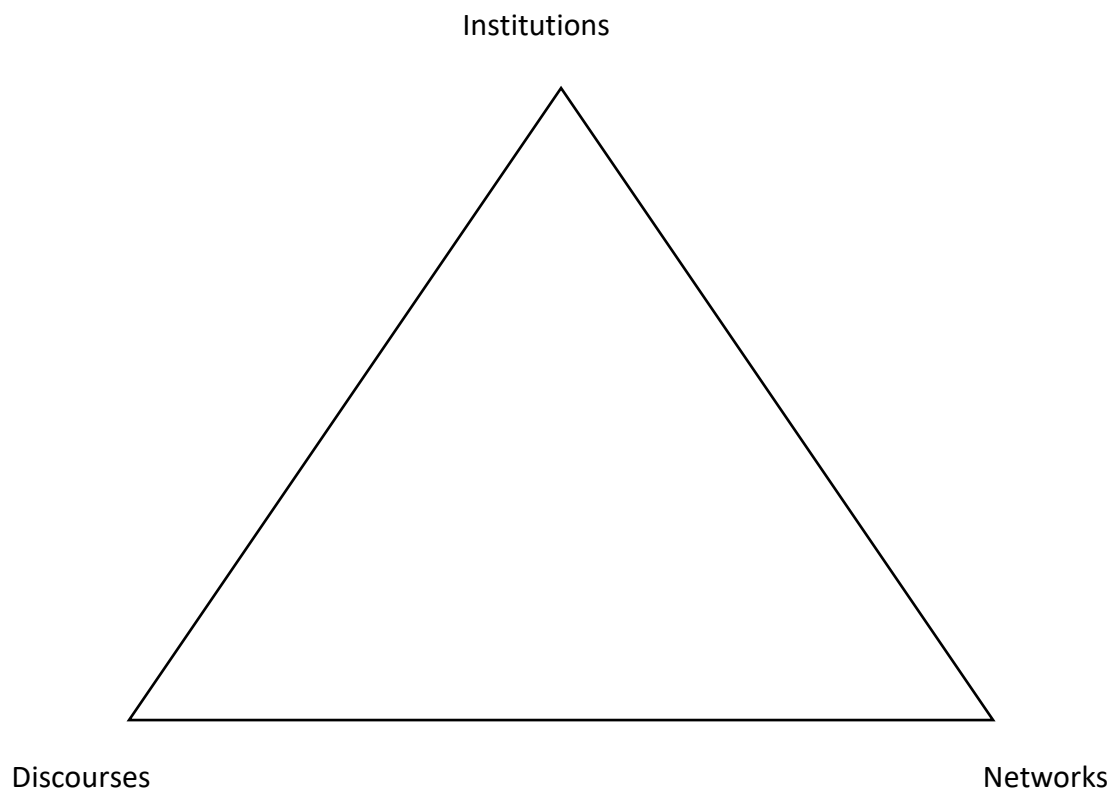
Source: own compilation

Theoretically, the chapter has built on insights from (new) institutionalism, discourse theory and network analysis (see figure 1). It has put forward an agency-oriented approach, suggesting that actors act within an institutional and a discursive context which they shape through their mutual interactions. That institutions matter has been emphasised repeatedly. This chapter has suggested that institutions constitute decision-making nodes around which networks work. In other words, institutional structures determine where decisions are made, who makes them and under what conditions, and who is affected. As a result, they also affect the power of actors in the network that forms around them, i.e., their competence, resources, relative position, access etc. While institutions structure much of the decision-making, these decisions are based on the discursive competition of wider network interactions around these nodes. This competition takes place in a specific discursive context, which generally limits the range of mutually recognised formulations. Yet it leaves actors space to act deliberately and strategically within this context, e.g., to highlight, reframe, challenge or ignore certain aspects. Compared to institutional structures, discourses are more responsive to events and other developments. Actors structure discourses by processes of argumentation to win support. While their discursive actions do not necessarily reveal their 'true' preferences, they provide an indication about actors' collective preferences of and ideas about the EU's role, which are otherwise not directly observable. Thus, we expect that actors adjust their arguments, formulations and narratives to promote a certain policy norm as a reaction to a shifting discursive environment. At the same time, such an agency-focused understanding of discourse presumes that discourses shift with actors' collective choices. We expect, therefore, that collective discursive actions affect the wider discursive environment. However, it needs to be born in mind that this study only looks at a subset of actors so that wider effects are likely to be affected by other groups.

Argumentation and discursive competition occur through social interactions. These interactions are based on mutual interdependences of various network relationships. Networks have been ubiquitous in EU policy-making, but their conceptualisation and functions differ. Networks form where institutional structures do not fully constrain interactions and actors choose to interact to mediate their interests and beliefs. The understanding that is put forward here focuses on the discursive function of network interactions. At the same time, they are based on real-world interdependences, which can be understood in terms of resource dependence that affect intersubjective power relations. These resources are capacities that actors need to engage effectively in discursive competition and to win support among other actors. Thus, it is expected that actors will adjust their ties and relations to gain relevant capacities for discursive competition. Specifically, this

chapter has highlighted the role of expertise for discursive competition and the role of knowledge for the relationship between different actors. How expert claims become authoritative is itself part of this formative contestation. It is expected that adjustments within a primary group of bureaucratic politics will not only affect their networks with societal actors but also the workings of networks among societal actors when engaging with transnational bureaucracies. This conceptualisation of relations makes 'discursive networks' analytically useful. As such, 'discursive networks' are not limited to the restrictive assumptions of networks as a governance mode, but the conceptualisation goes beyond simple (structural) social network analysis.

The subsequent empirical chapters therefore look at how actors 'act' discursively, i.e., how they connect policy problems to solutions in the form of common policy norms through means of language and speech acts. To understand the power of policy professionals in discursive networks, it is helpful to map them within the institutional context and against each other. Then, the empirical analysis turns to how these actors interact to disseminate their arguments and formulations to win support. The empirical parts of this thesis look in detail at how professionals seek to further their preferences and ideas through their interactions with other professionals within the institutional context of EU development cooperation and how this affects the wider discursive environment in which they engage.

2 Advancing Norms for Collective Action

Introduction

Europe's reputation in the world – for better or for worse – has strongly depended on its efforts in development cooperation. It was primarily France, which brought development to the Community 'table', while Germany reluctantly agreed. Britain was then presented with a *fait accompli*, which it quickly sought to change. Thus, much of the competition over a common European development cooperation was a reaction to France's engagement. As development cooperation became one of the first international tasks of the Community, competition over its international role through development cooperation has been relevant for defining patterns of common policy, even though trade and security have dominated the debates at many points. From the beginning, the struggles over reactions to international processes and challenges have also included the question of what 'Community Europe' could or should add. Therefore, this chapter traces how debates and discourse over common policies at the European level, in contrast to different national contexts (see chapters 4 and 5), have advanced over time and have become translated into common policies and institutions. By doing so, the chapter seeks to answer how norms for common action in development cooperation have evolved and on what grounds they have been contested among various policy professionals across EU member states, institutions and civil society in Europe.

Arguably, the 'European project' was not driven by an external purpose. Likewise, close observers have understood common development cooperation to be driven primarily by internal processes and advancements (Dimier, 2014; Grilli, 1993; Holland, 2002). This chapter sets out to see these internal processes and advancements in terms of discursive competitions over the function of collective European action in international development. In this way I also take account of external processes as they become part of the discursive competition processes within the EC/EU. Thus, while this chapter provides a historical account of 'European' development cooperation, it is not its purpose

to (re)produce a comprehensive history of the integration of development cooperation in Europe.[4] Instead, this chapter reproduces those aspects that are relevant to understanding on what argumentative grounds different actors have pursued or obstructed certain forms of common European action in development cooperation. The chapter also introduces the relevant actors, their power within the institutional system, their networks and interactions, and other factors that have shaped their preferences. While member states have been the primary arenas for contestation and promotion of appropriate 'solutions' to international processes (see chapters 4 and 5), with the increasing institutionalisation at the European level, institutional actors became more actively involved. In addition, civil society organisations and corporations in member states have not only contributed to debates 'at home' but also at the European level. Finally, the engagement with third countries' governmental elites and civil society has shaped the arguments of European actors.

The first section (I) of this chapter traces the origins and early debates about a European dimension in development cooperation. This period covers the political struggles prior to the Treaty of Rome, the 'communitarisation' of French association, and British accession to the European Economic Community (EEC). This time was defined by decolonisation, and the European dimension became a way of dealing with the simultaneous developments of European market integration and colonial disintegration. The result was what some observers have called a 'model' of international cooperation, situated between the US-dominated World Bank and the post-colonial, 'clientelist' member state policies (see Arts and Dickson, 2004; Ravenhill, 1985). The second section (II) traces the developments from the early 1990s onwards. Maastricht did not only provide the EU with competence in development cooperation, it also provided the institutional foundations for further growth into a fully-fledged foreign policy actor. The section shows how the wider discourse on effectiveness in international development provided a window of opportunity for actors to promote policy norms that had been less feasible otherwise. Effectiveness as a driver of an EU role thus emerged comparatively late, although concerns about the effects of development cooperation had been around for much longer. Yet, as Sven Grimm (2008, p. 3) notes, what constitutes aid

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[4] There are several comprehensive accounts of the historical evolution of common development cooperation in Europe. Enzo Grilli (1993) traces the integration process prior to the Treaty of Maastricht. Especially for the early period leading to and following Britain's accession, see Carol Cosgrove Twitchett (1978; 1981) and Marjorie Lister (1988). Martin Holland (2002) and the edited volumes by Paul Hoebink (2004b) and Karen Arts and Anne Dickson (2004) cover the evolution since Maastricht. In an updated version to the 2002 volume, Martin Holland and Mathew Doidge (2012) also consider the Lisbon Treaty reforms. For a highly-detailed perspective on the institutional shifts in the EU's supranational aid bureaucracy, see Veronique Dimier (2014).

effectiveness is far from technocratic, but it is 'at the heart of development policy'. The third section (III) traces the diversification of the competition over 'effectiveness' following the empowering of foreign and security policy communities in the EU, especially since Lisbon.

I   Europe's role in the world

At the beginning of the European integration process, the original Six had to (re-)consider their own roles in the world. Promoting a 'common' development cooperation policy, initially in the form of the association of (former) French and Belgium colonies to the Common Market, was a way especially for France of dealing with its declining empire. The role of the EEC in this was originally defined by the French negotiators, but soon thereafter officials from the new institutions and other member states began to challenge this role on various grounds. While the 'globalists' in Germany and the Netherlands pushed for reducing international barriers to trade and were anxious about any colonial stigma, the newly arrived EU officials began to develop their own priorities and arguments. Thus, what started as a policy that was closely intertwined with French policy became increasingly separate and distinct. Subsequent rounds of enlargement further contributed to this, but especially Britain's accession foreshadowed the opening of the debate of the common endeavour.

While the distinctiveness of the common international cooperation policy from the member states was increasingly presented as a 'selling point' and even a model for the rest, the joint endeavour also established a clear separation from member state policies. Several member states became comfortable with this situation as it allowed them to pursue different objectives through the Community and through their bilateral policies. The first part of this section concentrates on the earliest phase of contestation over a common policy in development cooperation to set out the initial discourse surrounding the common policy and the precedents to which actors subsequently reacted. The second part shows on what grounds the Community policy advanced separately from the member states, which created the discursive precedents, but also actors' capacities, e.g., resources, knowledge and networks, that shaped later contestation.

Communitarisation of decolonisation

In the post-war order of Europe, the orientation of the European project became less clear after the defeat of the European Political Community (EPC) and the European Defence Community (EDC) (see, for example, Mahant, 2004; Parsons, 2014). While for most of the original Six this meant taking a generally inward-looking, exclusively economic and Eurocentric focus, from a French perspective it was argued that any continental integration process had to include the country's overseas territories. The inclusion of cooperation with third countries, which were dependencies of member states, reflected the concerns of the imperial member states, primarily France and, to a lesser degree, Belgium. It was in the context of the late colonial period, after the Second World War, that cooperation with these countries was introduced, originally in terms of a policy of association of member states' colonial dependencies in Africa (see Betts, 2005). While international development was not on the agenda of most negotiators, especially not in the Netherlands and Germany, the prospect of decolonisation paired with the French conviction that they would loosen their grip only incrementally meant that there was no way around the topic – even if that meant deferring it to the end of negotiations. French negotiators insisted on including association in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and successfully managed to 'multilateralise' France's policy towards Africa through strategic issue-linking. This set the precedent of further processes of development cooperation in Europe. The initial definition and scope of a European cooperation policy was crucial because it determined the structure and mind-set of collective action to which actors subsequently responded.

The French idea of a role for Europe in the world was already present in Schuman's declaration of 1950, which outlined the imperative of passing on the benefits of European integration to the development of the African continent.[5] However, prior to the Treaty of Rome, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) did not contain any provisions, let alone Community structures, for Schuman's vision of a contribution of European integration to development outside the Community. Nevertheless, the issue remained salient among French negotiators in the subsequent negotiations of political integration in Europe (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, pp. 5-6). When France failed to secure

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[5] For an English language version of Robert Schuman's speech made in the *salon de l'Horloge* at the French Foreign Ministry on 9 May 1950 see, for example, The Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance de l'Europe (CVCE), available at: https://www.cvce.eu/ [retrieved 13 September 2018].

parliamentary consent for the EDC and the six members of the ECSC abandoned the scheme for a political community (EPC), the issue of integrating development cooperation, and in fact all external relations, disappeared from the rehabilitated agenda of European integration, the so-called *rélance européenne*, which began with the Messina Conference in 1955. However, 'Europeanising' association re-emerged swiftly after changes in French coalition politics, i.e., a shift in government to the centre-left, in early 1956. When the foreign ministers of the Six met in Venice in May 1956 to consider the Spaak Report, the French government under Prime Minister Guy Mollet requested the association of France's overseas colonies and territories with the proposed EEC (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 8; Parsons, 2014, pp. 128-9).

It was integration-minded French political elites who regarded the Europeanisation of association as a mechanism for managing France's colonial legacy by spreading the economic benefits from market integration. They pursued this against significant domestic opposition, but they could build their arguments on support from (Francophone) African elites (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, pp. 9-10; Parsons, 2014, p. 130). The French request has been conventionally explained by political, commercial and financial considerations to stabilise the declining empire, especially given French demands for financial burden-sharing with the other European countries (see also Dimier, 2014; Grilli, 1993; Lister, 1988). Indeed, it seems that France was torn between economic reasons for pushing for European continental integration, and political and identity motives that prevented it from abandoning Africa (Claeys, 2004). Hence, market integration in Europe, which was an imperative against the background of post-war economic recovery, required a functional compromise for France's overseas territories with which it shared a common market. At the same time, France's post-war developmentalist colonialism proved to be extremely costly and hardly sustainable (Claeys, 2004, p. 120). Hence, opening formerly closed overseas markets in the process of European market integration would require compensation payments from other European Community members.

While not unchallenged among French elites (Parsons, 2014, p. 130), in 1956, French negotiators understood European integration in the spirit of the Schuman declaration as a contribution to the creation of a Eur-African Community, which had been central to French post-war identity and interests: Investing considerable efforts and resources to build colonial economies and to integrate, educate and 'civilise' the colonial subjects constituted the basis of France's understanding of its commitment to the development of the African continent (Cooper, 2010, p. 12; Garavini, 2012, p. 45). This was ideationally based on the policy of association. The policy advocated

decentralisation and devolving autonomy, building on the retention of native institutions and it was guided by 'the geographic and ethnic characteristics and the state of social development of the particular region' (Betts, 2005, p. 106). Thus, through the changes of colonial policy during the post-war colonial period, association became a policy of development cooperation. Frederick Cooper (2010, p. 9) argues that

> With hindsight, one can find concepts and projects that can be aggregated into a long-term history of 'development': assertions of civilizing missions, claims to be exercising trusteeship, the building of railroads, hospitals and schools, all of which were sometimes subsumed under a rhetoric of European-directed progress.

He continues that this original, European colonial understanding of development resembles an 'implicit version of modernization theory that had developed among French and British bureaucracies well before it was systematized by American social scientists' (Cooper, 2010, p. 14). Thus, the French policy of association was built on a particular understanding of development, namely, i) development as a state responsibly; ii) development as a mutually beneficial/reciprocal process; and iii) development as a discriminatory policy, i.e., only where mutual interest, identities and benefits exist. Accordingly, this understanding assigned specific tasks to (development) cooperation, which proved to be highly persistent, even after decolonisation.

This mind-set of an imperative national relationship with Africa constituted the ideational basis of French post-war colonial policy that French negotiators wanted to preserve when pushing for a European 'Africa policy'. Crucially, this perspective assigned a precise 'task' for the European level. In contrast, suspicion and opposition to the French attempt to 'upload' this kind of external policy was particularly high in Germany and the Netherlands. Both countries opposed the integration of association into the proposed EEC. First, they opposed it based on commercial and financial grounds as they rejected a discriminatory regional trade regime and were not prepared to subsidise French colonial policy (Grilli, 1993). French negotiators demanded the creation of a common fund in exchange for opening the formerly closed markets in Africa – the origin of the European Development Fund (EDF) – to share the burden of France's development assistance. In Germany, in particular, efforts had only begun to develop own aid and development programmes with a relatively small budget and officials wanted to stay clear of any allegation of colonialism (see chapter 4; also White, 1965). However, both the Germans and the Dutch negotiators gave the issue initially low priority and

underestimated French insistence, especially after having conceded much in the area of internal economic arrangements, especially agriculture (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 11).

French negotiators around Mollet presented the argument of association as an 'extremely' constructive compromise. Yet it did not suffice to convince either the Germans or the Dutch (Dimier, 2014, pp. 12-3). Thus, association of overseas territories remained the single last unresolved issue of the EEC negotiations. Eventually, French negotiators, only joined by Belgium, successfully convinced the Germans and Dutch to accept association by making it a pre-condition to France entering the EEC. Despite their strong personal preference for a Community approach to inter-European relations, the French negotiators threatened the entire enterprise by demanding the inclusion of association (Dimier, 2014, p. 13; Parsons, 2014, p. 130). Having already experienced the uncertainty of French approval for European integration in the case of the EDC, the high costs of a non-agreement and the overriding concern in Germany of Franco-German reconciliation turned the issue into high politics. The German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer conceded to French pressure – much against unified German resistance – when France assured that association would not impinge on the political development of overseas territories (when decolonisation became seen as increasingly inevitable), and special but minor guarantees in the area of trade and the right of establishment were made (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 14; Dimier, 2014, p. 13). Eventually, the German and Dutch desire for advancing towards integration within the Community overshadowed their reluctance to association.

The final compromise was made between Prime Minister Mollet and Chancellor Adenauer in early 1957 and the Treaty establishing the EEC was signed in Rome on 25 March of the same year. Part IV of the Treaty outlined the basic principles of association and an Implementing Convention, which included the details of the commercial and aid dimension, was attached. Although the inclusion of association into the European integration project was not framed in terms of development policy and the common fund remained formally separate, the association regime of the Treaty of Rome nevertheless constituted the forerunner of the common development cooperation. It represented a mechanism for promoting the transformation of a set of colonial ties into a multilateral set of relationships while preserving and continuing its basic features (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 17; Grilli, 1993, p. 1; Lister, 1988, pp. 10-3). Crucially, it added a third party, the EEC and its institutions, to an essentially French colonial/post-colonial policy. This not only established a complex tripartite relationship between the EEC, France and the francophone African states (Rempe, 2011), it also created a new set of actors who would develop diverging perspectives and autonomous resources.

Contestation over the EEC's association continued after the Treaty of Rome, but it was complemented by additional actors from the EEC bureaucracy. While French officials saw the emerging common policy increasingly as a way of dealing with the pains of decolonisation, it was nothing with which the other member states wanted to be associated. Hence, the bureaucratic mission of the EEC in the lead-in to decolonisation needed to be acceptable both to the other member states and their common constituency, i.e., the African governing elites. It is in this way that the EEC Commission did not simply reproduce French policy but sought a contribution of its own and tried to avoid duplication by developing new ideas and activities (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, pp. 27, 36-41; Rempe, 2011, pp. 11-2). Although the EEC's policy built on colonial legacies and relied predominantly on French expertise, manpower and networks (Dimier, 2006; 2014), over time, the Commission gained increasing autonomy from France. This was buttressed by the input from development technocrats from other member states, especially the Netherlands, and motivated by the determination of the German and Dutch governments to avoid the stigma of neo-colonialism. A key element of this autonomy was what later became the Commission delegations (since 2009, EU delegations), which provided the new organisation with independent representation and resources from the field (see below). This allowed for a discourse to emerge that saw Europe's role as a mediator between post-colonial national policies and a technocratic international bureaucracy, which was built on the justification of 'being different'.

From the mid-1950s onwards, the prospect of the inevitable decolonisation of Africa became common wisdom in Europe (Grilli, 1993, p. 6). The independence movements in Africa in the late 1950s/early 1960s provided an opportunity for revising the European policy of association. While not having been consulted in the establishment of the association policy (Dimier, 2014, p. 14; Lister, 1988, p. 14), many of the newly independent states wished to keep their association status with the EEC, including its commercial and aid provisions, as they remained largely dependent on their former *métropoles*. This was despite opposition from movements such as Pan-Africanism. Thus, the Commission's policy survived decolonisation as the new local African leaders accepted the EEC's policy as a continuing relationship in the post-colonial era. A main reason for this were the strong personal ties and networks of primarily French, high-ranking Commission officials with African leaders and local authorities through which the Commission could strengthen its role as a development actor in the region that was independent of the member states (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 35; Dimier, 2014, pp. 53-5). This became the backdrop against which other member state governments and officials in the Commission started to understand the Community's purpose in development cooperation.

Community development cooperation evolved in parallel with member states' constructions of development cooperation, which were mostly in reaction to the establishment of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1960 (see also chapter 4). Over time, member states developed their own separate, distinctive national development policies based on their national policy priorities. Germany and the Netherlands assumed a globalist position with a broader perspective of development cooperation, which embodied their own policy norms, including their geopolitical and developmental concerns, and did not adapt to the regionalist Community-level development agenda (Grilli, 1993, pp. 59-60).

Although decolonisation and constitutional turmoil had changed the foundation of French policy towards the former colonies, 'For Paris, […] the end of its colonial empire had not signified the weakening of its politics of national prestige, in favour of common European cooperation with the developing world' (Garavini, 2012, p. 49). However, the French grip on European policy was gradually reduced, which challenged the dominance on French development policy discourse at the European level. On the one hand, the Dutch and German demands for a globalist European development policy were reinforced when the negotiations with Britain for EEC membership in 1961/62 required thinking about how association with the Commonwealth might take place. The issues of independence of former African colonies and the prospect of accommodating Commonwealth countries required a new association agreement.[6] On the other hand, the EEC Commission developed a degree of autonomy. The EDF, attached to and staffed by the Commission, represented a major innovation as it was sufficiently distinct from existing bilateral and multilateral aid institutions through its institutional entrenchment in the EEC Commission. Its aid procedures drew not only on French but also on more rigid and technocratic Dutch aid practices. This led to clashes with former French colonial administrators (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 33; Rempe, 2011, p. 11). In the early 1960s, the Commission started to challenge French practice and proposed to untie EDF aid, which followed parallel discussion on the same topic in the DAC (Dimier, 2014, p. 64). The influence of European but especially French enterprises had been strong. While the untying of aid was rejected at that point, the Commission instead sought to increase control and oversight. Originally, it was forced to use experts and consultancy firms in the control of projects (which were sometimes even implemented by these firms in the first place). However, by the mid-1960s, the Commission had eventually established a

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[6] The association agreements are the Yaoundé Conventions I-II (1964-1975), Lomé Conventions I-IV-bis (1975-2000), and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and its revisions (2000-2020). The first Yaoundé Convention was concluded on 20 July 1963.

'territorial delegation of control' for EDF-funded projects by setting up a firm under Belgium law, which would become the delegations of the Commission (Dimier, 2014, pp. 74-5). Thus, the Commission has long relied heavily on technical consultants, which historically formed the basis of its delegations, later EU delegations. Institutional decision-makers depend on people and organisations who implement and oversee policies and require this input where administrative capacity is limited.

The Dutch and German antipathy to association gave way to acquiescence as France continued to give association a high priority in dealings with the EEC (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 116) although their own national development policies advanced largely independent of it. However, the British bid to join the EEC refuelled the debate between 'regionalists' and 'globalists' (Garavini, 2012, p. 152). Thus, the future of association became a contested topic during the (unsuccessful) British membership negotiations. This resulted in (interim) conventions, first the Lagos Convention of 1966, which never came into force, and the Arusha Convention of 1969. It became evident that Britain was on the side of the 'globalists', promoting liberal trade principles, but it also pushed for non-reciprocity of trade relations (Dimier, 2014, p. 81), making trade a more active means of development cooperation. This conflicted with the French system, which was designed to keep a closed market for its own firms shielded from competition and barriers to its commercial interests. On aid, Britain demanded more rational, impartial and transparent methods and suggested above all 'programming' based on needs, suggesting that poverty should be made the guiding principle for aid allocation (see chapter 5). This insistence was also motivated by getting as much out of the EDF for the Commonwealth countries as Britain contributed to the common fund. The Commission (1971) also took a position in the debate between the 'regional' view of France and the 'global' view, which was dominant in the Netherlands and Germany, when it asserted that existing development policy measures did not keep up with the Community's growing international importance.

'Model' of (global) cooperation?

In their edited volume, Arts and Dickson (2004) capture the transition of European development cooperation from about 1975 to 1990 in their subtitle *From model to symbol*. While they and their contributors argue that this shift was largely incremental, a view that has been widely shared (Dimier, 2014; Grilli, 1993), there had been crucial turning points, which offered windows of opportunity for

challenging the justification of Community policy. According to the former Director-General for Development Dieter Frisch (2008, p. 18), 'benevolent paternalism was followed by a rather freer approach (It's your money!) which gave way in turn to a more demanding approach.' Some observers bemoaned that the unique European 'model' of international development was subsequently undermined by the Community's alignment to World Bank policy rationales of effectiveness and conditionality (Brown, 2000; 2004). However, the justification for a Community policy, which was pushed forward by the Commission and partly supported by Britain in the early 1970s, was already aligned to global policies of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Bank. Instead, several member states began to challenge the justification of EU-level development cooperation due to its lack of effectiveness. While individual policies in practice often continued (see Ravenhill, 1985), the transition towards a global, developmental policy was desired by the 'globalists', including the British, and supported by the Commission, which began to see this policy almost as a foreign policy equivalent (Frisch, 2008).

The first turning point in the justification of Community policy, away from a paternalist or client-based policy narrative, came in the late 1960s. According to Giuliano Garavini (2012), the turning point in development thinking was in 1968, which was characterised by shifts both at the international and at societal level. Among societal movements, there was a widespread perception that association and cooperation policies were based on Western economic imperialism. This was followed by events on the international level in the early 1970s. Following the oil embargo of the Arab members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) between October 1973 and March 1974, developing countries, through the non-alignment movement in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), asserted their position with a proposal for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Garavini, 2012, p. 61). In this Cold War climate of 'Third World nationalism' and the non-alignment movement, the Community was forced to renegotiate its association policy as the prospect of British accession to the EC moved closer after the departure of Charles de Gaulle as France's president. It had already been clear through the 1960s that with British accession, the established association regime would become untenable. Thus, a compromise had to be found as Britain joined the 'globalist camp'.

The gap that existed especially between Britain and France was used by Commission officials to promote their own narrative (Dimier, 2014, p. 105). After the oil and financial crisis, and de Gaulle's brakes on integration, the Commission policy was 'branded as a means to build, or rather, rescue

Europe' (Dimier, 2014, p. 110). What became Lomé I was promoted as a Community policy, which explicitly differed from that of the member states and was unique in the world: It was poverty-oriented as advocated by the World Bank, non-reciprocal as encouraged by the GATT, and included instruments such as the STABEX price stabilisation mechanism explicitly supported by partner countries through UNCTAD. While, in practice, changes were more limited than this radical narrative shift suggests, and cooperation policies may well have long continued to have a 'clientelist' connotation (Ravenhill, 1985), the Community drew its justification from principles of best practice at the international level, including demands from developing countries. To promote such a discourse, the Commission needed both Francophone and Anglophone African states to join forces and overcome the colonial partition. Hence, as in previous times, the Commission used its networks both in Brussels and among African elites, supported in part by British civil servants, and encouraged the elites in the associates to negotiate as a group (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 79).

The result was the first Lomé Convention in 1975 with the newly established group of (sub-Saharan) African, Caribbean and Pacific states, the so-called ACP group. Lomé I became symbolic of a genuine, 'more coherent, rational and ambitious policy of cooperation between Europe and the developing world' (Frisch, 2008, p. 13) despite many continuities. However, this Community approach created its own dilemma. A notionally 'freer' approach of non-involvement became quickly politicised and drew public opposition. On the one hand, it drew opposition from the European Parliament (EP) and NGOs over the 'Faustian bargain' in the case of massive human rights abuses, such as those by Idi Amin of Uganda (Dimier, 2014, pp. 112-3). While prominent cases led to individual sanctions, it did not come with a systematic shift in either policy or narrative. There was a first attempt of the Commission to include a reference to human rights in Lomé II, which was based on a proposal by the British Labour government, but it was quickly abandoned (Arts, 2000, p. 99). Many member states seemed to be comfortable with a situation in which they could maintain relations with countries through the Community that they could not maintain through bilateral relations due to hostile public opinion. On the other hand, the Community approach drew criticism over the lack of consideration for effectiveness, efficiency and evaluation. Efficiency became the main argument of those who criticised Community development cooperation from the early 1980s onwards, such as the British government after the Conservatives returned to power with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's concern for 'value for money' (Dimier, 2014, p. 142). This was also supported by other Community institutions, especially the EP and the European Court of Auditors (van Reisen, 1999, p. 105).

Public concerns over human rights were therefore complemented by growing concerns over the effectiveness of cooperation. According to Frisch (2008, p. 18), the turning point came around Lomé III, and the reason was a growing international concern for effectiveness, based on the observation that official development aid in general, and the project approach in particular, did not produce the expected results. Development policy norms shifted at the global level in favour of conditionality and general multilateral trade liberalisation, devised in and spread from the Bretton Woods institutions to improve aid effectiveness (Brown, 2000; Dickson, 2004; Hilpold, 2002; Ravenhill, 1985, p. 42). Several European member states supported this shift. In Britain, Germany and the Netherlands there had already been an adjustment to the dominant discourse in favour of promoting more rigorous, standardised evaluation practices. While this was presented as 'depoliticising' cooperation, the Commission and more regionalist-oriented member states highlighted the 'a-political' nature of Community development cooperation to conserve a narrative of Lomé as a benevolent and unconditional 'model' of North-South relations (Arts, 2004; Dimier, 2006; Frisch, 2008; Grilli, 1993, p. 37).

The perceived resulting sluggishness of adaptation to changing external circumstances led to frustration and suspicion among more globalist-minded member states, i.e., Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Instead, these countries looked to bilateral and other multilateral channels to deal with external development cooperation challenges such as the African economic and debt crisis (Grilli, 1993, p. 39). Thus, the shift in Community policy narrative came eventually with Lomé IV and the end of the Cold War when efficiency, as promoted primarily from within the World Bank, came to the heart of European policy.

II   Between efficiency and effectiveness

The end of the Cold War was not only a significant event in world history. It also offered the opportunity for fundamentally changing the basis of development cooperation: It allowed donors to reconsider the grounds of aid-giving as they were absolved from the political considerations of the Cold War. This also played a role for international institutions, which were eager to present rationales for aid that seemed less politically-motivated and more 'objective' (see, for example, World Bank,

1992). Simultaneously, European integration went through major changes, which culminated in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) of 1992. As a result, development cooperation became *de jure* a Community competence. Competences were 'shared' between the level of the Community and the member states. This meant that a single EU structure for delivering aid and development cooperation through the supranational Community level was created in parallel to the national development policies of the member states. These changes opened a window of opportunity for re-evaluating the EU's role in development cooperation *vis-à-vis* the member states. While especially the in the Commission, joined by France, officials understood these changes as a chance to expand the EU's role in terms of coordination, other actors, especially in Britain, but also in Denmark and, after the 1995 enlargement, in Sweden raised efficiency concerns that challenged the Community's operation in development cooperation. This section thus traces how Community development cooperation evolved after Maastricht, paying attention to the role of various actors who subsequently joined the debate.

Efficiency and new public management

Political conditions were formally introduced in all Community development policies from the early 1990s onwards, but their introduction had been foreshadowed in the 1980s. The Northern enlargement (Sweden, Finland and Austria) in combination with the end of the Cold War buttressed this shift towards the political aim of conditionality in Lomé IV, notably respect for human rights, democracy and 'good governance'. Officials in Spain and later in Austria saw this as an opportunity of reallocating financial resources to Latin America and Eastern Europe, respectively. Sweden had long implemented such policies domestically. There was also support for these political elements within the Commission. The increasing pressure to introduce 'political' elements in the Community's development policy came with calls for standardising cooperation, i.e., putting it on 'objective', measurable and rational criteria (Brown, 2004, pp. 28-9). This effectiveness narrative emerged as the dominant international justification for development cooperation from the early 1990s onwards. The focus on wider conditions was in line with international discourses, especially from the World Bank (1992), which based its legitimacy and bureaucratic authority on significant research and network capacities, including recruiting and co-opting its critiques in NGOs and top-tier universities. In comparison, there had only been sporadic attempts by officials to involve external experts and

academics in the Community (Dimier, 2014, pp. 151-3). Thus, adjusting to these international standards represented a further step towards 'rationalisation' of the EC bureaucracy. Almost paradoxically, the introduction of political conditions was presented as depoliticising Community cooperation.

While the EU began to act more openly as a political actor through forms of cooperation that were introduced in Maastricht, i.e., the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the justification of the EU's role in development became increasingly dependent on managing policies effectively. Against the background of increasing demands for effectiveness, the Commission promoted coordination and complementarity as a contribution to the effectiveness of European development policy due to the incrementally grown, fragmentary relationship between the Community and its member states:

> From a Community point of view, collaboration between the European institutions and the Member States on the design, monitoring and thrust of their operations, which is increasingly seen as a <u>sine qua non</u> of effectiveness, has not been close enough to give Community ODA the image of a concerted, consistent and efficient policy. (European Commission, 1992, p. 7, emphasis in original)

The Maastricht Treaty, for the first time, institutionalised an EU role through a Community mandate to ensure complementarity of development cooperation within the EU, and the Commission was assigned to promote coordination (Hoebink, 2004a; Loquai, 1996). While it was the Dutch who had pushed for the introduction of these provisions into the Treaty, as part of the so-called 'Maastricht Cs', complementarity, coordination and coherence (Hoebink, 2004a, p. 2), it was primarily a coalition of Commission officials, joined by France, who promoted coordination. The Maastricht provisions and the new Community competences tempted the Commission to strive to promote 'a sort of functional integration' (Carbone, 2013a, p. 345) by suggesting the transition towards a single policy by 2000 (European Commission, 1992). French officials joined the Commission in its support for coordination as they saw the need for strengthening a particular European vision on development issues in opposition to some of the existing Bretton Woods policies, particularly in the field (Hoebink, 2004a, p. 6). However, this was met with suspicion in several member states, which remained unwilling to cede control over their national policies, potentially (again) to the domination of France (Holland, 2002, p. 172; Orbie, 2012, p. 26). Outside these bureaucratic circles only few observers initially picked up these provisions, more prominently the European Centre for Development Policy Management

(ECDPM) (e.g., Loquai, 1996), a Maastricht-based think tank, which has continuously emphasised its distinctive (African-)European focal point in contrast to other European development think tanks.

Hence, in practice, the Commission's enthusiasm was quickly exhausted when it became evident that its arguments for integration based on effectiveness could not convince member states. In the post-Maastricht climate of increasing suspicion of the Commission, the general willingness of member states of pooling competence, resources and authority centrally with the Commission in Brussels was limited. Instead, a majority of member states stressed the importance and autonomy of bilateral development policy from an increasingly dysfunctional Commission policy (Holland, 2002, p. 172), which became the target of criticism based on a lack of efficiency and effectiveness of its own policies. Criticism came from within the EU institutions (European Court of Auditors, 1997), other international organisations (OECD, 1998), and member states. Especially British actors were particularly outspoken (International Development Committee, 2000; Short, 2000, see also chapter 5). The argument was that the Commission was struggling to manage its own policy. Programming was criticised as slow, aid disbursement lagging, and monitoring insufficient. In this situation, coordination would remain out of question as long as the Commission had not brought its own house in order. A patchwork of hardly-coordinated European policies remained and the resulting layering of objectives and procedures horizontally between policy areas and vertically with and among member states left the Commission struggling with the complex task of fulfilling its overburdening role (Dearden, 2003, pp. 106-7).

Within this patchwork, the justification of a distinct Community policy became increasingly contested as especially British political elites sought to answer to their constituency what the value-added of Community policy was. In effect, however, much of the criticism towards the Commission was geared towards its inefficiency and cumbersome management practices that led to a significant backlog of outstanding commitments (see, for example, International Development Committee, 2000). This was at odds with a general conviction inside the Commission to be seen as a potent policy entrepreneur:

> Adjustment in the implementation of developing policy is also required at the operational level with a view to increasing the effectiveness of aid. This would be done by streamlining aid instruments, promoting sector-wide approaches, increasing decentralisation and devolution of responsibilities, and seeking complementarity with the Member States and other donors. To do this the Commission intends

> to further strengthen its efforts in coordinating its activities with Member States. (European Commission, 2000, p. 6)

As a reaction to its own aid coordination crisis, this initially required demonstrating the ability to reform its own aid management. Consequently (and as part of the general reaction to the failure of the Santer Commission), the Commission embraced the new management narrative and embarked on a bureaucratic reform process to maintain its bureaucratic authority (Levy, 2006), also in development cooperation (Dearden, 2003; Grimm, 2006; 2008). Following this reform, the Commission's aid bureaucracy – since 2001 DG Development and Relations with ACP States (DG Dev), and EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO) – emerged as a central actor and policy entrepreneur in development cooperation. The 2000 reforms also came with so-called 'deconcentration' by which the delegations were given more autonomy in the programming process to reduce bureaucratic processes, which were seen as slow, cumbersome and ineffective (Dearden, 2003; 2008). However, increasing pressures to introduce audit, evaluation and accounting measures simultaneously reduced the autonomy of the delegations (Dimier, 2014, pp. 205-6). Nevertheless, these managerial reforms seemed sufficient to reassure also more critical member states, including Britain and Germany (see chapters 4 and 5).

'Federating' development policy

The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 heralded a discursive surge of effectiveness in contrast to the narrower concept of managerial efficiency. With the goals' clear focus on defined, measurable outcomes, they were not primarily about efficient management but about the effectiveness of aid, i.e., the extent to which aid contributes to achieving these targets. The MDGs focused on extreme poverty and basic service provision. This narrow focus on poverty eradication brought back 'need' as a relevant criterion for aid allocation. However, the previous reallocation of resources to Latin America and Eastern Europe, and to the support for democratisation, were unfit for the shorter-term view of the MDGs. Instead, Europe's main recipients by then were less poor countries closer to 'home'. Thus, as there was hardly more money available, the urgency and clear sense of direction that came with the MDGs offered an opportunity of promoting coordination by the EU in the interest of aid effectiveness and eventually led member states to accept and even promote coordination initiatives of the Community. Thus, from the early 2000s onwards, even the traditionally

more critical member states expressed more sympathy for the Commission's initiatives of increasing coordination and institutionalising measures for increasing aid effectiveness (see chapter 3).

In this context, the Commission drew on wider societal support, their public contribution and endorsement, and inclusive network interactions. Already in its overarching 2000 Communication the Commission suggested that

> In elaborating the present statement, the Commission has benefited from comments and suggestions made by stakeholders in civil society, multilateral development agencies, NGOs, private sector, during a preliminary consultation process. (European Commission, 2000, p. 5)

In contrast to other member states, such as Britain, the Commission did not have a domestic constituency on whom it could rely for political support. While the European Parliament was seen by staff in the Commission as an ally (Hoebink, 2004b, p. 50), it was still eager to increase its own institutional power. Moreover, the standardisation and professionalisation of development cooperation had subsequently eroded the capacity of Commission officials to maintain their personal networks with African political elites (Dimier, 2014, p. 161; see above). It is in that time that networks of actors shifted as more actors sought to become involved. It was only from the early/mid-2000 that the Commission's bureaucracy was able to incentivise and strengthen a transnational network on whose expertise, legitimacy and advocacy it could subsequently draw.

The EU institutions had engaged with Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) since the 1970s through participatory policy frameworks and support schemes which focused on their participation in Community programming. The Commission only started a systematic, structured engagement following the Communication on the participation of non-state actors in EC Development Policy (European Commission, 2002). Subsequently, when the original NGO-EU Liaison Committee[7] was dissolved after some controversy in January 2003 (Carbone, 2008b, p. 245), DG Dev established a new umbrella organisation, the Confederation of European NGOs for Relief and Development (CONCORD). Its purpose was to provide a more structured access to and engagement of CSOs, e.g., through the Commission's system of expert groups (since 2005), ensure EU-level civil society representation and avoid duplicating efforts, and to become a hub of policy networks from the member states. The Commission has since supported CONCORD financially and institutionally. At the same time,

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[7] Established in 1975 and usually known by its French acronym, CLONG, it represented European NGOs, grouped in national platforms, before EU institutions (see Carbone, 2008b).

CONCORD is the principal public 'watchdog' for European development cooperation, including the Commission, the delegations and the member states. It names and shames what it considers to be problematic in the EU's development cooperation and related policies (especially with regard to coherence). Other input came from think tanks and researchers. Again, most organisations and association had been around for some time at that point. ECDPM, for example, had been founded in 1986 but became more involved. One example of the increasing public expert engagement was the series *Studies in European Development Co-operation Evaluation*, which was commissioned by the combined evaluation bureaus of the European Commission and several EU member states (Hoebink, 2004c).

In the years following the UN Millennium Declaration, the Commission's initiatives linking donor coordination to enhancing effectiveness (see chapter 3) became recognised as a major achievement (Carbone, 2007; 2008a; Grimm, 2006; 2008; Orbie and Versluys, 2007; 2008). It received global momentum when it became an integral part of the global discourse in the early/mid-2000s. This happened because the international community began debating the means of achieving the MDGs with a focus on donor governance. Following the first UN Financing for Development conference in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, the donor community represented in the OECD-DAC dominated the debate. Concerns about overcoming aid fragmentation initially dominated in the subsequent OECD's series of High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness. The international agenda started off with a general consensus on principles for aid effectiveness, especially harmonisation, outlined in a declaration in Rome in 2003. The Commission, itself a member of the DAC, learnt to play a crucial role in these international deliberations because it was able to facilitate pre-coordination of member states positions (Carbone, 2007; Holland, 2008). Following the Commission's initiative in 2004, member states agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation in order to translate the Monterrey Consensus into practice (Council of the European Union, 2004c). The outcome of this Working Party was the EU's coordinated position for the Second High Level Forum (HLF), which took place in Paris in late February/early March 2005 (Council of the European Union, 2004b). The outcome of this meeting, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, reflects much EU input (Carbone, 2007; Holland, 2008). The Paris Declaration established a roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It established several principles of aid effectiveness, i.e., ownership of developing countries over their own strategies for poverty reduction, alignment of donors with local systems, harmonisation of donor policies, focus on results, and mutual accountability between donors and partners.

Within the discursive environment of aid effectiveness, the 'European Consensus on Development' (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006) became the first instance whereby member states agreed on common development policy norms for all European development policies (Carbone, 2007, p. 56). The agreement constituted a political commitment to align all development policies within the EU to a 'common vision' without full delegation of policy authority to the supranational level (Carbone, 2010; Orbie, 2012, p. 20). This largely declaratory 'vision' was complemented by an operational 'aid effectiveness package', consisting of a set of Commission Communication (European Commission, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c). On the one hand, this package was intended to improve EU-level aid delivery. On the other hand, it promoted a common framework for the programming of aid with the member states, including joint programming, to operationalise the Paris principles on aid effectiveness, especially 'harmonisation' and 'alignment'. The key elements of this package were the harmonisation of procedures between donors, coordination of policies, alignment with partner countries' multiannual programming cycles, and synchronisation of member states and Commission multiannual programming processes. It was in this way that the EU came to be seen as a 'federator' of European development cooperation (OECD, 2007, p. 12), which also became widely shared and promoted among researchers and NGOs in Europe (e.g., Corre, 2009; Orbie and Versluys, 2007).

However, such a 'federating role', as the OECD's peer review first called it (2007, p. 12), where aid policy approximation occurs through flexible, voluntary and decentralised initiatives (Carbone, 2007, p. 31; 2008a; OECD, 2012, p. 22), became quickly challenged. While member states' scepticism towards each other and the common institutions increased during the economic and financial crisis, it was the role of development cooperation in the EU's external action which was mostly up for contestation. Coordination of development cooperation was one way of keeping Europe's influence alive locally and on the international level. Yet, simultaneously, among EU member states, institutional actors and observers there were calls for institutions that represented a real foreign policy of the EU (Biscop and Andersson, 2008). Thus, development cooperation did not need to be the Union's *quasi* foreign policy. While there had been attempts at coordination of foreign policy since 1970 (see Pijpers*, et al.*, 1988), the EU's role in the world continued to be heavily driven by development cooperation. Yet foreign and security concerns increasingly overshadowed development cooperation within the EU's institutions. This was enhanced by the seeming reduction of development cooperation to objective management operations and the reluctance of subsequent development commissioners. Instead, issues of political salience, which became openly debated in

increasingly sophisticated institutional arenas, began to overshadow contestation about the EU's role in the world.

III   Security, impact and comprehensiveness

With the increasing prominence of an explicit foreign and security policy, and since 1999, defence policy, the effectiveness of the EU's role in the world through development cooperation has become fundamentally challenged. After Maastricht, a comprehensive European foreign policy remained a long-term vision. The EU's external action consisted of its commercial policy, Council decisions such as sanctions, and Commission-driven cooperation in developing countries. Supranational competence, common funds, and representation on the ground and at the international level lay with the Commission. The frustration over Europe's failures in conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s empowered a policy community of European security actors pushing for a strategically oriented mobilisation of the EU's external capacities (Cornish and Edwards, 2001; 2005; Edwards, 2006; Matlary, 2006; Meyer, 2006; Whitman and Haastrup, 2013).

Security cooperation, for instance, in areas of crisis management and peacekeeping, had emerged outside the EU framework and was formally incorporated only in the late 1990s. This brought new European actors to the foreground when the 1999 Cologne Council appointed Javier Solana as the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy to help advance both the CFSP and, in particular, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Not much later, international terrorism and concerns over fragile states meant that member states began to share an urgency of security cooperation, which convinced them to promote stronger security overtones in Community policy. Solana's European Security Strategy (ESS) made this clear when it stated that 'Security is a precondition for development' (2003, p. 2), heralding a discourse of 'securitisation of development' (Bergmann, 2018; Grimm, 2014; Keukeleire and Raube, 2013; Youngs, 2008). Thereafter, proponents pushed development cooperation as a means of enhancing European security through supporting fragile states (Council of the European Union, 2007b; 2008; European Commission, 2003; European Council, 2003). Failing and fragile states came to be perceived as breeding grounds for terrorism and other security threats to Europe. From Afghanistan/Pakistan the focus soon spread to the area

stretching from West Africa over Mali and the Central African Republic to the Horn of Africa/East Africa (Bagoyoko and Gibert, 2009; Olsen, 2015; Orbie and Del Biondo, 2015).

While this form of 'securitisation' was challenged by the Commission, Commission officials themselves advanced security on the EU agenda. Development professionals in the Commission also pushed the link to security cooperation and sought to 'frame' security aspects as a component of its development cooperation (Sicurelli, 2008). Under Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid from 2004 to 2009, the Commission's discourse on development cooperation became more political to preserve and possibly expand its autonomy in strategic policy-making. Especially in Africa, the EU attained additional policy options, including on security-related matters, but compartmentalisation persisted (Carbone, 2013b; 2013e; Olsen, 2008; Sicurelli, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa emerged as the focal point for its engagement. The African Peace Facility (APF) became symbolic of the Commission's ambition (Carbone, 2013e). Funded by Commission-administered funds, the APF was established in 2004 and constitutes the main source of funding to support the efforts of the African Union (AU) and African Regional Economic Communities around peace and security. Consecutive policy proposals on an EU Africa policy (European Commission, 2005a) and an EU policy on fragile states (European Commission, 2007b) stressed the role of development for security, pushing to mainstream development in all EU external action, and improving coordination and coherence with the member states.

That the Commission was 'losing' this discursive competition became clear with Lisbon. Failing or fragile states and the potential threat that they pose became the current topic, a discourse to which the Commission had also contributed. Subsequently, effectiveness has become understood among the top levels of the EU institutions as the EU's *impact* in third countries (see chapter 3), which was to be achieved by better management and alignment of all its external means. Lisbon was the attempt to put a managerial fix to the way in which these means were aligned within the EU's institutional system. The reforms of the Lisbon Treaty came with changes in the management structures and in the set-up of actors at the institutional core, especially the emergence of new actors with responsibility for development cooperation, i.e., the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) and a diplomatic service, the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Lisbon reforms meant that tasks previously exclusively

undertaken by the Commission were now shared.[8] This situation required increasing contacts between Commission and EEAS staff. Especially at the beginning, there was a strong sense that information flows and coordination were hampered by rigid structures, inflexibility and bureaucratic rivalry between the two institutions, dominated by a 'silo mentality' to protect their own interests (Furness, 2012; Koenig, 2011). The EEAS capacity at a working level,[9] both in terms of in-depth knowledge and human resources responsible for coordinating development cooperation was limited and required prioritisation, leaving the lead on development questions to the Commission. However, DG DEVCO – and its predecessors – had hardly been a cohesive actor (Carbone, 2007; Dimier, 2014). There have also been tensions both vertically between the working and political levels, and horizontally, which led to silos that were not overcome with Lisbon (Interviews DEVCO#1, #5; EP#5).

Lisbon maintained the primacy of poverty eradication in its relations with developing countries. However, the EU's subsequent efforts at increasing coherence of the EU's (external) action by aligning all policy instruments at the EU's disposal to overarching objectives were driven strongly by the HR/VP and the EEAS who pushed it in parallel to the Commission's competing interpretations (Faria, 2014; Furness and Gänzle, 2017). At the highest political levels, observers thus perceived 'jealousies' between the institutions, especially as the profile of the EEAS on development increased under Federica Mogherini while keeping a foreign policy orientation (Interviews DEVCO#1; EEAS#3; EP#4; PREP#1). In contrast, in some areas 'the EEAS and the new DG DevCo have started to build a pragmatic working relationship' (Furness, 2013, p. 123). The Lisbon Treaty made coordination between the EU member states and the institutions a legal obligation and the reallocation of competence from the Commission to the EEAS was aimed at integrating development cooperation into a more comprehensive EU foreign policy system. The institutional reforms further empowered

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[8] The Council Decision of July 2010 provided the EEAS with competences in development cooperation by transferring developing country desks to the EEAS and giving it co-responsibilities for the first stages of the development programming process (Council of the European Union, 2010a). The head of the EEAS, Catherine Ashton, followed by Federica Mogherini in 2014, was given responsibility for ensuring coherence of the EU's external action, including development cooperation. Nevertheless, the Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs (2010-2014) and since 2014 Neven Mimica, maintained overall responsibility of development cooperation. This involves setting EU development goals and priorities, ensuring that the EU delivers on its aid commitments, and working with national governments to make the EU's development cooperation more effective. Managing the implementation of the EU's external aid instruments, financed by the EU budget and the European Development Fund (EDF), remained within the responsibility of the Commission's DG DEVCO. DG DEVCO has also remained responsible for fostering coordination between the EU and its member states and ensures the external representation of the EU in development cooperation (Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, 2015).

[9] The unit "Development Cooperation Coordination - VI.B.2" is responsible for EU development cooperation in the EEAS. It mirrors the tasks of DG DEVCO/A2.

those actors who wanted to see a stronger security focus. Some member states, particularly France, had already begun to promote security aspects in the EU's relationship with developing countries on the political level, especially concerning the significance of tackling state fragility (Bagoyoko and Gibert, 2009, pp. 800-1; Olsen, 2015). However, immediately after Lisbon, HR/VP Catherine Ashton was preoccupied with setting up the EEAS, focused on CFSP and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and left development cooperation largely aside in practice (Interview EEAS#4; Smith, 2013b). At the same time, Commission President José Manuel Barroso sought to keep Commission competences untouched, including keeping the HR/VP out of development cooperation.

In contrast, from 2014, the incoming HR/VP Federica Mogherini put more pressure on Commission policies, including through joint Communications (e.g., European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015). Mogherini also had the support from the incoming Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker (2014, p. 3). Empowered in this way, EU institutional actors especially in the EEAS and other policy professionals in security think tanks such as the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) pushed jointly towards a discourse that challenged the pursuit of development cooperation for the sake of international development. As Nathalie Tocci from the EUISS remarked on the preparation process of the EU's Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016:

> The strategic planning division within the EEAS was a key asset in this process, as was the input of the top management of the EEAS. The EUISS played a critical role and was the natural hub to coordinate the public outreach and consultation dimension of the strategic reflection. (Tocci, 2016, p. 463)

Simultaneously, Mogherini's appointments of development experts to her cabinet, especially Felix Fernandez-Shaw, was seen to increase her credibility for shifting pressure on development cooperation away from particularistic Commission and member state interests to an institutional but securitised centre (Interviews DEVCO#1; EEAS#4; PREP#1). While the EU's external policies had already been overtaken by the language of a 'comprehensive approach' (Council of the European Union, 2014a; European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013), Federica Mogherini's 'Global Strategy' (2016) made clear that Europe's coherence in the form of an 'integrated approach' would define its effectiveness in the world. The EU's Global Strategy, which Mogherini presented to the European Council on 28 June 2016, epitomised this discursive shift towards more strategic external action on the part of the EU. It has

been described as an instance of European 'realpolitik', which acknowledged the limits of the EU's capabilities and the world's intractability (Biscop, 2016).

Mogherini prepared the EUGS to guide the EU's global action, and to replace its predecessors, the ESS of 2003 and its Implementation Report of 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2008). The Global Strategy aimed at contributing to a joined-up EU external action in line with the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty by identifying and agreeing on a set of interests, priorities and goals as well as on the means to achieve them (Tocci, 2015). It was meant to provide the EU with the ability to make choices and prioritise in order to mobilise the instruments at its disposal (Mogherini, 2015b). In the strategic review of June 2015, which preceded the member states' mandate for drafting the strategy (Mogherini, 2015a), the HR/VP had indicated her intention of 'moving beyond a narrower "security" strategy and towards a broader "global" strategy that mobilised all the EU's external action instruments' (Tocci, 2015, p. 119). The strategic orientation presupposes a focus on protecting Europe and its citizens (Mogherini, 2015a; 2016). Mogherini's push for a strategic orientation is a particularly significant instance of challenging the existing system of dependencies between policy areas, particularly EU development cooperation (while trade remained largely excluded). Against this background, the Commission suggested a new approach for a European development policy framework, replacing the European Consensus of 2006 (European Commission, 2016b). It sat between calls for challenging the guiding principles of European external action as identified in the Global Strategy and subordinating a 'sectoral' strategy to the emerging discourse.

Conclusions

The role of European integration in development cooperation has been contested from the very beginning. Drawing primarily on existing literature, this chapter has shown how policy norms for collective action have been advanced over time. Norm advocacy for collective European action in development cooperation goes back to the early days of integration. Initially, these norms reflected mainly French officials' ideas of how collective action benefits – or even enables – the France's participation in the Common market. However, early on, norm advocacy became a more contested process in which multiple actors competed over the purpose of collective action. Especially the newly

empowered Commission officials sought transnational support for their advocacy of a distinctive European cooperation policy. The result was a parallelism of European and national processes for norm construction guiding development cooperation.

The transnational dimension of policy professionals and issue specialists has mattered because these professionals have been able to engage across different institutional and discursive contexts in joint norm advocacy. Despite the high politics at the beginning and occasional intergovernmental bargaining, international development remained a field for policy specialists who engaged with various non-state actors, consultancies and researchers, other international bureaucracies, and African elites. This suggests that competition and contestation of collective action in Europe has never occurred purely between states and their representatives but as part of a wider process in which the organisation of the transnational has mattered. What started as a policy closely intertwined with French views became increasingly separate, requiring its own justification. Competition over this policy was reinforced with British membership. Common European policy norms increasingly followed global norm advocacy, also due to pressure from within, especially from the British. As a result, the distinctiveness of the Community in development cooperation became substantially challenged. A growing awareness for and the dominance of a limited, efficiency-oriented understanding of effectiveness made a distinctive Community policy untenable in the eyes of several actors, especially in Britain, but also among other EU institutions. Initially, this became evident over expectations for standardising management procedures and enhancing efficiency of aid operations, which challenged the Community role represented by the Commission.

The subsequent discussion over the EU's added value led to a reformulation of the EU's role as a venue for constructing common policy norms in development cooperation for the institutions and its member states. Global as well as internal shifts opened windows of opportunity for promoting norms for collective action that extended to the policies of the member states. The dominant driver for such all-EU norms was 'effectiveness'. While especially British officials initially emphasised efficiency within the EU institutions, the Commission's transnational norm advocacy shaped the global discourse on effectiveness in the early/mid-2000s with a focus on harmonisation. Shaping the discursive competition over the framing of effectiveness has been key as the framing offered a discursive justification for subsequent norm advocacy. The Commission tied common policy norms to the evolving international understanding on 'effectiveness' – which will be investigated more closely in the following chapter. However, that such a discursive frame is not stable but permanently subject

to contestation has been suggested in the last part of this chapter. This final part has shown how development cooperation became subsequently challenged from within European foreign and security policy communities.

By tracing the evolution of Community/EU development cooperation, this chapter has concentrated on the discursive competition over the role of European integration in development cooperation at crucial turning points rather than just on processes. By doing so, the chapter has illustrated how the discursive context becomes relevant for understanding what policy norms can be promoted and how they are promoted. The chapter also showed how EU policy norms were based on the participation of wider networks of actors, from the uploading of French priorities, based on discursive links with Belgium, Commission officials and Francophone African elites, to the subsequent reactions from different policy communities and their respective networks.

These illustrations have suggested that different discursive environments allow actors to capitalise on them by drawing on discursive networks when they can adjust their narratives and arguments accordingly. Thus, more than just the legitimacy of their arguments, different discursive environments affect the interactions within the wider network across EU institutions, member states and civil society. To understand which ties between primary groups can be 'activated', and what the role and power of groups has been at different points in time, this chapter also introduced the relevant actors, their capacities, networks etc. in EU development cooperation. The chapter has highlighted the centrality of the ability of member state administrators to 'use' domestic pressures, arguments and advocacy. France, most prominently at the beginning of the common development cooperation, and Britain during its membership bid and again around 2000 have pushed other member states and EU institutions to accept their narratives by using domestic ties in a discursive network, which enhances, legitimises and promotes preferred norms. As a result, their advocated norms have become accepted (and even defended by those who initially opposed them) as they were picked up by wider networks. The extent to which the Commission could similarly advance common policy norms thus also depended on involving other actors.

Finally, having provided an overview covering the 'lifespan' of common development cooperation, the chapter has demonstrated how 'effectiveness' emerged as the dominant discourse in EU development cooperation around which subsequent policy and institutional reforms revolved. Therefore, the subsequent discussion will focus on policy discussions about the effectiveness of European development cooperation since the early 2000s.

3 Advocating Effectiveness through EU Norms

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the 'effectiveness' of aid and development cooperation has been one of the most strongly contested discourses in international development among aid providers. The EU, as outlined in the previous chapter, has actively participated in this global discursive construction. At the same time, the EU has advocated policy norms for collective EU action as its contribution to the international efforts. The goal of this chapter is to identify how, in what ways and under what conditions policy professionals have contributed to these policy norms for collective action at the level of the EU. The EU level is relevant because it constitutes the central, institutionalised hub for transnational interactions of European development policy professionals. Thus, the chapter adds to the overarching research question how these actors contribute to the advocacy of policy norms for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states.

This chapter looks in detail at the time from the early 2000s to the mid-2010s. Centrally, in this time, the EU advocated policy coordination as a norm to enhance effective development cooperation in Europe. Coordination of aid policies and the approximation of development cooperation practices has long been a central theme for European policy-makers, as well as for observers in think tanks and academia (e.g., Carbone, 2013c; 2017; Corre, 2009; Delputte and Orbie, 2014; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2013; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2017; Lehtinen, 2003; Loquai, 1996; Orbie, 2003; Steingass, 2015). It was the European Commission which brought up the issue as early as the 1970s (Commission of the European Communities, 1971; 1972), and again in 1992 (European Commission, 1992) and the early 2000s (see also chapter 2). While member states had previously tended to discard EU initiatives that promoted policy coordination and approximation, proposals of the mid-2000s generated some enthusiasm, also among academic observers (e.g., Carbone, 2008a; Orbie and Versluys, 2007). These proposals were anchored in international aid/development effectiveness principles of their time, i.e., ownership, alignment, harmonisation, transparency and accountability.

They were advocated based on their contribution to enhancing aid effectiveness and shaped the international discourse on effective development cooperation.

Since then, the EU has formulated and re-formulated common policies, such as budget support, division of labour, joint programming, and a results framework, which stood in conflict to the interests and identities of many of the actors involved. Yet EU actors have promoted these common policies even at unfavourable moments when suspicion among member states had grown following the financial crisis, institutional rivalry increased among EU institutions after the Lisbon Treaty (see chapter 2), and coordination became less relevant as an international aid effectiveness principle especially after 2011 (Keijzer and Lundsgaarde, 2016). Nevertheless, the Commission's Communication on the revision of the 'European Consensus on Development' sought to keep the narrative alive:

> Given its broad policy scope, the objective of contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in developing countries can best be met through enhancing coordination of the development cooperation policies of the EU and its Member States. (European Commission, 2016b, p. 3)

Thus, while coordination has persistently been advocated at the EU level, the environment, both institutionally and discursively, changed significantly.

This chapter traces individual articulations of common policy norms for effective EU development cooperation. The purpose of this approach is twofold: First, it shows which actors participate in EU norm advocacy and how they promote certain formulations against competing narratives. Second, it shows how changing understandings of 'effectiveness' informed and benefitted competing arguments over policy norms at the EU level that aimed at policy approximation. The chapter thereby closely follows the efforts and interactions of Commission officials who facilitated the formulation of coordination initiatives, especially the EU's proposed programme coordination (joint programming), across changing institutional and discursive environments. In three steps, this chapter looks at the processes of contestation of coordination. The first section (I) looks at how effectiveness and coordination became connected in the Commission's development policy discourse. The second section (II) analyses how and on what grounds this discourse became challenged, which opened a window of opportunity for other EU policy norms. Against the background of these challenges, the third section (III) analyses how the Commission actively continued to promote and advance common policy norms for collective EU action. This last section draws mainly on the example of joint programming.

I   Coordination and effectiveness

The Commission had suggested enhancing the coordination of European development policies several times and it had justified these proposals with increasing the effectiveness of development cooperation (see chapter 2). The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000, which codified efforts from among donor countries in the OECD-DAC to establish a set of concrete development objectives that could be measured and monitored over time, provided another opportunity. The goals created an anchor both for donors to showcase progress due to their efforts but also for third countries and civil society to hold donors accountable and demand action. Despite high-level pledges, the conclusion of the MDGs was not followed by a significant increase in development aid to the reiteratively promised 0.7% of GNI as was considered the minimum necessary to achieve the targets set, but it reversed the declining trend of development aid during previous decades (Orbie, 2003, p. 396). Yet another priority of the international community subsequently gained traction: improving the quality of aid.

Following the conclusion of the MDGs, an international process was set in motion to mobilise the necessary resources. The first major step was the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002. In preparation for this conference, on 14 March 2002, the European Council in Barcelona made eight commitments on development cooperation. The first two of these so-called 'Barcelona commitments' were enhancing 1) aid quantity through increasing public spending on aid, and 2) aid quality through enhancing intra-EU coordination and harmonisation (European Commission, 2004b). On aid quality, the European Council in Barcelona pledged to 'Improve aid effectiveness through closer coordination and harmonisation, and take concrete steps to this effect before 2004' (European Commission, 2004b, p. 3). This was considered a remarkable step towards 'more Europe' in development cooperation (Orbie, 2003, p. 399). This commitment to coordination was reiterated by the Greek EU presidency at the first High Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome in February 2003, which addressed international concerns about aid fragmentation. Based on the international agreements of Monterrey and Rome, which were shared by the member states, the Commission promoted EU-wide coordination as one way of translating the commitments into practice. While the Commission had limited leverage over aid amounts, EU-wide coordination became its preferred agenda by explicitly connecting EU coordination and harmonisation to aid effectiveness. The Commission used the annual monitoring report of the

Barcelona commitments to promote this agenda, starting in 2004 (European Commission, 2004b). While member states remained at the level of (political) commitments, it had previously been impossible to commit them to an explicit EU agenda on coordination in development cooperation.

Member states remained sceptical of the Commission, but they agreed to pursue this agenda further. Following the Commission's initiative, on 27 April 2004, the member states in the Council agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation (AHWPH) to examine the Commission's recommendations in a report with a view to putting the Barcelona commitment on harmonisation into practice (Council of the European Union, 2004c). In November 2004, member states partly pushed back against the Commission because the AHWPH's report, adopted by the Council, cautioned against duplicating (coordination) efforts at the EU level where there was 'already a high level of consensus at international level' (Council of the European Union, 2004b, p. 30). Some member states stressed the commitment to the quantity of aid, whereas others preferred to focus on quality because they could not (yet) commit to these targets (Carbone, 2007, pp. 70-2). Nevertheless, the report took most of the Commission proposals on board to prepare the EU's input into the Second High Level Forum which took place in Paris in 2005. The Council reconfirmed that:

> in line with the Council's commitment made in Barcelona in 2002, and in view of the preparation of the High Level Forum II in Paris 2005, the intention and willingness to adopt and implement concrete initiatives to encourage further co-ordination, harmonisation and alignment. In this context, the Council welcomes the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Harmonisation. (Council of the European Union, 2004a, p. 20)

This was significant as it legitimised the Commission's connection between coordination and aid effectiveness. In addition, the member states in the Council acknowledged the prospect of implementing concrete operational tools for coordination and harmonisation, for instance joint multiannual programming, and other tools and instruments such as pooled funding, and direct and sector budget support (Council of the European Union, 2004b). Achieving a common position and suggesting concrete initiatives was paramount since the outcome of this Working Party was to become the EU's coordinated position for the Second High Level Forum (HLF) in Paris in 2005. This was important if the EU wanted to maintain its influence on the international discourse.

Alongside the international, i.e., the OECD-DAC objectives of operationalising the Paris commitments of 2005, the Commission tabled its own proposal. Following the bureaucratic reforms of 2000, the role of the Commission in development had become divided into an operational arm

(EuropeAid) and a conceptual arm (DG Dev). DG Dev needed to show that it had an added value in promoting issues internationally and not just duplicating or copying existing discourse. Its own role therein was yet to be defined, potentially ranging from something like an NGO, to a kind of European think tank, or what some observers called 'OECD-isation' (Orbie and Versluys, 2008). The Commission further strengthened the discursive link between EU coordination and aid effectiveness. This link provided it with the legitimacy to seek to enhance its own role as long as it could make the case that it was best placed for this task while avoiding any duplication of efforts. To gain support, officials in DG Dev sought to establish a more structured involvement of NGOs and other stakeholders, first, through a broad, public civil society consultation. The Commission initiated its first-ever public consultation for development cooperation in 2005. The resulting document was the 'Report on the public consultation on the future of EU Development Policy' (European Commission, 2005b). Based on the contributions of development policy professionals and stakeholders in meetings and submissions, the Commission concluded that there were two views on its role. The first view was that of a delivery agent ('donor'). The second view saw the Commission as 'an analytical organ rather than a delivery agent, able to define the European approach to globalization and development, as well as a promoter of harmonization and coordination' (European Commission, 2005b, p. 23).

A large share of respondents suggested that officials in DG Dev should not be reduced to an institutional promoter of intra-EU coordination. The report highlighted that participating policy professionals went beyond this role, stating that there is 'wide agreement (59%) on the role the Commission should play in pursuing a common EU platform for development policy, rather than limit itself only to coordination and harmonisation of EU aid' (European Commission, 2005b, p. 21). Importantly, the Commission highlighted that contributors pointed out the relevance of expertise for being an effective advocator of policy norms:

> There is a need, according to these contributions, to strengthen analytical capacity in the Commission. The World Bank has analytical leadership even in sectors where the Commission has a comparative advantage (e.g., infrastructure). Knowledge in the World Bank matters at least as much as financial resources. The Commission needs to become a "think tank" and a "policy leader", reflecting, inter alia, on the vast experience it has developed as a donor as well as a "catalyst for change". (European Commission, 2005b, p. 23)

Against this background, the Commission entitled its initiative ambitiously, but provisionally 'Brussels Consensus' (Grimm, 2006), based on a suggestion made during the consultation process (European

Commission, 2005b, p. 23), as a European response to the 'Washington Consensus' of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Coordination had become seen as a basic requirement for aid effectiveness. In the subsequently negotiated 'European Consensus on Development' (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006), coordination became part and parcel of EU policy. At the very beginning of the text, the common European policy document stated that 'Our efforts at coordination and harmonisation must contribute to increasing aid effectiveness' (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006, p. 1). This perception was not only shared among European development policy officials but also among politicians (e.g., European Parliament, 2006, p. 8) and researchers (Ashoff, 2004; Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. 1). In particular with regard to researchers, the Commission embarked on a more structured approach to engage with research institutions from 2007, which responded to the ambition of Commission officials to enhance their capacity in dealings with member state representatives. This led to the first European Report on Development (ERD) in 2009 (Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2009). In this context, the Commission asked for a better organisation of European development policy think tanks and research institutes. As a consequence, a group of the leading European development think tanks formed a network, the European Think Tank Group (ETTG), which was intended to facilitate engagement for the Commission but also to improve the institutes' eligibility to attract funding (Interviews CON#3; TT#1; Bayne, 2013).[10] Similarly, the Commission's ambition to enhance expert engagement became the basis for the annual European Development Days (EDD), an international forum for development policy professionals and experts, which the Commission has hosted since 2006. To justify the creation of such an event, the Commission argued that

> There is at present no event or moment that symbolises the analytical contribution of the EU in the development arena, nor an event or a moment that gathers all EU actors. Most political parties, unions or organisation have a moment of "cohesion", for prospective thinking such as 'summer universities' or "weeks of their core theme". Such an event or moment could serve to develop intellectual dynamism and confrontation, and gather various community actors in a sense of collectiveness around a common agenda.

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[10] These think tanks were initially the British Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the German Development Institute (DIE), the Spanish FRIDE (Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior) and the Dutch ECDPM. FRIDE ceased its activities on 31 December 2015 due to economic reasons and dropped out of the network. It was subsequently replaced by the French Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI).

> Starting in 2006 and onwards, it is therefore proposed to create annual "*European Development Days*", as part of the strengthening of our collective input and the effectiveness of our actions. (European Commission, 2006a, p. 11, emphasis in original)

This justification suggests that there was an ambition within the Commission to support its analytical capacity to strengthen cohesion in Europe.

Coordination to enhance the effectiveness of EU external assistance had become part of many development policy documents of the time that were published by the Commission (2004a; 2004b; 2005b; 2006a; 2006c). This illustrates how the narrative dominated the discourse but also how the Commission sought to advance its understanding within this wider discourse. Although effectiveness was not explicitly defined in any of these documents, coordination was a major component of the Commission's 'aid effectiveness package' of 2006 to operationalise the EU commitments on effectiveness. While aid effectiveness had been characterised in Paris by multiple principles, the Commission's operationalisations focused strongly on donor coordination, an objective based on the OECD's aid effectiveness principle of 'harmonisation'. One of the documents deals explicitly with the aspect of coordination:

> The effectiveness of aid will also depend on other important factors such as ***division of labour, complementarity and harmonisation***. Everything must be geared towards maximising the sharing of information between all concerned and complementarity with the activities of Member States, other donors and multilateral agencies. Where possible, coordination should take place in the partner country in question. (European Commission, 2006c, p. 7, emphasis in original)

The European Consensus had already given a clear indication of how coordination was going to be achieved, namely 'by working towards joint multiannual programming' (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006, p. 6). The document also reiterated the Maastricht provision that assigned the Commission a role for promoting coordination (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006, p. 9).

In its own public formulations, the Commission reiterated the link between joint programming, coordination and aid effectiveness, especially in its aid effectiveness package:

> Joint programming is part of the international movement which it sets out to invigorate. Where moves are already being made to introduce joint programming, European joint programming should be able to merge into that process, giving it new impetus through coordination and a joint European vision. (European Commission, 2006c, p. 10)

While EU coordination through joint programming was initially delayed, the aid effectiveness package was followed by the (voluntary) EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy in 2007 to make EU and member states aid and development cooperation more complementary (European Commission, 2007a). The Commission justified the Code of Conduct as a contribution to 'a more effective and efficient Europe' (European Commission, 2007a, p. 3). The proposition for the Code of Conduct was endorsed by the member states in the Council as the EU's common contribution in the run-up to the Third OECD High Level Forum in Accra, Ghana, in September 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2007a). While the EU's provisions on division of labour were entirely voluntary, the Council's position went beyond the pure commitments of the previous agreements as it established an EU-specific general operational framework for the division of labour between all EU donors, including far-ranging provisions on information sharing. When progress on division of labour turned out limited, in 2008, it was Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, who launched an initiative to fast track division of labour, supported by Germany (see chapter 4). In each country, one of the EU member states or the European Commission was supposed to volunteer to act as a lead and supporting facilitators at country level to promote the fast tracking.

At that point, as this section has suggested, the Commission had firmly established a discourse on policy harmonisation for aid effectiveness in Europe and, based on this discourse, advocated initial all-EU norms. The Commission's public engagement in development cooperation, for instance, through public online consultation, the European Development Days (EDD), and the European Report on Development (ERD), was supposed to create a European, transnational policy community and network of development professionals to support the implementation of this discourse through transnational advocacy of the jointly agreed policy norms for coordination. However, this 'new season' of EU development policy (Carbone, 2008a) was about to be tested.

II   Effectiveness at the crossroads

The Commission maintained its position on coordination and Commission officials pushed policy initiatives that were developed in the aid effectiveness package, especially joint programming. Yet these initiatives were associated more strongly with cost *efficiency* and *impact* to win, or maintain,

the support of the member states. This was because the discursive environment had significantly changed. Member states had become increasingly sceptical of EU-level coordination for the sake of aid effectiveness.

Several events between 2009 and 2011 had a strong influence on development cooperation in Europe. First, the consequences of the financial crisis encouraged member state governments to favour a discourse of accountability to which the Commission reacted with increasing reference to cost effectiveness and efficiency. Second, there was a perceived lack of effect of what the Commission was promoting as EU policies, such as budget support, in the wake of the so-called 'Arab Spring'. As a reaction, the Commission began to stress the EU's impact in third countries, which allowed for a wider inclusion of different objectives for change in these countries. Third, the global aid effectiveness fatigue made it more difficult to refer to the international discourse in EU norm advocacy. Thus, maintaining the focus on donor coordination meant a break with the global discourse. At the same time, the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009 significantly altered the institutional context in which Commission officials reacted to these discursive shifts. While Lisbon made effective coordination of aid programmes a legal obligation for the EU and its member states, it also meant that new foreign policy actors, i.e., the HR/VP and the EEAS engaged in the competition over the purpose of coordination.

Crisis of EU coordination?

After 2009, EU efforts to coordination aid were challenged. The financial and economic crisis, the 'Arab Spring', and global aid effectiveness fatigue (Keijzer, 2011) led actors to undermine the discursive link between coordination and aid effectiveness. These events and shifts opened space for various actors to challenge the role of the EU and the Commission, development cooperation as a policy instrument, and the conception of effectiveness of external assistance. At the same time, the willingness to agree to common policy norms declined among member state officials. Reluctance to coordinate policy was not only due to a general scepticism among member states; by early 2011, the 'euroskepticism sparked by the euro crisis has become an epidemic' with rising self-interest of

member states fraying EU spirit, as a German weekly remarked.[11] The coordination enthusiasm among development professionals also begun to pale as the Commission's continued advocacy and ambitions became increasingly dismantled as an integration agenda.

Table 1. Percent change of net ODA from EU-DAC donors over the preceding year

EU-DAC members	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Austria	18.3	15.4	-3.8	0.7	6.1	-14.3	8.8	-31.2	-14.0
Belgium	19.6	-7.8	3.3	-6.1	-13.0	-13.3	19.1	11.5	13.4
Czech Republic	29.3	11.4	2.5	-4.7					
Denmark	-7.6	0.8	1.6	3.8	-1.8	-2.4	4.3	4.2	0.3
Finland	-18.7	-5.7	12.5	3.5	-0.4	-4.3	6.9	13.1	6.7
France	4.6	2.8	-9.2	-9.8	-1.6	-5.6	7.3	16.9	2.9
Germany	36.1	25.9	12.0	3.0	-0.7	5.9	9.9	-12.0	5.7
Greece	10.8	38.7	6.3	-7.7	-17.0	-39.3	-16.2	-12.0	26.9
Hungary	0.5								
Ireland	11.9	1.9	-4.5	-1.9	-5.8	-3.1	-4.9	-18.9	6.4
Italy	20.2	14.2	-2.9	13.4	-34.7	33.0	-1.5	-31.1	2.2
Luxembourg	7.7	-1.2	-1.1	1.2	9.8	-5.4	-0.3	1.9	1.8
Netherlands	13.1	24.4	1.6	-6.2	-6.6	-6.4	2.2	-4.5	4.8
Poland	42.6	16.8	-8.3	8.6					
Portugal	8.9	-16.1	-14.9	-20.4	-13.1	-3.0	31.5	-15.7	21.1
Slovak Republic	26.8	23.3	-5.1	2.4					
Slovenia	25.3	21.1	-0.3	-0.6					
Spain	192.3	1.5	-20.3	3,7	-49.7	-32.7	-5.9	-1.2	19.4
Sweden	-31.1	36.8	11.0	6.3	-3.4	10.5	-7.1	7.4	3.9
United Kingdom	8.4	3.2	1.2	27.8	-2.2	-0.8	19.4	14.6	24.1

Source: OECD (2009-2017) 'Net Official Development Assistance from DAC and Other Donors'. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, available at: http://www.oecd.org/dac/ [retrieved 13 September 2018].

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[11] Spiegel Online, 'European Disunion: Rising Self-Interest Frays EU Spirit', 13 May 2011, available at: http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/european-disunion-rising-self-interest-frays-eu-spirit-a-762403.html [retrieved 13 September 2018].

Especially at the beginning of the debt crisis in the second half of 2008 and 2009, its management took up much attention and resources and diverted any sense of urgency away from development cooperation. Thus, national implementation of the Commission's attempts of enhancing coordination on aid effectiveness principles was delayed and often half-hearted. As Niels Keijzer (2011) suggests, the financial and economic crisis also lowered the level of ambition among member state governments to agree on common positions in development cooperation so that previous positions on aid effectiveness could not be reproduced. The crisis reduced not only the willingness of member states to make development cooperation a priority but also their willingness to coordinate with each other as suspicion increased. Even where the economic impact was less severe as in Germany (see chapter 4), member states retreated towards more inward-looking perspectives on bilateral development cooperation, mostly driven by national interests and priorities (Koch*, et al.*, 2011). In addition, the financial and economic crisis put pressure on the aid budgets of multiple member states and increased pressure for showcasing accountability of aid budgets against the background of domestic cuts (see table 1; Holland and Doidge, 2012, p. 186).

Despite the 'shock' at the height of the economic crisis, which occupied most political attention, the Commission continued to hold up aid effectiveness as a central principle of EU development cooperation and insisted on further operationalising the overarching EU-wide agreements of the mid-2000s. In April 2009, still under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel (2004-2009), as part of a comprehensive campaign to tackle old and new development challenges, the Commission adopted an Action Plan (European Commission, 2009a; 2009b). The aim was to promote the Commission's effectiveness as a donor and to assess and monitor the progress made in implementing the Accra outcome document (Accra Agenda for Action) at both headquarters and delegation level. With this plan, the Commission also tried to set an example for the member states to recommit to the previously established ambitious collective implementation of effectiveness principles, especially all-EU division of labour arrangements.

The Commission justified its insistence with reference to the adverse effects of the financial and economic crisis on developing countries:

> In these times of crisis, neither developed nor developing countries can afford to pay the high price of fragmentation and lack of coordination, as is currently the case. […] A coordinated EU effort on the basis of common priorities will enhance the short-term positive impact of our action and ensure its

long-term sustainability. (European Commission, 2009b, pp. 6-7; see also European Commission, 2010a, p. 2)

The Commission supported this claim by referring to the concrete *monetary* cost of 'non-Europe' in development. To make this argument for cost effectiveness, the directorate-general responsible for development cooperation commissioned an expert study (Carlsson*, et al.*, 2009). A first study was published in October 2009 to support the Council in adopting the EU Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness:

> The purpose of this study therefore is to identify and present costs (overheads) associated with ineffective, fragmented aid, as well as potential savings in such transaction costs from further implementing basic aid effectiveness principles into European (EU and Member States) development cooperation. (Carlsson*, et al.*, 2009, p. iv)

The study, however, also indicated that such costs did not only affect third countries but donors themselves. Thereby, the Commission reacted to what it perceived as the concerns of the member states over cost effectiveness and efficiency when it stated that

> We also have an obligation to our own citizens, the taxpayers, to ensure that their money is accountable and used transparently. When society demands efficiency and effectiveness in all other matters of economy and finance, how could development cooperation remain on the sideline? (European Commission, 2009a, p. 3)

Showing this was an explicit purpose of the study, as outlined in the terms of reference given by the Commission's DG responsible for development cooperation. The terms specifically requested to 'elaborate specific European examples of where aid effectiveness principles have been applied and illustrate *savings incurred by EU donors*, in a balanced sample of countries' (Carlsson*, et al.*, 2009, p. v, emphasis added).

In November 2009, the Council finally adopted the Commission's Communication establishing an EU Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness, which further operationalised intra-EU coordination through more precise provisions on the division of labour (Council of the European Union, 2009). However, it needed the prioritisation from Sweden, which held the Council Presidency in the second half of 2009, that policy discussions on aid effectiveness intensified again (Keijzer, 2011, p. 5). The Council Conclusions pledged for a 'strong EU commitment to aid effectiveness which is essential towards improved development results and enhanced poverty reduction' (Council of the European Union, 2009), and builds on previous EU and international initiatives. This was also seen as

a step towards an EU contribution for the upcoming Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, which was going to take place in South Korea in late-2011. In preparation for this conference, the division of labour arrangements became more advanced. The Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness was amended over the years 2010 and 2011 to include more precise arrangements on cross-country division of labour, but also provisions on mutual accountability and transparency, which had been less pronounced before (Council of the European Union, 2010b; 2010c; 2011b). All these developments suggest that the basis for promoting coordination as a common policy norm with the member states became more technical, which tended towards working-level interactions rather than more political advocacy.

In November 2010, Michel's successor since the second half of 2009, Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, published a Green Paper that put 'high impact' at its centre (European Commission, 2010b), and he invited stakeholders to submit contributions. While Piebalgs had previously considered reviewing the European Consensus (Interview TT#1), this more political advocacy for common EU policy norms in external action failed. Limited enthusiasm from member states suggested that some of them seemed 'more inclined to support an EU wide strategy on support to inclusive growth and sustainable development, rather than a review of the Consensus' (Secretariat of the ACP Group, 2010, p. 1). The ACP Group, which submitted its contribution via the Dutch think tank ECDPM, understood the Commission's hesitancy within the changed political and institutional context:

> First in an age of austerity and with the EU budget under pressure there is a desire for EU and EC development assistance to be seen to be giving value for money. Secondly there is a "relatively" new European Development Commissioner who does not come from a development background but has a reputation for being an effective manager who wants to "set out his stall". Thirdly it comes at a time when the Commission is eager to protect its unique engagement and contribution to development, particularly vis-à-vis the European External Action Service, while at the same time be seen to be giving EU leadership. Fourthly, the global development agenda is shifting and there is a need to reflect and refocus and this is one serious and early attempt by the EU to do so. (Secretariat of the ACP Group, 2010, p. 1)

In addition, the second termly revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2010 and the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, which took effect on 1 December 2009, especially the initiation of the EEAS, received more public and political attention. While this brought attention back to the EU's external policies (Bartelt, 2012; European Commission, 2011a), it opened a window for different

policy communities, also from within the EU's institutions, to challenge development cooperation with little voice from third countries.

2011 saw a brief revival of the aid effectiveness discourse, following the EU internal bureaucratic reforms of 2010. The newly re-merged DG DEVCO, which again hosted strategic policy and implementation units,[12] continued in the tradition of DG Dev and engaged in actively promoting all-EU coordination initiatives based on their contribution to aid effectiveness. The Commission's outcome document following the consultation process, the Agenda for Change (AfC) (European Commission, 2011e), however, did not reconstruct the discourse from before the crisis, which societal actors had helped to advance. Crucially, the AfC identified that in Europe '*Fragmentation and proliferation of aid is still widespread and even increasing*, despite considerable recent efforts to coordinate and harmonise donor activities' (European Commission, 2011e, p. 10, emphasis in original), a discourse, which was picked up by multiple societal actors across Europe thereafter (see below).

Nevertheless, when the Commission went to the High Level Forum in Busan in November/December 2011, it did so with a limited EU consensus on how to contribute to the international effectiveness discourse. In its proposal for a common EU position, the Commission linked joint programming, coordination and aid effectiveness (European Commission, 2011f). The Council Conclusions presented joint programming as a central EU input to the international debate on aid/development effectiveness, stating:

> To further deepen the aid effectiveness commitments and strengthen development effectiveness, the EU will promote and support specific initiatives [including to] Implement joint programming at the country level to reduce aid fragmentation and promote harmonization. (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p. 5)

While the Commission was able to push the Council Conclusions prior to the High Level Forum to reflect this discourse on reducing fragmentation, the Commission also accommodated issues such as fragile and conflict affected states. With this mandate to promote aid effectiveness and to 'show leadership' in the fight against increased aid fragmentation and proliferation (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p. 12), EU institutional representatives went to Busan but seemed unprepared to be confronted with a largely changed international environment and a strengthened voice from

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[12] On 1 January 2011, the EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO) and the Directorate General for Development and Relations with ACP States merged to form Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO).

emerging economies (Mawdsley*, et al.*, 2014). Thus, 2011 came to signify the demise of the global aid effectiveness discourse (Abdel-Malek, 2015; Keijzer and Lundsgaarde, 2016). This meant that effectiveness became less conducive as a discourse for advocating EU policy coordination. The debate at the conference in Busan largely side-lined the understanding of aid effectiveness, which DG DEVCO had forcefully promoted and drawn on before.

New discursive environment

In early December 2011, before the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan came to an end, it had become evident that the international environment of development cooperation had fundamentally changed (Abdel-Malek, 2015; Keijzer and Lundsgaarde, 2016; Mawdsley*, et al.*, 2014). Busan revealed how the global aid architecture had changed between the first HLF in Rome (2003) and the fourth HLF in Busan through the emergence of new economic powers, especially China, and the proliferation of competing models of development cooperation, which offer more choices for developing countries (Carbone, 2013d). This also gave a stronger voice to third countries than at previous conferences. In Busan, donors aimed at integrating non-traditional providers of development finance into the global development architecture (CONCORD, 2012; Mawdsley*, et al.*, 2014), which provided developing countries with increasing agency and assertiveness *vis-à-vis* EU donors (Carbone, 2013a; Smith, 2013a). However, this environment enhanced the politicisation of intra-EU relations. Harmonising EU development policies against the background of strong economic and political interests of EU member states in emerging economies presented a challenge (Grimm and Hackenesch, 2012). This had already been indicated by the divergence of reactions among EU actors towards the emergence of China as a development actor in Africa (see Carbone, 2011). The EU was side-lined as its position, presented by the Commission, had not overcome resulting internal divisions (Carbone, 2013a; 2013d; CONCORD, 2012; Smith, 2013a).

While participants de-emphasised 'aid effectiveness' and replaced it with a broader principle of 'development effectiveness', the attention of Western donors declined, and the bloc of EU actors turned out more fragmented than at previous occasions. The discourse on aid effectiveness lost proponents in the international development community as cross-cutting coalitions involving EU donors promoted competing discourses. This weakened the EU discursive network of professionals

who had previously promoted a common narrative linking coordination and aid effectiveness. Commission officials, together with development officials from Germany, continued to cherish improving coordination for aid effectiveness (see chapter 4). The ACP Secretariat supported this discourse as it had prominently highlighted the lack of coordination and reducing aid fragmentation in its position paper for Busan and therein called for better harmonisation of donor actions (ACP Secretariat, 2011).

In contrast, other EU actors activated network relations outside the EU development policy core to promote competing discourses. First, development finance was acknowledged to come from multiple and very different sources. Various private and public, domestic and internationals financial flows ranging from remittances to private philanthropists and investments from emerging economies, exceed official aid (ODA). ODA, the traditional tool of Western external development intervention, became open to reconsideration and the public funds that were spent on development cooperation became subject to increasing scrutiny. British officials, including at high political levels, had already begun to promote accountability and transparency with transnational societal actors, such as Publish What You Fund since Accra in 2008 (see chapter 5). In Busan, they joined forces with the ODI and the Commonwealth Secretariat to advance a narrative of transparency for effectiveness (see Rogerson, 2011). Second, after the widely-recognised OECD high-level meetings to improve aid effectiveness in Paris, Accra and Busan, public and political attention diminished significantly. The remaining international high-level attention and resources switched to developing the successor of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the post-2015 development agenda around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Agenda 2030 broadened the scope of development to include, alongside social and economic issues, environmental and other considerations to address challenges of sustainability and disseminate responsibility for development globally. Especially European civil society pushed in this direction and engaged less with development cooperation officials. Civil society organisations, including think tanks such as ODI, quickly adapted to the new discourse – while individual researchers maintained interest in coordination (Bigsten and Tengstam, 2015; Carbone, 2017; Klingebiel, *et al.*, 2014; Klingebiel, *et al.*, 2017; Leiderer, 2015). Third, especially France and the EEAS continued to push coordination but increasingly outside of development cooperation (see below). In EU external policy-making, development cooperation was increasingly integrated in what had been called the 'comprehensive' or 'integrated' approach. The ambition for these actors was to align the EU's means for external action, trade, aid, diplomacy, security etc. to the respective extents possible to assert the EU as a significant player in the world.

Thus, the established narrative within the Commission's DG DEVCO on framing the EU's role in effective development cooperation was challenged both globally *and* from within the EU, its institutions and member states. Externally, after 2011, arguments for advocating an EU role for development cooperation could no longer be based on an international discourse that had hitherto legitimised coordination. At the same time, internally, the Commission lost its ability to help project intra-EU coordination discourses at the international level. Member states had appreciated their joint influence on the international discourse through the EU, which seemed to have diminished (see chapters 4 and 5). The influence at the international level had been a central legitimising factor for EU norm advocacy. It motivated and tied together an active discursive network of EU development professionals despite their partly competing interests and ideas.

While the Lisbon Treaty provided an enhanced mandate for coordination and joint action with and between member states, this mandate was claimed by several EU actors and policy communities. Internally, there was increasing competition over norm advocacy for EU collective action from new EU foreign policy actors who did not follow DG DEVCO's narrative, which they perceived as limited to development policy communities (Interviews BMZ#1; EEAS#4). Yet there was also increasing competition inside the Commission and especially high-level political and bureaucratic support for development was increasingly undermined. Officially, Commission communications continued to make references to existing policy documents and discourses but without repeating the discourses themselves, for example:

> the EU and its Member States need to step up their efforts to meet *current commitments*, including increased and more effective financing to support developing countries, as outlined in the Commission Communication "An Agenda for Change". (European Commission, 2013b, p. 2; emphasis added)

Thus, as this excerpt suggests, the Commission did not link coordination to aid effectiveness any longer in its public discourse.

Instead, the Commission adjusted its arguments and narratives. In its public statements, the Commission began to link aid effectiveness to 'innovative modalities of delivering finance', especially blending of grants with loans and equity, and catalyse private and public investments (European Commission, 2013b, p. 8). In February 2013 and June 2014 respectively, the Commission issued two Communications entitled 'A Decent Life for All', which proposed other areas for the EU's common engagement in international development, including drivers for inclusive and sustainable growth; sustainable management of natural resources; and peace and security (European Commission, 2013c;

2014). This prioritisation also responded to challenges from EU security policy communities and to concerns in member states. Coordination hardly appeared in the public Commission discourse on development effectiveness of the time, other than that:

> The principles set out above should also ensure coherence and coordination of specific financing streams and on-going negotiation processes (e.g. in the context of the 2015 Agreement on climate change). This will ensure that each country can target resources where they contribute best towards agreed common goals. (European Commission, 2013b, p. 11)

Following the demise of aid effectiveness, the resistance of member states to coordinate, and the emergence of institutional rivals, the commitment within the Commission to uphold the mainstreaming of aid effectiveness had been reduced on all levels, especially at the top.

The reason for this transition of the debate does not seem to be a lack of room for further and intensified improvements of aid effectiveness of EU donors in the form of coordination. Less than two years before, the Council had indeed recognised that

> The evidence confirms that among the five aid effectiveness principles country ownership has advanced furthest. Alignment and harmonisation have progressed unevenly […]. Aid fragmentation and proliferation, which increased both at EU level and globally between 2005 and 2009, and transparency remain challenges (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p. 6)

This Council Conclusions had identified the continued relevance of aid effectiveness principles 'beyond their present scope' to 'bring added value to wide partnerships as well as other sources of development financing' (Council of the European Union, 2011a, p. 16). Moreover, the civil society watchdog report AidWatch by CONCORD, and think tanks, especially the German DIE and the Dutch ECDPM, found that the Commission's efforts to approximate EU donor activities were followed by an upsurge of divergence in European development cooperation despite member states' increasing formal commitment to effectiveness (CONCORD, 2012, p. 9; Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2014; Mackie, 2013). Thus, some EU-level development policy professionals were generally prepared to continue the quest against fragmentation of European polices.

The Commission's overarching, more public and political, commitment to aid effectiveness, in general, and policy coordination, in particular, had only been periodically revitalised. Thus, aid effectiveness and donor harmonisation played a negligible role in the Commission's input to preparing an EU position for the post-2015 agenda since 2013 (European Commission, 2013b; 2013c; 2014;

2015). Commissioner Piebalgs briefly expressed sympathy for further institutionalising EU coordination as conceptualised by the EP's ambitiously formulated legislative own-initiative report in 2013 (European Parliament, 2013). Yet, as reported by several observers, he quickly rejected it when confronted with member states' objections (Interviews EP#1, #4; PREP#1). When the international environment became more favourable during the first high-level meeting of the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in Mexico 2014, a follow-up to Busan, Piebalgs was again more sympathetic to the continued relevance of the aid effectiveness agenda (Interviews DEVCO#1; NGO#2). However, his successor from 2014, Neven Mimica from Croatia, was much less invested. Mimica finally set different priorities for his term, notably the post-2015, post-Cotonou, and Policy Coherence for Development.[13] Especially internal coordination for the EU's contribution to the post-2015 development agenda along a new set of development objectives, rather than means of implementation, took much of the commissioner's and DG DEVCO's attention subsequently (Interview DEVCO#5). Aid effectiveness was not a priority and donor coordination only a side issue.

International deliberations on development effectiveness continued in the framework of the GPEDC, effectively since 2012, at a more technical level. The official definition of effectiveness in development cooperation, used by the Commission, was evidenced in its proposal for a new European Consensus on Development, presented in November 2016:

> **The EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to applying the key principles of development effectiveness, as confirmed at the Busan High Level Forum in 2011 and to putting them into practice in their development cooperation.** These principles are: results; transparency and mutual accountability; democratic ownership; and inclusive development partnerships. (European Commission, 2016b, p. 26; emphasis in original)

What is evident in this formulation is the stress on results, transparency and mutual accountability (see also chapter 5) whereas coordination disappeared. However, in the same document, the Commission also maintained that:

> In response to global challenges and trends and focused on the priorities identified above, the EU and its Member States will further improve the way they deliver their cooperation, including through working together better. This includes improving effectiveness and impact through greater

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[13] Public hearing with Commissioner-designate Neven Mimica held by the Committee on Development on Monday 29 September 2014, available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings-2014/en/schedule/29-09-2014/neven-mimica [retrieved 13 September 2018].

> coordination and coherence. In order to be more effective in pursuing its objectives, and in particular eradication of poverty, EU development policy must be adaptable and responsive to pressing needs, potential crises and evolving policy priorities. (European Commission, 2016b, p. 19)

Thus, while the definition of effectiveness in development cooperation had shifted, the previous coordination and harmonisation agenda remained present among different EU-level actors, but the justification shifted.

Especially at the working level in DG DEVCO general policy directorate, effectiveness of development cooperation continued to be connected to EU coordination, especially joint programming (Interviews DEVCO#1, #2). Similar views were also present among development policy professionals in other EU institutions, such as the EEAS (Interview EEAS#1), the European Parliament (Interviews EP#2, #4), among some professionals in NGOs (Interview NGO#3; CONCORD, 2016, pp. 21-2), but especially in think tanks and academia (Interviews TT#1, #3; Klingebiel, *et al.*, 2014; Mackie, 2013; Moe Fejerskov and Keijzer, 2013). At lower levels in the Commission bureaucracy, ambitions for coordination, harmonisation and aid effectiveness had been maintained in some parts. While most aid effectiveness efforts within the Commission were largely suspended (Interview DEVCO#1), some initiatives for all-EU policies to promote coordination and harmonisation continued and were even intensified.

III   Promoting policy coordination

Less than 4 years after the conference in Busan, in spring 2015, the Council adopted its Conclusions for the third Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which almost completely neglected the aid and donor commitment side of effectiveness. Instead, it disseminated responsibility for effectiveness of development cooperation much more broadly away from aid providers. It presented a largely changed intervention logic with a focus on fragile and conflict affected states while shifting the financing concerns to other sources of development finance. The EU's position, as subsequently expressed by the Council (2013; 2014b; 2015), but also the Commission, moved incrementally away from what these EU actors had so unequivocally promoted in and before 2011. While this was a result of the demise of the global aid effectiveness discourse, higher obstacles

to coordination due to enhanced politicisation of European aid (e.g., security and migration considerations), and the emergence of institutional rivals at the EU level, it also reflected changing power relations in the EU.

This is not to say that coordination disappeared as a discourse at the EU level. It was, however, disconnected from development effectiveness. EU coordination continued to play a central role, but it was increasingly captured as a policy norm by EU foreign policy actors, including at the highest political levels. Newly empowered EU-level actors actively engaged in reshaping ideas about the EU's role and framed development cooperation as one instrument of effective European external action. However, despite the end of the 'aid effectiveness decade' of the 2000s and the inter-institutional rivalry, Commission officials managed to keep aid policy harmonisation on the EU agenda, even in a less favourable global and European environment. To achieve that, officials in DG DEVCO had focused on fewer policy norms that were supported within a more technical, often predominantly administrative network of professionals, primarily joint multiannual programming (European Commission, 2011e; 2012b) and budget support (European Commission, 2011c), and later also a common results framework (European Commission, 2013d). This section draws primarily on the case of joint programming to illustrate how these professionals engaged in constructing and advocating policy norms for collective EU action through a discursive network.

Joint programming and bureaucratic politics

That joint programming became part of the EU's approach to improve effective development cooperation was neither obvious nor uncontested. In a nutshell, joint programming means that EU institutions and member states decide jointly on a multiannual response to a third country's development strategy to reduce their fragmented and uncoordinated presence and activities in this country, and thus enhance development effectiveness (European Commission, 2011e, p. 10). Some member states, especially Britain (see chapter 5), did not regard this EU policy norm as beneficial in terms of effectiveness and rejected the integrationist agenda behind it. Other member states, such as France, and a majority in the EEAS considered it as a means of enhancing the EU's foreign policy impact in the world. In contrast, proponents within the German aid administration highlighted the benefit of joint programming in terms of development effectiveness (see chapter 4). To turn policy

initiatives into common EU norms and promote them internally, officials in DG DEVCO circumvented wider ambitions, which the Commission's bureaucracy had in the mid-2000s, and sought compromises with EEAS officials and member state representatives. Moreover, they concentrated on targeted policy expertise, especially from individual consultants and organisations, even where this risked antagonising the European Parliament and other CSOs. The interaction processes between these professionals led to adjustments of the promoted policies, which started to differ from the original initiatives.

The basis for what would become joint programming had been connected earlier to the coordination/effectiveness discourse before it was picked up again by actors in the EEAS. The Commission's reform agenda of 2000 laid the groundwork for developing the concept of joint programming through the introduction of an EU multiannual programming tool, modelled on the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which was seen to enhance predictability and transparency. In preparation for the second OECD High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris (2005), the Council determined that the EU's Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) framework should be used as a blueprint to implement joint multiannual programming for all EU *and* member state assistance to developing countries in order to encourage coordination and harmonisation (Council of the European Union, 2004a, p. 20). In Paris, the EU framed joint programming as a major contribution to the aid effectiveness agenda. Thus, subsequently, the European Consensus on Development (European Parliament*, et al.*, 2006) and a Commission work plan (European Commission, 2006c) sketched out the gradual introduction of joint multiannual programming on the basis of a revised CSP framework. The Commission further explicitly suggested that the CSP framework could equally be used by member states when drafting their country strategies. The coordination and joint programming agenda was substantially linked to the principle of complementarity when the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy enshrined the 'emerging' joint programming as a means to achieving complementarity of aid (Council of the European Union, 2007a). In preparation of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011, the Council of the European Union (2011a, p. 12) highlighted joint programming as a contribution to aid effectiveness.

While aid effectiveness principles had then significantly changed since the heydays of harmonisation, the efforts coming out of DG DEVCO to improve the effectiveness of EU aid initially continued to focus largely on improving the coordination of EU donors' development policies. The continued focus on overcoming fragmentation remained central in the Commission's proposition for

an Agenda for Change (European Commission, 2011e). The Communication highlighted EU donor coordination, but increasingly stressed flexibility and voluntarism. It aimed at increasing intra-EU coordination and joint action with the member states, especially through joint programming, better division of labour amongst EU donors through the concentration on three priority sectors per country, and aid modalities conducive to collective action, such as budget support. According to the Commission, the EU's approach to a division of labour aimed at increasing the complementarity of EU donor contributions to increase aid effectiveness (European Commission, 2011b, p. 3). Thus, it goes beyond simple coordination because it is about

> *changing* the situation by systematically reducing the number of donors in overcrowded sectors and increasing support for orphan sectors, making use of donors' comparative advantages in the process to ensure the complementarity of their contributions. (European Commission, 2011b, p. 3, emphasis added)

However, obstacles obstructing the improvement of division of labour and complementarity on the ground remained, for instance, the reluctance of member states to leave attractive sectors and 'darling' countries (European Commission, 2011b, p. 14).

To improve the arbitrary distribution of EU donors' aid, which the DAC perceived as rather more political than technically-informed (OECD, 2012, p. 77), the Commission proposed the extension of joint programming of EU institution and member state aid. The proposal was based on the division of labour agreements in which EU donors commit themselves to engage in no more than three sectors per country and five donors per sector. However, the suggested tool goes beyond division of labour because it aims at creating a '*single joint programming document* which should indicate the *sectoral division of labour* and financial allocations per sector and donor' (European Commission, 2011e, p. 11, emphasis in original). During this process, the Commission, the EEAS and EU member states jointly determine a development response strategy for a partner country and draft a joint country strategy document, ideally replacing bilateral country strategies. However, harmonisation in challenging areas such as joint modalities for delivering aid, including conditionality, pooling of funds, co-financing or delegated cooperation, and measuring results, was not necessarily part of the joint programming exercise (European Commission, 2011a; 2011e; Galeazzi*, et al.*, 2013; OECD, 2012). Thus, observers criticised joint programming for being largely 'limited to the drafting and ratification of a strategy paper for organising division of labour at the country level' (Furness and Vollmer, 2013, p. 2).

Table 2. Presence of EU member states in countries with EU joint programming

Germany	52	**Ireland**	11
France	46	**Austria/Czech Republic/Poland**	9
United Kingdom	39	**Luxembourg**	8
Italy	27	**Hungary**	6
Spain	24	**Romania**	5
Sweden	23	**Lithuania/Portugal**	3
Belgium	21	**Bulgaria/Estonia/Greece/**	1
Netherlands	19	**Latvia/Slovenia/Slovakia**	
Denmark	17	**Croatia / Cyprus / Malta**	0
Finland	14		

Source: capacity4dev.eu, last updated April 2018, available at: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/minisite/country-cases/joint-programming-tracker [retrieved 13 September 2018].

Nevertheless, and although the basis for EU joint programming had emerged earlier, it was around 2011 when this initiative gained traction. The EU trialled joint programming in Haiti and South Sudan in 2011 and in 2012 (European Commission, 2012a, p. 4). Subsequently, the EU heads of mission initially deemed 52 countries suitable, mostly either least-developed or lower middle-income countries. As a result, the Commission's DG DEVCO and the EEAS jointly pushed for an expansion of the implementation of joint programming with the member states for the programming period 2014-2020 (European Commission, 2013a). This was despite the coordination and aid effectiveness fatigue at the EU and international level.

Member states had been generally sceptical about any Commission attempt to foster coordination. In its early days, joint programming was broadly perceived as a 'Brussels-led' initiative that could possibly threaten the independence of member states' development policy-making (Estrada-Cañamares, 2014; Furness and Vollmer, 2013; Galeazzi, *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, regarding coordination on the ground, the Commission had often been perceived as 'technocratic' with a slow and 'heavy bureaucracy' (Delputte and Söderbaum, 2012, p. 43). Even within DG DEVCO, joint programming for improving aid effectiveness had not been universally accepted. Among senior officials, including the commissioner, the general enthusiasm for aid effectiveness was much reduced. Joint programming was not equally accepted among all directorates of DG DEVCO. Some geographic

units in DG DEVCO, especially those responsible for Asia, perceived it as an additional burden. Reportedly, in their view, joint programming made the already demanding bilateral programming process yet more complex for the EU, but it did not yield much credit and often disinterest by other donors and third countries (Interview DEVCO#1; see also Herrero*, et al.*, 2015).

To react to and partially pre-empt criticism both in Brussels and the field, Commission bureaucrats from the general policy directorate collaborated with their counterparts in the EEAS and in some member states, especially the Netherlands, France and Germany, to create favourable conditions to promote joint programming (TT#3; Helly*, et al.*, 2015, p. 25). Despite institutional frictions between the top levels in DG DEVCO and the EEAS, policy professionals from both organisations collaborated to promote joint programming on a limited, technical and development-focused basis (Interviews DEVCO#1, #2; EEAS#1, #2; TT#3). To convince critics of its added value, development officials used their close personal working relations to promote aid effectiveness principles horizontally and to help them travel up the political ladder. In the words of one Commission official, joint programming became their 'area of pride' and one of their 'best endeavours' (Interview DEVCO#2). On the working level, DG DEVCO and EEAS officials adopted a division of labour concerning both the promotion of joint programming and the successful implementation among the EU instruments. Although, the institutions come from different overarching conceptions of the purpose of joint EU action in development cooperation, at the Brussels working level, the respective actors in the EEAS and DG DEVCO interacted much 'like a team' in the promotion of joint programming, as officials from both institutions confirmed (Interviews DEVCO#2; EEAS#1). Crucially, several of the involved EEAS officials, who were committed to joint programming as an instrument of development cooperation, were development policy professionals themselves, often brought in as seconded national experts from development departments of member states to support the EU's aid programming for 2014-2020 based on this policy norm (Interview EEAS#1).

The collaboration with the EEAS provided a channel for DG DEVCO officials to advocate their understanding of joint programming at the country level where joint action is implemented. The EU delegations also needed to be convinced of the value-added of joint programming, which was not necessarily evident due to diverging internal priorities in the delegations between development officials and diplomatic staff (Carbone, 2017, p. 540). Thus, headquarters support from the Commission was relevant to establish on what discursive basis joint programming was promoted by the delegations with the local member state representatives. In the process of implementing the first

round of joint programming, DG DEVCO and EEAS officials sought to convince the delegations in the field of the political desire to expand joint programming (Interview DEVCO#1) – especially as political ambitions became reduced among higher level development officials. In letters from 2010 and 2012, both organisations asked the delegations to promote joint programming in the field, seeking to generate positive feedback to member states on the policy level (European Commission, 2010c; 2012b; European Commission and European External Action Service, 2012). Subsequently, several EU delegations, mostly in Sub-Sahara Africa, tabled proposals for joint programming covering most of EU ODA. While the joint programming process was to be headed by the EU delegations in the respective countries, both DG DEVCO and the EEAS officials provided headquarters and delegations with significant support throughout the process (Estrada-Cañamares, 2014, p. 59). For instance, they jointly prepared a detailed 'guidance pack', trainings and regional workshops between early-2014 and early-2015 for the EU delegations,[14] and organised presentations and information campaigns in Brussels. In this process, DG DEVCO could contribute more human and financial resources at the headquarters level than the EEAS in order to pool expertise centrally and make the case for joint action.

Originally, the staff in the EEAS engaging with the Commission remained committed to joint programming as an instrument of development cooperation, which also reflected the legal basis of aid programming. However, the wider ambitions within the EEAS to use joint programming more explicitly as a political instrument for enhancing the visibility of the EU also affected these officials. As expressed by several interviewees, they highlighted joint programming as a *political* instrument of the EU to 'speak with one voice' in order to increase the EU's impact in third countries (Interviews EEAS#1, #2, #3). This followed a more general, high-level discourse of coordination in all EU external action horizontally and vertically with the member states. In this understanding, joint programming contributes to a 'comprehensive approach', i.e., the horizontal coherence of all-EU external action in which development becomes a part of foreign policy. Hence, although at the working level in Brussels the EEAS seemed committed to aid/development effectiveness, at higher levels in the EEAS, also among heads of missions (Carbone, 2017, p. 540), coordination was not primarily seen against the background of international development and aid effectiveness. Therefore, other development officials, who sought to promote joint programming at the working level together with DG DEVCO,

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[14] These (and other related) documents can be accessed through the capacity4dev.eu website, available at: https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/minisite/eu-joint-programming-guidance-pack-2015 [retrieved 13 September 2018]. The Commission's DG DEVCO maintains this platform as a knowledge sharing hub for development cooperation. Its aim is to improve capacity development through knowledge sharing with the wider policy community.

criticised the institutional frictions between the two organisations concerning the different messages about development cooperation that they communicated (Interview PREP#1). This was exacerbated because, especially under HR/VP Ashton, the level of development expertise in the EEAS was low (Interview EEAS#4). The capacity of the external service in development cooperation increased significantly under Ashton's successor Mogherini. This shift also came with a more assertive position of the EEAS on joint programming.

To promote acceptance and legitimacy in member state capitals, officials in the relevant units in DG DEVCO and the EEAS significantly increased their contacts and exchange with national aid bureaucracies at all levels. DG DEVCO and the EEAS frequently called and drew on meetings of ministerial development professionals and officials from member state headquarters. While certain professionals in EU institutions acted as policy entrepreneurs for joint programming, some member state officials, especially in Germany, the Netherlands and France, were strongly involved in shaping and promoting it on the policy level. Among them, Germany stood out as the most active to implement it (see table 2). German officials in Brussels and Berlin actively promoted and supported joint programming in the EU as part of Germany's national contribution to development effectiveness (see chapter 4). An important role for the support at the working level played the secondment of a 'national expert' (SNE) to the Commission. This working level exchange had the effect of linking the bureaucracies closer on the issue to raise awareness for joint programming not only among other member states but also within their own organisations (Interviews DEVCO#1; PREP#1). France actively promoted joint programming at the policy level as a step towards giving Europe more visibility and political clout as a whole (Interviews EEAS#2; TT#3). While German officials supported the linking of joint programming to the aid effectiveness agenda, French officials emphasised the added value of the EU not limited to development (see also Krüger and Steingass, 2018).

The ambiguity of joint programming allowed a wider network of development officials from DG DEVCO, the EEAS and some member states to promote and advocate it as an all-EU policy norm, while justifying it on different grounds. However, the close engagement with the EEAS and some member states came at a price for DG DEVCO. While the EEAS was an ally in promoting joint programming, even on a limited, development-oriented level, its position in the network allowed it to assert its own institutional preferences *vis-à-vis* the more development-oriented policy professionals (Furness, 2012; Smith, 2013a). This was supported by an increasing assertiveness at higher levels of the EEAS and of the HR/VP, and the passivity of subsequent development commissioners. That the

foreign and security policy-oriented discourse had become more dominant at the expense of aid effectiveness, became tangible in the Commission's proposal for a revision of the European Consensus on Development. It states that 'the EU and its Member States will enhance joint programming in development cooperation in order to increase their collective *impact* by bringing together their resources and capacities' (European Commission, 2016b, p. 20, emphasis added). In the same paragraph, joint programming is stressed for the context of fragile and conflict-affected countries, which had become the new guiding objective of EU external action.

Expertise and networks

While bureaucratic politics was the 'engine' behind gaining support for joint programming, at least from the Commission's point of view, expertise became the 'fuel'. Despite its own bureaucratic, in-house expertise, the Commission had long relied on contracted external experts to increase its policy-making capacity at all stages of the policy cycle. This ranges from hiring individual consultants and short-term experts to commissioning studies under explicit terms of reference and engaging large member state-financed organisations, such as the Dutch think tank ECDPM. However, while from the mid-2000s, the Commission had tried to put its expertise on a wider, more systematic and networked basis, to promote joint programming, officials in DG DEVCO relied heavily on more tailored expertise, which was considered 'useful' for its engagement in bureaucratic politics. Thus, during the formulation of joint programming, and the early implementation and evaluation, officials in DG DEVCO tended to be selective and focused on relevant expertise for the continued promotion of joint programming based on aid effectiveness terms.

In the early phase of policy formulation, the Commission made the case for EU harmonisation based on what it saw as the public and research-backed perception of an increasingly pressing need for countering the progressing fragmentation of aid (European Commission, 2011d, pp. 15-6). While, at this time, such a perception was shared more widely among European think tanks and researchers (Carbone, 2010; Corre, 2009), DG DEVCO actively sought expert support with two commissioned external studies, published in March (O'Riordan*, et al.*, 2011) and September 2011 (Bigsten*, et al.*, 2011). The study from March 2011, run by the same consultancy that had already done the study on calculating savings in transaction costs from further implementing coordination (Carlsson*, et al.*,

2009), focused on showing the feasibility of joint programming. The second study from September 2011 aimed at substantiating the claim of an added EU contribution, again in terms of concrete monetary gains for the EU and its member states. This study produced quantifiable cost savings in the case of increased EU harmonisation along the proposed reforms, which 'could constitute a powerful incentive towards moving the aid effectiveness agenda forward' (Bigsten*, et al.*, 2011, p. 14).

As DG DEVCO maintained its bureaucratic capacity in the area of development effectiveness, it had not only the staff but also the funds to commission such additional, highly targeted studies for which its officials could determine very precise objectives (terms of reference). Thus, while the evaluations were done independently, the Commission's aid bureaucracy steered what kind of expertise these studies would produce, i.e., quantifiable 'hard' evidence (Bigsten*, et al.*, 2011) and knowledge which can be directly used in the advocacy of joint programming in practice (O'Riordan*, et al.*, 2011). While this expertise did not remain without criticism, for example, from researchers at the ODI (Prizzon and Greenhill, 2012, p. 9), DG DEVCO officials continued to concentrate on the direct engagement with specific experts, mostly those that it had already been familiar with and remained behind closed doors. Thus, while time-consuming, the development policy professionals in the Commission mainly responsible for general policy formulation continued to engage individual 'external' experts to follow the promotion of joint programming in later stages and support the claim of an added value.

Due to the relevance of 'field knowledge' in the promotion process with bureaucratic actors in Brussels, contracted consultants involved in joint programming at the EU delegations became highly important. The Commission hired and financed consultants, some of which were locals, to support the EU delegations in promoting and drawing up joint programming with the member states (Interviews DEVCO#1, #2; TT#3; Helly*, et al.*, 2015). Guidance in this process came again from the Commission and the EEAS. Since DG DEVCO had the financial resources and staff to manage consultants, it was primarily the Commission officials who engaged with them, and often used their own existing institutional contacts and relationships (Interviews DEVCO#1, #3; TT#3). This fits with the more general observation that the Commission has traditionally heavily drawn on consultants and external contractors especially when it comes to stages of implementation and early evaluation (Interview TT#1, see chapter 2). The joint programming consultants also became a direct link for the Commission officials in Brussels to the field where the political steering had been passed on to the EEAS in the EU delegations. The EEAS had asserted increasing control over the former Commission

delegations, despite a large proportion of former Commission staff in development-heavy third countries. While this played a role for informing the policy orientation, Commission officials sought to keep processes of coordination and planning close to their chest (Interview DEVCO#3, #5).

In contrast to EU institutional actors – especially in the context of increasing suspicion towards the Commission in member state capitals – external policy professionals could be more outspoken about advocating an EU policy norm. There was, as mentioned earlier, no shortage of research criticising fragmentation of aid in Europe and assessing the Commission's policies for reducing it (e.g., Carbone, 2013a; 2017; Delputte and Orbie, 2014; Mackie, 2013). The European Parliament had also commissioned a study with a similar focus (Klingebiel*, et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, officials in DG DEVCO had decided to grant certain external experts in-depth insights and access, for instance, participation in the seminars with member state representatives. ECDPM was closely involved in the EU institutions' positioning of joint programming for a study, and the reporting process, supported by the Commission, was used as input into the promotion process (Interview TT#3; Galeazzi*, et al.*, 2013; Helly*, et al.*, 2015). ECDPM has been well-connected and its expertise recognised by actors from very different parts of the European policy community, especially also in member states and the EEAS, as suggested by interviewees (Interviews DFID#2; EEAS#4). Another advantage was that, despite receiving core funding from the Netherlands, the think tank has continuously highlighted that it does not have primarily a national focus but a (African-)European one. In return for granting close insights, in the words an interviewee, ECDPM tried to make its expertise and knowledge-production process 'useful for those who wanted to promote it' (Interview TT#3).

While this degree of engagement of one organisation might have been exceptional rather than the rule, the strong reliance on individual consultants, researchers and organisations stood in contrast to earlier Commission discourses to put engagement with external experts on a more transparent and structured basis. This form of engagement shows a prioritisation of expertise that is 'produced' directly for the relevant norm advocacy based on institutional demands as opposed to knowledge 'on offer' in the wider 'market'. As a consequence, this fuelled criticism among observers within the wider expert community and led to tensions with and among experts who have constituted the wider network. It illustrates the capacity of Commission officials to become entrepreneurs in discursive networks as they not only manage network relations but also steer the production of expertise and knowledge within.

The perception that fragmentation was a problem for aid effectiveness seemed to dominate in bureaucratic and research circles. However, it was also shared by the EU's civil society umbrella organisation CONCORD, which argued that the 'problem of the fragmentation and proliferation of aid agencies has been identified as one of the major constraints on more effective development cooperation, at both OECD and EU level' (CONCORD, 2012, p. 36). The Commission thus proposed the shift to joint programming as a way out, allowing for the flexible tailoring of donor coordination to the situation on the ground, which would be in line with country ownership, the core principle of the effectiveness agenda (European Commission, 2011e). This argument was, apparently, not sufficient to convince civil society at large of the added value of joint programming, which was also due to the bureaucracy-driven nature of policy construction in Brussels (see above). The collaboration between officials in DG DEVCO, the EEAS and in a few member state bureaucracies, on the one hand, and the selective approach to the engagement of external experts, on the other hand, meant that the advocacy of joint programming for a crucial period kept a low profile and remained depoliticised. This proved to be problematic for engaging the wider policy community.

Officials at all levels in both DG DEVCO and the EEAS stressed the voluntary nature of coordination initiatives, including joint programming, division of labour, joint budget support etc. In a 2012 letter to all member state ministers in charge of development cooperation, the three underwriting commissioners highlighted this when they state that

> It goes without saying that the EU and its Member States are the driving force behind our joint cooperation response [i.e., joint programming]. […] Therefore, when it comes to determining whether or not to undertake joint programming in a country, it is first and foremost up to the Member States providing assistance to said country to decide whether they are willing to go down this road. (European Commission, 2012b)

This approach stood in contrast to the European Parliament. While the EP has hardly taken a (public) position either before or after, in a resolution in 2013, the EP called on the Commission to provide a proposal for a legally-binding regulation on EU donor coordination on development aid (European Parliament, 2013). The EP's initiative report was based on a report entitled 'The Cost of Non-Europe in Development Policy: Increasing coordination between EU donors', which suggested to adopt 'a new *binding* coordination instrument, building on current best practices and mechanisms, notably in relation to division of labour and joint programming' (Nogaj, 2013, p. 3; emphasis added). This study itself was based on an external study, which the EP had commissioned before (Klingebiel, *et al.*, 2013).

Although it merely called for a legal codification of already existing, albeit voluntary, measures, the initiative met the resistance of member states *and* DG DEVCO (Interviews DEVCO#1; EP#1, #4). Due to the 'confrontational' nature of this approach *vis-à-vis* the member states, the Commission distanced itself from the EP's approach, including its study on the cost of non-Europe.

Thus, although the EP's Committee on Development (DEVE) shared argument coming out of DG DEVCO that enhancing EU donor coordination contributed to increasing the effectiveness of EU development aid, in DG DEVCO a more careful attitude prevailed, distancing themselves from the attempt to achieve a legal norm with the member states (Interview DEVCO#1). DEVE members and the committee's officials could frame this initiative as supporting the Commission's efforts at implementing EU coordination measures in increasingly difficult times (Interviews EP#2, #3, #4). However, the entire process was, arguably, mainly aimed at 'testing' the EP's capacities post-Lisbon (Interview EP#4), especially the extent to which it was able to engage independently in the public debate based on its newly consolidated research capacities, the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) or 'EP think tank'. This incidence shows how DEVE members became more outspoken, confident and conflictual, even against their long-term ally and patron, the Commission, despite limited formal competences on policy formulation outside the financing instruments.

A second issue was that the reduction to and promotion of joint programming through a small, exclusive, administrative-centric circle of policy professionals meant that a wide range of policy actors felt increasingly excluded from the debate about EU policy norms for effective development cooperation. As noted earlier, leading European development think tanks and researchers aside from ECDPM, such as ODI and DIE, also criticised aid fragmentation and supported the Commission's policies to reduce fragmentation. Despite their attempts to present themselves as an entity through the ETTG, the Commission's aid bureaucracy hardly engaged them as a group in this time.[15] Instead, the attempts of DG DEVCO officials to engage European think thanks have been perceived as *ad hoc* (Interviews DEVCO#3; TT#1, #2). The continuity of such a European group was further challenged with the discontinuation of the European Report on Development (ERD) after 2015 when more and more member states dropped out of the financing and the report's impact had been questioned (Interviews CON#3; DEVCO#3; Lorenzoni and del Carmen Bueno Barriga, 2014). Competing for the ERD tender

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[15] The ETTG experienced a 'revival' in 2018. In June 2018 the group of European development policy think tanks, which has been partly reconfigured, held an inaugural public event with the European Commission in Brussels with the aim of sharing expertise between policy professionals and to improve the engagement of experts in EU policy-making.

had been a principle incentive for think tanks to organise, which they have, however, found generally difficult. Their cooperation in the ETTG, for instance, was largely *ad hoc*, their relationship loose, often depended on personal ties, and generally overshadowed by competition (Interviews CON#3; TT#1, #2).

In contrast, DEVE took over some ground from the Commission when it came to public expertise, stakeholder engagement and the wider communicative discourse from which the Commission had largely withdrawn concerning the advocacy of EU policy norms in development cooperation. However, as the case of DEVE's *Cost of Non-Europe* report suggests, not all expertise was equally welcome, especially where this created public pressure on the Commission to be more assertive and thus politicised its bureaucratic interactions. This made it increasingly difficult for officials in DG DEVCO to engage in a more encompassing way within the wider network of professionals, which it had supported so strongly in the mid-/late 2000s. While some think tanks and academia showed strong interest, NGOs showed little interest in the technical linkages between (EU) coordination and development effectiveness and therefore hardly engaged in the promotion of measures to improve coordination.

The main exception was budget support (Interview NGO#2; DFID, 2013c, p. 54). The Commission had linked the promotion of joint programming with measures conducive to coordination, especially budget support in its public discourse (European Commission, 2011e, p. 11; 2013a, pp. 29-31). Budget support was perceived to support coordination operationally, including joint programming (Faust*, et al.*, 2012). Importantly, it was also strongly supported by partner countries. Thus, think tanks and NGOs had been on the same page as the Commission with its argument. For example, a DIE discussion paper argued that, in principle, 'the intervention logic of budget support is conducive to increasing the coordination among European donors' as the question of how funds are implemented is left to partner countries and 'could therefore have contributed to a more coherent and harmonised European development policy' (Faust and Koch, 2014, p. 24).

However, since the time of Paris Declaration, and especially during the so-called 'Arab Spring', budget support had significantly lost acceptance among EU donors, even when they had nominally supported it before, such as Britain. EU member states remained particularly divided on the conditions for and extent of budget support (CONCORD, 2012, p. 37; Faust and Koch, 2014; Vanheukelom, 2012). In the wake of the 'Arab Spring', any form of budget support became increasingly politically untenable in the eyes of many member states as it pushed human rights and

political governance higher on the agenda in the EU (Faust*, et al.*, 2012, pp. 2-3; Vanheukelom, 2012, p. 11). Together with the financial crisis, this forced the aid and development bureaucracies in many member states to showcase accountability to their domestic audiences (see chapter 5). Thus, several EU member states became more restrictive by including more political issues of governance in their eligibility criteria and linked budget support disbursement explicitly to democratic governance reforms, which effectively led to scaling down of budget support (CONCORD, 2012, p. 37).

Against this background, NGO support for DG DEVCO continued in the area of budget support, as expressed by CONCORD or the NGO network Eurodad (Interview NGO#2; Eurodad and Reality of Aid, 2010). It was there where societal policy professionals offered targeted expertise and advocacy. They criticised primarily that it was Europeans' domestic demands for mechanisms to ensure tighter control and accountability that led to a significant reduction in support for EU budget support policies, not development demands. Although NGOs had shown limited interest in the Commission's wider coordination agenda, they exchanged support with DG DEVCO to promote budget support *vis-à-vis* the member states (Interview NGO#2; DFID, 2013c, p. 54). Despite putting increasing transnational expertise and advocacy behind budget support (Wolff, 2015), the Commission failed to circumvent member state opposition (Koch*, et al.*, 2017). This forced Commission officials also at the working level to adjust their priorities and their engagement with civil society soured (Interview NGO#2).

That at higher levels the Commission made increasing concessions to security-oriented demands (see chapter 2) led to additional tension with and among other stakeholders, which had been traditionally on the side of the Commission. While NGOs and think tanks perceived changes in the EU's approach towards development to become more integrated within the EU's external relations as a chance to improve the effectiveness of European development cooperation (CONCORD, 2015; Gavas*, et al.*, 2016), they also stressed the risks of subordinating development cooperation to Europe's short-term security concerns. In the eyes of some NGO representatives, as expressed in several interviews, the Commission's adjustments, following their closer ties to the EEAS and member states, meant a divergence of objectives: Whereas in the mid- and late 2000s, NGO and EU interests seemed broadly aligned, especially with a focus on budget support and active attempts to involve CSOs, the increased focus on the private sector, Europe's security, and the lack of appetite in DG DEVCO to involve especially European CSOs in it, has made their engagement continuously more confrontational (Interviews NGO#1, #4; TT#1). This has reduced their mutual advocacy of EU policy norms.

These tensions went against attempts in the Commission to structure its engagement with CSOs more systematically but also contributed to tensions within the wider (sub-)networks, e.g., within CONCORD and the ETTG. Instead, the EP emerged as the driving force behind the engagement of European CSOs through strong institutional access, for instance, invitations to hearings and exchange of information and resources (Interviews EP#2, #3). This shift was facilitated because many NGOs adjusted their priorities in the light of the UN's updated set of international development objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Civil society actors significantly shifted away from the aid effectiveness discourse of the 2000s. The differentiation of the international development paradigm around the global 'Agenda 2030' and the SDGs meant that external actors shifted their focus and became more diverse. Multiple NGO networks expressed to shift attention further towards 'domestic' issues, such as tax evasion, and away from aid and development cooperation (Interviews NGO#1, #3, #4, #5). This influenced and partly reduced their ties with and reliance on DG DEVCO, given that its mandate remained limited to development cooperation, and moved them closer to the EP. However, as an interviewee suggested, the Commission officials remained relevant interlocutors, so they have continued to engage with them in development policy terms (Interview NGO#1).

Conclusions

Different actors in Europe such as politicians, bureaucrats and experts have pursued collective action through the establishment of common EU policy norms. The EU level has thus been a central arena for the competition over different norms for collective action. The chapter has demonstrated that this competition has largely revolved around promoting discursive frames of improving the effectiveness of the EU's development cooperation. Various policy professionals have contributed in different ways to the promotion of discursive frames of improving the effectiveness of the EU's development cooperation. To understand the contribution of policy professionals to the advocacy of policy norms for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states, this chapter has shown to what extent and how professionals have contributed to the competition over discursive frames of improving effectiveness. It has found that the EU level has offered various policy professionals a way

of engaging across organisational boundaries in norm advocacy and thus partly circumvent the gatekeeping of member state representatives through their participation in discourses on EU effectiveness.

This chapter has traced and analysed the advancement of common EU norms within shifting discursive and institutional contexts, which have shaped EU norm advocacy. The emergence of norms for EU collective action has often been analysed as part of institutionalised policy processes (e.g., Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; Orbie and Versluys, 2007), which omit large parts of the wider transnational discursive process in which policy professionals play a role who do not have a formal role. One conclusion of this chapter is that the transnational level offers various policy professionals a way of engaging across organisational boundaries in norm advocacy to promote their preferences and ideas. This goes beyond member state representatives who come together to engage in norm negotiations over common policy norms (Elgström, 2000; 2017). Instead, their interactions are part of a larger discursive contestation in which a wider range of professionals at the transnational and national level participate, including a range of non-state actors. The contribution of these policy professionals to norm advocacy has become visible through analysing their discursive interactions. The EU level has been relevant for policy professionals as it constitutes an institutionalised nodal point around which transnational networks form rather than an established hierarchical order. A central position in this institutional structure is occupied by institutional actors. This includes policy professionals especially from the European Commission but also the European Parliament and the EU's diplomatic service (EEAS).

Thus, the chapter has highlighted how professionals in these EU institutions, rather than member state actors (see chapters 4 and 5), have sought to participate in EU norm advocacy through competition over discursive frames of improving effectiveness. A key finding is that Commission officials have taken such a central role in EU norm advocacy because they have established and advocated a discursive frame of improving the effectiveness of the EU's development cooperation. As the first section demonstrated, Commission officials managed to establish a discursive network of public support among state and non-state actors for promoting an agenda which aimed at reducing fragmentation in Europe by strengthening the role of the EU as a 'federator' in development cooperation. What this part has shown is that this promotion of common EU policy norms emerged within an international discourse of aid effectiveness that was simultaneously shaped by the norm advocacy in the EU. That this discursive network weakened as the international discourse on aid

effectiveness shifted, shown in the second section, indicates the relevance of the international discursive environment for EU norm advocacy.

The last section has demonstrated how Commission officials, who have remained potent network managers, adjusted their interactions to continue to promote common policy norms even in unfavourable times when suspicion among member states had grown following the financial crisis, institutional rivalry increased among EU institutions after the Lisbon Treaty and the international discursive environment has shifted. Coordination did not disappear as a policy norm at the EU level but in the wider discourse it was largely disconnected from development effectiveness. To understand how norm advocacy continued in a shifting institutional and discursive context, the chapter has zoomed into the discursive network of policy professionals who have continued to promote coordination norms during unfavourable times. Officials in DG DEVCO focused on fewer policy norms, primarily joint multiannual programming, and advocated it by coordinating a discursive justification through a more technical, predominantly administrative network of professionals in DG DEVCO, the EEAS, and relevant officials in member states, including in Germany (see chapter 4). Instead of wider societal participation in the justification of common policy norms, policy professionals in DG DEVCO engaged external experts, such as consultants and researchers, more selectively to enhance their bureaucratic expert authority and justify joint programming against competing voices in the member states and EU institutions, which have highlighted alternative discursive frames of improving effectiveness (see also chapter 5). This strengthening of a (bureaucratic) coordinative discourse meant a break with the communicative discourse coordination of the 2000s. In contrast to earlier EU norm advocacy, when the Commission's public promotion with the member states shaped the international discursive environment, the coordinative discourse has not had the same effect. Moreover, the approach made advocacy in a public sphere more confrontational and undermined earlier attempts at establishing societal transnational networks because it reduced incentives for collaboration.

This chapter has advanced our understanding of the agency of policy professional in EU collective action. It has established how norm advocacy in EU development cooperation has occurred as part of competition over discursive frames of improving effectiveness in which EU policy professionals participate. This has allowed to draw first conclusions about how, in what ways and under what conditions policy professionals have contributed to collective EU action in development cooperation. The key implication of these conclusions for understanding wider processes of advocating collective EU external action is the need to identify how professionals contribute to the

justification of policy norms and thus engage in transnational norm advocacy, even when they have little formal role. While this chapter has concentrated at the networks and discourses of professionals around the EU institutions, the next step involves looking at the member state professionals who have engaged in these transnational discursive processes.

4   Germany: Coordinating for Consensus?

Introduction

The search for agency of policy professionals in EU norm advocacy sooner or later leads to Germany. Chapters 2 and 3 have shown how German actors – similar to the French – have sought to influence EU external action from within. When looking for a member state that seeks to shape EU norms and policy, Germany comes to mind not because of its untamed power projection but because of the lack thereof – despite its size and weight. Germany's elites have avoided discourses of national interests and presented them instead as European interests. To pursue them, they have presented European initiatives, usually jointly with other member states, preferably France. The preference of German policy-makers for working behind the scenes and alongside others is a consequence of the country's history in the 20th century and has shaped the country's engagement in Europe's regional integration (Bulmer and Paterson, 1989; Maull, 1990). Nevertheless, since reunification and with the eurozone crisis, this traditional approach has come under increasing pressure internally while external expectations of Germany assuming leadership have simultaneously experienced a step-change (Paterson, 2011).

Chapters 1 to 3 have shown how transnational norm advocacy revolves around discursive competition in which policy professionals participate. The previous chapter has demonstrated that German professionals mattered for the coordination of collective action norms in EU development cooperation. That is hardly surprising given that German policy-makers have always stressed the relevance of the EU for Germany's identity and interests. This chapter seeks to understand in what ways state and non-state professionals participate, how their participation matters for transnational norm advocacy and what affects their participation, especially national discourses, practices and institutional structures. Germany's engagement in the EU has attracted considerable academic attention, which was revitalised after its reunification in 1990 (e.g., Bulmer and Paterson, 1996; 2010; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 2001; Katzenstein, 1998; Paterson, 2011; Schweiger, 2007). Observers have

since been curious about what role a unified Germany plays in European integration, given that the country's historical 'baggage' has shaped the process of integration. While much attention has since rested on Germany's relationships and balance with other EU member states, some observers have turned to its role in EU foreign policy (e.g., Daehnhardt, 2011). European integration has become a central avenue for Germany's external relations. This deliberate taming of opportunities reflects a general pattern of German power projection (Katzenstein, 1998), which has become part of its civilian power image (Maull, 1990). Development cooperation has been part of this power projection. However, relatively little has been written on Germany's role in EU development cooperation. While France, Britain and the Nordic countries have often been singled out for their role in and influence on EU development cooperation (e.g., Cumming, 2001; Elgström, 2017; Elgström and Delputte, 2016), Germany has only occasionally surfaced (see chapter 2).

Conversely, little has been written on the German politics of EU aid, with some minor exceptions (Ashoff, 2005; Schmidt, 2015). The expectation is that German engagement in the EU has become more assertive since the 1990s. While the preference of policy-makers for multilateralist approaches has continued, a 'normalisation' of power projection by the German government means that this approach has become less dominant (Bulmer and Paterson, 2010; Hyde-Price and Jeffery, 2001). On the one hand, in the words of two seasoned observers, 'Germany's strong pro-European credentials enabled it to play a very large role in "uploading its preferences" to the EU level' (Bulmer and Paterson, 2010, p. 1058), and German actors have become more strategic in using this multilateralist approach to promote national agendas. However, they are less tied to embedding competences in supranational institutions and instead tend to diffuse preferred discourses to other member states. On the other hand, unilateral action seems to remain the exception due to the German preference for conformity. Thus, the engagement of the German government has become 'normal' in the sense of a more direct, interest-based projection of power in the EU. This 'normalisation' of Germany's 'Europeanism' following reunification has arguably accelerated with the eurozone crisis (Paterson, 2011).

The extent to which such shifts guide Germany's engagement in EU development cooperation is not immediately obvious. German actors use multilateral discourses explicitly to pursue their agenda and effectiveness of collective action has been a key discourse. In development cooperation, Germany has traditionally preferred to avoid political conflicts and instead used other channels for contestation. While there has been a domestic bilateral agenda, Germany has preferred a rhetoric of

multilateralism, which has been both consistent and persistent. This is evidenced, for example, in the so-called 'Marshall Plan with Africa' (BMZ, 2017a), which highlights 'Europe's stakes' despite being an exclusively German policy. This 'multilateral reflex' is particularly relevant as the German development agenda goes beyond conceptions of aid giving, to include constructing internationally favourable conditions for development (BMZ, 2014; 2017b). Thus, engagement in the EU has a more prominent place when it comes to policies beyond aid. On the one hand, the EU is itself a system of international governance, which makes it a suitable forum for collective problem-solving. On the other hand, through the EU's role as a global player, a wider system of international governance can be shaped more effectively, e.g., through its participation in the OECD-DAC, the international climate negotiations, and world trade rounds.

Against this background, the chapter analyses how German actors have participated in the discursive networks on effective EU development cooperation. The extent to which Germany acts 'normally' in an EU institutional system that favours intergovernmental interaction (Bickerton*, et al.*, 2014) adds to our understanding of who drives discourses on the EU's role and how. The first section (I) of this chapter outlines the discourses of German development cooperation over time and how they have related to Community/EU policy. The second section (II) looks at the politics of EU aid in Germany. It disentangles the complex organisation of German development cooperation in the EU, and how actors coordinate and seek support for their arguments in the national and transnational arena. In the third section (III), the chapter then analyses the participation of German policy professionals in EU norm advocacy in the context of aid effectiveness to assess how their different discourses and capacities for engagement contributed to EU policy norms.

I   Development cooperation and the EU

For a long time, Germany's development cooperation was a substitute for, rather than a complement to, an assertive foreign policy. This shaped the advancement of German development cooperation, which has focused on political and commercial interests and has therefore been less progressive in its mandate. Although different political leadership put their stamp on German development policy, which empowered certain factions in the domestic constituency, there has been a great deal of

continuity. One observer at the German Development Institute (DIE) once compared the German aid system to a tanker at sea:

> German aid policy resembles a tanker. The size of its aid programme in absolute terms gives it a considerable weight in the convoy of donors and, for example, in efforts to improve donor co-ordination. Like a tanker, German development co-operation has changed its course over time somewhat more slowly than some other reform-minded countries […], but once a change of course occurred, Germany has followed this course fairly steadily and reliably – again like tankers in real life. (Ashoff, 2005, p. 299)

In this way, German discourses on international development have also shown a strong degree of continuity. They have been dominated by the pursuit of a global structural (or governance) policy and enhancing the effectiveness of cooperation.

From the German perspective, the purpose of European integration in external relations was, in the 1950s, limited to opening third countries to international trade. This ambition was initially disappointed by French opposition, supported by the Commission (see chapter 2), and which thus created suspicion in Germany towards the common institutions.[16] Pursuing a globalist trade policy remained a central concern in German discourses on the EU's role thereafter. While Germany established its development policy in the 1950s, it was placed under the auspices of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation in 1961. Since financial assistance had previously been with the Federal Ministry of Economics, this influenced the way in which German aid developed (White, 1965, pp. 22-3). It meant that aid policy explicitly served German trade and domestic economic interests. Certain benefits, such as the creation of employment at home, were official criteria for committing German aid (Schmidt, 2015, p. 33). This directed aid towards large (prospective) export markets, which created a long-term bias in aid allocation to large, economically viable trade champions such as China, India, Brazil and Indonesia. Concerns about securing raw material imports have complemented this approach. While such a focus might be compatible with development objectives (Faust and Ziaja,

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[16] When France linked its approval to the Treaty of Rome to the financial commitment of Germany to its colonies in the late 1950s, Germany had not yet formulated a national external development assistance strategy. Nevertheless, although it has since contributed the lion's share of the EU's development budget together with France, it did not uncritically support the French conception of development cooperation. Germany, together with the Netherlands had challenged the particularistic Franco-European approach several times on the grounds of their universalist trade goals, originally with little success. Therefore, the German government insisted to maintain some degree of control about the collective European development efforts and posted the Director-General as long as Frenchman held the office of Commissioner.

2012), it reflects strong and deeply embedded domestic pressure on the orientation of development cooperation in terms of commercial and business interests.

At the same time, Germany's development policy has also been part of its commitment to Western alliances and European integration. Thus, particularistic commercial and business interest were balanced against competing political interests. For instance, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's assent to the EDF was strongly criticised at home (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 14). While opening formerly closed export markets in Francophone Africa was promoted as a 'consolation price' in exchange for Germany's financial contribution, national businesses initially benefited little in practice. However, the German government came to accept the strong French influence on Community aid because of its overriding commitment to the vulnerable European unification process, even though, to some extent, this restricted Germany's commercial and political engagement in Africa (Schmidt, 2015, p. 33). Thus, Germany's contribution to Community development cooperation fulfilled a different purpose from German aid coming out through bilateral channels (White, 1965, p. 22).

Germany continued to promote a global orientation of European development cooperation, including its expansion to Latin America and Asia. This was facilitated partly by the accession of the United Kingdom (see chapters 2 and 5). Subsequently, the EU's engagement in some third countries was also seen to have the potential for democratic transformation. While this became increasingly relevant as a German discourse on the EU's role in the 1980s, the end of the Cold War brought this role of the EU to the forefront, as the government's official development reports suggest (see BMZ, 1993). However, the end of the Cold War came with multiple, partly competing shifts that became relevant for German discourses on the EU's role. First, it meant that the EU could develop a strong role in the neighbourhood, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Second, while the orientation towards the East was a German priority, German cooperation policies pushed to become more development-oriented, reflected, for instance, in the renaming of ministry from 'Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation' to 'Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development' in 1993.[17] These competing discourses on Europe's role were captured in the ministry's 1993 report to parliament (*Weißbuch*), which expressed the need to assure that

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[17] From 1961 to 1993, the ministry was named *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit* and thereafter *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung*, short BMZ.

> The increase of the financial volume [of the EDF] reveals that the Community does not neglect its responsibility towards the Third World, even against the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and the related challenges. (BMZ, 1993, p. 91, translated by the author)

Third, with the Treaty of Maastricht, the EU was not only given a competence in development cooperation beyond the external partnership agreement with the ACP countries, but it advanced into different policy areas, including foreign policy through the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This opened new avenues for German engagement through the EU and its institutions.

The end of the Cold War strengthened Germany's pre-existing propensity to see development cooperation as a policy for stability (Ashoff, 2005). Due to the high costs of reunification and increasing austerity considerations, financial resources for developing countries were reduced in the 1990s. At the same time, accelerated globalisation and changing security concerns, especially the crises in the Balkans and the opening of Eastern Europe, restructured the focus of German aid. The development ministry increasingly shifted towards conceiving development cooperation as part of what it called a 'global structural and peace policy' (BMZ, 2001b, p. XI). While this perspective had already emerged in the early 1990s (BMZ, 1995, p. 47), it was strongly advanced under the long tenure of the social-democratic Federal Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul from 1998 to 2009, who also brought the EU into the picture. Coordination among EU member states in the run-up to international conferences, especially in the UN system, had been acknowledged as beneficial before:

> In the run-up to international conferences […] there is close coordination between the member states. A common approach on the basis on political recommendations facilitates the implementation of development policy priorities and thus simultaneously provides the Union with a distinct European profile. (BMZ, 1995, p. 108, translated by the author)

However, from 1998 onwards, as evidenced in the ministry's report in 2001, the EU as an institution played a more prominent role in areas of German policy interest beyond free trade, i.e., democracy and human rights, regional integration and crisis prevention (BMZ, 2001b, p. 157).

These ambitions go back to the conception of German development cooperation as part of Germany's overall foreign relations, its normative framework, principles and goals. Thus, it has been largely consistent with its post-war 'civilian power' image (see Maull, 1990). Issues of fragility and state failure moved closer to the centre of German development cooperation. This was accompanied after 1994 by a paradigm shift in Germany's external relations concerning the use of military force abroad, first practiced in the Balkans. However, German engagement remained largely confined to

conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction of which development cooperation became a central component (Schmidt, 2015). Against this background, in 2001, the development minister demanded from the EU that

> preconditions for faster and more effective non-military crisis management of the EU must be created. The most recent example, the refugee catastrophe in Mozambique, showed that the combined use of military and non-military forces, of state and non-state actors, can accomplish fast and effective assistance for emergency relief and reconstruction. (Wieczorek-Zeul, 2001, p. 163, translated by the author)

That the BMZ regarded the EU more openly as a central channel for shaping the global governance system was not primarily due to the EU's own competence in development cooperation. Instead, it was due to the EU's 'explicitly political' role in international trade, agriculture and fisheries, environmental protection, its role model character for regional integration, democracy, rule of law and human rights, and its role in international crisis management. This is, according to the ministry, what sets the EU apart from other international donors and constitutes its comparative advantage (BMZ, 2005, p. 175). Subsequent BMZ reports since 2008 put the EU in the service of Germany's policy of improving global governance. While this had become the ministry's main discourse on the EU's role, different ministers have set different emphases depending on domestic priorities of the time. Thus, the EU's role in global climate and energy governance was central during Germany's Council Presidency in 2007 (BMZ, 2008), the EU's role in international development effectiveness was highlighted in 2013 (BMZ, 2013a), and in managing the refugee crisis in 2017 (BMZ, 2017b).

In contrast, the EU institutions' role in development cooperation has long been seen in a more sceptical light. This became particularly relevant after Maastricht when the BMZ needed to develop a position on the Commission's ambition as a donor *and* coordinator. German development actors saw the EU's role therein as limited, and the German parliament (*Bundestag*) instead highlighted subsidiarity and the need for the EU institutions to become more efficient (BMZ, 1995, p. 119). This criticism of, and concern with, the EU institutions' lack of efficiency was repeated thereafter (BMZ, 2001b) and resonated with the criticism of other member states, in particular the United Kingdom (see chapter 5). While the BMZ had acknowledged the EU's critical role in policy fields relevant to international development, e.g., trade, security, environment etc., it was more sceptical towards the role of the EU institutions in development cooperation.

This scepticism was also due to the lack of a clear conception of German development policy. In addition to commercial objectives (see above), development cooperation had long been used explicitly as a means of pursuing specific foreign policy objectives. These were originally arranged around West Germany's aim of receiving international recognition, which resulted in spreading aid widely, known as 'watering-can approach' (*Gießkannenprinzip*), and aid to Israel and Yugoslavia (Schmidt, 2015, pp. 31-2). Aid had also been used for more distinct geopolitical concerns where other means of foreign policy were absent, e.g., in the case of aid for Turkey and Egypt that was justified as a contribution to the Middle East peace process, and after the end of the Cold War for Eastern Europe and again the Balkans (Faust and Ziaja, 2012). While an enhanced focus on poverty eradication had emerged at several points,[18] it was only with the international resurgence of poverty orientation and a focus on fundamental needs, most prominently codified in the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000, that German development cooperation reflected this orientation more consistently. The formal codification of poverty reduction in the 'Programme of Action 2015 for Poverty Reduction' of 2001 (BMZ, 2001a) has thus been regarded as a 'milestone' in the conceptual framework of German development cooperation, also due to its wide support within Germany (Ashoff, 2005, pp. 275-6).

On this basis, the BMZ recognised the EU's clout in international development negotiations. Referring to the international development conferences of the early 2000s, the ministry acknowledged that 'The EU has been able to assert its superior weight in the past years especially at global development conferences' (BMZ, 2005, p. 175, translated by the author). This referred primarily to the Monterrey consensus on financing for development, which established parameters on aid quantity and quality. While the contribution of the EU institutions to the aid effectiveness conferences in Paris and Accra received little recognition under Wieczorek-Zeul – with the exception of the German contribution to the EU Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour (see chapter 3) – it demonstrated to the subsequent political leadership in Germany that the EU's role in international development negotiations was relevant. By 2011, German officials had defined the purpose of the EU in helping Germany to shape the international effectiveness discourse. In 2011, Dirk Niebel (2009-2013) of the liberal party, who followed on Wieczorek-Zeul as development minister, asserted that 'The EU is present in almost all countries and has a pioneering role for efforts for more effectiveness. We want to use this potential better' (BMZ, 2013a, p. 41, translated by the author). The Commission

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[18] This was the case under the tenure of the social-democratic Development Minister Erhard Eppler (1968-1974) and again in the early 1990s, which was also reflected in the renaming of ministry in 1993 (see above).

was increasingly recognised as an actor and its role had become presented as that of a BMZ ally in Europe, one that shared German concerns, especially regarding effectiveness (BMZ, 2013a, p. 42). To highlight this more strategic multilateral engagement, Niebel provided a first 'strategy' for Germany's multilateral engagement, which had been missing before (OECD, 2010a). It was introduced in 2013 with an explicit focus on effectiveness (BMZ, 2013c). While this focus was certainly informed by the political affiliation and preferences of the minister, it was compatible with the overall German discourse. Simultaneously, Niebel stressed the commitment to work bilaterally with France (BMZ, 2013b), which emphasised the horizontal perspective in the German discourse to work with allies to influence the global governance system.

The EU's failure to maintain its influence on international discourses in international climate and development conferences in Copenhagen (2009) and Busan (2011) highlighted the limits of the EU's role. At the same time, re-emerging domestic priorities, especially migration, but also climate change and environment, cast doubts among German development actors over the role of the Commission as an ally. In 2017, the BMZ report stated that achieving the goals of the agenda 2030 did not only require fundamentally reconsidering individual instruments but also 'the self-understanding of the EU as a development policy actor' (BMZ, 2017b, p. 72). Against the pressures of migration and climate change, the EU appeared mainly as a financial contributor. Beyond these limited functions, the EU was seen in an instrumental way, mainly limited to its power in global trade:

> In addition to tackling the root causes of migration, improving the social and environmental standards in global supply chains, which can be implemented effectively globally due to the EU's market power, is a priority of German development policy in the EU. (BMZ, 2017b, p. 190, translated by the author)

Hence, the multilateralist bias, which has motivated much of Germany's active engagement in the EU, has primarily affected policies outside aid and development cooperation. The EU has been a channel of Germany's ambition of shaping the global governance system both as a model and as a collective actor in the international system. As both Germany's and the EU's interest in international development broadened, this increasingly involved the EU's role in development cooperation. However, the role of the EU institutions, especially the Commission, in development cooperation was regarded as limited, with the main exception of asserting its weight in international trade. This changed with a more assertive engagement under Federal Minister Niebel who perceived the Commission as a 'horizontal' ally for Germany's global policy ambitions when it came to the shaping

of international institutions for policy effectiveness. Since then, the role of the EU has become more ambiguous and less pertinent.

II   Bureaucracy, fragmentation, expertise

The organisation and institutional set-up of development cooperation has had repercussions for the engagement of German policy professionals in and with the EU. The complexity of development cooperation structures comes together with the general 'de-concentration' of Germany's domestic institutional structures for EU policy-making, i.e., the sectorisation of policy responsibilities (Bulmer*, et al.*, 2000; Bulmer*, et al.*, 2001). Sectorisation refers to the sector-specific representation in the EU. It comes with the potential for political competition between ministries and policy communities, which may undermine each other. As a result, even when the political commitment to 'doing things through the EU' is high among officials, political parties and socio-economic stakeholders, this can be undermined by the loosely coordinated articulation of German interests in day-to-day government diplomacy in Brussels (Bulmer and Paterson, 2010, p. 1057).

For development cooperation, the issue of coordinating political engagement in the EU has been amplified by a persistent lack of separation between political governance and the implementation of development cooperation. The ministry's capacity for engaging in the EU has been significantly enhanced by the separate implementation agencies and other closely affiliated organisations. Keeping close contact with the development professionals in these organisations has been indispensable for government officials at all points, also when going to Brussels. However, the fragmented organisation of the development constituency means that political steering has been a challenge. While officials seek to anticipate much of the political demands when engaging in expertise-based coordination, there continues to be partly competing messages communicated in Brussels. There have been different attempts at dealing with this issue, most prominently, the institutional reforms under Dirk Niebel between 2009 and 2013, which were aimed at improving the effectiveness of German development cooperation through enhancing the capacity for political steering within the sector.

These institutional arrangements shape how Germany engages at the European level and how German development professionals participate in EU norm advocacy. While these arrangements shift over time, this section outlines the two main themes that have shaped the country's politics of EU development cooperation. First, German bureaucratic representation externally is not centralised but horizontally fragmented and sectorised. This comes with compliance-based parliamentary scrutiny. As a result, the development ministry (BMZ) enjoys a degree of autonomy when engaging in the EU from the *Bundestag*, civil society and other government departments as long as it remains within the confines of legal requirements, for instance, regarding the budget, and does not step onto other actors' 'turf'. Second, ministry officials need to engage with policy professionals to substantiate and promote policies. While BMZ officials have the political responsibility, they lack technical capacity. The necessary substantial expertise comes from specific government-funded, state-owned organisations and agencies with different technical expertise and experience from the field, which are closely affiliated with the ministry, rather than from traditional NGOs. This is a central component of German state-society organisation.

Representing development cooperation

Institutional complexity has been a defining feature of German development cooperation because its organisation had emerged incrementally with more and diverse actors joining the system. Originally, until a dedicated development ministry was founded in 1961, competences were spread over several government departments. Since 1961, development cooperation has been represented at federal cabinet-level by a federal government department (BMZ). This status has provided development cooperation with some political autonomy *vis-à-vis* foreign affairs, trade and defence. At the same time, it increases the political fragmentation of Germany's international relations internally and externally. This is due to the horizontal political division of policy sectors, which means that the political responsibility is with the respective minister (*Ressortprinzip*). As a result, the existence of the ministry had not always been a given. Before the conservative-liberal government formed in 2009, Dirk Niebel, who later became the development minister, favoured the abolition of the ministry to merge its competences into the Federal Foreign Office.

The scope of engagement is confined by the guidelines outlined by the chancellor according to which the ministries are formed. The BMZ and its minister have the primary political responsibility for development cooperation. Traditionally, more than half of German ODA had been channelled through the BMZ budget, but since 2013 this share has continuously fallen to a third in 2016 (Bohnet*, et al.*, 2018, p. 11). This was also due to the expenses for the large number of refugees in Germany in 2015 and 2016, which count as aid for the OECD's statistical purposes (see table 1). As a result, the BMZ budget, despite increases, has constituted a smaller proportion. Other government departments, e.g., the ministries responsible for the economy, health, or education and research, continue to be responsible for disbursing sector-specific funds. Especially the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*), the Federal Ministry of Defence or the Federal Chancellery also play a role in specific geographic contexts, e.g., in Afghanistan, or thematic and overarching issues, e.g., migration, and they have their own agendas when it comes to engaging in the EU. In addition, there is development assistance by the federal states (*Länder*), about 5.4 percent of total ODA in 2015 (Bohnet*, et al.*, 2018, p. 11), which is a particular element of German development cooperation (Ashoff, 2005, p. 283). Thus, the BMZ has never been unrivalled in its competence, although civil society organisations, the Christian churches in Germany, as well as a cross-party 'informal coalition' in the *Bundestag* have long supported the ministry's emphasis on aid as an expression of solidarity (Schmidt, 2015, pp. 31-2), in contrast to other interests and values.

German federal government departments have their own 'EU competence', which means that they are responsible for promoting and defending departmental and governmental interests in the EU. Thus, the BMZ engages directly with EU institutions and other member states horizontally on all levels. Internationally, German development cooperation is represented by the ministry's political leadership, i.e., the minister and the secretaries of state, and the units in Berlin responsible for the ministry's international representation. The latter coordinate Germany's input into European and multilateral development cooperation. Apart from the EU, the BMZ is represented on all relevant international development bodies, such as the World Bank and the UN, where it puts forward the strategies and positions adopted in German development policy. The ministry's representation in Berlin is responsible for the coordination of the internal units, as well as communicating and coordinating its policies with external actors. The minister or a state secretary represents Germany in the informal EU Development Council meetings and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meetings when dealing with development topics. That this is not done by the permanent representative, as is the case

for several other EU member states, identifies Germany as one of the member states which give significant attention to development cooperation.

The lynchpin between the national and EU level in the BMZ is a dedicated EU department. The officials in the EU department collect input from within the German development constituency and promote it externally. To do so, the department seconds a team to the German permanent representation in Brussels. There is a very close connection and interaction between officials in the ministry's EU department in Berlin and its seconded staff in the permanent representation in Brussels through frequent phone calls, video conferencing, and personal exchanges during and on the periphery of EU meetings (Interviews BMZ#1, #2; PREP#1). In contrast, there is potential for a disconnect between staff in Berlin/Brussels, and the majority of staff in the thematic and geographic departments, which are mostly situated in Bonn.[19] The BMZ staff in Brussels receives its written and verbal instructions through the EU department in Berlin, but the input for these instructions comes directly from the relevant thematic and geographic departments within the ministry. These departments are expected to deal with EU (and other multilateral) aspects largely autonomously and prepare the instructions based on their awareness of European processes.

Due to increasing demands for horizontal, working-level interactions in the EU on topics that require expert engagement, EU competence in thematic and geographic departments becomes more relevant. The knowledge and awareness of EU processes and, generally, of European development cooperation processes, had traditionally been low. Thus, according to an interviewee, it has been part of the role of the EU department to communicate the functioning of EU processes to the relevant units; yet the knowledge of EU processes has been improving with new generations of graduates joining the ministry (Interview BMZ#1). In general, however, the feeling for the European 'business' in thematic and geographic units has been less developed unless EU issues are reoccurring for a longer period or are a ministerial priority. Therefore, the quality and intensity of horizontal engagement at the European level varies significantly between different BMZ units.

BMZ officials engage directly with their counterparts in the EU institutions and member states where this is relevant, i.e., on topics that have been pushed either by Germany or in the EU and

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[19] When the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany was moved from Bonn to Berlin, the ministry was split. Most of its administrative overhead, and the thematic and geographic units remained in Bonn, which also remained the official first seat of the ministry. Primarily the political and coordination units moved in Berlin, closer to the political centre. In addition, a small proportion of employees are always abroad taking on development policy assignments worldwide for a period of a few years.

require expert-based responses (Interviews BMZ#1, #3). For this reason, BMZ issue specialists engage directly in expert groups, for example on transparency, which could be termed 'a large issue-specific network of issue experts' (Interview BMZ#3). In 2013, the BMZ identified two ways of engaging systematically in multilateral organisations, codifying such practices and offering guidance for strategic engagement. First, the ministry identifies its own priorities internally and promotes them, for instance, 'by the BMZ placing staff in an issue-focused manner at key interfaces within the EU […] and maintaining close exchange' (BMZ, 2013c, p. 9). Placing such a seconded national expert (SNE) was the case, for instance, for joint programming (see below). Second, the BMZ was asked to react to priorities of multilateral organisations based on political priorities. This is an attempt at providing stronger overall political guidance. This has been the case, for instance, for EU budget support. Including stricter criteria for budget support was part of the coalition agreement between the conservative and liberal parties after the 2009 election (Merkel, *et al.*, 2009, p. 130). In most other cases, however, exchanges on the working level consist of mere information exchanges and in extreme cases, national issue professionals are even substituted by staff from the permanent representation in meetings in Brussels.

The multiplicity of other pressures on thematic and geographic units, especially on country desks to spend bilateral funds in a way that satisfies their accountability obligations, make it difficult to keep EU issues high on their agenda. This situation is exacerbated since political priorities have not been, with few exceptions, on multilateral issues. On the one hand, there is some lack of awareness of senior ministry officials of multilateral processes (Interview BMZ#1). The political leadership often comes in with little background in external relations, let alone development cooperation. Instead, especially for political appointed officials, political experience tends to be closer to home in domestic policy. On the other hand, this background means that the political leadership comes in with domestically informed political priorities. However, changing priorities, for example, moving attention to specific sectors, may obstruct the longer-term promotion of priorities through the administrative system, especially in overarching topics such as effectiveness. Bilateral cooperation can be steered more easily towards political and ministerial priorities where visibility is key. Thus, there is a tendency to favour bilateral cooperation, especially when the new political leadership takes office. Despite a general tendency to favour multilateral engagement, it takes some time to adapt to and familiarise with processes of multilateral development cooperation and to decide how to engage with them.

The political system of parliamentary scrutiny in the German parliament exacerbates the policy area's executive focus. German parliamentary scrutiny is based on a system of checking compliance through interrogating the political leadership and publishing their responses. This general working system has implications for engaging on issues of transparency and accountability (see below; Interviews BMZ#3; BT#1; CON#2). In the *Bundestag*, development cooperation is represented in a separate committee on economic cooperation and development (*Ausschuss für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung*) whose agenda corresponds to the competence of the ministry. Hence, the development committee also deals with EU development cooperation where appropriate. In exceptional cases, issues of EU development cooperation are dealt with in the *Bundestag*'s separate Europe committee, e.g., in the case of migration (Interview BT#1). As the development committee is not a legislative committee, its main function is scrutiny. In addition, the committee conducts debates and takes decisions on the fundamental principles of development policy, topical issues or specific regions. These debates are based on reports produced by the government, including the White Paper (*Weißbuch*), a report to the parliament, which is usually published once per legislative term, or current political events and international conferences. Especially current events generate wider attention and often begin a political top-down process in the ministry, most prominently, migration since 2015 (Interview BMZ#1; BT#1). Increasingly, development policy concerns are also being taken into consideration in crisis management and prevention, foreign trade and foreign policy. Thus, there are overlaps with other Parliament committees.

Political attention means increasing involvement of other government departments and pressure from day-to-day politics. As this suggests, despite the ministry's autonomy, there are limits to the engagement of BMZ officials in the EU. The ministry's mandate is not fully congruent with all issues that are discussed and covered in EU development cooperation, especially within the wider framework of ACP cooperation. Moreover, there are different processes in place that deal with issues of horizontal coherence. The Federal Foreign Office oversees humanitarian assistance and coordinates Germany's interventions, including development cooperation, in countries such as in Afghanistan or Mali, where the Federal Ministry of Defence has also played an important role. However, also in other contexts, the BMZ's limits to political appropriateness are often reached within discussion in the EU, which requires collaboration with other government departments. This issue is particularly crucial, as, on the government side, the Foreign Office stands between the BMZ and the actors on the 'ground' in partner countries where concrete policy coordination with EU actors takes place. Therefore, certain BMZ-backed EU policies, such as joint programming, have been promoted

internally primarily where the BMZ has its own actors present (Interview BMZ#1; Krüger and Steingass, 2018). This points to a general condition for ministry officials to be able to promote priorities in the EU.

Generating capacity for Brussels

While the BMZ is politically responsible and represents Germany in the EU, much of its capacity has come from closely associated organisations, which constitute the core of Germany's development cooperation constituency. Whereas the thematic and regional units in the ministry have the responsibility and authority over programmes and projects, the implementation of development cooperation has been delegated to various organisations. These include powerful agencies, consultancies and NGOs, a large proportion of the latter are political foundations (*Stiftungen*) and churches.

In Germany, political governance and the implementation of development cooperation have always been separated, providing a clear division of labour. While political steering comes from the ministry, specialised, predominantly state-owned agencies conduct financial, technical and personnel cooperation with and in third countries. Shortly after the development ministry had been founded, the first development agencies followed, such as the German Development Service DED (1963). Other organisations followed later, especially the provider of development consulting services GTZ (1975),[20] which merged into the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and dominates the German development cooperation landscape. Despite their formal separation, questions of political governance can often not be separated from implementation, and therefore require that implementing agencies are involved in high-level management talks (Interview CON#2; BMZ, 2013c, p. 10). The BMZ requires the support of these organisations when engaging with EU actors, especially their knowledge and feedback from the 'ground'. This applies to both promoting political priorities and reacting to EU-level initiatives. Thus, professionals in these agencies play a role – at least in the background – for representing Germany in the EU.

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[20] The BMZ also provides funds to other federal agencies, such as the Federal Agency for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) and the National Metrology Institute (PTB).

While the international engagement of these organisations can have political implications, prioritisation comes mainly from the political and top administrative levels in the BMZ. The BMZ has a clear policy steering role at headquarters-level. However, as a ministry, it has limited human resources, compared to its budget, and capacity constraints when it comes to subject knowledge and expertise. As with most German ministries, the BMZ had traditionally been staffed predominantly by lawyers. While this has changed significantly over time, the ministry's capacities have remained limited as it does not have its own representations on the 'ground' to help inform decision-making as compared to, for instance, Britain's development department DFID (OECD, 2015, p. 54; see chapter 5). Individual BMZ officials are seconded to several German embassies as 'policy advisors' to improve ministerial steering. Following an agreement between the BMZ and the Foreign Office, which is in charge, seconded BMZ staff becomes part of the foreign service (OECD, 2015, p. 56). This makes them answerable officially to the foreign service hierarchy whereas communication with the BMZ 'home' unit is informal.

Despite these limits, Germany has a strong, well-informed and knowledgeable representation in third countries through its aid agencies (Rauch, 2015), which 'allow it to play a prominent role in policy dialogue with partner governments and in co-ordinating other development partners' (OECD, 2015, p. 67). These stakeholders include a powerful aid agency and a development bank, GIZ and KfW respectively,[21] but also other government ministries, federal states, political foundations, church-based organisations, NGOs, scientific and training institutions. Thus, in partner countries, key German implementation agencies have their own representations. In contrast to the BMZ country desks, the GIZ country desks are usually better staffed and can draw on their experience from the organisation's various activities (Interview CON#2). BMZ officials commission implementing organisations with executing the agreements, which set out in detail the objectives, time schedules, form and volume of support, and they monitor the results of their work. For a long time, however, internal harmonisation between the different agencies was perceived as a major problem for the German aid system with negative repercussions for aid effectiveness, repeatedly highlighted by the OECD (OECD, 2010a, pp. 78-9; see also Rauch, 2015). The complexity of the German aid system not only entails problems of coordination but also provides an additional level of complexity for partner countries and international partners. In 2010, an OECD-DAC peer review on Germany, referring to two independent

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[21] Financial and technical co-operation have separate budgets and are implemented by different institutions. Germany's financial cooperation is through (concessional) loans by the German development bank (*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*, KfW), similar to the European Investment Bank (EIB) on the EU-level.

studies (Ashoff, 2008; Eurodad and Reality of Aid, 2010), explicitly noted a relationship between the internal complexity of the German aid system and its adverse effect on external coordination:

> it is noticeable that two recent surveys of aid effectiveness in Germany's development co-operation highlight harmonisation *within* the German development co-operation system as a major issue […] but it is important to note at this point the negative impact of Germany's fragmented development co-operation system on its capacity to harmonise aid with other development partners. This theme was picked up by the second survey […], which reported that respondents in BMZ, DED, KfW and GTZ felt that harmonisation within the German aid system remained a considerable challenge that in some cases needed to be addressed *before* there could be effective harmonisation with other development partners. Germany's institutional fragmentation is also hampering its efforts to make greater use of common arrangements or procedures and to co-ordinate joint missions. (OECD, 2010a, pp. 78-9, emphasis in original)

This assessment suggests that the institutional fragmentation has affected Germany's external representation and preferences concerning multilateral cooperation and coordination.

A major reform of the German aid agency landscape in 2010 (*Vorfeldreform*), directed by the development minister of the time, Dirk Niebel, aimed at reducing the system's complexity in order to increase the effectiveness of German development cooperation (Rauch, 2015). The reform reduced the number of German development agencies that focused on technical assistance to create one central, highly capable and articulate aid agency for technical cooperation, which outranked the ministry in terms of size by about 20:1 (OECD, 2015, pp. 58-9). As such, the GIZ, which is a fully state-owned limited liability company, has a prominent role. While its core task is the implementation of German (and other donors') projects and programmes, it also offers consulting services to the BMZ on overarching policy issues (*Sektorvorhaben*). This consultancy focuses mostly on sector policies, e.g., education or climate, but it has also included cross-cutting issues such as the implementation of development effectiveness principles (Interview CON#2). Through these direct consultations, GIZ professionals influence policy formulation.

The ministry often heavily relies on the GIZ's input. The GIZ, whose staff is directly and usually in significant numbers present in over 130 countries, far more than the BMZ, draws on its vast experience from its representation in the field. Part of this experience comes from the implementation of projects and programmes of other donors. According to the 2015 peer review by the OECD (2015, p. 54), some 15% of GIZ's activities have been commissioned by ministries other than

the BMZ, including the European Commission. In has included, for example, technical cooperation in the context of accompanying EU budget support (Interview CON#2). While political oversight remains with the BMZ, the GIZ has a certain degree of autonomy in its acquisition of external contracts. Based on the intimate knowledge of GIZ professionals of both the conditions on the 'ground' and the working system of the German (and international) aid system, the GIZ assists the BMZ in its engagement within multilateral development cooperation, including at international conferences and in the EU where BMZ officials are often in convoy with experts from the GIZ and KfW (Interviews BMZ#3; CON#2). To benefit from the available expertise that is generated in the German development constituency, professionals from the different organisations work on specific topics in 'work teams', which consist of the relevant thematic experts from the different organisations and coordinate policy expertise. Depending on the issue, the BMZ asks for the participation of and consultation with relevant experts from the different organisations that it supports financially. These working-level experts coordinate a position nationally, which is then represented internationally by the BMZ, e.g., in EU expert groups. Despite this coordination, BMZ officials continuously rely on the technical support and knowledge from the field and are thus also accompanied in technical seminars at the EU level (Interview CON#2).

In addition to the GIZ, the BMZ is closely associated to other organisations which contribute to developing its priorities and positions internally and externally. One of these organisations is the German Development Institute (*Deutsche Institut für Entwicklungspolitik*, DIE). The DIE is a research institute or think tank, funded by the BMZ. It has three core functions in the German aid system: 1) research, 2) policy advice and 3) training. While its work is research-oriented, DIE researchers work closely with BMZ officials on bilateral and multilateral questions of development cooperation, including the EU, since the early/mid-1970s, and they engage in relevant European networks such as the European Think Tank Group (ETTG). The DIE has undertaken research on EU development policies, especially where this has been deemed relevant within the BMZ. The BMZ can commission studies and assessments directly, but it also supports the DIE with core funding. This provides the researchers in the DIE with some autonomy in selecting fields for research and setting priorities. On effectiveness and multilateral development policy, the DIE has developed a large portfolio. DIE and GIZ professionals also engage directly on technical questions to avoid overlaps or push topics internally.

With the increasing international and domestic attention, and pressure on improving results for national and mutual accountability, the German Institute for Development Evaluation (*Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*, DEval) emerged as a later addition to the

system in 2012. DEval was founded under the auspices of Federal Minister Niebel (2012) as the 'closing act' of his institutional reform agenda to make German development cooperation more efficient and effective. The institute has been mandated to evaluate the effectiveness of German publicly funded development projects, programmes and policies. It supports the BMZ to improve its policy-making with the goal of increasing the effectiveness and impact of development interventions by Germany's implementing organisations and NGOs. In this context, DEval also provides evidence to the *Bundestag* to support the parliament in performing its scrutiny. Thus, through its evaluations, the organisation is supposed to enhance the transparency of German development cooperation. However, evaluation of different policies was shared between BMZ, GIZ and Deval (Interview CON#1). Especially the evaluation of multilateral development cooperation remained in the BMZ.

The 'tight' organisation of the domestic development constituency has left little room for private NGOs in aid and development cooperation. The NGO landscape is traditionally dominated by churches and political foundations (*Stiftungen*), which are closely associated to the political and administrative organisation of the state. There are separate budget lines for six political foundations and the development associations of the Protestant and the Catholic Church, which allows them to engage in countries or sectors that are not part of the ministry's bilateral programming (OECD, 2015, pp. 36-7). In 2012, a not-for-profit service provider ('Engagement Global') was founded. It has been commissioned and funded by the BMZ and offers a point of contact for civil society. Nevertheless, civil society in Germany has found it difficult to engage constructively on strategic policy issues at the heart of German aid policy, especially aid effectiveness. According to the OECD (2015, p. 68), 'some stakeholders point to a risk that the autonomy of NGOs be [*sic*] reduced by a tendency to use them to pursue the German government's objectives'.

German NGOs have been less active in promoting discourses transnationally as, for instance, in the case of Britain with is transnationally-operating private NGOs and NGO networks (see chapter 5). Instead, German NGOs have been more in the background and often focus on awareness-raising and non-aid policies in German political circles (Interviews NGO#5, #6). The German civil society umbrella organisation (*Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen e.V.*, VENRO) engages on European issues predominantly indirectly through CONCORD. The shift away from aid due to the universality of the UN's post-2015 development agenda gave them a more easily accessible area of engagement and securing funding in the domestic context. This includes topics like sustainable consumption, taxation, energy and

environment. EU co-financing, in contrast, had become increasingly less relevant for their activity (Interview NGO#5). This has made NGOs become even less interested in Germany's engagement at the EU level.

As a result, rather than through a wider transnational network, the participation of German ministerial officials in EU norm advocacy has long been in close cooperation with development professionals and researchers from associated organisations who provide relevant additional expert capacity. This internal working mode of a coordinative discourse for policy norm advocacy has also been reflected outward in the mode for engaging within the EU.

III   Effectiveness, efficiency and coordination

The effectiveness and the quality of development cooperation have long been central to German discourses on development cooperation. An important discursive distinction therein lies between the terms *Wirksamkeit* (effectiveness) and *Effizienz* (efficiency); the German term *Effektivität* is used more ambiguously. The discourses on effectiveness and efficiency have motivated support for a range of international arrangements and initiatives in development cooperation. With the emergence of the international aid effectiveness principles in the early 2000s, these principles fitted with the German ambition for a global structural policy, which goes beyond international development to improve the efficiency of global governance. As global governance principles, they became connected to the function that Germans attributed to the EU (see above). Despite overlaps between (i) efficiency; (ii) the effectiveness of projects, programmes and policies; and (iii) the international effectiveness principles, divisions remained within the German institutional structure and between relevant actors, which affected how and on what grounds development actors supported arguments for EU policy norms.

German policy professionals have been influential in advocating policy norms that have come to characterise the EU's role in effective development cooperation. Yet they have not always been able to do so in the same way. German policy professionals actively shaped and preserved the discourse on the relationship between effectiveness and coordination within the EU's bureaucratic

circles, which allowed them to advance collective EU policy norms for coordination against resistance, especially from the UK. In contrast, they had less of an impact on the EU policy norm for aid transparency. The remainder of this section deconstructs these processes of norm promotion and contestation. It pays specific attention to the different role of policy and issue experts, on the one hand, and those actors close to Brussels who act as advocates and gatekeepers for different discourses, on the other hand. The first part of this section traces how German development policy actors helped promote an EU coordination norm for enhancing effectiveness, especially through the policy tool of joint programming. The second part unravels the reactions within the German aid constituency towards increasing discursive differentiation over effectiveness on the EU level.

Making sense of EU coordination

Since the 1990s, Germany had increasingly advocated better coordination of development cooperation within the EU (BMZ, 1993, pp. 89-90; 1995, p. 113). The precept of coordination in the Treaty of Maastricht was acknowledged as a means of enhancing the *efficiency* of European development cooperation:

> The development policy of the EC creates the framework for a coordination process between the member states and the Commission […]. This wide coordination process aims at enhancing the efficiency of development aid of the Community and its member states. […] The coordination precept creates the preconditions for a future division of labour, based on comparative advantages, which allows for improving efficiency and synergy effects. (BMZ, 1993, pp. 89-90, translated by the author)

This coordination norm was perceived as a positive step to avoid competition, initially over structural adjustment programmes with the Bretton Woods institutions, but also to avoid the subordination of the Community to these institutions (BMZ, 1993, p. 89).

Thereafter, however, the EU's promotion of enhancing coordination and complementarity had received mixed reactions in the German aid constituency. The official governmental and ministerial position remained reluctant during the 1990s and early 2000s under both conservative and, after 1998, social-democratic development ministers. While increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU was a central concern of German engagement on EU institutional questions in development cooperation, especially during the German Council Presidency in 1999 (BMZ, 2001b, pp.

83, 157), the political opposition of the conservative Christian democrats felt that the government during the tenure of the social-democrat Wieczorek-Zeul was not doing enough. A group of parliamentarians was critical that 'coordination and coherence between the development cooperation of the EU Commission […] and national development activities of the EU partner countries have hardly improved' (Brauksiepe*, et al.*, 2003, p. 1, translated by the author). Therefore, they demanded from the government that it should

> work towards a vastly better coordination of EU development cooperation with the bilateral development activities of the individual EU member states and, in this context, increasingly implement programmes and projects that are co-financed with the EU Commission; (Brauksiepe*, et al.*, 2003, p. 2, translated by the author)

While the parliamentarians still talked of the 'quality' and 'efficiency' of EU development cooperation, it was primarily the German Development Institute (DIE) which – eagerly – picked up EU coordination in the context of the emerging international development effectiveness principles (Ashoff, 2004; 2008).

Subsequently, the ministry became interested in European aid effectiveness. However, there was a perception in the DIE that, although Germany had welcomed stronger European coordination of (national) development policies, it remained critical of the Commission's role in steering European coordination (Ashoff, 2005, p. 290). Indeed, the Commission was not given public credit for its efforts or potential in this respect as outlined in the European Consensus on Development. Instead, the BMZ initially continued to separate the issue of Commission policy and efforts to improve coordination between member states (BMZ, 2008, p. 205). While coordination had been a lingering option, the BMZ eventually reacted to the Commission's efforts of pushing EU coordination as a means of improving the effectiveness of European development cooperation. Based on its previous preferences, a European division of labour became the most prominent effectiveness principle in Germany and German officials began to push it as such in the EU (Interview PREP#1). Political actors used the German Council Presidency in the first half of 2007 to put weight behind their support, which determined the German position and course of engagement in the EU for several years. Especially during and after its presidency (which coincided with its G7 presidency), the government and senior ministry officials emphasised the EU division of labour for increasing the effectiveness of the EU in development cooperation:

> Furthermore, a Code of Conduct for the Division of Labour in the EU was decided: more efficient coordination of donors is to reduce the burden on the partners and increase the effectiveness of EU aid. With this initiative, Europe is asserting its pioneering role in implementing the Paris Agenda. (Bundesregierung, 2007, p. 36).

Despite deficiencies in political steering, at this point, BMZ actors engaging in and with Brussels were able to establish a strong understanding of division of labour as a means for effective development cooperation against competing effectiveness principles.

Hence, it took until about 2007 that promoting coordination, which had been on the German multilateral development policy agenda since the 1990s, and stronger support from the BMZ to push EU coordination as a means of improving the effectiveness of European development cooperation became connected. This was only after this discourse, also with the support of the Commission, had been firmly established at the international level. Due to the international prominence of the coordination discourse, especially researchers in the DIE had already established experience on the topic on which BMZ's officials could draw in their interactions at the EU level. This support was reflected in several commissioned and BMZ-funded studies of the time (Furness, 2010; Mürle, 2007). The DIE had become an outspoken advocate of the advantage of the EU in reducing fragmentation. It criticised the international community because, while it had translated several requirements for policies to be effective into international commitments, it had missed an institutional dimension:

> The exception […] is the Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy adopted by the EU in 2007. It aims to reduce the number of EU donors engaged in a country or sector by division of labour. (Ashoff, 2008, p. 2)

While the DIE called for a strengthening of the institutional agenda also at the European level, the BMZ lowered this expectation and highlighted a more intergovernmental understanding of coordination through division of labour.

German support for EU coordination surged between about 2007 and 2013 and thus *after* the heyday of the international harmonisation discourse. EU coordination was promoted most strongly when improving efficiency of national development policy was at the top of the national agenda. There was additional political weight when international pressure on aid quantity surged, partly due to the German failure to live up to the aid quantity commitments. Following the international operationalisation of division of labour in the second half of the 2000s, especially in Accra (2008), German development actors began to adopt and appropriate division of labour more strongly and

took it to the EU level. The BMZ took the lead on the EU Fast Track Initiative on Division of Labour in 2009 together with the Commission to support the implementation of the in-country division of labour and complementarity until 2011 (BMZ, 2009, p. 5). This cooperation between BMZ and Commission officials continued despite the change of the coalition in government in late 2009. It was even amplified due the new minister's priority of showcasing efficiency and effectiveness of development cooperation. Under the incoming Federal Minister Niebel (2009-2013), as agreed in the Coalition Agreement (2009), the effectiveness of German development cooperation became a priority (Merkel*, et al.*, 2009, p. 129). German development officials were to take this priority to the international level more actively. For the first time, pushing this internal priority became part of a 'strategy' for multilateral engagement, including in the EU. The ministry's strategy stated that

> Improving efficiency and effectiveness in development cooperation is a key concern of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in its efforts to shape its policies with cooperation countries and international organisations.' (BMZ, 2013c, p. 4)

This introductory sentence to Niebel's multilateral engagement strategy points to the prioritisation of connecting effective development cooperation and multilateral engagement, pointing particularly at a special role for the EU (BMZ, 2013c, p. 5).

Consequently, German development actors gave more visibility to EU efforts and sought to promote them among European development professionals. Central to this norm advocacy was the support for EU joint programming. The minister and parts of the BMZ began to support EU joint programming as a contribution to aid/development effectiveness and to help promote it internally and externally (Interview PREP#1; BMZ, 2013a, p. 43). This active advocacy must be seen against the context of Niebel's overriding agenda of showcasing the efficiency of all aspects of German development cooperation. Thus, during his time, BMZ officials promoted international aid effectiveness principles at the EU level to fulfil national efficiency concerns. At the same time, they justified this promotion with existing discourses on aid effectiveness principles, which served as a common justification to opposition from more reluctant member states such as Britain (see chapter 5). This advocacy occurred at several level, including the political. During and in preparation of the Busan High Level Forum, Niebel advocated joint programming to reduce aid fragmentation and achieve a European division of labour in countries where donors only just arrived or returned after a longer period of absence, like South Sudan and Myanmar, and fragile countries (Niebel, 2011). In this

context, Niebel collaborated with European Commissioner Piebalgs to promote the idea of joint programming (Sarmadi, 2013).

While the decentralised understanding of coordination excluded a special role for the Commission, German development officials nevertheless sought to co-opt Commission officials as allies in the promotion process. This was partly also reflected in public discourse in which the Commission was increasingly presented as a like-minded ally for Germany in Europe whose policy 'corresponds to a high degree to German ideas' (BMZ, 2013a, p. 43, translated by the author). The BMZ, for instance, promoted the extension of delegated cooperation between the Commission and individual EU member states as a contribution to donor coordination and harmonisation (BMZ, 2013a, p. 43). In return, at the end of Dirk Niebel's term as development minister, the Commission lauded his 'strong political commitment' to joint programming (Sarmadi, 2013). This political commitment to EU joint programming became institutionalised within the BMZ strategy for multilateral cooperation (BMZ, 2013c) and within a bilateral agreement on closer cooperation in development with France (BMZ, 2013b). The 2013 strategy on multilateral development policy, for instance, explicitly welcomed joint programming as a 'promising example of the division of tasks' (BMZ, 2013c, p. 7). The German government emphasised 'Germany's leadership' on the issue in Europe and stressed the Commission's support for Germany's approach (BMZ, 2013a, p. 43). In the 2013 BMZ White Paper report the ministry was explicit about the role of the EU to advance Germany's ambitions for effective development cooperation. It portrayed the EU as a central forum for the preparation of international political processes and as a leader on the international division of labour (BMZ, 2013a, p. 41).

The political commitment in Germany and the institutionalisation helped to maintain the advocacy among Commission officials where political prioritisation had already been weakened at that time (see chapter 3). Political priorities trickled down to the BMZ officials who coordinated and advocated German positions in and with Brussels and led to their active engagement in promoting joint programming. BMZ officials close to Brussels understood joint programming to be more than the implementation of an aid effectiveness principle. According to close observers, they also understood it as a way of establishing one EU voice (Interviews DEVCO#1; PREP#1). They found, reached out to and maintained allies in DG DEVCO and the EEAS who shared the 'one voice' discourse at the working level (Interviews DEVCO#2; EEAS#1; PREP#1). These working-level discussions in Brussels left room for diverging domestic justifications (Interview TT#3). Joint programming could be promoted nationally because it was talking to different agendas of different actors in the BMZ. This created some

compatibility despite clashes with other effectiveness principles, especially ownership. That joint programming was more than division of labour fitted the wider German concept of development cooperation, especially the idea that the institutionalisation of such coordination was a means of enhancing the effectiveness of EU governance more generally. This ties into the structural policy priority that is based on a preference for multilateralism when German actors pursue national agendas.

While the engagement of German officials at the EU level helped to maintain and strengthen the norm advocacy efforts of Commission officials, the advocacy in the EU in turn created some institutional legacy in the BMZ, and joint programming became translated into German aid structures to some extent. Despite political prioritisation, domestic implementation had been continuously deficient although 'everyone has generally been open' to it in the ministry, according to an interviewee (Interview BMZ#1). This resistance was – allegedly – especially persistent among BMZ country desks official, who felt capacity constraints and burdened with existing, partly conflicting obligations (Interviews BMZ#1, #2). The justification for joint programming was not self-evident to many of these officials. As a result, joint programming required strong institutional promotion, support and facilitation through information, advice etc., including BMZ officials in third countries, for example, in Mali (Interview BMZ#1). Such deficiencies were also acknowledged by the OECD-DAC in 2015. While deficiencies persisted, the DAC nevertheless found that

> Germany leads by example, working with other development partners through joint programming and delegated co-operation […]. In partner countries, Germany increasingly takes a lead role in donor co-ordination and works with a range of partners who value the professionalism and expertise of its staff. […] Germany is among the strongest supporters of good division of labour and joint approaches with other development partners. […] Germany appears to be ahead of the game. (OECD, 2015, p. 67)

While this indicates that the political patronage created some form of 'institutional legacy' over the medium-term after 2013, the divisions over the purpose of coordination in the EU had repercussions for the reactions in the German aid constituency. For many observers around the BMZ, it was clear that the discourse on coordination and effectiveness was primarily a DG DEVCO agenda (Interviews CON#2; TT#1). Thus, to convince country desks and missions in the field, it was necessary to make the case for how such a policy served to alleviate growing pressure on bilateral results.

Reacting to discursive differentiation

While the BMZ's political support for EU coordination reached its peak between 2011 and 2013 when joint programming was first trialled in a few pilot countries (Furness and Vollmer, 2013), the international discourse on effectiveness had already moved on. After the Busan conference in late 2011, globally, aid effectiveness lost political prominence. Instead, the discourse on aid effectiveness continued to be advanced within the more technical Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), which was less politically prominent. At the same time, the weight among effectiveness principles in the international discourse shifted away from coordination. As a result, development professionals within the BMZ and its affiliated organisations, especially the GIZ and DIE, began to differentiate more clearly between EU coordination, e.g., through joint programming ('one EU voice'), and the shifting development effectiveness agenda (Interviews BMZ#3; CON#2; TT#1).

Reducing fragmentation and enhancing coordination remained a priority for enhancing effective development cooperation in Europe. For instance, in the context of the GPEDC, where Germany had become engaged as a co-chair since 2012, it pushed the initiative on managing diversity and reducing fragmentation (OECD, 2015, p. 67). That a division of labour, coordination and joint programming remained part of Germany's effectiveness agenda in the EU was also maintained within parts of the BMZ. The 2017 BMZ report to the *Bundestag* stated that

> Instead of 28 donors with their own strategies there should be **one common development policy** in which member states and EU institutions complement each other in their cooperation with partner countries […]. (BMZ, 2017b, p. 73, translated by the author, emphasis in original)

> Against this background, Germany explicitly supports, for instance, the so called **'joint programming' (JP) of the EU**. In the context of JP, the EU and its member states develop one common strategy, which is the basis for the cooperation of all active EU donors in a country. (BMZ, 2017b, p. 161, translated by the author, emphasis in original)

However, the report was less clear than the previous report on the connection between coordination and aid effectiveness. This development was similar to the discursive shifts at the EU level (see chapter 3). What became evident was that arguments for coordination and joint programming began to adjust, and the effectiveness discourse had progressed.

The understanding of the function of EU coordination and joint programming had consolidated in bureaucratic and policy circles. This consolidation was reflected in the division of labour within the BMZ and the German development community, more generally. From an organisational perspective, joint programming remained a central component of the BMZ's engagement with the EU (Interviews DEVCO#1; PREP#1; BMZ, 2017b, p. 161), but it was organised in a separate unit from effectiveness (see below). The BMZ also kept the assessment and evaluation of joint activities close to its chest, i.e., not assigning it to the GIZ or DEval (Interview CON#1). This indicates that joint programming remained politically relevant rather than on a technical effectiveness basis. On the one hand, joint programming had already been established in BMZ structures and discourse. On the other hand, arguments in favour of coordination were actively justified politically based on its contribution to aid quality. While aid quality is relevant independently of the amounts spent, the internal but especially international attention for aid quantity targets in the run-up to the SDGs 2015 increased pressure on German officials as the government seemed not able (or willing) to achieve the aid spending target at this point (i.e., before the increases due to in-country refugee costs, see table 1). This was even more so since Britain increased attention on aid quantity within the EU (see chapter 5). Other donors and international civil society professionals similarly pushed for financing for development and highlighted the continued relevance of aid ahead of the SDGs negotiations (Interviews NGO#6; PREP#1). In this context, before going to the international financing conference in Addis Ababa in summer 2015, BMZ officials attempted to keep the focus at the EU level on aid quality by highlighting what they were already good at. Coordination therefore continued to be a political priority based on the argument that it improved the effectiveness of policies. Thus, continuing with a focus on coordination and advocate it as a collective EU policy norm was a contribution to the political dispute, not simply institutional legacy.

At that point, however, German professionals needed to adapt their argumentation due to the changing effectiveness discourse. Thus, the German debate on the relationship between effectiveness and coordination followed the EU level debate about enhancing the EU's impact as a foreign policy actor. This fitted the overall German conception of development cooperation as a peace and structural policy. German officials who promoted joint programming based their understanding of coordination on the EU's Agenda for Change (AfC) of 2011 (Interview BMZ#2), not the European Consensus on Development of 2006, which had connected EU coordination more explicitly to aid effectiveness. This is important because it shows how mutual norm advocacy at the EU level has depended on the discursive context, which is partly constituted by a wider discursive network and

subject to external shifts. The understanding since 2011 that was supported by officials in other member states, especially France, in the EEAS and by the HR/VP (see chapter 3) saw joint programming as a way for the EU to be seen as a unified actor in third countries with a reduced role for the Commission. This understanding became increasingly pertinent in the German context over concerns for fragility and migration. The EU level discourse fitted well with the dominant political concern between 2015 and 2017 of tackling migration (Interview BMZ#1; BMZ, 2017b, p. 73). While it was on this changed discursive basis that BMZ officials, who engaged at the EU level, continued to support the advancement of joint programming in Brussels, these more political considerations were not necessarily shared by country desk officials, which reduced implementation (Krüger and Steingass, 2018).

While donor coordination and joint action may be relevant for development effectiveness in practice, it did not reflect the international development effectiveness discourse post-2011. German development policy actors, experts and officials alike, were confronted with a different effectiveness agenda of emerging themes, especially accountability and transparency of results, which they perceived as less compatible with German development cooperation (Interviews BMZ#3; CON#2). Transparency as a precondition for effectiveness had been pushed since Busan, both internationally and in the EU, primarily by a wider transnational network, and officials in Britain (see chapter 5), and the Nordics, especially Sweden (Interviews CON#1, #2; TT#1). As a result, the BMZ officials needed to consolidate work on effectiveness. At the working level this occurred through a 'working group', which followed the changing effectiveness paradigm in the international processes. These processes took place in the GPEDC, IATI, the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (UNDCF), and the EU, and were partly competing and overlapping. The focus of the working group has been on transparency, the use of country systems, fragmentation, and mutual accountability. German development actors have followed the international discourse on effectiveness mostly at the expert level, and it was primarily at this level that they engaged at the EU level, mostly due to the insistence of other member states. It was simultaneous to this participation in EU norm advocacy that German policy professionals and Commission officials advocated coordination and continued to push joint programming as 'suitable' for effectiveness (see chapter 3).

As the discourse shifted more strongly towards transparency, German development professionals were caught partly unprepared as transparency had only been slowly and reluctantly institutionalised in the German system. This was despite the fact that the issue of transparency had

been around for some time: Dirk Niebel (2012) opened the evaluation institute (DEval) in 2012 with a reminder that its work contributed to the international development effectiveness principles. Yet the international discourse did not resonate in the same way as the one on coordination and harmonisation. Among those actors close to the administrative centre, the emerging discourse on transparency became quickly perceived as foreign ('Anglo-Saxon'), based on fundamentally different societal views, and thus partially incompatible from a 'cultural' perspective (Interviews BMZ#3; CON#2). While the BMZ had changed its approach to country strategies to enhance its results focus since 2012 (OECD, 2015, p. 64), the argument was that the promoted transparency standards went beyond traditional principles in the German system of how to deal with government action, especially in external policies.

This mismatch had repercussions for the participation of German policy professionals in EU norm advocacy regarding a collective EU transparency norm. German policy professionals could not ignore the intensifying norm advocacy on transparency at the EU level and, as one interviewee put it, had to notice that they had 'missed the train' on shaping the discourse based on which this norm advocacy took place (Interview CON#2). One potential reason for the missing political clout, affirmed by an interviewee, was that the incoming minister in 2013, Gerd Müller, was less active in EU-level norm advocacy than his predecessor and had – at least initially – little priorities regarding common EU norms for collective action (Interview BMZ#1). While the relevant German policy professionals realised that they needed to react at the EU level, their participation has become more challenging. The debates had become more technical not only at the international, but also at the EU level. Thus, norm advocacy was conducted in a more technical way than previous discussions on coordination, for example, through an EU expert group of issue experts (Interview BMZ#3). The participation at the expert level required a concerted approach between BMZ officials and professionals in the other relevant organisations. This made a reaction more time-consuming and, while German officials have usually been well prepared and active in EU interactions, some officials had the perception that in this case the Germans were partly absent from the debate at the EU level (Interview DEVCO#4). As a result, compared to coordination, BMZ officials have not been able to push norm advocacy at the EU level accordingly.

Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the contributions of German policy professionals to the construction of discourses on EU effectiveness in development cooperation, in particular since the early 2000s. The chapter has demonstrated that much of the contribution to the construction of these discourses has occurred as part of direct, mostly administrative engagements of German officials at the EU level ('coordinative discourse'). In this way German policy professionals have participated in advancing policy norms for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states. The central contribution of this case study has been to identify the agency of policy professionals in a member state which has actively advocated EU norms for common development cooperation. As part of this, the chapter has also shown how professionals, on the one hand, participate in the construction of discourses to advance EU-level norm advocacy, while the wider policy community, on the other hand, hardly participates or even contradicts it. This helps to understand the partly competing roles of policy professionals even within one member state when it comes to their contribution towards common EU external action.

As the largest EU member state with the highest financial contribution to EU aid and a strong professional, publicly-funded development sector, the German case is relevant for understanding the ways in which national policy professionals become engaged in the advocacy of collective action norms in EU development cooperation, as well as the scope, conditions and limits of their contributions. As already indicated in chapter 3, German professionals have participated in discursive processes at the EU level to develop and promote justifications to advance common policy norms among member state and EU institutional actors. This has been based on a national discourse of improving international aid effectiveness. As the first section of this chapter has suggested, this fitted the longstanding discursive commitment to structuring global governance and enhancing its efficiency, which has been maintained by recurrent high-level political support, and which has guided the external engagement of German development officials, including in the EU. As the second section has suggested, the sectoral, expertise-based engagement of Germany in the EU has offered leeway for administrative, technical coordination and specialist engagement at the European level. This suggests that there is potential for agency of policy professionals in discursive coordination processes at the EU level. The analysis has highlighted a tendency towards discursive coordination among administrative professionals whereas the more public discourse construction in the EU through

political and societal actors seems less prevalent. Domestic professionals have engaged with other European professionals from relevant member states and in the EU institutions, both as part of intergovernmental networks and across organisational boundaries. Therein, the administrative development professionals have concentrated on regular, issue-based engagement within an exclusive circle of relevant actors aimed at finding consensus. The preference for such a coordinative discourse has been a general characteristic of German EU engagement and corresponds to both its structural organisation and discourses on international cooperation.

A central reason behind the agency of administrative professionals has been the sectoral organisation, which provided these officials with a degree of autonomy from parliament, civil society and other government departments when engaging in the EU. In development cooperation, this engagement tends to be based on a kind of political 'permissive consensus' by a cross-party political alliance. One implication has been that technical experts from selected public service providers, especially the country's development think tank (DIE) and aid agency (GIZ), who support and even accompany ministerial professionals in their dealings with Brussels, become part of the coordinative discourse at the European level. Their participation has been largely restricted to pre-selected professionals. This is because the German system seeks to engage only few, closely-tied organisations, which provide what is perceived as relevant capacity to make arguments for administrative network interactions. These issue professionals are important because they provide input and partly engage directly as part of a transnational discursive network. The DIE has somewhat been an exception due to its participation in a wider communicative discourse formation as part of the European think tank network ETTG.

While German professionals tend to seek EU-level participation, how active they are has depended on top-level prioritisation. Minister Niebel sought a strong German role in EU norm advocacy regarding coordination based on his preferred discourse on effectiveness, which was dominated by efficiency concerns. The ministerial prioritisation and international advocacy came with more administrative resources, including the secondment of a BMZ officials to the Commission to strengthen the Commission's work on joint programming. Thus, political prioritisation has increased participation in the EU-level coordinative discourse to keep control over the EU policy norm for coordination. This participation, especially on EU joint programming, initially continued at the working level under the incoming minister, Gerd Müller, even though he was less active at the EU level. However, the shifting discourse on effectiveness, both a result of competition between policy

communities at the EU level (see chapters 2 and 3) and wider international advocacy on development effectiveness (see chapter 5), has shown the limits of this participation. While German development actors close to Brussels sustained support for coordination, most German professionals have had competing priorities. Especially, discourses on effective EU development cooperation shifted towards transparency, which did not fit German ideas and interests. This has partly led to disengagement of policy professionals at the EU level.

This last finding has implications for the limits of German policy professionals in EU norm advocacy, which also illustrates the limits of German power in the EU. Contestation in the German system comes primarily from within the bureaucratic organisation rather than the wider societal network. Opposition to EU norm advocacy has been fuelled by resistance within the national aid bureaucracy, for example, hesitance of country desk officials to joint programming, and implementation agencies despite high-level political commitments. This has also contributed to gaps between commitments in Brussels and compliance 'at home' (see also Krüger and Steingass, 2018). This lack of wider transnational advocacy was amplified by a reduced interest of societal actors in EU norm advocacy on coordination. Thus, the domestic organisation has reduced the capacity for more strategic and concerted engagement at the transnational level.

5   United Kingdom: Too Effective for Europe?

Introduction

During the years of Britain's membership in the EU, the public and political discourse has repeatedly challenged a distinctively EU approach to development cooperation. While this seems to fit the country's popular image as the 'reluctant European' (Gowland and Turner, 2000) and 'awkward partner' (George, 1998), Britain has shaped European development cooperation as no other member state, with the possible exception of France. That Britain has strongly shaped EU development policy was not only the impression of British development professionals, as expressed in several interviews (Interviews DFID#1; PREP#2; Olivié and Pérez, 2017), but its footprints are reflected in the major shifts of EU development cooperation over several decades (see chapter 2). Understanding how these two observations go together involves looking at British engagement in more detail, especially by disaggregating the state and its transnational interactions. British actors have used the EU to promote policy norms more widely and, in this process, also shaped common EU norms. Thereby, British development professionals have participated in norm advocacy across EU transnational networks. Yet they have not directly aimed at an EU-specific consensus on norms for collective development cooperation and domestic prioritisation has limited their ability to commit themselves to these norms.

This chapter seeks to understand how and on what grounds British policy professionals have shaped and participated in EU norm advocacy. Given Britain's financial contributions, influence on global development discourses and effect on common European development policy norms over time (see chapter 2), such an analysis centrally contributes to our understanding of what drives norm advocacy on the EU's role in development cooperation. This analysis is expected to enhance our understanding of how and under what conditions the agency of policy professionals matters for EU norm advocacy. Chapters 1 to 3 have shown how transnational norm advocacy revolves around discursive competition in which policy professionals play different roles. Chapters 3 and 4 have shown

how policy professionals become relevant if they coordinate discourse on a technical level through regular working level interactions ('coordinative discourse'). Looking at the national arena has helped to understand in what ways state and non-state policy professionals participate, how their participation matters for transnational norm advocacy and what affects their participation, especially national discourses, practices and institutional structures (see chapter 4). While British professionals were present in all EU level discussion, they have played less of a role on EU coordination norms and seemed sceptical of joint programming. The chapter traces how they participated in contesting these norms through competition over the discourse on effectiveness.

The 'Mission for Global Britain' (Mordaunt, 2018) was not a consequence of the 2016 referendum on EU membership but an ambition that has dominated the country's international engagement, including through the EU, long before the referendum. For example, Britain has sought to influence global institutions for international development, such as the World Bank, which exerted adjustment pressure also on the EU (see chapter 2). Respectively, analyses of Britain's role in and perspective on international development only marginally touch on the EU (Ireton, 2013; Morrissey, 2005). Britain has seen the EU as a channel for influencing international development institutions, and those institutions that are relevant for international development, especially in trade, while keeping the existing balance of competence (see DFID, 2013c). Yet assessments on Britain's interactions in EU development cooperation have remained rare in the academic literature, with the partial exception of the country's accession to the Community (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978; 1981). Eventually, it was the Brexit referendum which has created momentum to examine the relationship between the EU and Britain in this sector (Bond, 2017; Lightfoot*, et al.*, 2017; Olivié and Pérez, 2017; Watkins, 2016). This chapter draws on various insights ranging from governmental publications, public reports and expert submissions, to opinions and advocacy statement in order to identify different sources of British contestation. The fast forgotten Balance of Competence Review (DFID, 2013c) is one of the few bits of public discourse which considered the EU's role explicitly. This is complemented with interviews conducted by the author to analyse the relationship and the engagement of policy professionals in Britain within EU development cooperation.

The first section (I) of this chapter revises the historical and discursive background that is relevant to understand British contestation over the EU's role in development cooperation and collective EU action. The following second section (II) draws a picture of Britain's organisation for engaging in and with the EU, including the EU institutions, other member state governments and

bureaucracies, and European civil society. This section highlights governmental coordination and civil society networks, which make up Britain's concerted engagement in international development. The last section (III) analyses how the discourses and organisation in the national arena contributed to the participation of British policy professionals in EU norm advocacy for effective development cooperation.

I   Britain and EU development cooperation

Britain's relationship with EU development cooperation has historically been shaped by two sets of factors. First, there is Britain's colonial and imperial legacy, Euroscepticism, and its special relationships to the Commonwealth, the US and US-dominated international institutions. Second, especially since the 1980s there is a concern for managerial efficiency and international economic development, which is expected to yield mutual benefits for the reduction of global poverty and British commercial interests. As a result, the UK balanced its multilateral engagement, used the EU as a channel for influencing global regimes but did not hesitate to go it alone if necessary, and preferred the EU's intergovernmental development fund (EDF) with its focus on poorer countries to budget-funded policies and support less productive sectors, such as culture.

The emergence and advancement of British foreign aid and its relationship to EU development policy help to understand the perspectives of British actors on the role of the EU for effective development cooperation. British development cooperation emerged from colonial development efforts, i.e., assistance in the form of grants-in-aid to provide a minimum level of public administration and infrastructure. This was a move away from the principle of colonial financial self-sufficiency. However, several colonies were originally excluded from such assistance and it was not foreseen that this form of aid would continue after the colonies had become independent (Ireton, 2013, p. 6). The new Colonial Act in 1940 clarified the goal of subsequent development programmes to improve the economic situation in such a way that colonial governments could ultimately finance their own social and other services. While the Second World War delayed the implementation in

practice, the underlying concepts and the regional distribution became the basis of modern development policies at the heart of British international cooperation policies (Ireton, 2013, pp. 8-9).

Britain's involvement in EU development cooperation began with its accession negotiations over the role of the UK's former colonies. Before joining the European Community in 1973, it had already significantly shaped Community policy.[22] The UK played a major role in rewriting the Community's policy of association and in transforming it into a development cooperation policy that became more compatible with British interests both geographically and thematically. The EC's geographical focus on Francophone countries in Africa, which was enshrined in the Rome Treaty and Yaoundé Agreement, was significantly extended to include members of the British Commonwealth. Yet this only contributed to the distinctiveness of the common development cooperation. Shortly after the UK eventually joined, the Community negotiated the first Lomé Convention in 1975 (Lomé I). The cooperation enshrined in this convention stood in contrast to the US-dominated, global development agenda of the Bretton Woods institutions in which Britain actively engaged. While Britain's accession to the EC pushed the balance further towards a more globalist, liberal orientation, the Commission and France had insisted on preserving an exclusive, regionalist approach (see chapter 2).

Partly because of this continued opposition within the Community, Britain did not view the European level as its preferred channel to deal with external development cooperation challenges such as the African economic and debt crisis. Their preferred channels for influencing the global development agenda were other multilateral fora, such as the Commonwealth, but especially the Bretton Woods institutions (Grilli, 1993, p. 39). Yet, as Chris Patten, then Minister for Overseas Development, suggested in 1988, British officials argued their case simultaneously in Brussels (Brown,

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[22] In early 1962, the Six made clear that association would only apply to African and Caribbean countries and exclude the Asian Commonwealth. Despite de Gaulle's veto on British membership, the Six issued a Declaration of Intent assuring the Commonwealth LDCs in Africa and the Caribbean that association remained open to those that were deemed similar in development status and otherwise to the associates. Nigeria was the first country to respond to the declaration. The attempt to integrate Nigeria was not based on Yaoundé association but on a special association agreement based on Article 238 of the Rome Treaty. It resulted in the Lagos Convention of July 1966 (see Okigbo, 1967). However, it never entered into force. The association agreement expired in 1969 before French ratification took place. It was postponed over France's position during the Nigerian civil war (Cosgrove Twitchett, 1978, p. 146). Subsequently, it was the East African countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as a bloc to negotiate an association agreement with the EEC, like the Nigerian one. This became known as the Arusha Convention. The Arusha Convention of 1969 constituted an important landmark of Community development policy. It rested on the free-trade area principle between EEC and East Africa (as regions) of reciprocal preferential access to each other's markets.

2004, p. 22) and Britain ended up channelling a large part of its multilateral funds through the EC. As a result, the priorities of EC and UK development cooperation converged over time. The common European development cooperation converged towards the global consensus, reflecting US-dominated liberal and multilateral norms of international relations as embodied in the 'Washington Consensus' in the 1980s and 1990s (Arts and Dickson, 2004; Brown, 2000; Cumming, 2001). This meant that the European level remained relevant for Britain as a forum for influencing the global development agenda.

However, despite the new EU competences in development cooperation under Maastricht, Britain initially showed little signs of recognising this during the second Major government. The government was rather more defensive due to splits on Europe in the Conservative party (Bulmer and Burch, 2005, p. 867). In addition, development cooperation was not independent but part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). This changed under Tony Blair's premiership with the British aid reform from 1997 onwards, which put development cooperation on an independent basis with its own cabinet-level minister, a governmental Department for International Development (DFID), representation in Brussels and an explicit mandate for poverty eradication. With DFID came a more sectorised, professional, expertise-based representation of British development cooperation in the EU. While development cooperation has been an integral part of Britain's foreign policy from post-colonial times, it had only been represented by a separate ministry before under Labour governments in 1964-70 and 1974-79.[23] Following the establishment of a cabinet-level Secretary of State for International Development, the EU immediately received significant attention from the new minister. The inaugural office holder, Clare Short, was particularly critical of the EU's bias towards middle-income countries and lack of managerial efficiency. Notoriously, in a newspaper article, she called the EU 'the worst aid agency' and threatened to review the UK's engagement in EU development cooperation (Short, 2000). The parliament's International Development Committee (IDC) also criticised the Commission for its inability, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in managing the supranational development policies and programmes (International Development Committee, 2000).

As the EU seemed to be a potent platform for shaping the global discourse on aid effectiveness in the wake of the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it also became more

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[23] The Ministry of Overseas Development was created in 1964 by Harold Wilson. Under Conservative governments in 1970-74 and 1979-97 it was part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office under the name of Overseas Development Administration.

attractive as a forum for influencing the global agenda. As the fourth White Paper of 2009 suggested, the UK's 'place in the EU is perhaps our best opportunity to make an impact on global challenges beyond what we could achieve by ourselves' (DFID, 2009, p. 111). While criticism of the EU repeatedly surfaced, especially with the 2010 coalition government's emphasis on evaluation and accountability, many British development professionals began to accommodate the EU's role. For example, the British parliament's development committee concluded in 2012:

> The UK has a certain amount of choice as to whether it spends its aid bilaterally or through multilaterals. Although we have acknowledged that there are some problems with channelling aid through the European Commission, for example the large amount of aid going to middle income countries and its slow bureaucracy, on balance we are not convinced it is any worse than the other multilaterals DFID funds, for example the World Bank which we have previously reported our concerns on. (International Development Committee, 2012, p. 17)

Such perceptions were the result of a rigid series of evaluations, which the coalition government initiated after 2010, and which became increasingly sophisticated (DFID, 2011c; 2013a; 2016c). To inform these evaluations, several surveys focused explicitly on the role of the EU in development cooperation or included the relationship with the EU in their scope (DFID, 2011b; ICAI, 2012; International Development Committee, 2012). The most explicit document assessing the EU's role in international development from a British perspective was the Balance of Competence Review on Development Cooperation of 2013. It concluded:

> Most respondents supported the present parallel competence in the areas of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Their view was that, while there is a need for improvement in many areas of EU activity, the advantages of working through the EU outweigh the disadvantages. (DFID, 2013c, p. 6)

While societal actors, especially those with transnational links, such as the British civil society umbrella organisation Bond, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and the Trades Union Congress, had become well-acquainted with the option of projecting policy norms on the EU level, Euroscepticism remained part of the debate. For example, the Freedom Association, a Eurosceptic pressure group, which emerged as an outlier in the Balance of Competence Review, argued that EU development cooperation had been ineffective and harmful to the UK's objectives, and Britain should thus pursue its goals unilaterally and independent of the EU (DFID, 2013c, pp. 36, 51).

One persistent concern was the differentiation of EU development cooperation in the national British discourse according to instruments. This differentiation suggests that the EU's role was acknowledged positively where it followed and closely complemented British priorities. This was arguably the case for the more intergovernmental EDF, which covered a higher share of Commonwealth countries than British aid itself and political steering was more direct (DFID, 2011c). British development policy professionals remained critical of the Commission's autonomy. For instance, the watchdogs in Britain's Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) highlighted the risk of giving too much independence to the Commission:

> The relationship between Member States and the EU in setting policy and planning and implementing projects remains problematic. The OECD DAC review of EC [European Commission] aid in 2012 noted that the response to central EU initiatives from Member States is variable. It commented that the relationship required further work. A recurrent issue is the level of autonomy versus accountability that the development arms of the EU have from and to Member States. (ICAI, 2015, p. 15)

Thus, while much attention had been given to protecting Britain's global political and commercial ambition from the EU, British professionals had become more active in 'using' the EU after 1997 (until the EU referendum 2016) and promoted policy norms proactively in development cooperation on the EU level. This was mainly due to the changed attitudes towards the EU *and* towards development cooperation under Prime Minister Tony Blair. Thus, the EU itself became a relevant forum for British development cooperation activity, even as government officials remained defensive when it came to common EU policy norms. Likewise, the majority of societal actors in the policy area, who often maintain extensive international links, became accustomed to the parallel competence, which allowed them to engage in contestation both nationally and transnationally in the EU.

After the 2015 general election, the Conservative government started to rearrange funding and to reduce the role of DFID on aid spending (ODA). It planned to reduce the share of ODA channelled through DFID to 70% by 2020 and to spend more aid through other departments and funds (HM Treasury and DFID, 2015). Fragility became an increasingly prominent aspect of development effectiveness. Shifting attention to fragility required the recognition of other foreign policies and foreign policy instruments. In this context, the government put some trust in the EU's institutional changes post-Lisbon and considered them an opportunity for promoting its domestic policy norms more actively in the future:

> Working through these new institutions DFID can help transform the effectiveness of EU aid, improve its coherence with wider policies and help the EU to demonstrate more clearly the development results that it achieves. (DFID, 2013b, p. 3)

This emerging reorientation towards effectiveness, especially uploading the 'results agenda', which reflected pressure on DFID itself, offered potential for active EU engagement. The focus on results was one of the most dominant shifts in DFID since its foundation, but it was also seen critically from within both DFID and among other development professionals (The Economist, 2016; Valters and Whitty, 2017). Nevertheless, it became the core of Britain's engagement in the EU up until the EU referendum 2016.

This brief overview has traced how the link between EU development cooperation and effectiveness were treated in the British public discourse. The section has also highlighted the role of political prioritisation over time. The priorities of common European and British development cooperation have diverged and converged several times. Especially the convergence is puzzling given the scepticism towards direct engagement in EU norm advocacy for collective action. Before this will be analysed in more detail, the next section sets out how British development policy professionals have organised to engage at the transnational level in the EU.

II   Coordinating for Brussels

Britain's internal and external coordination and engagement processes in the EU had been well developed despite the notion of a general 'awkwardness' when it comes to the engagement with the EU (George, 1998). While European integration brought some movement of power 'up' to the EU, Britain's organisation for Europe absorbed this into the 'logic' of the Whitehall (government) machinery (Bulmer and Burch, 1998, p. 606; Burch and Holliday, 1996). While certain principles generally apply, different actors, interactions and networks come to the foreground depending on the EU policy context. The relevance of certain actors and institutional mechanisms also changed over time. For instance, the role of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in general policy coordination had become reduced since the early days of Britain's membership. In contrast, the Treasury emerged as an important player, setting policy frames for improving the accountability and transparency of government engagement in the EU. Such institutional scope and sector-specific characteristics make

it relevant to identify the main elements of Britain's 'coordination for Brussels' in development cooperation.

This section disentangles the politics of EU aid in Britain; it identifies the institutions, actors and networks that matter for Britain's national coordination in and organisation for the EU. Britain's 'coordination for Brussels' is based on the organisation of the British state, its external projection of domestic policy priorities and its integration with the EU. While some aspects may seem 'quintessentially British' (and are fundamentally revised following the Brexit decision), other aspects are similar for several member states, e.g., a strong consideration for *ex ante* coordination. The section pays attention to the political and bureaucratic representation and coordination, as well as wider societal networks. A closer look suggests that there are some particularities in development cooperation, for example, regarding the relatively large bureaucratic autonomy within DFID's circumscribed mandate. The section, first, outlines the governmental networks and bureaucratic politics that are relevant for Britain's engagement in EU development cooperation. Then, it turns to the engagement of the wider, societal network that is particularly important because these actors do not only matter for national discourse formation and norm advocacy but have strong transnational links. This analysis is relevant to understand how the institutional structures empower British actors, their networks and narratives when engaging in the EU.

Coordinating governmental engagement

As mentioned above, more proactive engagement in EU development cooperation goes back to two major developments within Britain's administrative structure that came with the change of government in 1997. First, there was a step-change in Britain's engagement with the EU under Prime Minister Tony Blair, which aimed at a stronger 'projection' of British priorities instead of the previous defensive-reactive approach (Bulmer and Burch, 2005). Second, the creation of an independent government Department for International Development (DFID) meant that development policy officials would engage directly within the EU without being represented within the wider framework of the FCO. However, the Treasury's continued scepticism when it came to aid spending within the EU had an influence on DFID's subsequent engagement, including the framing for policy formulation in the EU.

Centralised government, characterised by its collective cabinet responsibility and the resulting ambition for *ex ante* interdepartmental coordination, dominated Britain's engagement with the EU (Bulmer and Burch, 2009; Geddes, 2013; Kassim, 2001). The Cabinet Office, the Treasury, the FCO and the UK representation in Brussels (UKREP) provide the effective communication infrastructure and central authority to ensure coordination. The European and Global Issues Secretariat of the Cabinet Office coordinates the collective agreement of the government's international economic and European policy, including international trade and development issues. In theory, the Treasury has a central role in policy planning; the FCO has the overall responsibility for European affairs, after the Prime Minister, and is the lead department in Whitehall for all EU external relations, including development cooperation. The FCO had been very much in the driving seat of coordinating the government's position at the beginning of Britain's membership. For a long time, the British system was geared towards a defensive and reactive approach to the EU. There was little enthusiasm for using the opportunity structures offered by European integration to promote British interests actively. Arguably, this was particularly strong when the governing party was split over European integration, for instance, during the second Major government (1992-97).

This limited how officials engaged in the EU. Yet, over time, there had been a shift in system's capacity away from absorption, or reception, to projection (Bulmer and Burch, 2009; Geddes, 2013; Kassim, 2001). Structurally, the machinery for securing an effective voice in formulating policies in Brussels was strengthened with the Blair government in 1997. This meant getting away from the defensive and reactive approach. Instead, the aim was to realise potential for affecting intergovernmental forces in the EU through networking and coalition-building with the member states on a horizontal level (Bulmer and Burch, 2005, p. 877). This horizontal networking and coalition-building with member states became increasingly important for development cooperation on all levels (Interviews DFID#1; PREP#2). As Bulmer and Burch (2005) argue, these shifts occurred largely within existing institutional structures, e.g., central government, and trends, e.g., new public management. At the same time, increased demands of the EU and the technical nature of policies required more specialist involvement and direct engagement by the government departments and associated networks. Government departments have their own 'EU competence', which varies significantly due to their exposure to EU-level policies, but also due to different personalities who headed these departments (Geddes, 2013, pp. 206-7). In this context, the personal prioritisation of the different development secretaries of state was relevant for DFID's orientation and external

representation, for example, Short's shift away from a national interest discourse (Valters and Whitty, 2017, p. 19).

Nevertheless, DFID's EU engagement had been subject to the Treasury's more reluctant position towards the EU, as well as the parliament's and societal scrutiny. This scrutiny has been relevant wherever British funds are spent in the EU. While the Cabinet Office had become increasingly important for Britain's overall coordination, the Treasury had an important constraining effect on European initiatives with expenditure implications. This effect was amplified by increasing pressure for results management in DFID (Valters and Whitty, 2017). The implication for development cooperation was that especially the Treasury, rather than the FCO, came to exert pressure on development policies in the EU. The Treasury maintained its sceptical and reluctant position despite Blair's initiative to move towards a more positive and proactive engagement (Bulmer and Burch, 2005, p. 880). This had an influence on the general frames for DFID's EU policies, i.e., what kind of policies were supported, what tone and emphasis they had etc. The Treasury's role is closely connected to parliamentary scrutiny, which limits DFID's autonomy to compromise. This became expressed through DFID's self-restraint, cautioning and risk aversion.

While political power is centralised, sovereignty is vested in Westminster. Parliamentary sovereignty and the principle of parliamentary supremacy dominate the system's accountability. It demands constant and transparent reporting to and scrutiny of parliament, which differs from some other member states, e.g., Germany (see chapter 4). The system favours a defensive posture on sovereignty concerns and value for money among government departments (Kassim, 2001), which links policy effectiveness to accountability. While parliament does not mandate the Secretary of State or DFID on EU policy positions, all EU documents are shared with parliament in a – more or less – timely fashion to allow for oral and written questions in advance of EU Council agreements. The House of Commons' International Development Committee (IDC) is primarily an investigative committee. The IDC monitors the policy, administration and budgetary spending of DFID, and the policies and procedures of EU development cooperation to which DFID financially contributes. To enhance the capacity for constant public scrutiny, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) was established in 2011. It is independent from the government and responsible for the scrutiny of official UK aid, which is carried out by a specialised development consultancy on its behalf. The watchdog institution focuses on maximising the impact of the UK aid budget for intended beneficiaries and getting the best value for money for the British taxpayer. It is an advisory, non-departmental public

body, sponsored by DFID, and reports to the parliament's development committee (IDC). The committee exchanges correspondence with ICAI on how to approach scrutiny reports on the EU in order to avoid duplication (ICAI, 2012, p. 10). ICAI also engages directly with DFID and other societal actors through interviews to gather information for its EU evaluation reports. This has put additional pressure and limitations on DFID officials' EU engagement.

Reduced flexibility has not been a guarantee for success in an EU policy process that benefits more fluid, open, consensual, network-based, rule-guided, multilingual and sectorised engagement (Bulmer and Burch, 2005, p. 872). With the establishment of DFID also came a more sectorised, expertise-based representation of British development cooperation in the EU. Engaging in EU development cooperation was largely left to the development department, even though oversight over some finance instruments had later been relocated to the FCO or shared between DFID and the FCO, e.g., the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Due to DFID's mandate, it is in the lead where EU policy remained closely concentrated on issues of aid and poverty eradication. Due to Britain's ring-fencing of aid, DFID promoted internally agreed policy positions in Brussels on a largely autonomous basis, focusing on the development-specific aspects. Moreover, although development officials share all EU fiches with other government departments, officials from these departments often lack the attention, time and simply resources, e.g., travel budgets, to accompany DFID officials to meetings in Brussels (Interview DFID#1). Thus, on most thematic development issues, DFID has been the lead department, as in the case of the presenting the UK's position in the EU on the SDGs, even though the SDGs cover a broader range of policy areas (Interview PREP#2). This often leaves engagement in Brussels *de facto* to the lead of DFID officials, but it also means that they only engage in EU norm advocacy when it is limited to development cooperation.

While the ring-fencing provides the development secretary and DFID with some leverage to engage on behalf of the British government on issues of EU development cooperation, it requires at times lengthy governmental coordination. DFID acts in a constant 'shadow of hierarchy' and thus coordinates and consults proactively with other government departments within a tightly coordinated policy network (Interviews DFID#1, #2; EP#5; PREP#2). This follows the 'logic' of the Whitehall machinery (see Burch and Holliday, 1996). Against the shadow of top-down coordination, DFID attempts to engage in close interdepartmental coordination on EU development policy issues before going through the formal EU channels, i.e., the working and expert groups, and committees. The purpose of governmental networks is to consult and align departmental positions to present a joined-

up British position at the EU level, which is promoted equally by all involved actors. This is to prevent a British position in one working group from being undermined in another. As a former official in the UKREP suggested, promoting and defending this position takes precedence over the need to achieve consensus in Brussels (Interview PREP#2). Thus, arguably, DFID's strength in the international arena has depended on whether 'the government as a whole was committed to international development, and on the role of aid and other international policies in reducing poverty' (Ireton, 2013, p. 66).

Coordination, and the willingness to communicate across and within departments, has been important in determining the relationship between DFID and other departments. This corresponds to the (self-identified) 'national identity' of British civil servants, which has been described as based on horizontal coordination, collegiality and professionalism (Interviews DFID#1; PREP#2; Morrissey, 2005, p. 166). While DFID has attempted to coordinate and consult proactively with other government departments (OECD, 2014, p. 15), for example, regarding the British EU position on the SDGs, it has been less successful in persuading them to promote development-relevant positions in the EU. According to interviewees, this applies especially to the FCO, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence (Interviews DFID#1, #2). Yet these departments have become increasingly relevant regarding EU development policies on middle-income countries, migration and fragile states, respectively. The degree of sectorisation has shifted with different development secretaries. Whereas Clare Short could implement an independent agenda, subsequent secretaries were more aligned to a national interest agenda, which has depended on both personalities and the wider political climate (Valters and Whitty, 2017). The political prioritisation has empowered different views over time while marginalising others.

The professionalisation of development policy, the ring-fencing of aid and the department's relative independence, and the generally proactive coordination meant that DFID engaged directly and actively in the EU on all levels. The department has its own expertise regarding the functioning of EU processes and its Europe Department (EU Department before 2008) communicates the functioning of EU processes to those units which have subject specific knowledge. The Europe Department is the lynchpin for organising Britain's engagement in EU development cooperation. It is divided into teams, all but one of them are based in London. One team is hosted by the UKREP in Brussels. The teams in the London office are responsible for feeding policy priorities into the EU system, ensuring that EU policy does not go against British interests, and scrutinise EU development cooperation. UKREP in Brussels allows direct contact between DFID and other departments for their representation in the

EU. It is an 'all of government' operation under the auspices of the FCO. These officials communicate processes in Brussels to Whitehall and they are the 'gatekeepers' for engagement with the EU institutions. DFID, in turn, sends all agendas and information from its meetings in Brussels to the UKREP. Yet their contact and interactions vary and leave significant leeway for EU engagement to London. The leeway also depends on the political relevance and implications of proposed policies because it affects how EU interventions are perceived in Britain's domestic arena. For example, trade, sanctions or humanitarian aid, generate more public and political attention than long-term cooperation policies. The direct and horizontal engagement of development officials with their counterparts in other member states has been stretched as discussions on EU-ACP cooperation often cross the boundaries of long-term aid and cooperation policies and require input from the FCO (Interviews DFID#1; PREP#2). Generally, DFID's internal system has tended to foster a compliance and risk aversion culture (OECD, 2014, p. 57). As a result, DFID officials have also tried to limit their EU interactions to technical and thematic discussions.

Nevertheless, DFID officials have used their access to the EU strategically to promote priorities that they considered relevant for effective development cooperation. To do so, they have relied on a combination of advocacy among peers in the formal Council system, especially the general development working group (CODEV), pushing priorities in technical expert seminars bottom-up, and placing officials as seconded national experts (SNEs) in relevant places in the Commission's DG DEVCO. While not geared towards consensus, as compared to Germany and France, also foreign observers considered British representatives in the relevant working groups, CODEV and ACP, active and constructive (Interview PREP#1). This has been underpinned by good personal relationships based on a degree of trust in which argumentation and persuasion, but also the knowledge of the other, play important roles. As a former UKREP official put it:

> It is a priority for us to work well together and I never felt that there was some kind of game playing involved but we had honest interactions. That's the kind of people that they send to Brussels. This is specifically true for the development working group where it is easier than in other areas to have this kind of interaction because there is a general sense of goodwill. We had a kind of 'Mini-Codev' group of key actors which was very informal and under the radar and people informed their successors and were integrated immediately – like a group of like-minded friends. (Interview PREP#2)

Support for arguments in terms of subject expertise has come from internal coordination in DFID. A central advantage of British officials has been their direct connection to DFID colleagues on the ground

in cooperation countries, which differs in both DG DEVCO and the German BMZ. This kind of knowledge is highly valued in EU working groups.

DFID has relied heavily on (informal) links to like-minded member states and working level engagements (see Elgström, 2017). Its officials engage regularly with representatives from EU institutions and member states on all levels to ensure that priorities get the necessary weight in the Council and ACP system. Thus, DFID combines political top-down intervention and bottom-up working level argumentation. At the highest political level, informal ministerial exchanges are strongest between like-minded ministers. These high-level, informal links have been traditionally stronger with the Nordics, especially Sweden and the Netherlands. They also rely on personal relationships for which the reduced language barrier matters, as one interviewee suggested (Interview DFID#1). Similarly, as suggested by the quote above, DFID officials have engaged informally with like-minded member states as well as France and Germany to coordinate policy positions before they go through formal processes. They have invested a great deal into keeping good working relations both at the level of the UKREP and in London. DFID officials from London have also regularly travelled to Brussels to meet with representatives from EU institutions as part of working groups, expert groups and in management committees. The Europe Department team in the UKREP has been responsible for 'lobbying in the EU corridors' (Interview DFID#1).

Development officials in thematic and geographic units have engaged with EU institutions and member states horizontally on specific themes. This is especially important where they have sought to push a topic bottom-up. It is in these areas where DFID has seconded individual experts to the EU institutions or organised staff exchanges with other member states (Interviews DFID#1, #2). One way to push priorities with the Commission has been through horizontal expert groups/seminars with the Commission, which are formal channels of bottom-up promotion of priorities through technical expertise. DFID has used these channels, for instance, for promoting a results framework (see below) and strengthening the gender dimension, which were both deemed very successful British contributions (Olivié and Pérez, 2017, p. 20). DFID officials have reached out to stay in contact with Commission staff working on the same thematic issue, especially their own seconded expert to keep oversight over the relevant thematic network (Interviews DEVCO#4; DFID#2; EP#5; PREP#2). However, the proportion of British SNEs had generally been low compared to Germany or France, according to evidence by the FCO to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (2013, p. 92).

'Stateless society' and its networks

Britain's style of representative government, the importance of private actors, and the professionalisation of politics provides a central role for civil society (see Hilton, *et al.*, 2013). In development, UK-based civil society has a strong presence in Brussels and significant capacities in terms of funds, expertise, networks and human resources. This has been exceptional for development NGOs in Europe, especially when compared to member states of a similar size, such as Germany (see chapter 4). However, with a large civil society sector also comes a heterogenous structure from internationally-operating advocacy leaders with vast networks, such as Oxfam, to specialised consultants and very influential think tanks. The role of non-state actors has been relevant for Britain's national coordination and engagement in EU development policies due to their wide networks and international recognition and reputation. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the UK's leading think tank on international development and humanitarian issues, which is mainly funded by DFID, has been instrumental for governmental capacity-building. Non-state actors, more generally, play an important role in transnational agenda-setting and advocacy but also in keeping competing agendas alive at the domestic level. Thus, Britain's engagement in the EU has also been an arena for domestic contestation on a wider societal level.

The prominent role of British civil society and societal actors during policy formulation and implementation is based on a general understanding of the state 'according to which public policies emerge from the interaction of societal interests' (Knill, 2001, p. 83). In contrast to Germany's state-society organisation (see chapter 4), the British understanding implies that the legitimacy for contributing to policy coordination arises from societal competition. Traditionally, this coincides with a bureaucratic machinery which has a low degree of professional specialisation and is dominated by generalists while its specialist capacity comes from stakeholders (see Knill, 2001). As a result, NGOs, think tanks, research institutes, and consultants have been involved in formal and informal ways. DFID provides grants to UK-based CSOs through several mechanisms ranging from providing core funding, especially to ODI, to funding poverty reduction projects in developing countries, for instance, the UK Aid Match scheme, which match-funds public donations to charity. As noted earlier, development cooperation differs to some extent due to the significant degree of specialisation and professionalisation within the public administration and the direct contact of officials with primary stakeholders, i.e., partner country governments, which gives officials relevant information for

engaging in the EU. In addition, coordination in the EU is highly intergovernmental, which reduces space for direct interaction with national civil society.

Nonetheless, it is the demand that arises from the combination of professionalisation and horizontal, intergovernmental engagement in the EU which makes knowledge providers such as the ODI relevant. This is due to the importance of knowledge in European-level interactions (see chapter 3). DFID officials, especially in Brussels, are often preoccupied with managing the relationships with and expectations of political and foreign policy actors in London (Interview PREP#2). In this situation, ODI enhances the 'capacity' of British officials for engaging in EU development cooperation through briefings and trainings on the functioning of EU processes (Interviews DFID#1, #2; PREP#2; TT#2). Despite its in-house expertise on European development processes, DFID has also drawn on EU-specific expertise from ODI. This was institutionalised through the European Development Cooperation Strengthening Programme (EDCSP), established in 2009 and financed by DFID (Interview TT#2; Bayne, 2013). For instance, DFID's Europe Department officials asked for ODI training on EU processes to provide upskilling and awareness raising (Interview PREP#2). There is also some external mobility of staff. While there is only limited commissioned work, the Europe Department in London has made occasional requests for briefings where 'external' expertise seemed particularly relevant, for example, on EU budget support (Interviews DFID#2; TT#2; Bernardi, *et al.*, 2015). As a former official explained, the ODI involvement has been motivated by the desire of British officials to demonstrate supportive evidence in the EU without appearing 'awkward' (Interview PREP#2; see below).

ODI's role has been limited on wider, politically salient questions about the EU's role in development. This is different to Germany's development institute (DIE), which regularly makes such contributions (see chapter 4). Nevertheless, ODI has developed both an interest and extensive capacities in the European dimension of development cooperation. With the financial support through the EDCSP, ODI created a European network with other think tanks to improve its outreach and help establish a European policy community of researchers and practitioners. First, ODI facilitated the creation of a network of EU researchers and research institutions through the establishment of the European Think-Tanks Group (ETTG), a lose grouping of like-minded, leading European international cooperation think tanks (see chapter 3). The goal was to create a more coherent and cross-EU approach to development cooperation by strategically using national think tank platforms and capacities to influence process at the European level. Also due to its autonomous funding, within

the group, ODI has been viewed as a leader and lynchpin (Bayne, 2013, p. 16). Second, in the same context of ODI's European programme, the think tanks have promoted a European dimension of development policy-makers through the establishment of a network of policy-makers and researchers known as 'EU Change-makers' (Bayne, 2013) who meet occasionally, for example, during the annual European Development Days (see chapter 3). Occasionally, ODI also works together with Bond, one of Britain's NGO networks, to write joint reports on EU development cooperation (Herbert, 2013), and they consult and inform each other on an *ad hoc* basis. For instance, ODI's European programme supported British NGO's to engage in a more targeted way in effective advocacy with the EU on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (Bayne, 2013).

For NGOs, the picture is different despite their growing research and expert capacity (Hilton*, et al.*, 2013). Instead, due to their strong European and international links, they have a role in transnational advocacy and agenda-setting, which makes them central for discursive challenges of governmental-driven agendas, not only domestically but also within the EU. Bond is one of Britain's national membership organisation (the other one is the UK Aid Network, UKAN) and is a member of CONCORD, the European civil society umbrella organisation. Bond represents its members, advocates on their behalf, and adds input into European-level advocacy and network formation. Bond is not only part of a well-defined network of civil society organisations, but its members and staff are also part of wider networks. For instance, Bond's chief executive since 2017, Tamsyn Barton, was previously at DFID and then at the European Investment Bank (EIB) where she brought in a results framework (see below) and advocated for the EIB to sign up to the IATI. Bond had previously emphasised 'the importance of the EU as a development actor and the need for the UK Government to strongly support this role and invest in this relationship' (Bond, 2011). Thus, the organisation itself acquired skills and knowledge of European development processes through its staff, members and the annual EU-wide AidWatch report process (Interview NGO#6). On this basis, it also helps develop the skills of other NGOs in the sector regarding knowledge on EU development policy processes, build organisational capacity and effectiveness, and provide opportunities of exchanging information, knowledge and expertise (e.g., De Toma, 2009).

The role of CSOs has been crucial for building domestic societal support, which has helped political representatives to promote issues in Brussels. An important example, in the run-up to the Council meeting in May 2015, was the informal alliance between DFID and several CSOs organised in Bond to lobby EU institutions and member states especially through CONCORD. The intention was to

back the British government positions in the EU negotiations concerning development finance and ring-fencing of EU aid (Interview NGO#6). The government further encouraged this function of British transnational CSOs. When launching a review of DFID's engagement with civil society, then Development Secretary of State Justine Greening (2015) addressed NGOs directly:

> I want to urge you to use your networks, knowledge and passion in that wider world – less on campaigns to lobby us, but to get on the case of more countries – show why the UK was right to do 0.7 and urge others to follow our leadership. That's where we need to put our efforts.

While civil society had benefited from a privileged access when development cooperation was largely defined in terms of assistance to social development, e.g., education or health, which was dominant between 2000 and 2015, its role came under increasing pressure with the advance of the 'results agenda'. The British government grew more critical of NGO engagement, which also affected shifting funding away from core funding (DFID, 2016a, p. 11). DFID's focus on engaging the private sector challenges NGO's privileged access (Interview NGO#6). This includes the Civil Society Partnership Review process between July and November 2015, which sought to assess the grounds for 'reforms that will maximise value for money and results from CSO programmes and engagement' (DFID, 2016a, p. 10). As a result, DFID's engagement with CSOs expanded to involve a broader range of organisations, including more private sector suppliers.

Yet, aside from potentially more strategic adjustments in the relationship between public administration and civil society, British participation in transnational advocacy has been characterised by interactions between state and society, often as part of a wider competition over global development policy norms. Transnational advocacy has not been aligned primarily to the EU, as it has always been global in outreach, but professionals have nevertheless participated in and pervaded EU structures.

III   Effectiveness beyond coordination

The British concern for effectiveness in development cooperation significantly affected the engagement of British development policy officials in the EU. The UK presented itself as a global leader in enhancing aid and development effectiveness, and 'Europe' had some role to play in it. On the one hand, Britain has been part of European development cooperation structures since it joined the

Community. On the other hand, the EU was an opportunity structure for influencing the global debate, which became increasingly evident in the early 2000s (see chapter 3). The European Consensus on Development of 2005, with its focus on coordination, was also shaped under the UK Council Presidency to set a strong development agenda as a response to the 2004 enlargement and the associated perception that development cooperation might slip as a priority (McAvan, 2016). While British development professionals shaped EU policy, the government always sought to avoid the impression of common European policy norms, unless they were, in fact, global policy principles as was the case, for instance, for division of labour.

This section examines on what grounds and how British development professionals sought to shape discourses on common policy norms in the EU. It helps understand how British actors supported certain transnational coalitions and networks, which affected the competition over policies on the European level. The engagement in the EU became driven by the domestic politics of advancing a results agenda (see Mawdsley, 2017; Valters and Whitty, 2017); and Britain used the EU to pursue this agenda both nationally and internationally. The first part of this section looks at the case of policy coordination and how British actors reacted to those EU initiatives that were based on an international discourse establishing a close connection between coordination and effectiveness. The second part turns to how British actors subsequently sought to establish transparency and accountability principles at the EU level as part of the internal advance of the results agenda. This occurred in a changed international discursive environment, which British development professionals had themselves helped to create.

Diverging ideas of coordination

British development officials had perceived the EU as a potential forum for influencing the international development agenda. In a speech by Gareth Thomas, then DFID's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, at the ODI in September 2003, he made clear that the EU was a channel for coordinating policies that needed to be dealt with at the global level:

> The Commission is uniquely placed to co-ordinate and harmonise Member States' development policies and practices. […] It can also push agreed EU positions in international development fora. This

is most apparent when one thinks […] of the WTO, but could equally apply to the Global Health Fund or other multilateral structures. (Thomas, 2003)

While British officials were very active in pushing the aid effectiveness agenda outside the EU, in the subsidiary bodies of the OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the Nordic Plus group[24] (OECD, 2010b, p. 71), their engagement on aid effectiveness in the EU was considered as key given the EU's 'global lead' in the 2000s (DFID, 2009, p. 111). It was in this way of using the EU for exerting concerted influence on the international agenda, rather than the coordination of bilateral aid, in which British development policy professionals, including in the ODI, principally perceived the EU's coordination role for its member states. This understanding found wide support because it was in the EU where British actors were confident that they could influence common policy norms according to their preferences.

Even as the discourse on coordination for effectiveness experienced significant momentum at the international level around the time of the European Consensus in the mid-2000s, DFID remained sceptical towards the EU efforts. On the one hand, in its Institutional Strategy for engaging with the EU, DFID officially committed itself that it would 'actively support the EC [European Commission]' in its 'Efforts to make European donors work better together (improve coordination and harmonisation)', including through joint multiannual programming and joint financing of aid programmes (DFID, 2005, p. 8). On the other hand, there was strong reluctance to this kind of policy harmonisation as an ODI study of the time reports (Warrener and Perkin, 2005). The study analysed DFID's perspective on EU approaches to harmonisation and was prepared with input from DFID's Poverty Reduction Strategy and Aid Harmonisation team. It found that

Despite DFID's strong engagement with the EC's approach to harmonisation and alignment there are also some tensions visible. […] in as much as DFID sees itself as one of the leaders in framing innovative and progressive international aid policy dialogues, there is a sense that to conform to EU approaches would be to sacrifice some of the more subtle nuances of DFID's own thinking on these issues. (Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. 8)

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[24] The Nordic Plus (Nordic+) Group, which has been built up gradually since 2003, is an informal partnership between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Ireland. These countries claim to share a joint vision of development cooperation. Their objective is to strengthen mutual cooperation, and to harmonise procedures and practices, primarily on the ground, in order to reduce fragmentation and the resulting burden for developing countries, primarily through delegated cooperation.

This thinking, as expressed by the then DFID Head of Development Effectiveness, included the 'desire to avoid prescriptive, centralised approaches', which DFID saw in the EU's approach to harmonisation (cited in Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. 8). The scepticism towards the EU's role was partly shared by the ODI, which cautioned against expectations of bilateral policy coordination, pointing to political considerations:

> Although multilateral channels would seem to offer considerable potential for greater harmonisation and alignment of aid, donors are likely to always maintain a mixed portfolio *as bilateral aid enables greater innovation, political engagement and flexibility*. (Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. iv, emphasis added)

In the same study, Hilary Benn, then Secretary of State, was cited as concerned over the implications of harmonisation and alignment for policy accountability (Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. 14). However, these political counter-incentives did not only exist in DFID. The FCO had strong concerns, stressing the visibility of Britain in certain countries where DFID had a powerful, historical presence as a bilateral donor. In contrast, country offices perceived harmonisation to be a passing trend, which was mainly championed by senior management to deal with staff losses. Thus, it was seen to be less about aid effectiveness for the development in third countries but about efficiency of cooperation procedures, which already burdened country-level staff due to high internal accounting requirements (Warrener and Perkin, 2005, p. 15). This suspicion was not countered by building incentives for considering harmonisation into the institutional system, for instance, training, promotions etc. This seemed to confirm the perception of many policy professionals that harmonisation was merely a 'trend'. Instead, DFID considered pursuing different alternatives to the EU for pooled bilateral funding at the country level, for example, 'Delivering as One', an approach piloted by the United Nations (OECD, 2010b, p. 54).

As outlined in chapter 3, the financial crisis 2008/2009 postponed the debate on coordination at the EU level for some time. However, when the debate resumed, and the European Commission pushed concrete coordination policies, especially joint programming, the careful optimism in DFID for EU harmonisation, which had briefly emerged following the EU reforms of the early 2000s (e.g., Thomas, 2003), had largely vanished. Instead, the discourse in Britain had moved on due to the deepening of the results agenda (Valters and Whitty, 2017). The growing preoccupation with efficiency and transaction costs, reinforced after 2010 within the wider British coalition government, pointed towards a predicament regarding EU coordination. Britain's first Multilateral Aid Review

(MAR) of 2011, which spelled out DFID's expectations of a multilateral organisation, highlighted among others (i.e., outreach, economies of scale and international standard setting) that 'their leadership and co-ordination function reduces transactions costs for both donors and developing countries' (DFID, 2011c, p. 2). This and subsequent evaluations were ambivalent in the sense that growing concerns for value for money justified stronger engagement in terms of coordination. Against this background, the Balance of Competences review, for instance, summarised the position of several British development professionals and stakeholders by referring to evidence from Christian Aid, which 'made the point, echoed by most of the respondents, that coordinated EU action can improve the efficiency and impact of Member States' aid spending' (DFID, 2013c, p. 37).

Despite this general affirmation, the British governmental position became very clear: EU coordination initiatives were only relevant where policies were closely aligned and complementary to British priorities and ways of working. Regarding Britain as a leader in international development, leading officials saw little need to coordinate policy with the EU and the other member states. This understanding, which was partly considered a form of 'arrogance', as some interviewees suggested (Interviews DFID#1; EEAS#1), was based on DFID's financial contribution, but also on its experience, expertise, representation in the field, and the positive assessment by third actors, such as the OECD-DAC. DFID's overall structure, especially its well-staffed and flexible in-country offices, provided it with a strong presence on the ground. Thus, international partners tended to have high expectations of the UK taking the lead in reducing aid fragmentation and promoting division of labour. The UK had already participated in joint country strategies and programmes with other, not necessarily EU, development partners, e.g., through multi-donor trust funds or delegated cooperation, and had played a 'leadership role' in donor coordination, which was recognised by external stakeholders (OECD, 2010b, p. 19; 2014, p. 19).

The political reluctance to support EU coordination became clear in the IDC's assessment of EU joint programming. The parliament's development committee concluded that while

> It seems sensible that there is a reduction in the overlap between donors by having a form of joint programming, [...] the question remains over who coordinates the process if Governments do not want to hand over responsibility of bilateral projects to the European Commission. As the ODI points out—everybody wants to coordinate, but no one wants to be coordinated. (International Development Committee, 2012, p. 23)

The conclusion was that the coordinating should be done by the donor with most experience and the strongest track record in a certain country. The committee suggested that 'the European Commission does not necessarily have the capacity or the expertise to lead the coordination' (International Development Committee, 2012, p. 23). While it seemed not possible to prevent the establishment of a distinctive EU joint programming at this point, British actors instead sought to minimise the Commission's role and maintain 'exit options'.

In particular, the International Development Committee (2012, p. 4) objected to EU joint programming when 'it involves the Commission playing a leading role in coordinating the work of Member States with a better track record than its own'. On these grounds, DFID officials justified their insistence on keeping joint programming open to non-EU members, not only on paper but in practice, so that it resembled the kind of (non-EU) joint programming that the UK had already participated in. This referred primarily to the UK's preferred multilateral organisations, the World Bank and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (formerly known as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization), but also the private sector and civil society. In such an arrangement, the EU/Commission would merely be one partner in a multi-stakeholder engagement. DFID supported this argument with resistance in partner countries (Interview DFID#2; European Commission, 2011a; Furness and Vollmer, 2013; OECD, 2012). Thus, DFID officials abstained from promoting joint programming centrally and, instead, diverted the decision about participation to the professionals in the field (DFID, 2013c, p. 39). Yet, as its staff on the ground had long engaged in other non-EU coordination activities, e.g., the joint donor trust fund or the UN, these professionals tended to prefer established coordination within more comprehensive or like-minded groups to the EU (Furness and Vollmer, 2013).

The dominant narrative in DFID was based on the argument that it was a priority to have a flexible, voluntary and pragmatic approach to joined-up working within the EU, which must be 'open to other donors, aimed at reducing transaction costs and not least adapted to the realities on the ground' (DFID, 2013c, p. 39). The high-level opposition to joined-up working within the EU meant that DFID officials had to face negative reactions despite being not the only member state to divert from the common EU policy norm. Initially, also Spain and Portugal had been very critical of EU joint programming, while other member states, such as Germany, remained behind their commitments, even though they had strongly supported the common policy norm at the EU level (see chapter 4).

While DFID perceived its approach to be pragmatic, other member states perceived Britain as more destructive and 'cherry picking' (Interviews PREP#1). This perception was also shared by other

European observers in EU institutions and among researchers (Interviews DEVCO#2; EEAS#1; Klingebiel, *et al.*, 2013). As an official from the Commission put it, 'in countries where DFID is strong, it can block the whole process' (Interview DEVCO#2). This indicates that the British projection of an alternative conception of joint programming was dismissed as being primarily a defensive reaction to a common EU policy norm. That the UK became increasingly reactive rather than proactive grew due to the political opposition against jeopardising national visibility and accountability. The increasing political preoccupation with domestic process for accountability made it politically increasingly difficult to commit to EU joint programming. As the OECD-DAC observed, the strong British focus on 'value for money' and results 'has led DFID to impose its own processes and requirements, making it more difficult to engage in joint programmes' (OECD, 2014, p. 19). However, this did not only affect joined-up engagement, coordination and harmonisation in the EU but became a more general issue for Britain's engagement in bilateral policy coordination.

Results, transparency, effectiveness

While accountability demands made bilateral coordination more problematic, it offered DFID an incentive for organising more proactive, 'constructive' input into the EU by seeking to 'up-load' domestic policy priorities on effectiveness to the EU level. This also happened against criticism from other European actors and development policy professionals while DFID staff, as expressed by an interviewee, saw the 'need to ensure that the EU is seen as efficient as possible' within the UK (Interview DFID#1).

For British development professionals, as for others after the conference in Busan 2011, donor harmonisation, coordination and division of labour did not play the same role as they had done before and continued to do among officials at the EU's bureaucratic centre. The British government's focus in development cooperation since the beginning of the 2010 Conservative-led coalition government fully shifted towards results and value for money, transparency and accountability based on the prioritisation of the incoming Secretary of State Andrew Mitchell (Valters and Whitty, 2017, pp. 26-8). With increased spending came an increased focus on value for money, which had become firmly established as a ministerial priority for 'everything' DFID does, including its engagement in the EU (Interviews DFID#2; PREP#2; DFID, 2012; 2014). Similarly, Mitchell's successor, Justine Greening

(2015), summarised her term in office with the words: 'I've driven value for money and efficiency in everything we do'. These issues were not new in British development cooperation and had already emerged under the previous Labour governments. One reason for the stronger emphasis was that, from 2006 onwards, the British government, with cross-party support, began to expedite its commitment to achieve the 0.7% ODA/GNI target. The aid quantity goal had subsequently become a very strong point of reference for British development actors (Interviews DFID#1; NGO#6; PREP#1, #2).

The 2006 International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act had already focused on the 'promotion of transparency' for both aid effectiveness, i.e., 'securing that aid supports clearly identified development objectives', and efficiency, i.e., 'promoting the better management of aid' (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2006). Moreover, DFID had pioneered a value for money approach as part of its so-called 'Making it Happen' programme. This approach sought to assess whether the results achieved represented good value for money against the costs incurred. This was not only to enhance domestic accountability of development cooperation but also to improve its effectiveness in development terms as these results would be used to maximise the impact of aid programmes (OECD, 2010b, pp. 63-4). Therefore, in January 2008, DFID launched its first Results Action Plan, which became a central pillar of the 'Making it Happen' programme. Later in the same year, DFID launched the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in Accra. IATI is an international, voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative, which seeks to improve the transparency of aid, development, and humanitarian resources to increase their effectiveness in tackling poverty.

These initiatives heralded an increasing institutionalisation of accountability in British development cooperation, but these 'innovations' were not without criticism. In an external, DFID-commissioned evaluation of it actions since the Paris Declaration, the reviewers concluded:

> If there are any grounds for concern about DFID's commitment to the Paris Declaration, it is the preference for high-profile new initiatives over the hard work of implementing old ones. New initiatives, such as global spending commitments and new funding vehicles for global public goods, do not fall clearly within the country led paradigm, and have the potential to push Paris Declaration commitments into the background. (Thornton and Cox, 2008, p. vi)

British NGOs and their networks also preferred to put partner country ownership first as this would improve mutual accountability whereas donor-driven concerns for accountability were considered destructive (Thomas, 2013). However, as this distinction suggests, the concept offered much room for

ambiguous use. The financial crisis and the change of government fuelled such concerns among civil society professionals. While the financial crisis led to a (small) dip in British official aid spending (see table 1), the commitment to the schedule for achieving the 0.7% spending target in 2013 remained unchanged (Lunn and Booth, 2016). Thus, it was left to the coalition government to make the necessary large increases in aid. This increased public attention on aid and its ring-fencing, first politically and then legally, made it vulnerable to criticism against the background of public spending cuts elsewhere (Lunn and Booth, 2016, p. 3; Watkins, 2014). Thus, in contrast to its predecessor, the Conservative-led governments decided to push the issue of value for money, accountability and transparency more strongly in a concerted effort in bilateral policies and in its engagement with all multilateral platforms.

Pushing this agenda in multilateral arenas had been a priority from the very beginning. In May 2010, then International Development Secretary of State Andrew Mitchell commissioned, in addition to a Bilateral Aid Review (DFID, 2011a), a Multilateral Aid Review (DFID, 2011c) as a basis for promoting value for money externally. This was justified on the grounds of domestic accountability demands of the British system of constant scrutiny of public expenditure through parliament and fitted the incoming government's scepticism regarding European coordination efforts. To underline the political relevance, ICAI, which was founded to promote accountability, turned early to the EU. In an assessment of the EU, the evaluation body concluded that

> An important challenge for the EU is to improve the value for money of its development assistance. A focus of DFID's effort is for the EU to develop a framework for assessing value for money within the organisation. The DFID Europe Department plans to call for more value for money considerations in future EU aid and use upcoming opportunities […] to further this. (ICAI, 2012, p. 7)

Subsequently, this became the central mission of DFID's Europe Department. In its mission statements, it had been unequivocal to highlight the challenges of improving value for money through promoting results orientation and transparency in the EU:

> To address these challenges, our main objective is for the EU to develop a framework for assessing VfM [value for money] within the organisation. This would work better when incorporated as part of a wider Results Framework (DFID, 2012, p. 10)

The Europe Department had internalised the political prerogatives: 'Results, transparency and accountability are our watchwords and guide everything we do' (DFID, 2012, p. 1), which was also echoed by DFID officials (Interview DFID#2). The focus on results developed as the overarching

principle in DFID, followed by concerns for transparency and accountability (Interviews DFID#2; PREP#2). DFID officials connected transparency to development effectiveness, which they used to promote the issues at the EU level and among European partners. The narrative of DFID's Europe Department highlighted the dual benefit of transparency: 'Transparency […] helps us achieve greater value for money and improves the effectiveness of aid' (DFID, 2013b, p. 2). Thus, 'As EU aid represents 56% of global ODA, the benefits of EU action on transparency would be huge for poorer countries as well as for our domestic constituencies' (DFID, 2013b, p. 14). This was closely aligned to what DFID officials simultaneously promoted in IATI, namely, transparency increases the effectiveness of development cooperation through enhancing mutual accountability and improving decision-making, including for better coordination.

This converging and mutually reinforcing domestic and international discourse was the basis for the organisational support of DFID officials in the EU, especially through seconded national experts (SNEs) in the area of results and evaluation in DG DEVCO (Interviews DEVCO#4; DFID#2; DFID, 2013b, p. 13), and maintaining a horizontal network of relevant experts. Internally, those views in DFID on the issue of promoting accountability and the promotion of these effectiveness principles were empowered as they had become engrained in the department's organisational structure. The Cabinet Office drove administrative reforms to establish 'value-for-money' firmly in all DFID activities, notably through the civil service reform of 2013 (HM Government, 2012), which focused on performance and results, and made DFID a lead department in its implementation (OECD, 2014, p. 55). Subsequent development secretaries and DFID's leadership have embraced these requirements to exert political top-down pressure in the Council of the EU. The high domestic accountability demands and pressure on DFID itself and its officials (Interview DFID#1; Greening, 2015) reduced the ability of British development officials to compromise on issues that put either scrutiny (e.g., transparency) or the 'returns' of EU money to 'national interests' at risk. This even increased when parts of the national media attacked British aid effectiveness itself, with a series of stories appearing in some newspapers between March and June 2016, which alleged British bilateral aid was spent in a wasteful and ineffective manner (Lunn and Booth, 2016, p. 3).

While the limited room for manoeuvre risked putting individual DFID staff at the EU working level into a 'destructive' position, their reference to societal support helped to promote results transparency horizontally against criticism from member states and 'not to appear as the awkward UK' (Interview PREP#2). Britain's leading development think tank ODI had put transparency high on

the aid effectiveness agenda (Moon and Williamson, 2010) and supported this prioritisation also in its other interactions, such as with the Commonwealth Secretariat in a background note to the bloc's position for Busan (Rogerson, 2011). ODI's research on the topic had been funded by the International Budget Partnership, which works with governments and civil society to achieve more open budgeting practices, and Publish What You Fund, a global campaign to achieve better transparency of development financing. ODI was closely involved with these organisations 'with the aim of informing and influencing the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)' (Moon and Williamson, 2010, p. 1).

Thus, societal support was not only a discursive device in EU-level debates but became a component of DFID's organisational support. Britain's influence on and promotion of IATI was decisive as it emerged as a principle global framing devise for accountability and transparency in international development effectiveness. The engagement of DFID officials in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) and the G8 (2013) shaped the international effectiveness discourse and thus created a strong international precedence, which was received positively by DFID's Europe Department:

> During the Secretary of State's time as co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, DFID played a key role in encouraging different development actors to work together and use internationally agreed principles for aid and development effectiveness. (DFID, 2014, p. 2).

The global debates in IATI and the GPEDC were more technical in nature than the OECD high-level fora of the 2000s. The GPEDC and the fatigue with the previous aid effectiveness principles after Busan opened a window of opportunity for British policy professionals to get involved more strongly to by-pass discussions in the EU. This window of opportunity fitted the British government's perception for effective governance more widely, which was part of its national reform strategy after 2010. While the international development discourse provided a justification for Britain's insistence in the EU, it also opened it up to criticism from other member states (Interviews BMZ#3; CON#2) and internally, as some development professionals felt that the governmental results agenda sat uncomfortably with development objectives (Valters and Whitty, 2017). However, DFID received support especially from Publish What You Fund. This UK-based campaign for aid transparency was launched at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2008 with support of DFID. The group's advocacy gained significant momentum after 2011 when it was increasingly promoted by DFID:

> Several of Publish What You Fund's recommendations have not only been accepted, but also championed, by DFID – including support for data user tools and the piloting of the crucial budget alignment component of the IATI standard. (Publish What You Fund, 2012, p. 8)

Thus, there was a mutually reinforcing relationship for norm advocacy between the organisations. First, the campaign provided DFID with discursive and organisational support, which it used to engage with the European Commission and other EU institutions, such as the EIB (see above). Second, their engagement affected the wider international discursive environment, which increasingly reflected aid transparency.

In addition to this active engagement and organisational support for promoting transparency and accountability at the EU level, the British government emphasised its option of 'walking away'. While the government's announcement to adjust its financial contributions to international organisations according to their performance against these international standards was not mainly directed towards the EU, the EU received much attention. The Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) process (DFID, 2011b; 2013a) and, in 2016, the Multiannual Development Review (DFID, 2016c) extended and institutionalised scrutiny to multilateral aid channels in a regular and (domestically) regulated process. This process also targeted the EU despite its different character (ICAI, 2015). Additional political pressure specifically on the EU came in the context of the Balance of Competence Review (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 2012), which heralded the increasing pressure of a reassessment of the general relationship between Britain and the EU. This political pressure was also underpinned with research insights and expertise. For example, in 2012, ODI summarised various findings on EU aid effectiveness and suggests a potential decision rule for engagement with the EU (Geddes, 2012, p. 6).

Eventually, by 2015, the EU had picked up the international transparency norms that were significantly shaped by British policy professionals in a wider, international discursive network, which included societal actors. The effect of this norm advocacy, mainly through a communicative discourse, became evident as the EU instruments scored well on DFID's new indicators in subsequent assessments. DFID had introduced indicators for value or money and accountability, which became 'tougher' over time (DFID, 2016c, p. 13). Nevertheless, as a 2016 assessment on the EU concludes, 'Since the 2013 MAR Update, the EU has made good progress on transparency, and taken important steps to improve reporting of results' (DFID, 2016b). The EU's 2015 results framework reflected DFID's priorities, which was perceived as relevant among officials in DFID's Europe Department for

demonstrating to the domestic audience that the EU is as efficient as possible (Interview DFID#1). Similarly, after the British EU referendum in 2016, a study found that British policy-makers were convinced that they had shaped the EU development policy according to their own goals and principles in terms of aid to LDCs, raising awareness on gender issues, and introducing transparency as well as result orientation (Olivié and Pérez, 2017, p. 20).

The example of the results framework also shows how the promotion of specific priorities clashed with diverging understandings on the EU's role. Due to the strong domestic accountability concerns for public spending and the unwillingness to be bound to EU policy norms, British officials had not been inclined to commit to a common EU results framework (Interviews DFID#1; PREP#2). Instead, they retreated to a defensive and reactive approach when this option was put on the table. To illustrate this point, while in its 2012 mission statement, the Europe Department still sought to 'lobby the EU to adopt an EU-wide guarantee on aid transparency that would *commit* both the European Commission and EU Member States' (DFID, 2012, p. 12, emphasis added), the phrase 'commit' had already been dropped in subsequent updates (DFID, 2013b; 2014).

Conclusions

This chapter has traced the participation of British policy professionals in EU norm advocacy in development cooperation in the years before the 2016 referendum on EU membership. While British officials have actively participated in networks of member state and EU officials, they have been less invested in a coordinative discourse to arrive at a working-level consensus on common EU policy norms. This has contributed to the perception of an 'awkward partner' in the EU. Yet British professionals have actively participated in the discursive formation on EU effectiveness in development cooperation, as the chapter has demonstrated based on the case of transparency. The central channel for British norm advocacy has been a wider international discursive network around (aid) transparency, including societal actors, which officials helped to strengthen. Since Britain has been a major contributor to EU development cooperation and has significantly shaped EU policy norms over time despite the reluctance of officials to engage in consensus-seeking, this contributes to close the knowledge gap of how policy professionals have contributed towards common EU

external action. As part of this, the chapter has demonstrated that the discursive contribution of British professionals stands in contrast to professionals in Germany, which highlights different ways of understanding the contribution of professionals to EU norm advocacy.

The EU has not been the primary channel for British actors to shape discourses on international development. The chapter has shown that despite the country's weight in the EU, British officials have primarily relied on extra-EU discursive networks to promote priorities. However, as the chapter has also shown, British officials have become more involved in the EU's administrative networks, especially since the founding of DFID. The analysis of discursive competition over effectiveness in EU development cooperation in the final section of this chapter has suggested that British officials became more engaged in using the EU's opportunity structure. This part first analysed the reaction of UK policy professionals to EU policy coordination and then their participation in EU discourse construction to support the promotion of alternative policy norms, especially transparency. How active British officials have been in the EU coordinative discourse has depended on the extent to which they could steer the discourse to align common EU policy norms with the principles that they promoted within their international network. For this end, similar to Germany, and despite the continued British reluctance (Geddes, 2013, pp. 200-1), British professionals participated in technical, administrative coordination. For example, they actively engaged in an EU expert group, and seconded a national expert on transparency to the Commission to steer policy formulation and coordination from within the institutional network hub.

This suggests that there had been some form of 'Europeanisation' of the engagement of British officials in the EU, which had to overcome the 'extra' scepticism that British officials have been facing at the EU level. Seeking to overcome scepticism of other professionals, British officials have been particularly concerned with proving their credibility. As a result, they have been especially inclined to reference policy expertise and knowledge, such as ODI. However, as the analysis has demonstrated, and in contrast to the German discursive engagement, the goal of this participation was not to advocate EU policy norms for the sake of collective EU action. This has been suggested as the British governmental ambition to structure public discourse beyond EU circles was much more pronounced. This has involved engaging, mobilising and supporting global civil society and their networks, such as the ODI and Publish What You Fund. British officials have engaged in different fora (e.g., IATI, GPEDC, Nordic plus) to upload domestic preferences to the international level. British professionals at higher levels have continued to feel some unease with the EU-level coordination

processes, which tend to be reliant on achieving consensus in a coordinative discourse (see chapter 3). Participation in a wider discursive network meant that British officials shaped competition over effectiveness in international development simultaneously at multiple institutional hubs.

This wider transnational engagement, which contributed over time to the international discourse, allowed British development officials to make arguments in the EU that were legitimised by the international discourse and strengthened relevant (societal) voices in the discursive network, while isolating actors with competing arguments. At the same time, a key component of using the EU's opportunity structure was building up capacity at the EU level in these areas to absorb the international discourse and maintain it. This included enhancing the number of seconded experts (SNEs), which tended to be comparatively lower than in Germany or France, and strategically placing them in key positions across EU institutions. The simultaneous international advocacy and EU capacity-building made EU institutional actors, such as the Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), more susceptible to the international discourse and adaptable to international standards (e.g., IATI). The discursive engagement of British development officials, including in the EU, had also been a way to deal with domestic contestation. In particular, it helped to absorb pressure from the Treasury on safeguarding accountability, as development officials could exploit the ambiguity of accountability as both an aid effectiveness and a domestic governance principle. However, this also drew criticism from different parts of the national and international development community, and further governmental measures in the early/mid-2010s risked weakening support by civil society professionals for the ministry's norm advocacy.

The contrast to German discursive engagement implies that there are different ways of understanding the contribution of professionals to EU norm advocacy and hence collective action in international development. It illustrates the value of the outlined approach of discursive networks where the participation on professionals is less tied to the institutional boundaries set by the EU. This also has implications for Brexit and EU development cooperation (see also Conclusion). While with Brexit some of the empirical knowledge that has been presented will be revised as British engagement in the EU adjusts, even after Brexit, the approach remains a valid tool to analyse the relationship between the EU and Britain.

Conclusion

It has been the aim of this research to add to our understanding of collective EU external action. The preoccupation with how institutional structures facilitate member state coordination in EU external relations has created a blind spot. This blind spot is a gap in our knowledge regarding how norms governing collective EU action are advocated. A gap existed because work on policy-making has not adequately captured the nature of norm advocacy, which underpins the formulation of common policy norms and presupposes collective action. The contribution of this research is to fill this gap.

This research shifts attention to neglected processes of norm advocacy. The analysis has concentrated on the discursive coordination and competition on which norm advocacy is built. In these discursive processes multiple actors participate in a transnational space that is not directly represented by institutional structures. Instead, the research locates EU, state and non-state actors in discursive, transnational networks of policy professionals who engage in, and compete over, norm advocacy for common EU policy through their discursive interactions. This research implies a critique of how norm advocacy has been studied. It revises existing, dominant views on norm advocacy in EU external action. To do so, the analysis links the previously little related concepts of norm advocacy and discursive networks to examine the agency and scope of policy professionals in the advocacy of EU policy norms; and it provides new empirical insights into the role of these policy professionals for collective action between the EU institutions and the member states in development cooperation, many of whom have hardly been credited in this way before.

This research demonstrates how policy professionals contribute towards a common EU policy on development cooperation. While the institutional environment provides little incentives for coordination, the EU has agreed on norms governing collective development cooperation over time. The thesis argues that to understand EU norm advocacy, it is relevant to consider wider processes of policy formulation. This goes beyond negotiations between member states, who control decision-making. Norm negotiations between state representatives are part of larger discursive competition, contestation and coordination processes. These processes take place in a more encompassing and

complex network around decision-making centres, which is not evidently organised by one set of institutional structures. Instead, policy formulation inevitably involves more, and specialised, professionals who engage substantively in norm advocacy and across organisational boundaries with overlapping institutional demands on actors. The thesis shows how these policy professionals contribute to the construction, mediation and advocacy of norms for collective action in the EU. Through their discursive action – both coordinative and communicative – institutional, state and non-state policy professionals presuppose and shape norm negotiations of decision-makers. The research thus highlights the importance of paying attention to the multiple, overlapping interdependences of advocacy actors. Policy coordination is to a large extent 'back-seat' driven in the way that the resources and constraints for advocacy actors are determined by the network which they form.

Policy coordination in the EU's external action has been generally portrayed as state-centric and intergovernmental. It is predominantly central-state governments that formulate, fund and execute these policies and, in most cases (except for trade), they hold their own, effectively independent competence for doing so, even where they cooperate at the EU level. While these actors control decision-making, at the formulation (and re-formulation) stage more professionals are engaged. The engagement of those professionals who coordinate policy formulations informally and on a more technical basis *across* organisational boundaries has been hardly credited, partly because it is not part of the EU's institutional design. This includes the role of member state bureaucrats 'at home' and their national networks, which has been largely marginalised when it comes to coordination at the EU level, with some exceptions (Chelotti, 2013; 2016a). Yet it is these professionals who organise the norm negotiations of 'their' representatives in Brussels. They engage with their counterparts in other member states and the EU institutions; they organise the involvement of technical professionals, some of whom may even become part of the institutions as in the case of seconded national experts; and they manage the engagement with external professionals. An important element of norm advocacy in the transnational arena is the provision of suitable argumentation, evidence and expertise for a respective discursive context. Thus, the range of relevant actors also includes other professionals who play a role in providing expertise, advocacy and argumentation at the national, European and global level. While these professionals are often regarded in terms of external (advocacy) networks that can be engaged in the policy process (Jordan and Schout, 2006; Kingah*, et al.*, 2015), I have shown that they are part of a wider, interdependent transnational process of discursive competition and coordination (see Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Stone, 2013; Stone, 2015; Stone and Ladi, 2015). These professionals are integrated in the

discursive formation and coordination, for example, through invitations to hearings and technical seminars, they contribute studies and opinions, or they provide training and awareness-raising among officials and other professionals. While especially NGOs and think tanks require to be visible and thus seek to contribute to the wider communicative discourse formation, consultants have a more instrumental function and often become part of the coordinative discourse of bureaucratic politics.

All these different professionals, who partly have little or no formal role in EU policy coordination, become engaged because they have something 'to offer' to the discursive formation. To make the case for the relevance of these wider processes of norm advocacy, the research has demonstrated, both conceptually and empirically, that there is a meaningful contribution of policy professionals to norm advocacy, what the nature of this contribution is, and under what condition it becomes effective. To show this, the research has moved to a mid-level of analysis between the individual-level norm negotiations and macro-structural processes (both institutional and discursive). Capturing EU norm advocacy at the meso level of analysis becomes possible by linking processes of discourse construction and networks within an institutionalised environment. Chapter 1 established this conceptual link by drawing on discursive institutionalism and network approaches in institutionalised international relations, which accounts for the potential of norm advocacy of professionals through their discursive action in networks. Showing the relevance of this conceptual link required creating new knowledge at this level of analysis. The empirical work therefore needed to show that there is a link between norm advocacy and discourse construction. Chapters 2 and 3 responded to the need to establish that competition over policy norms for collective EU action occurs within a discourse on (development) effectiveness. Chapter 3 additionally demonstrated how professionals at the EU level engage in discursive competition over effectiveness. This responds to the need to fill a gap in our knowledge about EU norm advocacy but left open how and under what conditions state actors are involved. The chapter identified the need to look at what matters for the transnational interactions of national professionals who engage in this competition. Chapters 4 and 5 then analysed in detail those member state actors who contribute to and contest EU norm advocacy. This responds to the need to disaggregate member state engagement in the transnational arena at this level of analysis.

Since the role of policy professionals has been hardly credited, this thesis has generated new knowledge regarding their role. This is how the in-depth studies of the EU level, Germany and Britain become relevant. Focusing on two central member states allows to gain the necessary in-depth

perspective at professionals, who often remain invisible, and the context in which they act, which research at the EU level alone cannot do. Thus, by shifting the level of analysis, this research reveals and assesses the (collective) agency of actors who have no or little EU institutional role in the coordination process and have therefore been neglected by much of the academic EU level literature. Finally, the findings are valuable beyond the empirical case study. As the case of EU development cooperation suggests, the outlined approach is valuable where collective action norms are negotiated between EU institutional actors and member state representatives. This suggests that the research can speak beyond the case of development cooperation to the literature on EU external policy-making more widely.

The reminder of this final part of the thesis reflects upon the analysis of the preceding chapters and draws overarching conclusions by linking the empirical and conceptual aspects. It discusses the empirical findings and analytical contributions but also the limitations of this research. First, I briefly summarise the empirical findings regarding the role of policy professionals in negotiation common policy norms in EU development cooperation. Second, I link these findings to the conceptual framework, which is also integrated more systematically into the wider debate on policy-making in EU external action and contrasted to existing approaches. Third, I discuss several limitations and outlooks for further enquiry. These two final parts are guided by the following questions: How can we make sense of the role of policy professionals for finding agreement on collective action? How is the outlined approach different to existing approaches? What lessons can be drawn for other policy areas beyond the EU's development cooperation? And what does it add to the existing understanding of EU foreign policy-making?

Valuing policy professionals

This thesis has demonstrated the relevance of policy professionals in processes of norm advocacy beyond the negotiations of member state representatives. To understand this relevance, it has looked at the discursive dimension of interactions within networks between development policy professionals.

It was the establishment of collective action in development cooperation in the late 1950s that laid the foundation for the engagement of transnational policy professionals, which developed independently from the member states. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, over time, the range of

actors who have come to participate, namely bureaucrats, diplomats, implementers, external experts and so on, often with competing agendas, has constantly grown, transcending national organisational boundaries. While national structures developed largely within their own contexts and along the lines of global fora such as the DAC and the World Bank, as illustrated in chapters 4 and 5, the development at the European level offered a channel for policy-makers to come together to mediate their interests and beliefs. In addition to supranational policy professionals in the Commission, this centre has attracted professionals in member states who engage in transnational processes and/or shift their affiliation between the national and the supranational. This has created interdependences between multiple, different actors at different stages, and any attempt to overcome compartmentalisation, institutional variation and so on has fallen victim to the complex, overlapping field of interactions.

Commission officials have sought to formulate EU policies for the coordination and collective action of the Community/EU and its member states. This has formally been the Commission's task since Maastricht, and a shared task with the HR/VP and the EEAS since Lisbon (which has not kept Commission officials from promoting such policies at all points). Most prominent are the Commission communications as proposals for common policy. This has put Commission officials into a position to initiate formulations for common policy norms. They have aimed at promoting stronger measures for collective action and coordination of policies between the institutions and the member states. While this had already been the case before Maastricht (see Commission of the European Communities, 1972), it has since intensified based on the extended Treaty provisions. As a result, the Commission has also strengthened its own expertise and bureaucratic capacity in the form of dedicated funding, officials and organisational units in areas that have been considered relevant to substantiating and justifying such formulation. This concerns especially the area of aid/development effectiveness, which has long had a focus on policy coordination – at least since the 1970s. Thus, at least since Maastricht, there have been Commission officials who have been dedicated to promoting common policy norms for collective action in development cooperation. They have enjoyed institutional entrenchment, as well as access to funding and Commission level policy formulation.

Other professionals have sought to shape these policy formulations. Member state reactions have been central because it is their national policies which are concerned by these common policy norms for collective action. The nature of these policy proposals has meant that 'agreement' between member states mostly concern 'endorsements' and/or qualifications of Commission proposals, or more generally, any kinds of concerted reactions (or non-reactions). Finding this formal kind of

agreement is, in most cases, left to member state representatives in the Council working groups who are based in Brussels, meet regularly and coordinate intensively. They are specialists at 'finding agreement'. Interviewees were very explicit about the central gatekeeping role of this EU working group network – which, in fact, stretches across a couple of working groups – even though final agreements have legally, and often practically, little effect on the national policies of member states (Carbone and Quartapelle, 2016; Krüger and Steingass, 2018). The central role of these officials in the institutional decision-making process has however attracted attention to how this close (sub-)network operates, how they engage with each other, negotiate and advocate policy norms (Elgström, 2000; 2017). As outlined in chapter 3, they ensure the political 'fit' of agreements with national lines, but as members of a dedicated Brussels community who are often development specialists, it gives them a wider sense of purpose to find ways that improve international development. They are the 'gatekeepers' and the central institutional node of EU norm advocacy.

Nevertheless, 'finding agreement' is not limited to these professionals. Chapters 3 to 5 have illustrated tensions between different channels for norm advocacy in the EU, which has repercussions for the participation of other professionals. These tensions arise as officials are tightly integrated in national structures and networks for policy formulation, prioritisation, coordination etc. Officials in the Council working groups connect to both the Commission and their 'home' institution. While their engagement with each other is their main function, significant capacity goes into communicating agreement and disagreement about formulations with Commission officials and managing expectations in 'home' organisations, especially their ministries. At the same time, officials 'at home' also contribute to coordination, even more so on technical aspects. This goes as far as direct engagement between subject specialists from the member state bureaucracies in EU expert groups, as outlined in chapter 5 for the case of transparency, who focus primarily on coordinating technical details among each other – rather than wider political appropriateness. This gives them a role in policy norm coordination, which they formally do not have. The national coordinative networks of member state officials have been relevant because there have been additional, informal interactions at the working level between their units, which contribute to common formulations via the coordination of more technical elements ('coordinative discourse').

This highly coordinative form of norm advocacy among bureaucratic actors on a technical basis has thus been one way for the enhanced role of professionals. It comes with the limited involvement of other professionals, especially those who seek more visibility, wider communication

and political advocacy. This channel of norm advocacy has been the preferred channel for the Commission and Germany when the international and European discursive environment for coordination became more challenging. The German preference for and commitment to consensus and the coordinative discourse – which are not development policy specific – supported the Commission officials' eagerness to continue advocating common norms for policy coordination. Political prioritisation mattered. While in Germany top-level prioritisation meant that there was relevant capacity, such as high-level attention and human resources, Commission professionals needed the participation of other professionals to allow coordination to remain a political priority. In this way, it became possible to advocate joint programming among a like-minded group even despite differences on the (political) purpose, especially between France and Germany, as outlined in chapters 3 and 4. To promote preferences in this coordinative discourse, as chapter 4 has shown, German officials, but also other national actors, especially the DIE, were mobilised to promote joint programming through bureaucratic politics, including expert promotion, since 2009 when it came to the first implementation of this EU policy for the funding period 2014-2020. This included the secondment of a national expert to the Commission but also horizontal communication and interactions at all levels from the ministerial to the working level.

This coordinative discourse meant that researchers and civil society actors found it more difficult to participate in norm formulation processes. Instead, they have depended on the 'invitation' by participating bureaucratic professionals. As chapter 3 has demonstrated, to construct and promote their ideas, Commission officials interacted with experts and professionals who provided material that found its way into the respective communications. To do this, the Commission carefully selected knowledge providers who would substantiate and legitimise the Commission's narrative. While this gave some of these actors the chance to shape the narrative at least marginally, their main function was fostering agreement by a) providing additional expert authority, and b) coordinating wider societal agreement, which transcends the boundaries of the EU's formal institutional mechanisms, e.g., through EU-wide networks, which the Commission strongly encouraged. This reflects the traditional approach of the Commission towards creating a transnational European policy constituency, which despite little formal role (except for the occasional participation in the Commission's expert group), plays a role in aligning discourse within the EU. This exclusive participation stands in contrast to the ambition for wider participation of the mid-2000s, which the Commission promoted to communicate a more political case for coordination. Networks of national think tanks and of NGOs have sought to coordinate common positions at the EU level and promote

common formulations 'at home' in member states who also participate in other international fora. This also affected the wider international discourse and thus contributed to the image of the Commission as a norm-maker (Carbone, 2007). Seeking wider participation changes the relevance of professionals who play a role for norm advocacy. Importantly, it extends discursive competition and norm advocacy to institutional centres beyond the exclusive bureaucratic coordination and advocacy between respective member state and Commission professionals. Thus, societal participation potentially affects the wider international discourse in which the coordinative discourse of bureaucratic, technical professionals takes places. As a result, this coordination may contrast with the international discourse, which may lead to opposition.

However, on the general question of the value of EU coordination for effectiveness, the range of potential external advocacy and knowledge actors has been limited. This has been due to the national focus of think tanks and the increasing alienation of NGOs, which found it increasingly difficult to engage with the Commission on traditional questions of aid and cooperation. Industry, with the exception of few commercial consultancies, had also little to say on this issue. The absence of NGOs and parliaments suggests that norm advocacy has largely remained part of a coordinative discourse of professionals rather than a more communicative one shaped in front of the eyes of a larger public (see Schmidt, 2008). This has provided an advantage for external professionals who relied less on visibility, e.g., consultants, and actors who have invested in an explicit focus on the European dimension. This includes think tanks such as the German DIE, but most importantly ECDPM, whose researchers were closely involved with the relevant Commission officials on advocating joint programming. Their general prominence among officials enhanced the Commission's claims for expert authority. This form of direct engagement has partly stood in contrast to Commission officials' insistence on transnational network formation of think tanks.

British officials have been less oriented towards EU consensus than both German and Commission officials. While this meant that, as chapter 5 has shown, they had a harder time within the coordinative discourse, they have also used the EU as a channel for norm advocacy of their preferred policy norms. At times, British officials found it difficult to engage in EU norm advocacy in which they were perceived as 'awkward' or 'reluctant'. Scepticism towards common norms for policy coordination, such as joint programming, which was strong within the national context, found its way to British representatives for Brussels but did neither halt EU norm advocacy nor led, initially, to more effective advocacy of alternative policy norms for effectiveness. Only when cracks appeared in the

international discourse on which EU norm advocacy had been based and retreated to a coordinative discourse, consistent with its general organisation for wider international engagement, British officials mobilised advocacy of non-state professionals in the transnational network of development professionals. Chapter 5 has illustrated the institutional support for and public endorsement of the 'Publish What You Fund' advocacy network, which provided additional discursive support to British norm promotion. At that point it became difficult for German administrative professionals to engage with what they perceived as being contrary to national 'culture', and they partly reacted with disengagement, which reduced their role in EU norm advocacy.

The cases of German and British officials have shown that opposition to EU policy norm advocacy at these levels has primarily been through disengagement. This has left more room for those professionals who have actively sought to construct all-EU policy norms for which the Commission has been a central hub. While not all Commission officials actively advocate common policy norms, the Commission has tended to join the promotion of common policy norms also because member states, as part of their norm advocacy, provide it with relevant capacity, from political support to seconded national experts, to pick up their advocacy. As suggested in chapter 3, seconded national experts (SNEs) played an important role in this active Commission promotion. SNEs are issue experts, i.e., professionals who are seconded to the Commission to promote a certain (nationally favoured) norm from within the EU's transnational hub. In the cases of joint programming and, to some extent, transparency/results framework, this was designed to go beyond changing the practice of EU institutions to create and promote a policy norm for the entire EU. While these officials become part of the EU institution, and partly adjust their tasks to institutional demands, their placement has crucially contributed to shifting the narrative that has been promoted from within the Commission and served as discursive basis for subsequent negotiations.

Thus, multiple subject professionals have played a role in policy norm advocacy although they hardly have any formal role in the policy coordination process; where they have a formal role, as national EU coordination units supporting their representatives in Brussels, their role has often been marginalised. Especially 'imported' issue experts have played a central role in promoting agreement due to their enhanced technical expert authority but in the case of SNEs also because they have been part of a wider national promotion strategy by a member state. These experts, which also include non-state experts, were both sought after by Commission officials who seek to formulate common

policies and (actively) engaged by member states and civil society to promote prioritised, nationally coordinated norms.

Theoretical implications?

While policy professionals have become an important subject of study in EU and international governance, as well as international development (Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Stone, 2013; 2015; Stone and Ladi, 2015), in the academic study of EU development cooperation their role has been largely neglected. Thus, the outlined observations about the contributions of policy professionals add empirical insights into the contestation over collective action in EU development cooperation. Yet the presented findings also imply a critique of how norm advocacy for collective EU action has been researched in that the contributions of policy professionals to discourse formation, which are relevant for understanding norm advocacy, have been overlooked. This suggests that the presented findings also have theoretical implications for the study of EU development cooperation and external action, more generally. Especially, they add to the persistent questions of obstacles to EU collective action and effective policy coordination, which have received persistent attention (e.g., Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker, 2017; Henökl and Trondal, 2015; Niemann and Bretherton, 2013).

In the area of EU development cooperation, academic contributions have sought to identify obstacles to effective collective action and find them in the EU's institutional complexity, which lacks incentives for coordinating agreement on collective action (Bodenstein*, et al.*, 2017; Gänzle*, et al.*, 2012; Orbie and Carbone, 2016). Thus, these approaches have grown out of, and have been driven by, the EU's institutional 'design'. What I suggest here shifts the focus to some extent away from the institutional structures to the processes of norm advocacy. While it is some way between the advocacy of norms for collective action, and collective action/effective coordination, it is the advocacy process in which competing views are translated into agreement. Even as such agreement may not overcome underlying contestation, as the lack of domestic adjustment suggests (Carbone and Quartapelle, 2016; Krüger and Steingass, 2018), understanding what dynamics underpin agreement helps identify where challenges to collective action come from. To be able to capture the nature of these dynamics, the central contribution of this research is a shift in the level of analysis, away from the macro to a more disaggregated level.

Most work on EU development cooperation has focused on macro level developments. On the macro level, much attention has been dedicated to the EU's institutional structure. The existence of institutions at the EU level has contributed to a potential 'over-emphasis' on institutional structures whereas in international development institutions play a subtler role (Stone, 2004; 2013; 2015; Stone and Maxwell, 2005). The reason is the ambiguous role of formal institutions, high uncertainty and limited formal incentives for cooperation whereas normative motivations are much stronger. The emphasis on institution in the EU has come with a focus on the limiting role of institutions on actors. While these limits may help explain continuity (or the absence of change), this research challenges the limiting role of institutions and its restrictions on agency, which leads to path dependence, as ingrained in historical institutionalism (Pierson, 1996; 2004). Yet, in contrast to discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008; 2010), which highlights agency for change through active, collective and discursive agency, this research suggests that collective discursive agency also helps us to understand resistance to change. Thus, this research does not understand resistance mainly as a structural component of institutionalisation but in terms of collective agency. This also points at a limitation. The approach's value depends on whether one can identify such 'active' agency, i.e., attempts at promoting a policy norm, even against competing priorities and challenging discourses.

Disappointed institutional optimism after series of institutional reforms revealed the limits of the EU's institutionalisation to facilitate hierarchical policy-making. Moving to a more disaggregated level of analysis shows that interactions between actors occur across organisational/institutional boundaries. This level of analysis matters especially where institutionalisation is ambiguous and provides competing centres of policy formulation, which are in no evident hierarchical order. While EU decision-making is circumscribed by well-defined institutions and therefore a prominent subject to institutionalist analysis, the wider transnational policy process evades these clearly defined institutions. Formal institutions are less helpful in understanding how actors interact. Institutions do not tell us enough about what shapes the interactions of actors because of their competing inter-agent dependences, structured by power relations, which are not part of the institutions of decision-making. While such a network forms and operates around decision-making nodal points, constituted by the institutional structure, in contrast, this research highlights the transcending of organisational boundaries at the level of professionals (see also Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Wolff, 2015).

How do these professionals contribute to advocating policy norms when they are not part of the institutional decision-making? The network of policy professionals at the heart of this study has

no formal power to make decisions in the EU. And yet their decision and actions matter to coordinate policy and advocate agreement between the EU and its member states. To capture this role, this research has drawn on concepts of coordinative and communicative discourse formation processes (see Schmidt, 2008; 2010; Stone, 2015). To conceptualise the contribution of policy professionals to norm advocacy in the EU, this research has examined their contribution to discourse formation through their interactions with each other and in the public sphere. When looking beyond a single instance of negotiation, the matter becomes less static and more dynamic. It is about formulations that become the foundation for eventual agreements on policy norms. These policy norms are in constant flux and are challenged by competing policy norms, which are promoted by a variety of actors and through multiple, interconnected channels. Thus, it seems that the contributions of the discussed policy professionals can be largely seen as discursive, through a form of collective agency, even though they do not set the overall priorities and agenda. Instead, they argue, formulate, justify, advocate, look for evidence, reach out, seek contributions etc., which collectively affects the discursive context for EU norm advocacy.

This approach captures the highly heterogenous nature of the group of policy professionals, ranging from influential member state representatives in the Council working groups to policy analysts in the European Parliament secretariat and think tanks. A variety of multiple actors beyond those empowered by the institutional structure participate by seeking to shape narratives through their engagements. This is not to say power, especially institutional power, does not matter for discursive networks. 'Being at the table' is important and so is having more channels to promote a narrative. While some professionals, such as member state representatives or Commission officials, are 'at the table' by institutional design, other actors, such as think tankers or officials in the European Parliament must engage actively to be heard. Yet these actors are also engaged actively by those 'in power'. There is an interdependence between these actors, which means that power in discursive networks is a function not only of actors' relative position but also their interdependences when it comes to being able to contribute to or facilitate norm advocacy. Thus, these professionals are subject to multiple and overlapping interdependences. When seeking to understand how they achieve this discursive contribution, it makes sense to look at their multiple interactions. These interactions can be understood in terms of networks, which form where power is concentrated and decisions are made.

In contrast to micro-level approaches of EU policy-making, including studies on bargaining, negotiations, persuasion etc. discursive networks are less concerned with individual practice of actors in their every-day engagement (e.g., how they act to convince another actor). Meso- and micro level analyses of policy professionals, diplomats, bureaucrats etc. exist in and across different EU policy areas and seem particularly promising in external relations and foreign policy (Bicchi and Bremberg, 2018; Chelotti, 2016a; Elgström, 2017; Kuus, 2014). These accounts are generally concerned with practices of how individuals arrive at decisions. Thus, while they focus on organisational sub-sets (such as member state representatives in the Council), the level of analysis remains restricted to a specific arena of interaction or group. The advantage is that practices among similar actors, who engage intensively, can be studied more easily and yield potentially transferable conclusions. However, this micro-level perspective also comes with strict assumptions on participating actors and clear limitations of networks/communities, for example in the case of epistemic communities, which have been difficult to identify in practice. Most importantly, as this research suggests, isolating interactions at this micro level may help to study practice, but it is insufficient to understand the wider process of norm advocacy as it depends on the simultaneous advocacy and discursive action around multiple centres, which are interdependent.

These transnational interdependences point at another important insight of this research. This research offers an account of the limits of member states in their engagement at the EU level despite their formal power. National and transnational networks are important to support the promotion of norms. National networks behind member state representatives pursue norms simultaneously through different channels and provide substantiation and legitimation to claims. Transnational networks help to establish a discourse more widely and assure that it is reproduced in other fora, which may affect the wider discursive environment. In contrast, challenging an EU collective action norm seems more effective when promoting an alternative rather than trying to prevent it. While member state representatives can raise concerns against norms, their (discursive) disengagement has meant that these policy norms have nevertheless been advocated because of the advocacy through a transnational network of policy professionals. The EU institutions' bureaucratic authority over discourses is empowered by the engagement as part of wider transnational networks (see Wolff, 2015). This also adds to discussions about how the Commission can shape policies where member states dominate (Metz, 2015; Riddervold, 2016). As a result, countering norm promotion by proposing an alternative norm for collective action has been more effective.

To summarise, this research accounts for how professionals develop an entrepreneurial role for the construction and advocacy of common policy norms. While the entrepreneurial agency of EU officials in development cooperation has been highlighted before (Carbone, 2007; Wolff, 2015), this approach helps to understand their agency as a component of wider collective agency. More generally, the findings help understand what constitutes the entrepreneurial agency of different actors, including those who are less evident in the policy process. This includes a closer look at member states' agency in the EU to understand how they promote policy norms by disaggregating the state as an organisational unit into its component actors. First, this approach localises entrepreneurial agency in the transnational space. Issue experts play a central role in arriving at agreement due to their formulations on specific ideas and their expert authority helps substantiate and legitimise these formulations. Second, beyond individual agency, this approach understands norm advocacy in terms of collective agency through networks where agency is exerted simultaneously in several centres.

Where from here?

The theoretical implications of this research have repercussions for the study of collective EU external action. A consequence of the gap in our knowledge regarding norm advocacy of collective EU action has been that much hope for improving collective action has been put into institutional reforms of the EU's external governance. The study of EU policy-making in external relations has been burgeoning, especially following the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 (see Dijkstra and Vanhoonacker, 2017; Keuleers*, et al.*, 2016). The increasing commitment to collective action has contributed to the growing expectations in academic and public discourse of the EU's international clout.

Most attention has thereby been dedicated to the reformed institutional structures of foreign policy-making. Comparatively little attention has been given to the wider external action of the EU, which has become increasingly expected to be integrated as part of a coherent EU foreign policy. Yet, as suggested here, external policy processes come with a host of institutional and non-state actors who are involved at multiple stages and in different ways. This also applies to other policy areas from trade with its exclusive EU competence (Dür and De Bièvre, 2007) all the way to defence policy (Wilkinson*, et al.*, 2017). The involvement of these different actors cuts across the neat organisational boundaries of EU institutions and member states. Thus, despite the burgeoning research on EU

foreign policy and external action, which looks at the lack of success of institutional reforms, there is a need for research that helps to make sense of this lack. The presented conclusions contribute to this need.

There are some caveats, which opens avenues for further enquiry. Discursive networks of policy professionals may be less relevant in EU foreign policy-making when there is stricter institutional organisation or issue control by governments. Where norm advocacy takes place in *ad hoc* negotiations between top-level executives in front of the eyes of national electorates, the transnational role of policy specialists runs the risk of becoming less prominent. Norm negotiations on the issue of external action on migration control since late 2015 have illustrated this issue. Yet these situations are exceptions and 'extremes' in processes which are continuously carried on the backs of professionals, at least where there is some degree of institutionalisation of international cooperation. This study has looked at a case of transnational policy-making where supranational and national bureaucracies together with non-state actors construct, coordinate and advocate common policy norms. The adjustment of the analytical perspective on EU policy processes draws on conceptual debates about the role of networks of diverse types of actors in increasingly institutionalised international relations (Henriksen and Seabrooke, 2016; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Slaughter, 2004; Stone, 2013; Stone and Ladi, 2015). This means that the approach in order to be helpful requires a degree of institutionalisation, which identifies centres of decision-making; sufficient institutional ambiguity, which allows a variety of actors to seek access to this centre and promotes interdependences among them; transnational institutions and bureaucracies to serve as hubs for discursive networks and have independent policy professionals; finally, agreement is coordinated at the working level of policy professionals rather than at the political top.

This is largely the case for EU development cooperation. EU development policy-making is special in many ways, which makes it a relatively 'easy case' for the outlined approach (low politics, focused issue professionals, etc.). While it has not been the aim to generalise the findings from one case in a theoretical way in order to conceptualise – or even explain – all EU foreign policy-making, we see these characteristics in other areas of EU external action and foreign policy. This suggests that the outlined analytical lens can be applied there. Given the changes in the EU's foreign policy, especially since Lisbon, the approach holds potential to add to wider debates about the effectiveness of the EU's external policy-making. Overcoming problems of collective action led to the creation of the HR/VP and the EEAS, which have developed as a transnational network hub, and have become an

intensely researched institutional advancement (Amadio Viceré, 2018; Merket, 2016; Morgenstern-Pomorski, 2018). Yet research in this area has also concentrated more on the working level (Chelotti, 2016a; 2016b) and the role of non-state actors (Voltolini, 2016). In addition, since Lisbon, one can also observe the integration of external relations into the EU's foreign policy more generally, especially regarding the HR/VP's 'comprehensive/integrated approach' and the debate on the post-2020 financial framework. This integration means that more actors with competing agendas contest narratives across subfields more openly. While this integration has been welcomed with regard to existing levels of incoherence, the process involves that the nature of foreign policy-making will remain 'messy' and institutionally complex despite attempts at institutional reform and 'streamlining'.

Second, what comes out of this wider process in EU foreign policy also changes the rules of the game for development cooperation, especially for the time of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) after 2020 when budget lines are restructured, potentially in the form of a single external funding instrument (European Commission, 2018). The role and relevance of development cooperation in general but also in the EU has significantly shifted since the beginning of the 2010s and continues to do so. The EU's enlargements and security concerns 'at home' in member states have pushed the policy area further to the edge and at the disposal of European security interests (e.g., Bergmann, 2018), and global paradigm shifts have challenged the foundation of development cooperation despite continued reassurances (e.g., BMZ, 2017b; European Commission, 2016a; UN, 2015). As the negotiations of the MFF indicate, there is a move towards 'root causes of migration' and Europe's security, more generally, which will affect the participation of certain actors in the identified discursive networks. This is already foreshadowed by the retreat of NGO networks regarding questions of EU development policy. With the advent of a more assertive EU foreign service and a clear internal agenda driven by ambitious institutions, on the one hand, and suspicious governments, which are pushed by sceptics and populists all over Europe, on the other hand, international development is at risk of being subsumed by these interests in the EU.

At the same time, development cooperation is going through a transformation, potentially its most significant one since the Second World War, which has implications for the EU's external action. Aid and traditional cooperation policies that aim at poverty eradication by offering (limited) external interventions on which EU development cooperation coordination of the 2000s had been built become less relevant. This potential decline of development cooperation was made more likely by other international shifts and global discourses, such as the agreement on the UN Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This does not need to be bad news for international development, given the continuous critique of aid and development cooperation (see Moyo, 2009; Riddell, 2007; Sumner and Kirk, 2014). While at the beginning of the 2000s, international aid discourses were dominated by donor governments, including the EU, their retreat and the emergence of new actors, from individual philanthropists to emerging economies, on the global scene and on the ground had changed cooperation for international development significantly. This has been both bemoaned and welcomed in international development circles.

While these shifts have the potential for enormous benefits for international development and the departure from at least seven decades of post-colonial orientalism, it also heralds a disengagement of financially potent and influential international actors whose domestic and international policies still hold great challenges for international development. Cooperation policies for international development thus remain relevant, including coordinating international funding or aid. Also, the question of whether Europe is going towards a common cooperation policy for international development remains relevant and how such a common policy looks like. Trends of seeing international cooperation in the service of managing migration to Europe and the 'securitisation' of EU development cooperation efforts (e.g., Bergmann, 2018) may potentially jeopardise the EU's contribution to international development through its external action because these trends weaken the discursive contributions of those actors who seek to safeguard development objectives. This research suggests that contestation over international cooperation policies takes place at the level of professionals, but the stronger role of the more political discourses around migration and securitisation strengthen the communicative discourse in the advocacy process for collective action norms. This means that norm advocacy based on technical discourses, a central driver for advocacy through transnational networks, becomes more challenging.

Finally, European integration is in flux. On 23 June 2016, a majority of the electorate in the United Kingdom voted in a referendum to leave the EU. This referendum, especially its outcome, provoked multiple reflections on Britain's EU membership (e.g., Smith, 2017) and its relationship in various policy areas, including development cooperation (Green, 2016; Lightfoot*, et al.*, 2017; Olivié and Pérez, 2017; Watkins, 2016). In contrast, Britain's development administration in the Department for International Development (DFID) remained silent around the time of the referendum and its immediate aftermath. After it had postponed the publication of a large-scale assessment of its engagement with multilateral organisations because of the EU referendum, when finally published,

the document (DFID, 2016c) largely ignored the EU, one of the primary multilateral channels for British development cooperation together with the World Bank. This reflects the dilemma in which its officials were put who participated actively in coordination and contestation of EU collective norms. There are further changes as British actors leave the institutional framework of EU development cooperation following Brexit. At the time of writing, the wider implication of Britain's withdrawal from the EU are still to be determined, which also affected development cooperation:

> The UK's decision to leave the EU will have implications for DFID's future partnerships with the EU bodies included in this Review. In the meantime, the UK continues to work with the EU, meeting our obligations, including funding to the European Development Fund (EDF) to support the poorest countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and humanitarian work via the Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO). (DFID, 2016c, p. 40)

DFID's multilateral development review of December 2016 mostly avoided mentioning the EU, reflecting a sense of prolonged uncertainty. Brexit will likely affect Britain's international engagement in development as it has also benefited from its EU networks.

Thus, the discussed observations are snapshots of a moving target. Especially against the background of Brexit, one question is how the presented discussion remains relevant. Brexit offers opportunities for the outlined approach. As a reminder, the key benefit of this research is that it allows to look beyond shifting institutional structures to the professionals who engage in norm advocacy, even as they are not directly part of decision processes. Interactions at the professional level, while facilitated through institutions, are not determined by them. In contrast, they may even contribute to constructing them. Thus, while Britain leaves the EU's institutional structures, including the Council with its working groups (and Commission SNEs), which reduces interactions, exchanges at all levels may well continue in practice and lead to new arrangements (Steingass, 2018). Research in this direction may further advance the presented argument and, despite all the consequences, these developments constitute an important avenue for further research, which can provide some optimism for transnational cooperation.

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Annex – List of interviews

BMZ#1	German development ministry (BMZ) official, Berlin, 21 September 2015 (a).
BMZ#2	German development ministry (BMZ) official, Berlin, 21 September 2015 (b).
BMZ#3	German development ministry (BMZ) official, Bonn, 18 May 2016.
BT#1	German parliament (*Bundestag*) official, Berlin, 17 September 2015.
CON#1	German development cooperation consultant (via phone), 24 July 2015.
CON#2	German development cooperation consultant, Bonn, 20 May 2016.
CON#3	British development cooperation consultant (via phone), 7 June 2016.
DEVCO#1	European Commission official, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 25 March 2015.
DEVCO#2	European Commission official, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 13 November 2015.
DEVCO#3	European Commission official, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 16 November 2015.
DEVCO#4	European Commission official, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 12 May 2016.
DEVCO#5	European Commission official, DG DEVCO, Brussels, 22 November 2016.
DFID#1	British development cooperation official, London, 14 December 2015.
DFID#2	British development cooperation official, London, 5 May 2016.
EEAS#1	European External Action Service (EEAS) official, Brussels, 21 April 2015.
EEAS#2	European External Action Service (EEAS) official, Brussels, 5 June 2015.
EEAS#3	European External Action Service (EEAS) official, Brussels, 17 November 2015.
EEAS#4	European External Action Service (EEAS) official, Cambridge, 29 April 2016.
EP#1	European Parliament (EP) official, Brussels, 24 March 2015.
EP#2	European Parliament (EP) official, Brussels, 21 April 2015.
EP#3	European Parliament (EP) official, Brussels, 23 April 2015.
EP#4	European Parliament (EP) official, Brussels, 16 November 2015 (a).
EP#5	European Parliament (EP) official, Brussels, 16 November 2015 (b).
NGO#1	NGO representative, Brussels, 26 March 2015.
NGO#2	NGO representative, Brussels, 28 April 2015.
NGO#3	NGO representative, Brussels, 5 June 2015.

NGO#4	NGO representative, Brussels, 7 July 2015.
NGO#5	NGO representative, Bonn, 25 September 2015.
NGO#6	NGO representative, London, 26 October 2015.
PREP#1	German development cooperation official, Brussels, 20 March 2015.
PREP#2	(Former) British development cooperation official, London, 24 May 2016.
TT#1	Think tank researcher, Bonn, 20 July 2015.
TT#2	Think tank researcher, London, 24 May 2016.
TT#3	Think tank researcher, Brussels, 21 November 2016.