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**Bilateral Development Aid to Africa -  
The Case of Germany  
德國對非洲的雙向援助**

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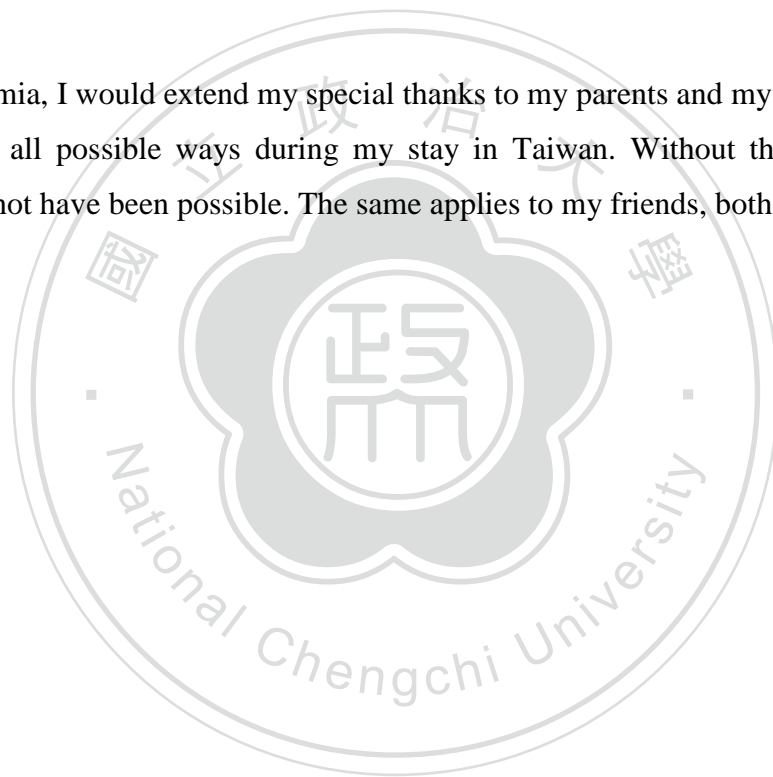
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## **Abstract**

This thesis uses a mixed-method approach to examine the underlying priorities of German development assistance to African countries. It pitches the self-interested motives of facilitating trade and curbing migration from the continent against the more altruistic goals of contributing to development, alleviating poverty and fostering good governance. The qualitative part of this study includes a presentation of the structure of the German aid regime and examines four key policy documents from the 18th and 19th legislative periods, covering the time spans from late 2013 to 2018 and 2018 to 2021, respectively. In the quantitative part, the four different motives are operationalized through several variables and tested against German aid flows by employing regression analysis. The data covers the entire 18th legislative period and the first half of the 19th legislative period. The qualitative examination shows that trade and migration are considered more relevant to foreign aid by the German policymakers in the 19th legislative period than they were in previous years. Poverty and development appear to have become slightly less relevant over time. The rule of law and democracy in recipient states are addressed over the whole time period, but the protection of human rights appears like a much higher priority. The quantitative analysis indicates that states with a higher population residing in Germany in fact do receive more aid, while the geographical distance from their home country to Germany seems to be irrelevant in the more recent years. Furthermore, it finds that German exports appear to be positively correlated with aid. Surprisingly, the measures employed to account for the development orientation of German aid are all insignificant. Moreover, democracy is the only dimension of good governance that appears to influence German aid allocation. Insofar, this thesis concludes that self-interested motives dominate over the altruistic ones. This practice may be explained by the realist theory of international relations. The results put the rhetoric of the German policymakers in question and may be an indication for German aid being inefficient when it comes to the promotion of development, good governance and the eradication of poverty in recipient countries.

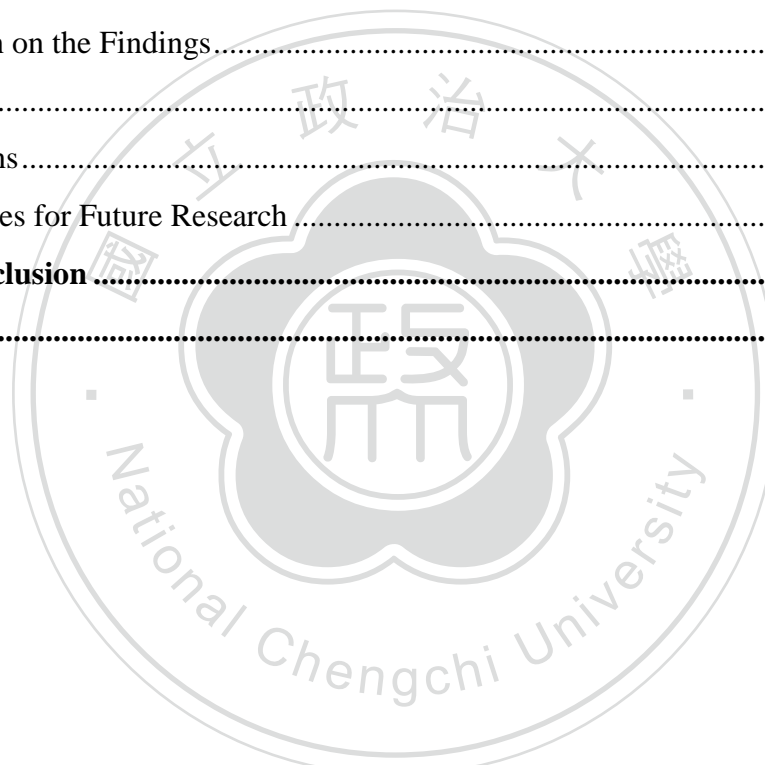
**Keywords:** Foreign Aid, Germany, Migration, Trade, Good Governance

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## List of Acronyms

<b>AfD</b>	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
<b>AwZ</b>	Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development)
<b>BMVg</b>	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (Federal Ministry of Defense)
<b>BMZ</b>	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
<b>CDU</b>	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
<b>CPI</b>	Corruption Perceptions Index
<b>CPIA</b>	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CSU</b>	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Social Union in Bavaria)
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DM</b>	Deutsche Mark (German Mark)
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FDP</b>	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
<b>FRG</b>	Federal Republic of Germany
<b>G20</b>	Group of Twenty
<b>G7</b>	Group of Seven
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GDR</b>	German Democratic Republic
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
<b>GNI</b>	Gross National Income
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>HIPCs</b>	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization

<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>KfW</b>	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Credit Institute for Reconstruction)
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MPI</b>	Migration Policy Institute
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NICs</b>	Newly Industrialized Countries
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OLS</b>	Ordinary Least Squares
<b>PTS</b>	Political Terror Scale
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SPD</b>	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VENRO</b>	Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen (Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs)
<b>WGI</b>	World Governance Indicators
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter sets off this thesis by linking foreign aid to poverty on the global level and by introducing Germany in its role as a donor, as well as Africa as an important recipient continent. The research objective is discussed next, followed by an explanation of the theoretical background and methodology. The last section presents the research outline.

## I) Background

### *Global Poverty and Foreign Aid*

Despite the success in decreasing global infant mortality (World Bank, 2021c) and increasing the numbers of children with access to primary schools (World Bank, 2021d), it is incontestable that poverty still remains a severe issue of our time. As of 2019, 1.3 billion people from over 100 countries were multidimensionally poor (UNDP, 2019b). According to the UNDP's Poverty Index, half of those individuals were under the age of 18, a third of them younger than 10. In 2018, the number of people suffering from hunger was still on the rise, counting about 820 million individuals (WHO, 2019). Unsurprisingly, poverty is also associated with poor health conditions (World Bank, 2014). Poverty and its adverse effects are not spread throughout the globe equally. Our time is marked by inequality, both on the international level and within countries (Jolly, 2007).

Foreign aid is given to fight global poverty and to contribute to economic growth and development in the recipient countries – at least this is what policymakers in the donor countries usually claim (Riddell, 2007). However, the effectiveness of such efforts has been a concern from their very beginning (Glennie & Sumner, 2016). A plethora of academic work has been dedicated to the issue. Neoliberal authors believe that aid is incapable of achieving developmental goals, that it creates dependencies and that it actually exacerbates poverty (Gulrajani, 2011). Liberal thinkers on the other hand reject their proposed market solutions, because they believe that they are a cause of inequality and thus put more trust in governance (Klees, 2010). Scholars are not the only ones concerned with aid effectiveness. In 2005, representatives of almost 100 countries came together and passed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which contains a number of principles designed to improve the efficacy of the efforts (OECD, 2005).

## *Germany - From Recipient to Major Donor*

After once reaping large benefits from foreign aid in form of the Marshall Plan after World War II (Berger & Ritschl, 1995), Germany has graduated to being a major player in the global aid regime. It is now the second-largest provider of ODA (Official Development Assistance) among the 30 countries that form the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (OECD, 2021b). In 2019, Germany's disbursements of USD 23.8 billion were only exceeded by the USD 34.6 billion spent by the United States (OECD, 2020).

The large amount of aid and its important political role within Europe are not the only factors that make Germany a compelling case to study. Regarding some other donors, especially France and the UK, it is argued that their aid allocation is strongly influenced by their history as colonizers (Riddell, 2007). Germany too held colonies, mostly in Africa, but the duration of its colonial rule was shorter and arguably had less impact on the colonized territories (Conrad, 2012). Insofar, one might assume that Germany operates under different conditions than other European donors. This aspect seems particularly relevant in the African context.

Another interesting factor of the German aid regime is its complex and at times peculiar makeup of institutions and policy documents. Surprisingly, Germany has never passed any federal law regarding the administration of aid. Instead, there are a number of guidelines and multiple international agreements that the state ostensibly adheres to. The most recent policy update came in June 2020, marking the first major makeover in 12 years (BMZ, 2020b), in an attempt to make development policy more strategic, effective and efficient (BMZ, 2020c). However, this concept has been harshly criticized by different commentators. For instance, the German Green Party laments a lack of focus on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and accuses the authorities of pursuing geopolitical interests (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2020). All in all, Germany's role in the global aid structure, combined with the recent policy developments, call for an analysis of the regime and its outcomes.

## *Africa as a Recipient Continent*

There are several reasons why Africa is a compelling object for studies of foreign aid. First, the continent is the stated focus of the German efforts. A glimpse at the recently modified list of aid partners reveals this emphasis, as more than half of them are located on the African continent (BMZ, 2020c). Also, the new concept stipulates the deepening of the cooperation with certain

countries, which entails additional financial support. Notably, all six of the so-called reform partners are located in Africa.

The continent is also worthwhile studying due to its high relevance for global poverty. 33 out of the currently 47 LDCs are located in Africa (United Nations, 2021). A look at the Human Development Index (HDI) further manifests the grim picture of the continent's developmental status. The group of states with "Low Human Development" consists almost entirely of African states (UNDP, 2019a). Even though the share of Africans living in poverty has decreased in the last three decades, the absolute number of poor people has actually increased, due to the drastic population growth on the continent (World Bank, 2019).

Another important aspect is the regional proximity with Europe. Africa is viewed as a source of mass migration to Europe, caused by poverty, violent conflicts and environmental issues (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). Even though Africans are making up a relatively small share of Europe's immigrant population, the issue has been a serious concern for European policymakers (Kassar & Dourgnon, 2014).

Lastly, the DAC aid regime is coming under pressure by the activities of the so-called emerging donors, such as China, India and the UAE, which are challenging the traditional donors by providing funds on their own terms (Woods, 2008). Especially China has been highly active on the continent in the recent years, as it is providing aid to almost 50 African countries (Mlambo et al., 2016).

## **II) Research Objective**

The general objective of this thesis is to test development policy outcomes against the intentions and priorities that are stated in several policy documents. Insofar, this thesis can be considered a test of how much the German aid regime adheres to its (partially self-imposed) rules. This section points out possible mismatches between stated elements of policy and respective outcomes. It concludes with the research question that this thesis is attempting to answer.

### **1) Formal Development Policy**

The "Charter for the Future", issued by the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), is one of the documents serving as a guideline for German development policy (Bohnet, 2017). The foreword of the charter promises a fairly altruistic approach:

*“Its principal concerns are food security and health; peace and freedom to make choices; the preservation of our environment and climate action; human rights and human dignity.”* (BMZ, 2015, p. 3)

A glimpse at the document’s table of contents allows for a rough assessment of the ostensible priorities of the BMZ. It claims to be aiming to protect natural resources, foster sustainable economic growth, to promote human rights and good governance, to build peace and strengthen human security, and more. The current coalition agreement, also a key document for development policy (Bohnet, 2017), paints a similar picture. It emphasizes gender equality, social security, the fight against poverty and hunger and other motives that appear rather selfless (CDU, CSU, SPD, 2018).

## **2) Possible Mismatches with Quantitative Data**

A preliminary examination of quantitative data however suggested that German aid might not be allocated on the grounds of such altruistic motives. For instance, Egypt, Nigeria and Tunisia were the three largest African aid recipients in 2018 (BMZ, 2020a). All three countries were in the top 6 of Germany’s trading partners on the continent (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020). Given that at least Egypt and Tunisia are also among the ten highest developed states in Africa (UNDP, 2020a), one might suspect that trade influences aid allocation.

Another interesting aspect to consider is migration. North Africa is considered a transit region for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006). Tunisia was the third-largest African recipient in 2018 (BMZ, 2020a), while the majority of the other recipients located at the Mediterranean Sea are in the top 20. Furthermore, Nigeria is the second-largest aid recipient and also the country with the second-most African immigrants in Germany (MPI, 2019a). This raises the question of whether Germany is trying to curb migration through aid.

A third factor to examine is the development orientation of German aid. Out of the 33 LDCs in Africa, Germany will have aid relationships with 21 states in the future, according to the recent policy update (BMZ, 2020c). Furthermore, Germany gives large amounts of aid to states that are well-developed in the African context, such as Algeria, Libya and Morocco (UNDP, 2020a).

A last feature is the relationship between aid and good governance in recipient states. In terms of the CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index), Ethiopia and Egypt were not even in the top 20 in 2018 (Transparency International, 2021), but were both among the largest 5 recipients. Nigeria

ranked second in aid, but only 36th in corruption. These findings suggest that German aid is not allocated in strict adherence to the principles purported in the policy documents.

### **3) Contribution and Research Question**

As noted above, aid and its effectiveness have already been extensively discussed in the academic literature. However, the majority of such work is either entirely quantitative or entirely qualitative. This thesis adds to the existing literature in three ways. First, it bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative research. Second, it offers a presentation of the German aid regime, which is hard to come by in the English literature. Third, it reflects on the most recent policy document, which has not been assessed in the academic literature so far.

While it would be too hasty to assume that German aid disbursements are not following the stated policy principles at all, there is enough evidence present to ask whether the ostensible priorities are, at least in some cases, subsidiary to self-interested motives, such as economic benefits and the prevention of migration. Insofar, this thesis is dedicated to answering the following question: To what extent do interests regarding trade and migration dominate considerations of poverty, development and good governance in German bilateral aid to Africa?

### **III) Theoretical Background and Methodology**

The purpose of this section is to provide the theoretical background for this thesis and to introduce its general methodology. It first introduces the viewpoint taken in terms of theories of international relations, before shifting the attention to the framework applied and the time period considered.

#### **1) The Realist Prediction**

This study will be conducted using a realist perspective. Despite the considerable variations between definitions, realists agree on four basic propositions (Wohlforth, 2008). First, they assume that international politics are shaped by the anarchical structure of the global landscape. Second, realists see nation states as the most important actors on the international level. Third, they argue that when states are acting politically, they are driven by narrow self-interest. Fourth, realists claim that the combination of anarchy in the international system and the pursuit of self-interest by states entails that international relations are characterized by politics of power and security.



While some realist theories focus entirely on either internal factors of states or on the attributes of the international system to explain foreign policy choices, the neoclassical variant considers both (Rose, 1998). It is argued that foreign policy is primarily influenced by the state's position in the international system. Yet, choices regarding foreign policy are made by political leaders, so their perception of the state's power is relevant for the decision-making process. Also, policymakers are not entirely free in their decisions, which requires internal state structures to be included in respective analyses.

Gilpin (1987) argues that humanitarian and developmental concerns to play an important role for bilateral aid, but also states that those considerations are secondary to political, military and commercial interests of the donor. This hierarchy of donor interests provides the theoretical background for this thesis. However, since Germany is not involved in any unilateral military activity in Africa (BMVg, 2020), this aspect will be excluded. In summary, the theory then predicts that political and commercial interests are dominant over humanitarian and developmental concerns. In that sense, this study tests the realist hypothesis for the case of Germany.

## **2) Methodological Framework and Time Frame**

The assessment of the hierarchy of interests will be loosely based on the framework by Maurits van der Veen (2011). It proposes that considerations of aid policy can be divided into seven broad categories, termed “frames”, which are “general ways of thinking about a particular policy” (2011, p. 15) and specify the relevant goals. The seven frames are security, power and influence, wealth and commercial interests, indirect or enlightened self-interest, self-affirmation and prestige, obligation and duty, and humanitarianism.

Maurits van der Veen argues that frames are mental constructs and that their relative strength is therefore not directly measurable. The author first suggests to analyze the legislative debate on policy to measure their relative salience. However, frames also suggest specific choices of policy. That is, the policy goals are reflected by their outcomes. Therefore, the author associates one or more variables with each frame. For instance, a policy dominated by the wealth frame would tend to channel aid towards recipients that are important in commercial terms. In other words, the framework proposes to assess a donor's foreign aid policy through a combination of a qualitative analysis of policy documents and a quantitative analysis of policy outcomes.



Since the original framework by Maurits van der Veen goes beyond the scope of this thesis, it has to be adjusted in multiple ways. First, only three of the frames are relevant here. Those are wealth, enlightened self-interest and humanitarianism. The independent variables chosen to represent them will be discussed in chapter 5. Second, the qualitative element of the framework will be reduced to analyzing the key policy documents from the recent years. Third, this study will only use one dependent variable, which is the amount of aid disbursed towards the recipient countries.

This study will include data from 2013 onwards. This allows us to draw on the coalition agreements from two legislative periods, which allows for a more thorough analysis than just focusing on the currently valid document. Furthermore, we will be able to identify possible changes.

In short, this thesis will examine key policy documents in a qualitative fashion and various quantitative indicators from three different categories to allow for an assessment of the goals that Germany is pursuing with its aid strategy in Africa. This mixed method approach also allows us to draw conclusions regarding the credibility of stated aid policy. From a theoretical standpoint, we will be able to test whether the realist prediction lines up with both the stated policy and the actual outcomes.

#### **IV) Research Outline**

Chapter 2 is dedicated to reviewing the relevant literature. Three different topics are considered here. The first section examines the views of realist theorists on foreign aid. The second one offers an account of the general aid allocation literature. The third section is dedicated to trends in German aid allocation. The findings are then reflected upon in the last section.

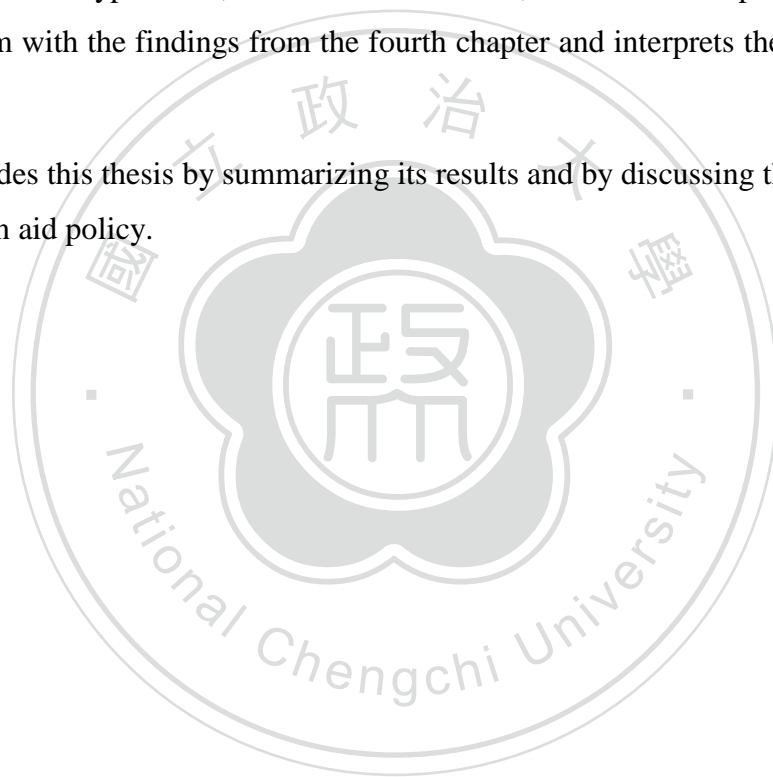
Chapter 3 introduces the German aid regime by offering a brief historical overview, by discussing the structure of the current regime and by offering figures which illustrate the policy outcomes.

Chapter 4 contains the qualitative analysis of the study. It is divided by time periods. The first section will examine the key documents from the 18th legislative period (2013-2018). Those documents are the coalition agreement from that time and the so-called Charter for the Future. The second section then sheds light on the most important documents from the 19th legislative period (2018-2021). Again, this includes the coalition agreement and another policy document, called “Development Policy 2030”. The analyses offer background information, an assessment

of general statements on aid policy and the role of the African continent, before the attention then shifts to the aspects of interest for this study, namely poverty, development, good governance, trade and migration.

Chapter 5 constitutes the quantitative element of this thesis. Using regression analyses, it includes three models which test German aid allocation against several hypotheses based on the realist view on aid and the findings form the fourth chapter. The key explanatory variables are migration, trade, development and good governance. Besides those, the analysis includes further control variables. The first model covers the entire time period of this study, while the other two only cover the 18th and the first half of the 19th legislation period, respectively. After an introduction of the hypotheses, models and variables, the results are presented. The last section links them with the findings from the fourth chapter and interprets them in the greater context.

Chapter 6 concludes this thesis by summarizing its results and by discussing their implications for future German aid policy.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter places this thesis in the literature by reviewing the existing works on three different topics. The first section presents realist views on the issue of foreign aid. The second section reviews the general aid allocation literature, while the third is dedicated to the subset that is concerned particularly with German aid. The last section discusses the findings.

### I) The Realist View on Foreign Aid

In terms of international relations theories, the debate on foreign aid is mainly informed by three different viewpoints: realism, liberalism and neo-Marxism (Noel & Therien, 1995).<sup>1</sup> Since this study may, from a theoretical standpoint, be seen as the test of the realist hypothesis regarding foreign aid, this section includes a brief overview of some arguments made by proponents of this school. Realists generally view aid as a foreign policy tool, created during the Cold War to politically influence recipient countries (Hattori, 2001). The first section presents views on the national interests that are allegedly pursued with aid, while the second one sheds some light on the role of humanitarian and developmental aspects.

#### 1) Aid in the National Interest

Liska (1960) refers to foreign aid an economic instrument of political power and argues that it is treated as such not only by donors, but also by recipients. The author argues that the goal of aid is to bolster the national security of the donor and to secure its survival by influencing the political behavior of the recipients accordingly. Similarly, Morgenthau (1962) believes that aid is always motivated by self-interest and that is a tool which can achieve goals that other foreign policy measures cannot. Differing between six different types of aid, Morgenthau conceptualizes the self-interest largely in political or security-related terms, such as maintaining a certain political status quo in a recipient country or using aid to establish or uphold alliances. Black (1968) views aid in political and security terms as well, as he states that aid can be used to bolster defense alliances or to obtain favorable votes from other states in the United Nations. The author also views it in ideological terms, arguing that aid may be used to curb the spread of communism throughout the world. Of course, this argument refers to the period of the Cold

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<sup>1</sup> Other typologies exist. Hook (1995) for example differs between realist, idealist and structuralist perspectives. See e.g. Pankaj (2005) for a more nuanced classification.

War. Unlike other earlier theorists, Black mentions direct economic interests of the US, such as access to raw materials and markets in general, as well the continuation of global trade.

Authors from the following decades have generally adopted the view that aid serves purposes of national security, political considerations and economic interests of the donor. One of which is Huntington (1970), who views aid in almost strictly self-interested terms. It may, for example, be used to manipulate political situations in recipient countries in the donor's favor, to buy political support on the international level or it may benefit the donor's economy by opening up markets for trade and investment. The author further explains that the national interest varies from donor to donor, as well as over time. Knorr (1973) again mentions military alliances and the support of favorable foreign leaders, but also suggests that aid could portray the donor in a positive light on the international level. Regarding commercial interests, the author again states that the donor might want to gain access to raw materials. Gilpin (1987) too believes that political, security and commercial considerations are the decisive dimensions of foreign aid. The work of Eberstadt (1988) is also inspired by the notion that aid ought to strengthen the United States' "political, economic and moral objectives throughout the world" (p. 156), as well as the liberal economic order. Just like the previously mentioned authors, Hook (1995) believes that decisions regarding aid are made under the assumption that fostering the national interests of the donor is the most important goal, if not the only one. Similar to Huntington, Hook states that the exact definition of national interests depends on the donor.

## **2) Developmental and Humanitarian Aspects**

In line with the self-interested realist doctrine, Liska (1960) believes that aid should strengthen the recipient states' economies to improve the donor's national security, which implies that the author believes that states with stronger economies will be less likely to pose a security risk. The argument made by Huntington (1970) clashes with that opinion. The author explains that less developed states will have lower capabilities in security terms and that higher development might not be in the interest of the donors, as it could strengthen possible aggressors. He also sees stronger economies as potential competitors in trade. However, Huntington believes that there is a moral obligation to provide "minimum economic well-being of individuals" (p. 175). Generally quite critical of the effectiveness of aid for economic development, Morgenthau (1962) also warns that such efforts could easily entail consequences that are politically undesirable for the donor. Black (1968) views developmental efforts as subsidiary to long-term

political goals. Similarly, Hook (1995) describes the relationship of aid and recipients' development as minimal, arguing it only plays a role if it is in the interest of the donor.

Liska (1960) argues that emergency aid is given under political considerations. Similarly, following his classification of different types of aid, Morgenthau (1962) claims that the only one that is in itself non-political is humanitarian aid, such as after natural disasters. However, the author also concedes that it may have a political function if given in a certain context. Regarding humanitarian aid, Black (1968) sees a humanitarian basis, but ultimately argues that it is disbursed on grounds of self-interest. Huntington (1970) does believe that wealthier states have an obligation to alleviate suffering in other countries, but also does not separate the argument from political considerations. Making a rare argument within the realist school, Eberstadt (1988) argues that humanitarian aid should be provided free from political or ideological interests.

## **II) General Patterns of Aid Allocation**

Over the last half-century, an abundance of literature has been produced with the purpose of investigating the allocation of foreign aid.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of the literature consists of quantitative studies performing regression analyses, in which aid flows or aid commitments constitute the dependent variable.<sup>3</sup> For the most part, those studies are positivistic ones, that is, they merely attempt to describe allocation patterns. However, a few works also consider aid allocation in a normative fashion (e.g. Alesina & Dollar, 2000).

The independent variables can, for the most part, be divided into five broad categories. First, researchers have examined aid in relation to recipient need, which is usually conceptualized through their GDP per capita (e.g. McGillivray, 1989; Berthélemy & Tichit, 2004; Dollar & Levin, 2006), but also through other measures, such as the amount of aid a given recipient receives from other donors (e.g. Berthélemy, 2006). The second group considers the domestic policies of the recipient countries, particularly aspects of good governance. Measures are for example the Freedom House Index (Alesina & Dollar, 2000) or the Political Terror Scale (PTS) (Carey, 2007). Third, several authors consider aid in correlation with commercial interests of the donors, which may for example be measured through trade figures with the respective

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<sup>2</sup> The following review only considers works which examined bilateral aid.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Maizels & Nissanke (1984); Alesina & Dollar (2000); Hoeffler & Outram (2011); Martínez-Zarzoso et al. (2016).

recipients (e.g. Schraeder et al., 1998; Younas, 2008). The fourth group is concerned with aspects of the donor's foreign policy, such as the interplay between aid and votes in the UN general assembly (Alesina & Dollar, 2000) or arms trade (Maizels & Nissanke, 1984). The fifth topic is the correlation between aid and the population of the recipient countries (e.g. Dowling & Hiemenz, 1985). Lastly, a few authors have investigated aid allocation in relation to aid effectiveness (e.g. Collier & Dollar, 2002). The findings on these aspects of aid allocation research will now be discussed in turn.

### **1) Recipient Need**

In an early study, Davenport (1970) examined aid allocation patterns from the early 1960s and came to the conclusion that GDP per capita and aid were positively correlated, that is, wealthier states received more aid. Even though African recipients were underrepresented in the study, it covered 70% of total OECD aid at that time. Maizels and Nissanke (1984) used data on a larger group of recipients from the late 1960s and 1970s to test it against their recipient need model, which included monetary as well as non-monetary indicators and found that it does not explain the allocation of that time. Here too, GDP per capita was positively correlated with aid. Nonetheless, the authors argue that this may not be evidence of an anti-humanitarian bias. Dowling and Hiemenz (1985) on the hand studied a similar time period and did not find a general bias towards middle-income countries. They argue that low-income countries instead were most likely to receive aid, while conceding that extremely poor countries were rather neglected.

Multiple studies examined aid allocation throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) found that higher GDP per capita is usually associated with less aid. However, the effect was inverted for a few donors, suggesting that low income does not play a role for their respective allocation and that they might focus on other aspects of poverty. The authors also found that donors generally seemed to care less about recipient need since the end of the Cold War. However, the result was not statistically significant. A following study refuted the Cold War-argument (Berthélemy, 2006), but nonetheless came to the conclusion that donors were, on average, quite self-interested, even though they were not entirely ignorant of recipient need. The author also found that Nordic donors tended to be more altruistic than others. Furthermore, he found that aid from other donors attracts more aid. We may interpret this finding in the way that aid tends to concentrate and that states that could use more support are potentially deprived of aid. Gates and Hoeffler (2004) focused on differences between donor



states and confirmed that Nordic donors were more poverty-oriented than others in that time period. The work by McGillivray (1989) extends this argument, as he states that Finland, Denmark, Norway and Belgium responded best to recipient need between the late 1960s and the mid-80s, while the Sweden and the Netherlands also ranked high in this regard. The US were identified as the worst performer.

Two pairs of authors investigated the topic based on data from the 1980s throughout the early 2000s. Dollar and Levin (2006) state that donors have generally become more selective in their aid allocation. GDP per capita was generally negatively correlated with aid in the entire period. However, the discrimination of wealthier states declined from 1984 to 1999. In the period from 2000 to 2003 it increased again, but did not reach the level of the early 1980s. Based on data on a small number of large donors, Hoeffler and Outram (2011) showed that these states did take recipient need into account. However, they also found that aid from these donors tended to go to recipients that are already receiving larger amounts of aid, leading to more concentrated allocation.

As a result of their extensive long-term study, Claessens et al. (2009) state that donors have generally become more poverty-oriented between 1970 and 2004. The effects varied from donor to donor. Following a similar analysis, Bermeo (2017) came to a different result and claims that donors have become less poverty-oriented after the end of the Cold War. On a conceptual level, the author rejects the classic model pitching recipient need against donor interest and introduces the concept of “Targeted Development” (p. 8).<sup>4</sup> Only investigating the post-Cold War period, Younas (2008) argues that non-monetary aspects of poverty attract more aid than a low GDP per capita. Regarding the period around the Millennium, Canavire-Bacarreza et al. (2006) found that most donors favor income-poor recipients, while France and Japan were exceptions.

Faust (2011) took a different approach to the topic and investigated the role of donor institutions. The author argues that donors with a higher degree of political transparency tend to be more focused on recipient need. Finally, some of the research has compared the poverty-orientation of bilateral aid with the efforts of multilateral actors. While some authors claim that

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<sup>4</sup> The core argument of the “Targeted Development” concept is that aid is used to promote development in states where spillovers to the donor can potentially have a high impact. For the classic recipient need vs. donor interest model see for example McKinlay (1978) and Maizels & Nissanke (1984).

the multilateral variant is more focused on poverty (e.g. McGillivray, 1989; Dollar & Levin, 2006), others claim that this is not the case (e.g. Davenport, 1970; Canavire-Bacarreza et al., 2006).

## **2) Good Governance**

Several studies were conducted using long time periods, beginning as early as 1970 and reaching into the 1990s or mid-2000s. Alesina and Dollar (2000) found substantial differences between donors when it came to the factor of democracy in recipient countries. For example, the Nordic donors and the US favored democratic states, while France did not consider this aspect in its allocation. The authors also found that in general, states in transition towards democracy received more aid, while those who implemented more liberal economic policies did not. Corruption in recipient countries did generally not deter aid in that period, whereas there were differences among donors again (Alesina & Weder, 2002). For instance, the Nordic donors gave less aid to states with higher corruption, while the relationship was inverted for the US. The authors do not report any change in this behavior since the end of the Cold War. Chauvet (2002) explored the impact of socio-political instability in recipient countries. The author found that violence and social instability generally deterred aid, while elite instability attracted aid. However, the results are rather complex and nuanced if we consider additional factors.

A second series of studies was performed covering shorter time periods, mostly covering the 1980s and 1990s. Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) state that donors are generally very sensitive to political governance. Improved economic policies were rewarded by donors after the end of the Cold War, while the role of civil liberties and political freedom in recipient countries decreased. Berthélemy (2006) found that internal conflicts deterred aid in that time period. Dollar and Levin (2006) confirm that less democratic states received less aid during that time, while the effect was weaker after the Cold War and increased again towards the end of the decade. The rule of law in recipient states did not play any significant role, except in the later 1980s, where states with poorer economic governance actually received more aid. Bermeo (2017) also confirms the finding that less democratic states received less aid, both before and after the Cold War, and that the effect decreased in the latter period. The Nordic donors were again found to disburse more aid to democracies with good human rights records (Gates & Hoeffler, 2004). Reportedly, poor trade policies did not deter aid. Hoeffler and Outram (2011) only studied a small number of large donors, but found insignificant correlations between aid



disbursements and both democracy and human rights. The authors argue that very few donors actually cared about democracy in recipient countries.

A few examinations offer results that refer only to period after the Cold War. Younas (2008) states that recipients with good human rights records received more aid per capita between 1991 and 2003. Using data on ten much-studied donors from the first half of the 1990s, Svensson (1999) found that aid was generally not channeled towards more democratic states. However, there were exceptions, particularly among the Nordic donors. Studying disbursements from seven large donors between 1992 and 2006, Clist (2009) reports that all of them were more likely to select aid recipients that had better scores in the Freedom House Index (covering political freedom and civil liberties), while better ratings on the Political Terror Scale (PTS) decreased the chances. When it comes to the allocation of aid, only Sweden and the UK rewarded better Freedom House Index scores. PTS ratings did not show any significant correlation for any of the donors. Claessens et al. (2009), found that between 1999 and 2004, more aid went to countries with better policies, conceptualized through the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). Canavire-Bacarreza et al. (2006) came to the same result, but warn that quality governance becomes insignificant if it is measured through the Kaufman Index.

According to Bermeo (2017), donors did generally not respond much to recipient governance post-2001. However, they did increase aid for poorly governed states in their proximity. The author argues that this is done to prevent spillovers from such countries and that donors tend to employ non-governmental channels in these cases. Dietrich (2013) delivers a similar argument. The author concluded that donors are aware of government quality in recipient countries and tend to bypass low-quality governments by disbursing aid through private channels, thus avoiding such governments. Similarly to the factor of recipient need, Faust (2011) states that more politically transparent donors tend to give more aid to states with better institutions.

### **3) Commercial Interests**

In his relatively early study, McKinlay (1979) examined aid allocation by the US, UK, France and Germany throughout the 1960s and considered trade with their recipients regarding its gross size and their respective trade shares of recipient countries. The author found that these aspects were correlated with aid flows, particularly in the second half of the decade, while there were qualitative differences between the donors. McKinlay also points out that trade might not only

be relevant in its economic aspects, but also regarding political influence in certain states or regions. Maizels and Nissanke (1984) also assert that at the end of the 1960s, aid allocation was heavily influenced by different donor interests, trade and investment being two of them. They claim that recipient need became relatively more important throughout the 1970s, particularly in South East Asia and Africa, but that this trend had been reversed already by the end of the decade.

Schraeder et al. (1998) examined aid from a small number of donors to Africa. They argue that trade with recipients, measured by donor exports, emerged as an important factor for the allocation of aid in the 1980s. Interestingly, this was also the case for Sweden. Lloyd et al. (2000) covered a longer time period but also focused on aid to the African continent. They too found links between aid and trade, but warn that the causality between them can go both ways. Trade might attract aid, but also aid might cause trade. The authors only examined four donors and 26 recipients, but half their country dyads showed causal relationships with varying characteristics.

The research largely covering the 1980s and 1990s turned an eye to the commercial aspects of aid as well. The large-scale study by Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) indicates that the end of the Cold War brought a shift of aid towards the donors' trading partners, while their trade variables included both imports and exports. Especially smaller donors, who have fewer recipients, were found to adhere to this practice. Berthélemy (2006) confirms the correlation between aid and trade for the entire period, while the effect was least pronounced for Norway and most noticeable for France, Italy and Australia. Neumayer (2003) came to the same results regarding these four countries, but does not support the argument that especially small donors target their trading partners. According to his work, only very few small donors gave more aid to their trading partners, while others even disbursed less aid to them. All the large donors were found supporting their export destinations. Extending the argument into the early 2000s, Hoeffler and Outram (2011) considered trade in both directions and state that all donors favored their trading partners.

Alesina and Dollar (2000) found no correlation between aid and flows of private investments in recipient countries between 1990 and 1994. Canavire-Becarreza et al. (2006) assert that around the millennium, donor exports were a highly important factor for the allocation of aid. Younas (2008) supports and specifies this argument, stating that OECD countries are targeting states that import goods in which the donors have a comparative advantage in production. The

author argues that such self-interested motives are clearly dominant over interests in development and poverty reduction.

The long-term study performed by Clist (2009) found that among several well-studied donors, only Japan tends to choose major importers of its goods as recipients. However, besides Japan, Germany and France also allocate more funds to bigger importers. The US did not seem to have any trade-related interests in their allocation. Covering an even longer time period, Bermeo (2017) found that donor imports and exports were both positively and equally much correlated with aid before the end of the Cold War. Afterwards, the importance of donor imports hardly changed, while exports reportedly gained great importance for the allocation of aid.

#### **4) Foreign Policy Interests**

Maizels and Nissanke (1984) measured political and security interests through arms transfers and also turned an eye to the allocation to specific regions, such as former colonies of the donors. They found that during the late 1960s and late 1970s, aid was mostly, if not entirely, allocated according to donor interests, which include political and security considerations. For example, US aid was strongly correlated with arms transfers, while France channeled aid towards its former colonies. McGillivray (1989) examined the 1970s and early 1980s and confirms the finding that political and strategic criteria were dominant aspects in aid allocation. Examining aid to Africa in the 1980s, Schraeder et al. (1998) measured strategic importance of recipients through their military spending, the share of their population in the military and through security alliances. They also considered the ideological stance of the recipients. They found that strategic importance played no role for Sweden and Japan, but did in the cases of the US and France. Ideology was found an important factor for all four donors. France preferred allocating aid to francophone states, while the other donors tended to support capitalist regimes.

A number of studies drew upon data from the 1970s until the mid-1990s. Several donors were found to allocate more aid to their former colonies (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). It is also reported that donors tend to favor states that support them in UN votings, which is seen as evidence of political ties or as the purchase of political support through aid. Hoeffler and Outram (2011) extend the argument regarding the role of UN votings into the early 2000s, confirming positive correlations for the US, the UK, Japan and France. Collier and Dollar (2002) state that during the entire time period, aid was partly allocated according to strategic and historical

considerations. Alesina and Weder (2002) suggest that political interests became less important throughout the 1990s, reporting that the colonial variable lost significance in that time period.

Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) support the latter argument, noting that donor self-interest in the 1980s was more about politics and history than in the 1990s. In the latter decade, they state, the bias towards former colonies had gotten smaller. Berthélemy (2006) did not disaggregate his results to allow for a comparison between the decades, but found positive correlations between aid and former colonies, as well as evidence for political ties playing a role. Zanger (2000) found that both France and the UK gave more aid to former colonies, while this was not the case for Germany. However, Germany, along with the UK, gave more aid to importers of their weapons. The author argues that the delivery of arms is an indicator for political friendship and strategic importance. Neumayer (2003) too confirms that several donors channeled more aid to former colonies and also found that recipients who receive military aid from the US were allocated more aid. The Nordic donors were not found to distribute more aid to their political allies throughout the 1980s and 1990, while all other DAC donors did (Gates & Hoeffler, 2004).

Younas' (2008) came to the conclusion that throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, political self-interest, along with commercial considerations, was more important to donors than the promotion of economic growth and the eradication of poverty. Canavire-Bacarreza et al. (2006) found colonial ties still being a significant factor for the aid allocation of France, the Netherlands and the UK around the year 2000. As a result of their long-term study, Bermeo and Leblang (2015) argue that donors target recipient countries to curb immigration.

## **5) Recipient Population**

Several of the presented works have also paid attention to the role of the recipients' population size. McKinlay (1979) found that throughout the 1960s, Germany, the US and the UK tended to give more aid to states with higher population, while it was the opposite for France. During the 1970s, donors seemed to be generally biased against highly populated recipients (Dowling & Hiemenz, 1985). The analysis by Neumayer (2003), spanning from 1985 to 1997, led to mixed results. During the recipient selection stage, no clear pattern became visible. In the allocation stage however, several donors gave more aid to recipients with higher populations. This is contrasting with the findings of Berthélemy (2006) who reports a strong negative correlation between population and aid. Claessens et al. (2009) confirm the negative correlation for the period from 1970 to 2004, but state that it decreased over time. Bermeo (2017) argues

that during the Cold War, aid tended to flow towards countries with smaller populations. After 2001 however, donors targeted highly populated states.

## **6) Aid Effectiveness**

As previously mentioned, the majority of the research on aid allocation presents itself as rather descriptive. Nonetheless, the notion resonates that aid allocated more according to recipient need would be more effective for the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of development. Since a whole different strand of literature is dealing with aid effectiveness, it cannot be reviewed thoroughly at this point. However, this subsection offers an exemplary presentation of some of the arguments made on aid allocation and effectiveness.

Alesina and Dollar (2000) state that the existing allocation patterns are a reason for the limited effectiveness of aid on poverty reduction and the promotion of economic growth. It has been argued that a more poverty-efficient allocation could almost double the effects of aid (Collier & Dollar, 2002). Boone (1996) claims that aid would be most effective for poverty reduction if it was channeled to liberal regimes. Arguing that economic growth would be the best remedy against poverty, Collier and Dollar (2002) propose that aid should be disbursed to states with large populations and good policies.

However, Collier (2007) identifies a dilemma regarding improved aid allocation. If donors only focused on recipient need, the funds would often end up with governments that potentially do not spend them effectively. If, however, donors emphasize government quality, then the resources end up in states where the population is not as much in need. The author concludes that aid should be disbursed in a way that as many poor people as possible can benefit. Similarly, Younas (2008) argues that citizens living under poor human rights conditions and in difficult economic situations may be punished twice by the existing donor practices. For once, they're suffering from the deficient situation and second, they're deprived of aid by donors who focus on good governance and prefer to give aid to their trading partners, which are usually economically stronger states.

Lensink and White (2000) are opposed to the idea proposed by Collier and Dollar and are questioning the link between growth and poverty reduction in a good policy environment. They argue that growth is not the only way to combat poverty and that under such governance-focused practice, citizens in poorly governed states would be deprived of aid. As a remedy for this dilemma, Dietrich (2013) suggests that in poorly governed recipient states, donors should

bypass the governments by channeling aid through NGOs. Bigsten and Tengstam (2015) argue that a more needs-oriented allocation could greatly reduce poverty, but ultimately see political constraints on the donor side for such improvements to be realistic.

### **III) Trends in German Aid Allocation**

Given the large role that Germany is playing in the realm of foreign aid, it is not surprising that several studies of the aid allocation literature have investigated the practices of the country as well. While Germany was part of a number of multi-country studies (e.g. McKinlay, 1979), some publications are specifically concerned with German aid (e.g. Martínez-Zarzoso et al., 2016). A few authors use a two-stage approach, distinguishing between the selection of aid recipients and their respective allocation of aid (e.g. Neumayer, 2003; Clist, 2009).

Since the corresponding literature is a sub-set of the general aid allocation literature, we may categorize the most commonly used variables the same way we did in the previous section. However, there is no literature available on the effectiveness of German aid allocation, which is why this category will not be discussed in the following. The findings on the other five aspects of German aid will now be discussed in turn.

#### **1) Recipient Need**

McKinlay (1978) drew on data from 1961 to 1970 and found that criteria such as welfare and humanitarian need were not the most important factors for the allocation of German aid. The author argues that “moral obligation” (p. 250) could not have been the primary motivation for the German efforts. However, McKinlay asserts that aid was not explicitly opposed to humanitarian aspects and speaks of a “quasi-humanitarian component” (p. 250). In a following study (McKinlay, 1979), the author fortifies this argument, stating that German aid was biased towards more developed states in terms of higher per capita GDP. Using data from 1969 to 1984, McGillivray (1989) examined the aid allocation of the 17 DAC donors to 85 recipients and found that Germany ranked 14th when it came to disbursing aid according to recipient need, measuring the latter through income-weighted GDP per capita. The author argues that German aid cannot have been based on developmental criteria only. However, he concedes that Germany considerably improved in this regard. Considering several donors and a large number of recipients over a 20-year period starting in 1980, Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) found that Germany was one of the few donors where the impact of GDP per capita is positive, meaning that Germany gives less importance to the income poverty of recipients. The authors also



reported that Germany tends to provide funding to states that already receive substantial amounts of aid from other donors, hence contributing to aid concentration. However, they also found that aid tended to be channeled to states with higher numbers of infant mortality and lower numbers in primary enrolment of children, suggesting that Germany might consider poverty in its non-monetary aspects. Hoeffler and Outram (2011) compared the disbursements of Germany, the US, the UK and France over a 25-year period beginning in 1980 and came to the conclusion that among these donors, Germany gave the least amount of aid to countries with a low GDP per capita. They also report that Germany gave more aid to states which already received substantial funding from other beneficiaries, suggesting that German aid is guided more by the behavior of other donors than by recipient need.

Using data from 1982 to 2006, Clist (2009) examined aid from seven different donors, while differing between two different stages of aid-giving. In the first stage, donors decide which countries generally receive aid, while the respective amount is decided upon in the second stage. The author states that Germany was moderately sensitive to poverty in both stages and that its poverty sensitivity improved over time in the second stage. Nunnenkamp and Öhler (2011) analyzed data from 2005 to 2007 and investigated the topic with respect to the different channels through which German aid is disbursed. They argue that the poverty orientation is the strongest for aid disbursed by the BMZ, while other ministries are lacking in this regard. They also found that BMZ aid which is channeled through private organizations has a higher focus on recipient need than aid by German NGOs. In a study of the same time period, Dreher et al. (2012) came to the conclusion that despite having the reputation of being more poverty-oriented, German NGOs tend to be less so when their share of state funding gets larger. Faust and Ziaja (2012) analyzed German aid allocation from the early 1990s to the late 2000s and report that humanitarian need played a crucial role for both recipient selection and aid allocation, but that it did not exactly determine both decisions either.

Drawing on data from 1973 to 1991, Arvin and Drewes (2001) found no evidence of German aid being biased towards middle-income countries. Dollar and Levin (2006) studied the time period between 1984 and 2003 and argue that a higher GDP per capita and aid were negatively correlated in the case of Germany, meaning that income-poor states receive more aid. They also state that this effect increased over the whole period, making Germany more poverty-focused over time. Carey (2007) used a two-stage approach just like Clist and found that needier countries have a higher chance of becoming a recipient of German aid if need is measured

through GDP per capita. The author found that poverty also impacted the amounts allocated in the second stage, arguing that more aid flew to poorer states in the time period from 1978 to 2003.

## **2) Good Governance**

In their much-cited study, Alesina and Dollar (2000) considered good governance in terms of democracy, civil liberties and rule of law in the recipient countries. They found that over the period from 1970 to 1994, Germany put only a small weight on these factors. Zanger (2000) investigated the correlation of aid and good governance in the years between 1980 and 1995, considering human rights, democratic structures and low military spending in the recipient countries. The author attests a generally bad performance for Germany. Only between 1986 and 1990 did more democratic states receive more German aid. Regarding repressive governments, Zanger claims that Germany gave more aid to countries with more violations, but that states with particularly severe repression received less aid. In the second half of the 1980s, Germany provided more aid to states with high military spending. Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) did not find any evidence for a correlation between civil liberties, political freedom and aid during the 1980s and 1990s.

McKinlay (1979) reports mixed findings in his previously mentioned study. The author claims that military regimes in the recipient countries deterred aid in the mid-1960's, while they attracted aid in the later years of the decade. The author further states that political stability in the recipient country did not influence the German decisions on allocating aid. Neumayer (2003) examined the aid disbursements from 21 donors from 1985 to 1997 and differs between civil and political rights on the one hand and personal integrity rights on the other. The author found that in the recipient-selection stage, none of the two had a significant impact on German aid. However, on the allocation stage, recipients with a good record in civil and political rights did receive relatively more aid. Carey (2007) discovered that in the recipient selection stage, Germany was more likely to decide in favor of democracies and that the same goes for states which had improved their human rights records in the time shortly before the selection was made. Countries in which repression had increased were less likely to be chosen as recipients. However, whether states were democratic or not was not considered by the German authorities in the allocation stage. While the author found that Germany paid more attention to human rights in the allocation process than France, the UK and the EC (European Community), Carey claims that recipients' improvements in this regard were not rewarded with higher amounts of



aid. Democracy and human rights were also aspects of the comparative study by Hoeffler and Outram (2011). While they found that Germany took human rights abuses into account by allocating less aid to the perpetrators, the authors did not find any significant correlation with democracy.

Dollar and Levin (2006) came to the result that in the entire period from 1984 to 2003, German aid was positively correlated with democracy in recipient states, while the effect was smaller from 1990 to 1994. Furthermore, they argue that states with good rule of law attracted more aid from the mid-1990s onwards. Clist (2009) reports positive correlation between good governance and amounts of aid in both stages as well, but they were not statistically significant. Parallel to their findings on recipient need, Faust and Ziaja (2012) argue that democracy in recipient states did play a significant role both in the selection and the allocation stage, but that it also did not exactly determine the decisions.

### **3) Commercial Interests**

The first study performed by McKinlay (1978) examined German commercial interests in the form of imports from and exports to the state's aid recipients and found that both factors did influence the allocation pattern regarding low-income countries. While both imports and exports played a role, the author argues that Germany was particularly inclined to distribute aid towards countries that it exported large amounts of goods to. This bias was found to be particularly strong in the early 1960s, while imports from recipients gained importance in the later years of the decade. The author confirms these findings in his following comparative study (McKinlay, 1979), in which he also points out that the previously mentioned bias towards more developed countries was correlated with the importance that Germany gave to its trade relationships. The results from the highly-cited work by Maizels and Nissanke (1984) are in contrast with these findings, as they only found a positive correlation between aid and the exports from recipient countries to Germany during 1960 and 1970, that is, goods being sold to Germany. The authors did not find any evidence for trade linkages in the period from 1978 to 1980 and suggest that aid decisions were motivated by different considerations at that time. Additionally, they found that German investments in newly industrialized countries (NICs) did not attract aid.

Arvin et al. (2000) examined the correlation between German aid and trade during the years from 1973 and 1995 and argue that untied aid was positively connected with exports to LDCs

and upper income countries. They consider this finding a support of their “goodwill hypothesis” (p. 318), arguing that aid positively influenced German exports. They did not find any such evidence for the subsample of countries that are part of the Lomé Convention. Regarding lower income countries, they found evidence for causality in the other direction, that is, exports from Germany having a positive influence on aid. With respect to lower middle-income states and the African subsample, the authors found evidence for causality in both directions. Zanger (2000) found that between 1980 and 1995, Germany tended to disburse more aid to states that imported its military equipment. The work by Berthélemy (2006) also found exports to the recipient to be positively correlated with aid and termed Germany a “moderately egoistic” (p. 191) donor. The research by Dreher et al. (2015) dealt with the 1973-2010 period and reveals that important trading partners, measured through exports, received relatively more aid. They add the qualification that Germany, on average, committed to less aid when its government and the BMZ, as well as the Federal Foreign Office, were under socialist leadership. Under such leadership, the commercial motives are found to be as least as strong as when decisions are made by conservative politicians. The authors point at the role of small firms and unionized workers, who may lobby in order to promote German exports through aid.

Neumayer (2003) did not find any evidence for Germany specifically selecting its trading partners as aid recipients, but came to result that countries that are large importers of German goods and services do receive more aid in the allocation stage. The two stage approach used by Clist (2009) also presents contrasting results, based on data from 1982 to 2006. Being a larger importer of German goods was negatively correlated with aid in the selection stage, meaning that those countries were less likely to become recipients. However, in the allocation stage, Germany did channel more funds to its larger export destinations.

Martínez-Zarzoso et al. (2009) conducted a study on German aid and exports, incorporating data from 1962 until 2005, and concluded that aid promoted German exports. According to their research, every dollar spent on aid increased the exports by USD 1.40 on average. The authors report that the effects varied between different groups of recipients and that it was larger for recipients that have an official aid relationship with Germany through the BMZ. They further found that German exports were in some cases displaced by aid from other European donors. The findings by Nowak-Lehmann et al. (2009) contain evidence of an increase in exports of USD 1.04 to 1.50 for every dollar spent on aid. The authors report that aid flows were not dependent on whether or not the respective recipient has promoted German exports in

the past. It is claimed that exports are promoted by aid and not the other way around. In so far, aid is reportedly not used as a reward for importing German goods. The displacement effect mentioned above is confirmed in this study as well. The topic was revisited a few years later (Martínez-Zarzoso et al., 2016), covering a slightly different time period and fewer donors. This time, the ratio between aid spent and increased exports is reported to be 1:0.83. It is stated that the size of the effect depends on the sector and that it is the largest for machinery and electrical and transport equipment – sectors in which Germany is internationally very competitive. Furthermore, the authors claim that up to 216,000 jobs in Germany are associated with the exports generated by aid.

The analysis performed by Hoeffler and Outram (2011) included trade in the form of bidirectional trade between recipients and donors as a share of the latter's GDP. In the case of Germany, they found that higher values for the trade variable is associated with higher amounts of aid.

Lloyd et al. (2000) surveyed the issue regarding the aid of four European donors towards 26 African states, using data from 1969 to 1995. The authors did not find evidence of Germany allocating aid according to trade criteria or using it as an instrument of trade policy. Nonetheless, in half the cases examined, they did find causality between German aid and exports in all possible directions. Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) also came to the result that Germany did not favor its trading partners in the 1980-1999 period, considering both imports and exports. Dollar and Levin (2006), who only considered exports, came to the same conclusion regarding the period between 2000 and 2003. Nunnenkamp and Öhler (2011) found no evidence for aid allocation being motivated by export-interests between 2005 and 2007. Faust and Ziaja (2012) confirm this finding for the entire period between the early 1990s and the late 2000s.

#### **4) Foreign Policy Interests**

McKinlay (1978) found a positive correlation between aid and the variables he used to model interests regarding power politics, but rejects the notion that German aid was guided directly by such aspirations throughout the 1960s. The author dismisses the idea that aid allocation was influenced by the behavior of the US and did not find any evidence for considerations connected with the Cold War either. According to McKinlay, there was no inverse relation between German aid and lower-income countries adhering to the communist bloc. He concludes that the

trade interest overrode any kind of political use of foreign aid. For the period from the mid 1980's to the late-90s, however, it is argued that Germany disbursed more funds towards states that receive more military aid by the United States, which is considered a contribution to the security interests of Western countries (Neumayer, 2003). Zanger (2000) noticed that in the second half of the 1980s, Germany disbursed more aid to countries with high military spending and speculated that it was attempting to support regional powers with strong armed forces.

The inquiry by Maizels and Nissanke (1984) considered political and security interests in terms of arms trade and aid to former colonies, as well as to particular regions. They found the arms trade variable and aid to Israel to be significant for the years 1969 and 1970, arguing that German aid was pursuing foreign policy interests. However, the significance disappeared in the 1978-1980 period. Similarly to the previously reported trade interests, the authors assume that over the 1970s, there was a shift in the priorities of German aid policy. Alesina and Dollar (2000) found evidence of Germany disbursing more aid to states that vote along with it in the general assembly of the United Nations in the period between 1970 and the mid-1990s. Furthermore, the fact that Germany has provided aid to both Israel and Egypt is interpreted as the fostering of a strategic interest. The finding regarding the association of aid and political support within the UN was confirmed for the mid-2000s for almost all channels of German aid, including aid through NGOs (Nunnenkamp & Öhler, 2011). This argument is temporally expanded until 2010 by Dreher et al. (2015), who additionally found that temporary members of the United Nations Security Council received more aid since the early 1970s. Therefore, the authors argue that geo-strategic considerations played a role in the allocation of German aid.

In opposition to the previously discussed findings, Hoeffler and Outram (2011) reject the argument that voting within the UN was a relevant factor in German aid between 1980 and 1994. The authors further point out that the amounts of German aid did not change with the end of the Cold War, which was the case for other major donors. Faust and Ziaja (2012) hold the same position regarding the influence of UN votes, arguing that they generally did not influence allocation decisions from 1992 to 2008. Despite that, they concede that a bias towards more populous recipients could be interpreted in the way that those states are politically more important.

## **5) Recipient Population**

McKinlay (1978) found that recipients with larger populations received relatively more German aid from 1962 to 1970. The author rejects the idea that this was due to higher populated states being more political powerful and is also not convinced that there is a correlation with economic interests in terms of market potential. The most plausible argument for McKinlay is the idea that larger countries need more aid than smaller ones and refers to this as a “quasi-humanitarian modification to the general donor interest interpretation” (p. 249) of German aid. His follow-up study came to the same results (McKinlay, 1979). According to Carey (2007), between the late 1970s and the early 2000s, states with larger populations were more likely to become recipients of German aid and were also allocated more funds in the second stage. Neumayer (2003) supports these findings. Considering only a slightly different time frame, Clist (2009) contradicts these results and argues that population size did not matter in the recipient selection stage. Nonetheless, the author also found that higher populated states received more aid in the second stage. His interpretation of this finding is that higher population reflects higher recipient need. Several other studies have confirmed the positive correlation between population and aid for an aggregate time period from 1980 to 2008, yet they did not offer any interpretation for the results (Zanger, 2000; Hoeffler & Outram, 2011; Nunnenkamp & Öhler, 2011; Faust & Ziaja, 2012).

Arvin and Drewes (2001) on the other hand found evidence for a population bias in German aid from 1973 to 1995, arguing that there was a negative correlation between aid received per capita and population size, that is, a bias against states with higher populations. They offer various theoretical explanations, the first being that aid is distributed by donors on a country-to-country basis and not based on population. Second, they suggest that donors may diversify their recipient portfolio to keep good relations with as many states as possible, rather than focusing on a few largely populated ones. Lastly they propose that if imports from the donor matter, smaller states might benefit, since they trade a larger share of their production. Berthélemy and Tichit (2004) came to the same result based on data from 1980 to 1999.

## **IV) Reflection of the Literature**

The general stance of realists towards foreign aid is very clear. Aid is viewed as a foreign policy tool, used by donors to pursue their interests in terms of security, commerce and generally global politics. Developmental concerns only play a role if they somehow serve those interests.

Humanitarian or emergency aid is largely considered in its political function, even though there are authors who accept a pure moral obligation to such efforts.

The findings from the general aid allocation literature support the idea that most donor countries take recipient need into account. But obviously, concerns of poverty and development are not the only decisive factors. Donors do take various other motivations into consideration. The focus on well-governed states may be interpreted as a concern for aid effectiveness. However, factors of self-interest have been uncovered as well. Most importantly, those are commercial interests, largely the promotion of donor exports, as well as various aspects that are supplementing the donors' general foreign policy. The ratio between concerns of recipient need and self-interested motives depends strongly on the donor and cannot be generalized. Insofar, the realist argument may be confirmed for a number of donors, while it could be inaccurate for others.

Regarding German aid, studies of earlier periods suggest that disbursements were not very needs-oriented. However, they might have improved in this regard over time. A similar argument can be made for the considerations of factors associated with good governance. German aid seems to be strongly related to commercial interests, particularly exports. However, we need to keep in mind that the direction of causality may not be clear. Some evidence has been found for aid being used as a tool to support general foreign policy, but the picture is not as clear as it is for other donors, such as the US. The findings concerning a possible population bias are mixed, even though the majority of researchers argues that Germany tends to favor recipients with larger populations in the more recent years. Whether the realist concept of aid is congruent with the German practices requires further examination.

Given that the vast majority of the aid allocation literature consists of quantitative analyses, some methodological issues must be addressed. First, it has been pointed out that the results of such work are strongly dependent on the research design (Dowling & Hiemenz, 1985; Lensink & White, 2000). Insofar, different ways of measuring complex qualitative concepts may skew the results. Recipient need, for instance, might be conceptualized through GDP per capita. But there are other related measures, such as primary school enrollment and infant mortality. Another example is the concept of good governance, which is rather intricate and arguably only measurable in quantitative fashion within certain limits. Another feature that stands out in most studies is the treatment of aid flows, which are regularly studied in aggregate form. That is, different types and channels of aid, as well as sectors that are funded, are all blended together.



Furthermore, the aspect of immigration from recipient countries has largely been overlooked (Bermeo & Leblang, 2015).

Second, there might be some interdependence between certain variables. One could argue that donors tend to favor states with larger populations because they are home to more poor people than smaller ones. But one could also claim that the economies of larger countries bear more potential for trade. Another example would be a possible correlation between rule of law and economic potential of recipient countries.

Third, several authors have aggregated data from long time periods. Covering long time periods may produce results that make certain trends during shorter periods vanish. Several authors found differences in aid allocation before and after the end of the Cold War. It seems plausible that more recent events, such as the refugee crisis in Europe, have effects on aid allocation patterns as well. A similar point can be made regarding studies which include larger numbers of donors without disaggregating the results. With these issues in mind, we must take the presented findings with a grain of salt.

Lastly, we have to accept the fact that in terms of aid effectiveness, we do not really know what “good” allocation is. The argument that the pursuit of donor interests limits aid effectiveness appears quite credible. Nonetheless, in the face of the dilemma of poverty and development under low-quality government, it is not clear how exactly the existing allocation patterns could be improved. And even if we knew, it is very questionable if donor countries would exhibit the political will to do so.

## Chapter 3: The German Aid Regime

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the analysis by providing an introduction to the German Aid Regime. The first section offers a brief historic overview of the regime's evolution. The second section offers insights into the structure of the current regime and its key actors, while the third section presents aid figures and information on Germany's aid partnerships.

### I) A Brief History of German Aid

The historic development of German aid is characterized by frequent paradigm shifts (Bohnet, 2019). It began in 1953, when the young FRG (Federal Republic of Germany), just eight years removed from World War II, dedicated 500,000 DM from the budget of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs for the exchange of experiences with lesser developed regions – funds, that were intended to support the German economy (Bohnet, 2019). In 1956, the parliament dedicated DM 3.5 million of the federal budget to the “assistance for the economic development of less developed countries”<sup>5</sup>, this time channeled through the budget of the Federal Foreign Office (Bohnet, 2019). The same year is considered the starting point of a proper development policy, since the Federal Foreign Office was not only provided with DM 50 mio. for “supporting measures for underdeveloped countries”<sup>6</sup>, but also began to work on defining basic principles and goals (Dumke, 1997). This vast increase in funding followed diplomatic pressure from the United States, which wanted to contain the Soviet Union's activities in developing countries (Bohnet, 2019).

Dumke (1997), who was actively involved in the policy-making process, points out that Germany was one of the few donor countries that was neither bound by former colonial ties, nor was it a major power that needed to pursue certain foreign policy goals with its aid program. The author argues that early development policy was solely focused on the development of the recipient countries, even though he concedes that foreign aid does have foreign policy effects.

Dumke states that the general goal of development policy of that time was the improvement of the living standards in the recipient countries and that the efforts were to be taken in the spirit

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<sup>5</sup> Translation by the author. Original phrase: “Hilfeleistungen für den wirtschaftlichen Aufbau von weniger entwickelten Ländern“.

<sup>6</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Förderungsmaßnahmen für unterentwickelte Länder”.



of partnership, with constant participation of the recipient government. The author further argues that there were no political conditionalities, that the concepts were supposed leave room for specific domestic conditions and that development was supposed to happen organically. All in all, Dumke's account of the principles appears highly altruistic and progressive. Andersen (2020) on the other hand claims that besides humanitarian concerns, economic and foreign policy considerations were very well present and that the efforts were rather short-sighted in the first years.

Dumke (1997) points out another peculiarity of the German aid regime that came into place early, which is the implementation of the development policy through private bodies (though owned by the state) and churches. According to him, this was done to keep the state administration compact, but also to avoid issues resulting from political conflicts. Like this, Dumke states, development efforts could be continued even if Germany had political disputes with recipient countries, which could potentially have official German personnel expelled.

A key event for the German aid regime was the foundation of the Ministry of Economic Cooperation <sup>7</sup> (BMZ) in 1961 (Dumke, 1997), which was a novelty in Europe (Bohnet, 2019). However, the ministry appeared to be of very limited importance, as it did not have its own sphere of competence, no administrative structure and was subject to veto rights of the Federal Foreign Office and Ministry for Economic Affairs (Nuscheler, 2007). Only serving purposes of coordination first, its competencies were gradually expanded, but key decisions still required approval of the previously mentioned ministries, as well as the Ministry of Finance (Andersen, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, the first half of the 1960s was marked by coordination problems between the ministries involved, which rendered the administration of aid complicated and inefficient (Bohnet, 2019). Regarding the allocation of aid, the FRG's relationship with the GDR (German Democratic Republic) was a key factor. According to its Hallstein-Doctrine, the FRG did not maintain diplomatic relations with countries that recognized the GDR as a state and systematically did not allocate aid to such countries either (Bohnet, 2019). Reportedly, the tactic was very successful, as only two developing countries (Cambodia and Cuba) maintained

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<sup>7</sup> Translation by the author. Original name: "Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit". The term „Entwicklung“ (development) was added only in 1993, making it „Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung“ (Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) (Andersen, 2020).

diplomatic relations with the GDR. Furthermore, BMZ minister Scheel promoted the incorporation of interests of the exporting industries, but was envisioning an operating mode that was beneficial in the long term for both Germany and the recipient countries (Bohnet, 2019). This approach was motivated by the economic downturn in the late 1960s (Nuscheler, 2007).

Politically, the period between 1968 and 1974 was marked by changes in the relations between the FRG and the Eastern Bloc, an increased awareness of environmental issues, as well as the student movement, which criticized the neocolonial appearance of German aid (Bohnet, 2019). The new minister Eppler attempted to shape development policy away from export promotion, towards a stronger focus on the developmental needs and interests of the recipient countries (Nuscheler, 2007). However, Nuscheler argues that his reforms largely failed. Even though Eppler was able to claim additional competencies from the other ministries, his efforts found too much political resistance to bear real quantitative improvements (Bohnet, 2019). When Eppler stepped down in 1974, his successor shifted his paradigm around in light of the energy crisis (Andersen, 2020). His policies were largely motivated by self-interest regarding natural resources and the German economy in general (Bohnet, 2019). In the late 1970s, Marie Schlei, the first female minister holding the office, helped the German aid program to a better reputation, as she shifted the focus towards the poorest developing countries and gave special attention to the well-being of women (Bohnet, 2019).

The first half of the 1980s was once again influenced by the global economic downturn (Bohnet, 2019). Bohnet offers a mixed assessment of that time period. On the one hand, development policy was used under considerations of the German labor market and economic competitiveness. On the other hand, minister Warnke advanced the political dialogue, coordination between donors, evaluation of projects and the protection of the environment. The late 1980s brought yet again a paradigm shift, inspired by the large streams of refugees and hunger crises in Africa (Bohnet, 2019). Minister Klein argued that altruistic aid, regardless of political considerations, is a duty for the German people due Christian principles (Bohnet, 2019). It is also reported that Klein was the first minister who brought up history as an argument, both regarding Germany's colonial past and the aid that Germany had received itself.

The beginning of the new decade brought complex political challenges for the FRG, as the unification with the GDR raised the question whether and how the former East German state's own development program was to be continued by Federal Republic (Bohnet, 2019). The

collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore the disappearance of the conflict between East and West opened new possibilities for the development sector in general (Bohnet, 2019). The BMZ brought new criteria for the recipients to life, which are basically still existing today: Adherence to human rights, political participation of the citizens, the rule of law, a market-oriented economy and development-orientated governance (Andersen, 2020). Furthermore, poverty reduction became a core principle of German aid (Bohnet, 2019). However, the budget of the BMZ became smaller over the 1990s (Nuscheler, 2007).

Since 1998, German development policy is understood by politicians as a global structural policy which has the goal to improve the economic, social, ecological and political conditions in developing countries (Messner, 2011). This broadening of scope is considered a reaction to the fast-paced globalization (Nuscheler, 2007). The inclusion of the BMZ in the Federal Security Council<sup>8</sup> made clear that development policy is a valuable tool to actively participate in the globalization process (Bohnet, 2019). According to Bohnet, the period until 2009 brought several changes and success stories. Several implementation organizations were merged and the number of bilateral partners was drastically reduced. Furthermore, Germany played a key role in the debt relief of HIPCs (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) and engaged heavily in South East Europe after the war in Kosovo, as well as in Afghanistan.

Minister Niebel, in office from 2009 to 2013, brought about several changes again (Bohnet, 2019). According to Bohnet, he focused more on bilateral aid, promoted the role of German private businesses in the development process and presented a strategy for the African continent. Furthermore, he reportedly facilitated further mergers of implementation organizations, initiated cooperation between the BMZ and the armed forces and transferred the ministry's competency for humanitarian aid to the Foreign Affairs Office (Bohnet, 2019). The following time period under minister Müller is subject of this study.

## **II) The Current Aid Regime**

To allow for a general understanding of the current German aid regime, this subsection will discuss its basic features and main actors. However, since the matter is rather complex and there is a large number of actors involved, they will not all be discussed in great detail. The first part of this section is dedicated to the BMZ and other key actors on the political level, while the

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<sup>8</sup> Translation by the author. Original name: "Bundessicherheitsrat".

second part discusses its budget and the goals it pursues. The last part is dealing with the organizations that are implementing the policies.

### **1) The BMZ and Other Political Actors**

Germany is still one of only a few countries that administers its development policy through a separate ministry (Engel, 2017). In regards to the separation of powers, the BMZ is an executive body (Andersen, 2020). It acts as the organizational framework of German ODA, as it is mainly charged with framework planning, priority setting and the financing and monitoring of projects and programs (Kevenhörster & Boom, 2009). Furthermore, the ministry cooperates with the civil society and the business community, the partner countries and multilateral organizations and engages in education and information campaigns regarding development cooperation (BMZ, 2021e). Since 2013, the BMZ has been led by Federal Minister Gerd Müller (Bohnet, 2019). Besides his three State Secretaries, the BMZ has a staff of about 1,200 employees, which are located in Bonn and Berlin, but also in German embassies abroad (BMZ, 2021e).

However, as mentioned in the section above, development policy is considered a global structural policy. In other terms, development policy encompasses more than what is located in the BMZ's competency (Messner, 2011). Several other ministries are involved in areas that are relevant for the development and globalization process. Examples are trade and commodity policy (Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy), environmental policy (Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety) and humanitarian aid (Federal Foreign Office) (Messner, 2011). This circumstance is well-illustrated by the figures provided by Bohnet et al. (2018), who broke down the total ODA budget of 2015 by ministries. The BMZ administered only 37.4% of the budget, while the Federal Foreign Office oversaw the spending of 8%. The remaining twelve ministries administered about 4.6% altogether. Furthermore, 5.4% of German ODA was disbursed by the federal states. In-donor refugee costs also made up a large share.

Another important political body is the Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development<sup>9</sup> (AwZ). As a unit of the German parliament, the AwZ deals with all kinds of

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<sup>9</sup> Translation by the author. Original name: "Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung".

questions regarding development cooperation and prepares corresponding hearings and votings in the parliament (BMZ, 2021a).

## 2) Budget, Goals and Priorities

The budget of the BMZ is determined as follows. According to Bohnet (2017), the allocation of funding for the ministry is determined by Section 23<sup>10</sup> of the federal budget. The budgeting process is initiated yearly by the Ministry of Finance. After several rounds of reports and consultations between the BMZ, the Ministry of Finance and the AwZ, as well as within the parliament, the latter decides on the passing of the spending bill. Bohnet concludes that after all, it is the Ministry of Finance that is leading the process, while the AwZ takes an advisory role.

As explained by Bohnet (2017), Section 23 does not only determine the BMZ's budget, but also contains the overall goals and priorities of German development policy.<sup>11</sup> They are formulated by the BMZ, based on the current coalition agreement between the governing parties and the Charter for the Future.<sup>12</sup> Currently, German development policy is officially pursuing five overarching goals:

- Developmental goals (fighting poverty and hunger, satisfaction of basic needs)
- Environmental goals (preservation of natural resources, climate protection)
- Security goals (conflict prevention and resolution, fighting causes of flight)
- Goals regarding political order (democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, ecologically oriented social market economy)
- Strengthening the participation of the civil society

These overarching goals are structured by countries and regions and supplemented with three special initiatives which emphasize specific thematic areas or regions:

- “A World without Hunger”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Translation by the author. Original name: “Einzelplan 23”.

<sup>11</sup> To keep this section concise and relevant for this study, explanations regarding multilateral aid will be omitted in the following.

<sup>12</sup> This was the case from 2014, when the Charter for the Future was published, until at least 2017, when Bohnet published his work. Since 2018, there is a new document, named Development Policy 2030. It is not clear whether the Charter is still in effect, but there is no contrary evidence. Both documents are examined in the following analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Eine Welt ohne Hunger”.

- “Combating the Causes of Flight, Reintegrating Refugees”<sup>14</sup>
- “Stabilization and Development the MENA Region”<sup>15</sup>

According to Bohnet, bilateral aid mainly consists of technical and financial assistance. Decisions regarding the allocation are made by the BMZ after confidential discussions.<sup>16</sup> However, the framework planning has to be reconciled with the Ministry of Finance and the Foreign Affairs Office. International agreements, such as Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and resolutions between the G7 states serve as foundations for the thematic priorities. A quantitative framework then allocates certain amounts of aid to specific topics.

The BMZ determines country quotas, which have to be reconciled with the Foreign Affairs Office. Bohnet lists seven aspects that are relevant in the allocation process. However, the author also states that the weight of these aspects varies from recipient to recipient. The aspects are:

- Developmental necessity and relevance for poverty (e.g. GDP per capita and poverty headcount)
- German interests (e.g. geopolitical considerations), possibilities to implement Agenda 2030, protection of public goods
- Democratic development and good governance
- Significance of the German contribution
- Historical relations (such as relations with former German colonies, e.g. in Namibia, Togo, Cameroon, Tanzania and Rwanda)
- Division of labor between donor countries
- Commitments from previous years

In the recent years, there were two kinds of bilateral partnerships (Bohnet, 2017). As the author explains, the pursuit of the developmental goals is based on country-specific strategies that are developed in cooperation with the recipient country in the case of states with a country program. The second kind of recipients receive aid that is focused on a specific regional or thematic area.

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<sup>14</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Fluchtursachen bekämpfen, Flüchtlinge reintegrieren”.

<sup>15</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Stabilisierung und Entwicklung in Nordafrika/Nahost”.

<sup>16</sup> The results of these discussions are not accessible to the general public. An attempt to obtain related documents from the BMZ was unsuccessful.



In 2020, the BMZ introduced new types of partnerships as part of its “BMZ 2030 Reform Strategy” (BMZ, 2020c).

According to Bohnet (2017), the BMZ’s leadership has stipulated a focus on the poor and poorest countries, fragile states and countries struck by violent conflict, climate change natural disasters, as well as newly industrialized countries. Furthermore, both the German chancellor Angela Merkel and the BMZ’s leadership have mandated that Africa should be the focus of German development policy. One expression of this regional priority-setting is the so-called Marshallplan with Africa, an initiative to boost vocational training and create jobs, which is mainly to be carried by private businesses.

Lastly, the BMZ also supports bilateral aid through the civil society, the business community and the German municipalities (Bohnet, 2017). Bohnet states that such aid only loosely adheres to the priorities of the general aid policy, so it can be used in areas where official aid cannot be implemented, e.g. in areas with human rights violations.

### **3) Implementation Organizations**

As previously pointed out, the BMZ does not have any department for the implementation of the development policy at its disposal. Instead, it relies on several different implementation organizations. The most important contractors are the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit <sup>17</sup> (GIZ) and the KfW Entwicklungsbank <sup>18</sup> (Andersen, 2020). They are both bound to the general policy guidelines of the ministry, but act rather independently (Nuscheler, 2007).

The GIZ is tasked with implementing technical cooperation (Bohnet, 2019). It was formed in 2011 when several development agencies were merged (BMZ, 2021b). The GIZ has more than 22,000 employees, which are active in about 120 different countries (GIZ, n.d.). It has a very broad portfolio and engages in many different areas, such as the promotion of the economy, construction of democratic structures, peace building, conflict management, food security, health, education, climate protection, and more (BMZ, 2021b). The GIZ is a private company that is owned by the Federal Government (Engel, 2017).

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<sup>17</sup> English translation by the author: “German Corporation for International Cooperation“.

<sup>18</sup> KfW refers to “Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau“, which translates to “Credit Institute for Reconstruction“. The term “Entwicklungsbank” translates to “development bank”.



The KfW is charged with providing financial assistance (Bohnet, 2019). For example, it funds investments in infrastructure, financial systems and the protection of the environment (BMZ, 2021c). It receives funding from the BMZ and also acquires funds from capital markets (Donor Tracker, 2020). The KfW is a public institution (KfW, 2021).

Besides these state-led organizations, Germany has a large number state-funded of civil society organizations (CSOs) that are active in the field of development (Engel, 2017). According to Engel, those include two large church networks, foundations of the political parties that are represented in parliament, as well as several thousand small to medium sized groups that include secular, church-linked and business-linked organizations. The activities of those non-state actors are only loosely connected with the policy priorities of the BMZ and the federal government (Bohnet, 2017). In 2018, about 7% of Germany's gross bilateral ODA were disbursed through CSOs (OECD, 2021b). Many CSOs are organized through VENRO<sup>19</sup>, which serves as a representation and lobbying instrument (Engel, 2017) and communicates with the general public (Nuscheler, 2007).

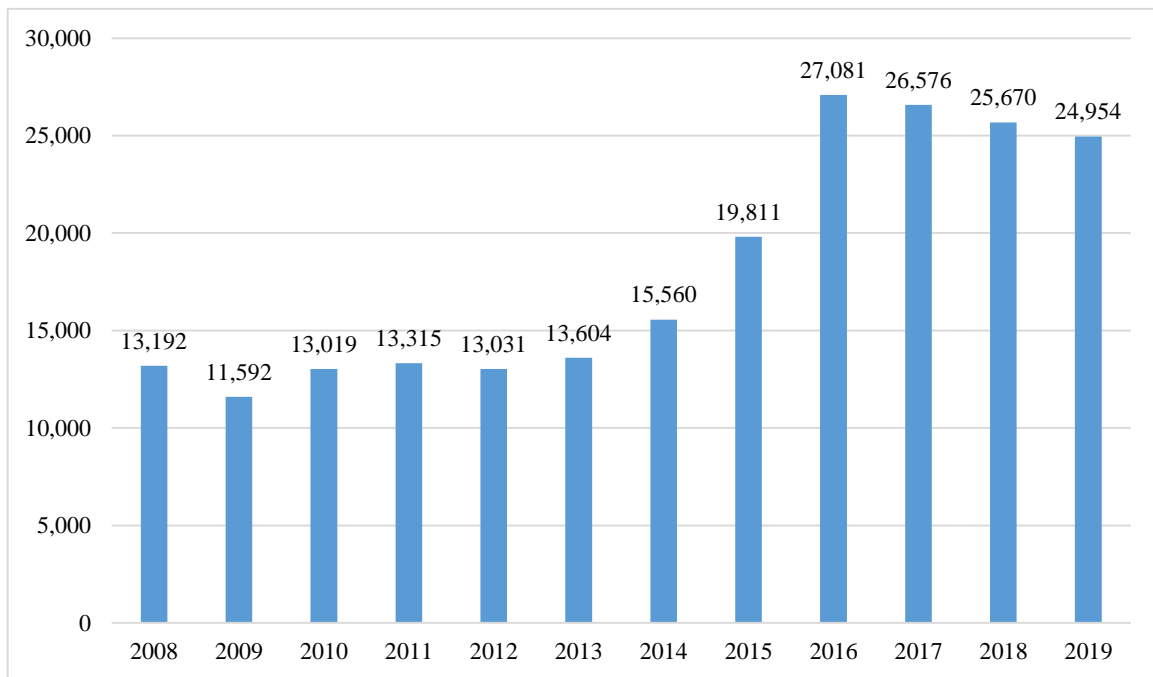
### **III) Aid Figures and Recipients**

The previous sections have discussed the history of the German aid regime, as well as its basic organizational features, goals and actors. This section will focus on the more practical side of German aid and introduce figures on the ODA volume, comparisons with other donors, sectors, as well as information on Germany's recipient countries.

After fluctuating in the late 2000s and the first years of the new decade, the German ODA volume has been constantly increasing from 2013 until 2016, where it has reached its peak of the last five years (OECD, 2021b). The sharp increases in 2015 and especially 2016 are caused by Germany's spending on refugees within the country, which is accountable as ODA for twelve months of their respective stay (Bohnet et al., 2018). Figure 1 shows the development of Germany's ODA volume from 2008 to 2019.

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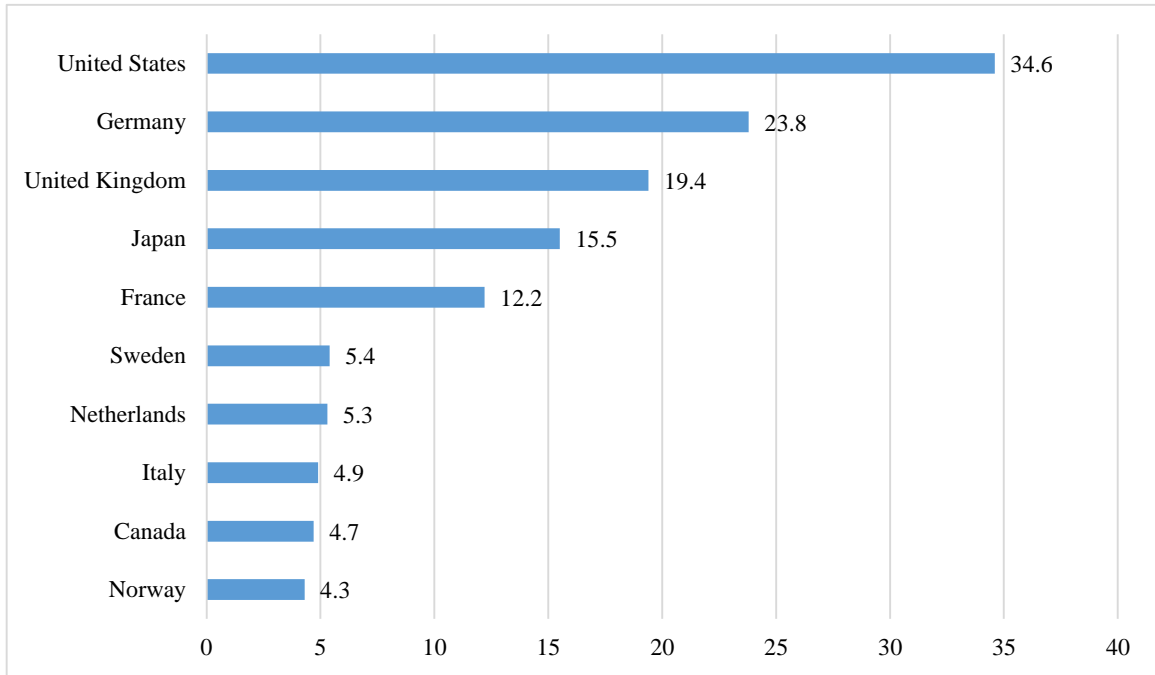
<sup>19</sup> VENRO stands for “Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen“, which translates to “Association for Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid of German Non-Governmental Organizations”.



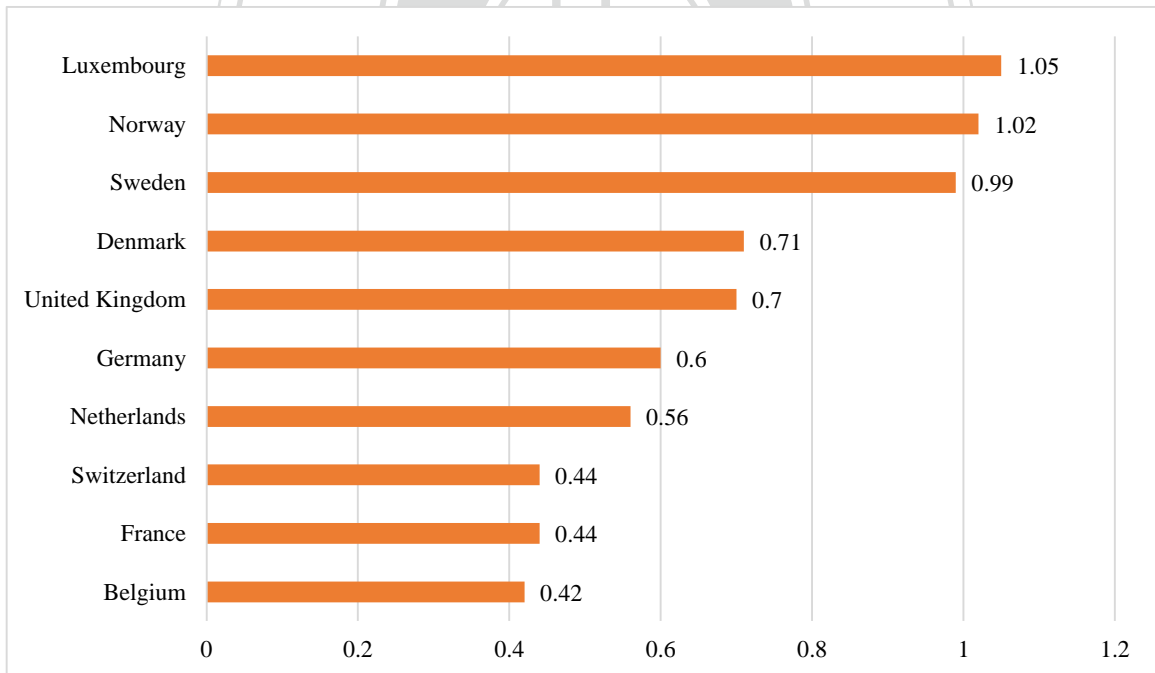
**Figure 1: German Net ODA Volume, 2008-2019.** In million USD, 2018 Constant prices. Source: OECD, 2021b.

As of 2019, Germany was the second-largest provider of ODA among DAC countries in absolute terms (Donor Tracker, 2020). With total ODA disbursements of 23.8 billion USD, it ranked behind the US and before the United Kingdom. Figure 2 shows the top 10 DAC members' ODA disbursements from 2019.

However, if we consider Germany's ODA volume in relative terms, it does not appear as large anymore. In the 2019 ranking of total ODA as a share of the GNI, Germany only ended up in 6th place, after Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom (Donor Tracker, 2020). Donor countries have agreed to set the target of providing 0.7 % of their respective GNI as ODA each year as early as 1970 (Riddell, 2007). Notably, all the countries that ranked higher than Germany have reached the target in 2019. Figure 3 shows the top 10 DAC providers of ODA as a share of their respective GNI.

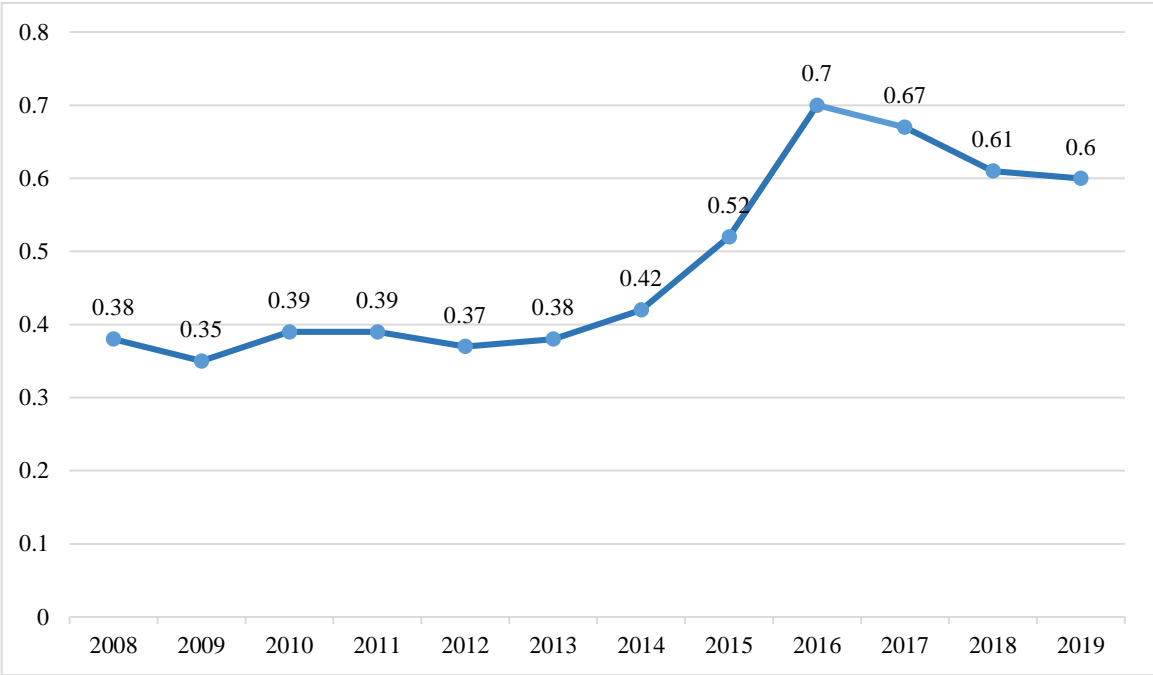


**Figure 2: Top 10 DAC Donor Countries by ODA Grant Equivalent, 2019.** In billion USD, 2020 prices.  
Source: Donor Tracker, 2020.



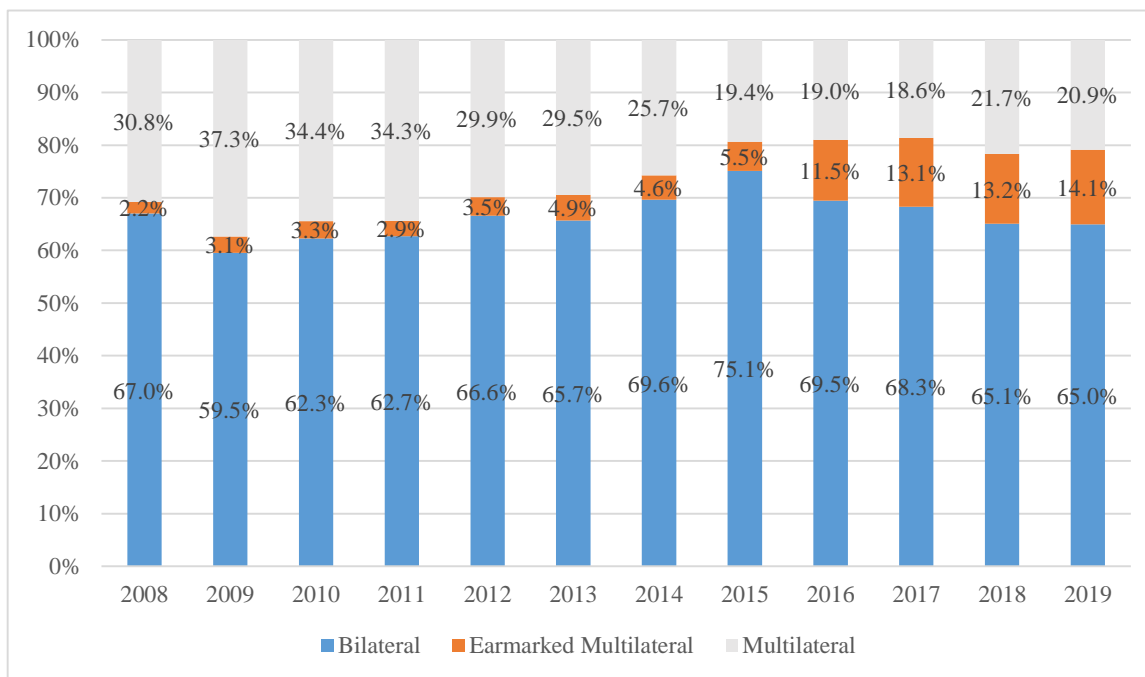
**Figure 3: Top 10 DAC Donor Countries by Total ODA as % of GNI, 2019.** Based on grant equivalent data. Source: Donor Tracker, 2020.

Ever since the 0.7 % target has been introduced, Germany has just reached it once, in 2016, when the ODA volume had its peak (Bohnet, 2019). Similar to the total ODA volume, the value has constantly increased from 2013 to 2016 and then shows slight decreases in the following years. Figure 4 shows the development of the German ODA volume as a share of its GNI from 2008 to 2019.



**Figure 4: German ODA as % of GNI, 2008-2019.** Until 2017, ODA net flows were used for the calculation. From 2018 onwards, they were replaced with the ODA grant equivalent. Source: OECD, 2021b.

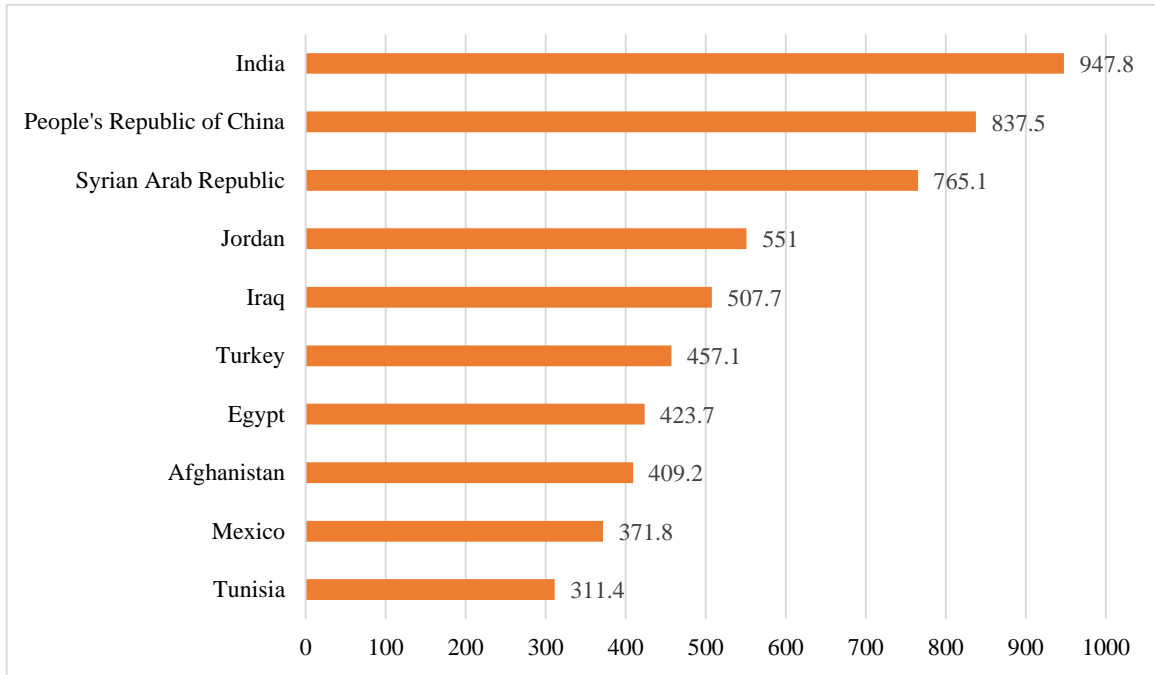
A striking characteristic of German aid is its distribution between bilateral and multilateral aid. While DAC countries spent an average 59% of their aid bilaterally in 2019, Germany’s rate stood at 79% (Donor Tracker, 2020). This suggests that Germany might have a stronger wish to control its aid allocation when compared to other donors. The share of bilateral aid has constantly increased from 2009 to 2017 and has only decreased slightly in 2018, before increasing again in the following year. Figure 5 shows how the total amount of ODA has been divided into bilateral and multilateral aid from 2008 to 2019. Note that earmarked multilateral aid is considered bilateral aid by the OECD (Riddell, 2007).



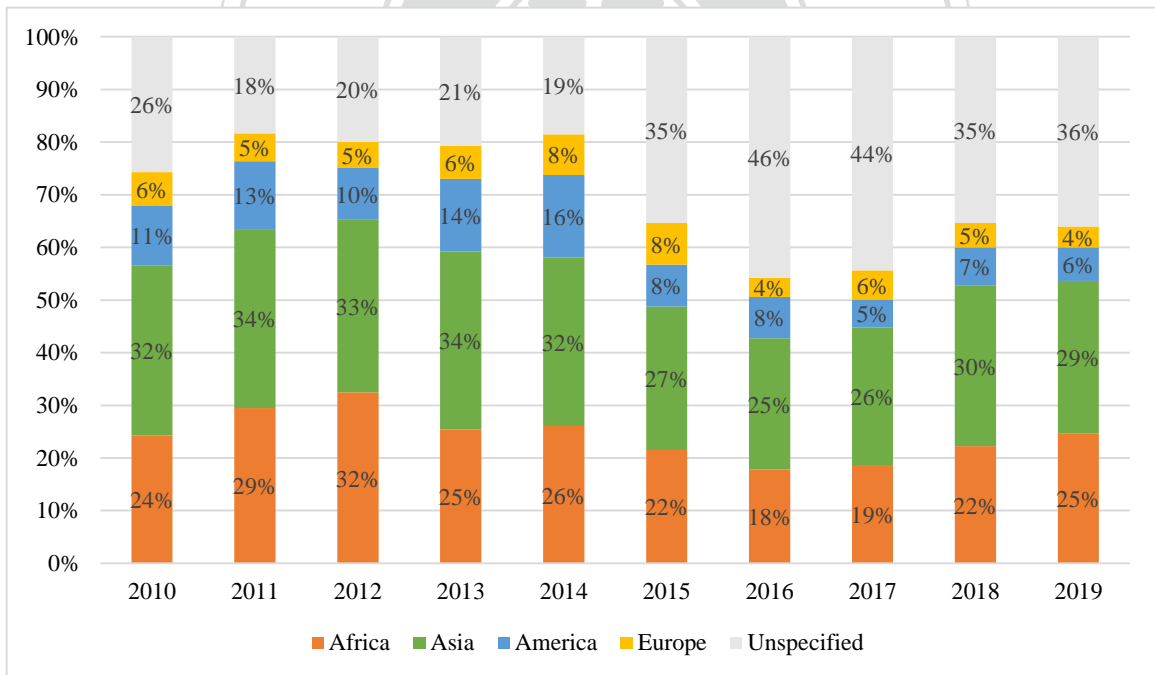
**Figure 5: German ODA Composition, 2008-2019.** Gross disbursements in million USD, 2018 constant prices. Note that earmarked multilateral aid is considered bilateral aid. Source: OECD, 2021b.

In 2018, Germany spent its 22,425 million USD gross bilateral aid budget in several different sectors (Donor Tracker, 2020). The largest factors were in-donor refugee costs and humanitarian aid with 17.3% and 11.8%, respectively. Those were followed by education (11.1%), energy (8.3%) government and civil society (7.5%) and financial services and business support (6.1%). In other terms, more than half of the bilateral commitments were dedicated to the improvement of the social and economic infrastructure of the recipient countries (OECD, 2021b).

Germany spent 26.2% of its gross bilateral aid on its ten largest recipients in 2019, while ranks 11 to 20 received 10.3% and all others 15.5% (OECD, 2021b). The rest was not allocable by country. Figure 6 shows Germany's largest 10 recipients. Figure 7 shows the distribution by region. Considering the recipients' income, 12.8% of the funds were disbursed to LDCs (DAC country average: 23.8%), 24.5% went to lower middle-income countries and 18.5% went to upper middle-income countries (OECD, 2021b). In 2018, 44% of bilateral aid was not allocable by country. Out of the allocable share, 22.4% were given to states in an extremely fragile context, 19.1% to states in fragile context and 58.5% to non-fragile states (OECD, 2021b).



**Figure 6: Top 10 Recipients of German Bilateral ODA, 2019.** Gross disbursements in million USD, current prices. Source: OECD, 2021b.



**Figure 7: Distribution of Bilateral Aid by Region, 2010-2019.** Asia includes the Middle East, America includes North, Central and Latin America. Oceania is not shown in this figure, as it received less than 0.2% in each of the years shown. Source: OECD, 2021a.

The topic of Germany’s bilateral aid partner countries is a rather complex one. In 2018, Germany provided funds that constitute bilateral ODA to about 130 different countries (BMZ, 2020a). However, the reported disbursements include all kinds of provisions, e.g. debt relief and humanitarian aid. Accordingly, the BMZ states that it supports all states from the DAC list of developing countries (BMZ, 2020c)

However, the ministry understands the term “partner country” in a narrow way, as not all of these 130 countries are considered partners. The “BMZ 2030 Reform Strategy”, issued in June 2020, provides us with a list of the 60 states that are partners with different types of partnerships (BMZ, 2020c), which is shown in table 1.

<b>Bilateral Partners</b>		
Afghanistan	Jordan	Nigeria
Algeria	Kenya	Pakistan
Bangladesh	Lebanon	Palestinian Territories
Benin	Madagascar	Rwanda
Burkina Faso	Malawi	Tanzania
Cambodia	Mali	Togo
Cameroon	Mauretania	Uganda
Colombia	Mozambique	Uzbekistan
Ecuador	Namibia	Zambia
Egypt	Niger	
<b>Reform Partners</b>		
Ivory Coast	Ghana	Senegal
Ethiopia	Morocco	Tunisia
<b>Transformation Partners</b>		
Albania	Kosovo	Ukraine
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Moldova	
Georgia	Serbia	
<b>Global Partners</b>		
Brazil	Indonesia	South Africa
China	Mexico	Vietnam
India	Peru	
<b>Nexus and Peace Partners</b>		
Central African Rep.	Libya	Syria
Chad	Somalia	Yemen
DR Congo	South Sudan	
Iraq	Sudan	

**Table 1: Partner Country List According to the "BMZ 2030 Reform Concept".** Source: BMZ, 2020c.



Bilateral Partners are countries that Germany works with “over the long term to achieve shared development goals” (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7). Reform Partners are “particularly reform-oriented countries” (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7) which receive “reform financing and higher commitments” (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7), both of which are tied to results. Transformation Partners are European states that are supported “in their political and economic transformation“ (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7). Besides these bilateral aid partnerships, there are so-called Global Partners that are cooperated with to work on “the issues defining our common global future and protecting global goods” (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7). With its Nexus and Peace Partners, Germany cooperates to fight “the structural causes of conflict, displacement and violence” (BMZ, 2020c, p. 7) and promotes peacebuilding.

Naturally, this list only reflects the aid partnerships of the period after the publishing of the reform concept. Notably, as part of this new policy, Germany ended its bilateral aid relationships with 25 countries (BMZ, 2020c).<sup>20</sup> The government offered three different reasons for this measure (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020): “Low need”, “bad governance”, linked with lacking perspective for cooperation, and “low significance of German development cooperation”. Table 2 lists the states that fell into one of these three categories.

<b>Low Need</b>		
Armenia	Costa Rica	Mongolia
Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Sri Lanka
<b>Bad Governance</b>		
Burundi	Myanmar	
<b>Low Significance</b>		
Bolivia	Honduras	Philippines
Cuba	Kyrgyzstan	Sierra Leone
Dominican Republic	Laos	Tajikistan
El Salvador	Liberia	East Timor
Guatemala	Nepal	Turkmenistan
Guinea	Nicaragua	
Haiti	Paraguay	

**Table 2: List of Countries with Terminated Partnership.** According to “BMZ 2030 Reform Concept”. Source: Deutscher Bundestag, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Even though the “BMZ 2030 Reform Concept“ and the cited statement from the government both mention 25 countries, the actual list consists of 27 states.

#### **IV) Discussion**

The historical overview has made clear that during the first 60 years of its existence, the German aid regime has been subject to frequent changes. Some of them were less drastic, others were rather severe. Those changes came about for different reasons. Some were rooted in consideration of domestic conditions, while others were responses to developments on international level. Lastly, we must not underestimate the political attitudes of the respective ministers of the BMZ.

A key element of the German aid regime is the BMZ, which has been existing for almost 60 years now. However, it is largely tasked with planning and organizational duties, as several other ministries are active in development policy. The overall strategy of aid policy is established in the ministry's budget. However, weights of different criteria vary between recipients, which hints at a certain amount of political discretion. Another distinctive feature of the regime is the implementation through private organizations.

The overview of general aid figures underlined the large role that Germany is playing in the international aid structure. Even though Germany regularly does not meet the 0.7% goal, it is still the second largest donor in absolute terms. It is also striking that Germany focuses heavily on bilateral aid, disbursing funds to 130 countries, even though the number of official aid partners is much smaller.

Some of the features discussed in this section distinguish Germany from other donors. Germany is one of the few countries that administers aid through a separate ministry. We might consider this fact as an expression of the importance of foreign aid to the German government (Ashoff, 2009). But we need to keep in mind that the amount of aid actually administered by the BMZ is surprisingly small and that other actors have important roles on the political level too. This lack of competency might be interpreted as to be designed in order to keep German aid in line with general foreign policy interests.

A second aspect that has not yet been discussed is Germany's colonial history. As the literature has shown, aid has been disproportionally disbursed towards former colonies of donors. Germany too had colonies, mostly in Africa, but it has been argued that the colonial rule had been upheld for a much shorter period than, for example, the ones of the UK and France (Conrad, 2012). Insofar, one may suggest that Germany has a different standing than these two

donors, especially in Africa, and that German aid could possibly be free from certain political motivations.

The fact that Germany is focusing much more on bilateral aid than other donors suggests that the country wishes to have greater control over the flow of its funds. Supplemented by the fact that formal development policy is rather loose, one could claim that the regime is designed to allow for great flexibility. This may be a positive feature, since aid could be channeled in reaction to specific developments of recipient need. However, a cynic would argue that the flexibility allows for more self-interested practices in the short term. Nonetheless, we need to consider the fact that implementation of German aid policy happens through private organizations, which are not fully independent, but do have some discretion too.

All in all, it is quite remarkable that Germany, as a large donor, has a very complex, but rather loose structure regarding its organizational makeup and overall policy. Some of the institutional features have not been left uncriticized. As mentioned above, German aid policy goals are broken down by countries and regions, but also by topics, through the special initiatives. Ashoff (2009) points out that this two-pronged approach requires large coordination efforts within the BMZ, which was reportedly also condemned by the OECD. The author further argues that the institutional separation of financial and technical assistance is untypical and makes concerted efforts more difficult. A similar point is made regarding the several ministries that are disbursing German aid. Bohnet (2017) also recognized these flaws and demands institutional changes. Nuscheler (2007) adds that development policy being made by different ministries brings coherence issues in some cases, for example when the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy wants to support a project that is disapproved by the BMZ for social or environmental reasons. Another related issue is the representation in multilateral aid actors. According to Nuscheler, the German representative in the World Bank is instructed by the BMZ, while the one in the IMF is directed by the Ministry of Finance.

Recent criticism of policy outcomes has been voiced by Baydag et al. (2018). Drawing on data from 2013 and 2014, the authors argue that Germany's aid flows were in some cases incompatible with its stated intentions. They point out that half of the ten largest recipients of that time were not official aid partners. They also claim that the state's priorities regarding the targeting of poor countries were not adhered to, given the fact that many official partner countries were middle-income countries. Lastly, they are generally critical of the large number of countries that are supported by German aid.

## **Chapter 4: Policy Document Analysis - What Do They Claim?**

The fourth chapter contains the qualitative analysis of this thesis, which is divided into two parts. The first one is dedicated to the 18th legislative period, the second one to the 19th. Both parts examine the respective coalition contracts and key development policy documents. The last section of the chapter presents and discusses the results of the analysis.

### **I) The 18th Legislative Period, 2013-2018**

This section is dedicated to examining two key documents that were guiding development policy during the 18th legislative period. The first one is the coalition agreement, the second one a BMZ policy document called Charter for the Future.

#### **1) Coalition Agreement of the 18th Legislative Period**

The examination of the coalition agreement is divided into five parts. The first one describes the significance and legal character of the document. The second one outlines its structure and offers background information. The third part examines the agreement regarding general statements on aid policy, as well as the role of the African continent. The fourth part is dedicated to the specific aspects of interest for this study, namely poverty and development, good governance, trade and migration. The last part presents and discusses the findings.

##### ***a) German Coalition Agreements***

Historically, all German governments were and are coalition governments (Thurich, 2011). If none of the parties elected into parliament receives a sufficient majority of the votes, two or more factions join together in a coalition to appoint and support a government (Woyke, 2020). As a part of this process, the coalition partners come to a coalition agreement (Kropp & Sturm, 1998).

The content of the agreement then provides a basis for the future cooperation of the ruling party factions and lays out the general principles for the government's policies during the legislation period (Woyke, 2020), which is four years long (Thurich, 2011). Those principles may include concrete legislative initiatives for some aspects of policy, but also very vague guidelines for other topics (Kropp & Sturm, 1998).

Even though coalition agreements are often referred to as contracts, they are not contracts in the legal sense. They may more accurately be interpreted as declarations of intent (Kropp &

Sturm, 1998). In other terms, coalitions agreements are not legally binding and stakeholders are not able to file a lawsuit if they find the agreement to be breached (Woyke, 2020).

For the following analysis, we need to keep the legal character of the agreements in mind. They might be a guiding policy document for German foreign aid, but they have very little binding effect. As argued above, several actors of the German aid regime can make different decisions at their discretion. From the combination of these two features, it follows that if the political decisions are not in line with the intended policies laid out in the coalition agreement, there might only be mild or even no consequences. Insofar, as far as the coalition agreements are concerned, Germany's formal aid policy appears rather lax.

### ***b) Background and Structure***

The coalition agreement of Germany's 18th legislative period (from here on simply referred to as "agreement") was titled "Shaping Germany's Future"<sup>21</sup> and was signed in December 2013 (CDU, CSU, SPD, 2013). The coalition consisted of three parties: CDU (Christian Democratic Union), CSU (Christian Social Union) and SPD (Social Democratic Party). The CDU had won the elections, but the 34.1 % it received (Bundeswahlleiter, 2013) were not enough to form a government by itself, so it had to share the cabinet with its smaller sister party and the social democrats. This manifested the beginning of the third term of chancellor Angela Merkel CDU, which has been in office since 2005 (Bundesregierung, 2021). New on the scene was minister of the BMZ Gerd Müller (CSU), who replaced Dirk Niebel from the FDP (Free Democratic Party) (Sturm, 2014). Previously, Müller had served as a member of the European Parliament and as a state secretary in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, where he was in charge of international relations, development projects and global nutrition (BMZ, 2021d).

The agreement consists of eight chapters, which are each divided into several subchapters. While the first seven chapters contain all kinds of policy statements, the last one is dedicated to the operation of the coalition. Two sections directly dedicated to foreign aid are found in chapter seven, which is termed "Responsibility in the World"<sup>22</sup>. They are the last two of 11 subchapters, while the first one refers to humanitarian aid and the second one to economic cooperation and

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<sup>21</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: "Deutschlands Zukunft Gestalten".

<sup>22</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: "Verantwortung in der Welt".

sustainable development. Both sections together make up about two pages of the 130-page document.<sup>23</sup>

The title of chapter seven may be considered as an expression of moral obligation to do good in the world. But interestingly, the presence of the aid-related subsections is overshadowed by the nine other topics that are discussed in the chapter. For instance, one subsection is concerned with strengthening the NATO, while the next one deals with relations with Russia. Other topics are disarmament and arms control, the United Nations and strategic partnerships, foreign and security policy and the realignment of the German armed forces. The placement of statements on foreign aid in a chapter with several topics related to foreign and security policy clearly underlines the understanding of aid policy as being a global structural policy, which is intertwined with other aspects of foreign affairs.

### ***c) General Aid Policy and Relations with Africa***

A first statement related to development policy is found in the preamble of the agreement. It acknowledges Germany's awareness of its responsibility on the international level and, among other aspects, mentions the support of the development of states and regions. The last sentence of the paragraph states that in shaping the global order, Germany is guided by its values and interests. A paragraph in the chapter dealing with finance includes the intention of reaching the goal of providing 0.7 % of the GDP for ODA and promises the provision of € 2 billion during the legislative period.

Under the title "Responsible Partner in the World", the first paragraph of chapter 7 repeats the statement regarding the state's international responsibility, as well as the guidance by its values and interests. Furthermore, it states that Germany advocates for a just world order, sustainable development and the fight against poverty. Development cooperation is also described as a tool to contribute to solutions for crisis and conflicts. A similar point is made in a section that is dealing with foreign and security policy. It states that development cooperation is an integral part of a policy that combines civilian and military measures.

The paragraph specifically referring to humanitarian aid presents itself rather short, but promises a greater weight to related efforts, due to their increased importance. It stipulates that

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<sup>23</sup> The version of the document referred to was downloaded from the official website of the CDU. Sturm (2014) reports 185 pages. The difference might stem from other versions which might include an appendix.



humanitarian aid should be needs-oriented and also reach individuals which are outside of the public focus.

The introductory paragraph of the section “Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development” provides the reader with a clear statement on the general objective of German aid. The goal is to overcome hunger and poverty and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. However, the phrase again includes the qualification that the basis for related efforts are “our values and interests”. The efforts are also seen as “help for self-help”. The section literally terms development policy as a global structural policy, which is supposed to shape globalization sustainably and just. Lastly, it promises alignment with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Other sections contain remarks on global public goods and trade, sustainable financing and thematic as well as regional priorities and repeat the intended adherence to the 0.7% goal.

Africa is mentioned in several different sections of the agreement. A section named “Research for Human Health”, listed under a general headline related to research and education, stipulates research and cooperation with the continent, in order to “break the vicious cycle of poverty and disease in developing countries”. One section in chapter 7 expresses concern for religious and ethnic minorities in North Africa. The chapter also includes a dedicated section for Africa, recognizing its increasing importance, underlining the continent’s self-responsibility and expressing the wish to increase cooperation. It also states that Germany has a special interest in the ability of African states to solve regional problems and promises support for regional cooperation, which is supposed to happen at eye level. Lastly, sub-Sahara Africa is declared one of the focal points of German development policy.

#### ***d) Aspects of Interest***

Now that the background and the general features of the agreement have been illustrated, the focus can now turn to the specific aspects that are relevant for this study. The first section examines the agreement regarding statements on poverty and development in the context of foreign aid. The second one is concerned with good governance. The third and fourth sections are concerned with trade and migration, respectively, before the last section presents and discusses the findings.



### *Poverty and Development*

Some of the statements regarding poverty and development have already been covered in the section above. The policymakers claim to see Germany as responsible for supporting the development of states and regions. The introduction to chapter 7 mentions the advocacy for sustainable development and the fight against poverty. Hunger and poverty are again stressed in the first sentence of the development policy section.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, a section in chapter 6, named “Strong Europe”<sup>25</sup>, states that the promotion of economic development in bordering regions is in the interest of both Germany and the EU. The region that comes to mind in the context of this study is of course North Africa.

The development policy section also considers development in connection with trade, as it stipulates a balancing of interests with developing countries in negotiations within the WTO. It further promises increased efforts in the poorest countries in order to fight hunger and poverty, in order to reach not yet fulfilled MDGs.

Given the repeated mentioning of development, poverty and hunger and the early placement of the latter two terms in the stated overall policy goal, we might conclude that those topics are rather important to the policymakers. But then there are the qualifications that the policy is based on German values and interests. The inclusion of values appears rather reasonable, yet it is a vague term that could have many meanings. The incorporation of interests on the other hand appears like a large loophole. Left unspecified, “interests” could practically be anything and potentially override a poverty and development-related orientation of German aid.

### *Good Governance*

The term “good governance”<sup>26</sup> is used in the agreement twice. In the above mentioned section of chapter 7, referring to relations with Africa, the intent of the cooperation with the continent is specified, stating that good governance should be the focus of the German policies, along with the promotion of the private sector and the strengthening of state institutions. The term is used again in the introduction of the section dealing with development policy, where it is among

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<sup>24</sup> Translation by the author: “The aim of our development policy is to overcome hunger and poverty worldwide and strengthen democracy and the rule of law on the basis of our values and interests”.

<sup>25</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Starkes Europa”.

<sup>26</sup> “Gute Regierungsführung“ in German.

a few aspects that Germany intends to promote. What both sections are lacking is a definition of the term.

Good governance is a rather elusive concept. There are several definitions that vary between donor organizations and even within them (Gisselquist, 2012). Without embarking on a big discussion, we can note that Gisselquist presents a few aspects that are usually included in the definitions. Those are democracy, the rule of law, human rights, transparency and a few other institutional attributes.

Democracy and the rule of law are usually addressed together in the agreement. First, they are both mentioned in the overall policy goal, along with the fight against poverty and hunger, which makes them appear rather important. But again we need to remember the qualifications. They are also addressed in the previously mentioned section in the “Strong Europe” chapter, which argues that democracy in bordering regions is in the interest of Germany and the EU. Both concepts are also emphasized in a section regarding relations with Islamic states.

References to human rights are much more common. They are first mentioned in the preamble, where it says that the protection of human rights is one of the German responsibilities in the world. They are also mentioned in a section regarding trade, declaring them a tool to alleviate tensions. Human rights are seen as a high priority within the EU, arguing that only a strict observation lets related efforts in other continents appear credible. The point made in the preamble is repeated again in chapter 7, which addresses human rights in several different sections. In fact, a dedicated section is dealing with the issue, declaring that “our goal is a human rights-consistent and coherent policy”. Notably, the section covers almost two pages, making it almost as long as the development policy section, which then addresses human rights several times again. Altogether, the protection of human rights appears like a major aspect of German policy.

One part of the development policy section states that cooperation with countries whose governments’ actions are systematically opposed to the German values is only supposed to take place if it can contribute to changes in that regard, if it is necessary for humanitarian reasons or serving purposes of peace and security.

Transparency is only addressed once in the development policy section, where it says that budget support might be used as an instrument to increase self-responsibility of recipients, given

that effective and transparent control of the utilization of the funds is secured. Issues of corruption are not directly addressed at all.

### *Trade*

The section on development policy only includes one direct reference to trade. As mentioned before, it states that Germany is striving for a development-oriented conclusion to the WTO negotiations and for a balancing of interests with development countries. The introduction of the section states that German policy is promoting the development of socially and ecologically oriented market economies. One might interpret this statement in the way that these efforts are supposed to help German trade through market access, but at this point, this seems to be a bit of a stretch. Possibly it is just a manifestation of the neoliberal trust in markets to contribute to higher living standards.

However, it has become clear that aid policy does not exist in a vacuum and that it is intertwined with several other aspects of policy. Since the existing literature has found quite some evidence for correlations between German aid and trade, it seems only appropriate to examine the agreement's other sections regarding the role of trade. After all, it does not seem very likely that policymakers would directly state that they are using aid to promote German exports. However, such a practice could be realized through the "German interests" loophole.

The opening section of the agreement's first chapter is titled "Strengthening Germany's Economy" and takes up 19 pages of the document. Its third subsection, dedicated to foreign trade, declares its "paramount importance" for the German economy. It argues that it demands a greater political engagement in international economic relations. Interestingly, instruments of development policy are mentioned as tools to alleviate foreign policy tension. Mentioning political tension, trade and development policy together under one headline appears quite odd. The paragraph does not provide any further information, but the interpretation that aid might be used to foster economic relations at the face of political tension is rather obvious.

Another section stipulates the support of medium enterprises in entering foreign markets. Regarding arms exports, the agreement promises adherence to strict political rules, but refers to a guideline that is not explained any further.

## *Migration*

The explanations directly related to foreign aid do not contain many policy prescriptions referring to migration or refugee movements. The section on humanitarian aid states that climate refugees are an increasingly important issue. The development policy section does not contain any direct references, but mentions climate protection and conflict prevention, which are possibly related.

The other chapters of the agreement contain several remarks on migration and the status and treatment of immigrants in Germany. Immigration is described as a chance that also brings challenges. It is stated that migrants are contributing considerably to the prosperity and cultural diversity and that Germany is in need of qualified foreign professionals. One section discusses migration within Europe and expresses the wish to decrease the incentives for migration by improving the living standards and social security systems in the countries of origin. This may not be directly relevant for this study, but shows that German policymakers do associate development with migration.

The topic of refugees is also addressed a couple of times. The agreement recognizes that the number of asylum seekers has increased considerably, but the dedicated section is largely dealing with domestic processes. However, three passages are standing out. The first one acknowledges that countries at the EU's external borders are confronted with a large number of refugees and demands more solidarity among EU states. The second passage promises the advocacy for the adherence to human rights and humanitarian standards in EU-coordinated measures for border security.

The third passage is key for this study. It suggests that issues of migration should be anchored more strongly and concretely in development policy with non-EU states. The declared goal is an improved management of migration flows and the combating of causes of involuntary migration and flight. It is intended that such measures lead to improved interaction between policies of migration, foreign relations and development. This statement makes it very clear that policymakers do not only associate migration with lower development on the European level, but outside of the continent as well. Also, they directly propose foreign aid as a tool to manage migration.

### *e) Findings*

The title of the chapter containing statements on foreign aid policy clearly suggest a moral obligation for the German aid program. However, it becomes clear from their placement that aid is seen as a foreign policy tool, which is connected with other foreign policy measures. Furthermore, the policymakers seem to give quite some importance to the African continent. Poverty and development are directly addressed in the general policy goal. However, there is the qualification regarding German interests. The same goes for aspects of good governance, particularly democracy and the rule of law. Humanitarian aid on the other hand is ostensibly only focused on recipient need. Moreover, the agreement puts a strong emphasis on the protection of human rights. Aid and trade are not related very much according to the document, at least not directly. Nonetheless, the importance of trade in general has been made very clear. Lastly, policymakers openly consider aid as a tool to manage migration.

If we compare these findings to the ones from the previous literature, the treatment of aid as a foreign policy tool is not very surprising. The placement of poverty, development, democracy and the rule of law in the overall policy goal is also not unexpected, as Riddell (2007) has pointed out that this is what donor governments usually claim. Without such wording, it would arguably be more difficult to find political support for aid. However, policymakers did not bother to hide their notion that aid is expected to foster or at least not intervene with German interests. The vague wording allows for virtually all kinds of other objectives to be included in the aid allocation process.

The general importance that policymakers give to trade already becomes clear due to its early placement in the agreement. Its high priority has literally been stated as well. Given that roughly 45% of the German GDP was generated through exports in 2013 (World Bank, 2021b), this is not very surprising either. Insofar, it does seem quite plausible that trade interests do find their way into development policy, especially since this practice has been confirmed multiple times in previous research.

Regarding migration, we do not even need to put two and two together. Policymakers made it clear that aid is supposed to be used to manage the migration flows. It is also notable that the agreement contains lengthy discussions of the treatment and status of immigrants in Germany, as well as the awareness of the increasing numbers of refugees. This makes sense, given that Germany has been the third most popular destination for migrants in 2010 (MPI, 2019b). The

combination of these findings allows for the interpretation that the topic of migration has a rather high priority for the policymakers.

Referring to the realist prediction, we can confirm Robert Gilpin's argument that development and poverty do matter. At least they do on paper. We can also agree that political motives matter. Regarding commercial interests, we do not have a clear statement, but the inclusion of trade interests in aid seems very well possible. What we cannot agree with yet is the hierarchy of these interests. After all, we need to remind ourselves that the coalition agreement is a declaration of intent. Therefore, expecting to find an easy confirmation of the hypothesis would be too much. This task is much more suitable for the quantitative analysis performed in the next chapter.

## **2) The Charter for the Future**

Besides the coalition agreement, a second key document guiding development policy is the "Charter for the Future" (Bohnet, 2017). To start off the analysis, the first section offers information on the creation of the document, as well as on its general characteristics. The second section provides an overview of the policy areas that are addressed, while the third one examines the document regarding the particular aspects of interest for this study. The last section then again presents and discusses the findings.

### ***a) Creation and Characteristics***

The creation of the Charter for the Future (from here on referred to as "Charter") was initiated by minister Müller (Scholz et al., 2016). It was presented to chancellor Merkel in November 2014 (BMZ, 2017). The document is the result of a participatory process that included the civil society, businesses, research institutions, churches, the federal states and several foundations (Bundesregierung, 2019). On the one hand, the Charter is supposed to guide German development policy (BMZ, 2017). On the other, it has contributed to raising awareness of the new content and requirements of Agenda 2030 and to setting the course for its implementation (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018b).

Since the document has been published by the BMZ, it cannot have the binding effect of federal law and is therefore best considered as a declaration of intent. Information regarding the period of validity of the document is not available. The relationship with other documents is also



unclear.<sup>27</sup> Since new documents have been released since 2014, one might assume that the Charter is outdated. However, the DAC still lists the Charter as a guiding document in Germany's Development Cooperation profile from 2020 (OECD, 2021b). Insofar, we must assume that the Charter co-exists with the more recent documents and is still in effect today.

Lastly, the Charter is not only directed at policymakers or actors on the implementation side of development cooperation. The foreword of the document stresses that “development policy begins with us at home in Germany” (BMZ, 2015, p. 3) and adds businesses and the civil society to the circle of the ones responsible for sustainable development. Insofar, the Charter proposes an approach that goes way beyond the traditional scope of foreign aid, as it includes private, non-aid-related actors and applies to behavior not only abroad, but also in Germany. Nonetheless, the document is available in English language.

### ***b) A Broad Concept of Development Policy***

The Charter is a document on development policy, so it goes without saying that its content is generally dealing with “development”. However, development is a rather difficult concept to grasp. As Todaro and Smith (2015) point out, it can mean different things to different people. The minimal definition provided by the authors proposes that the goals of development are better availability of basic life-sustaining goods, the improvement of living standards and an expansion of economic and social choices. This section provides insights on how the creators of the Charter understand the concept of development.

The foreword of the Charter supplies us with a general policy goal, stating that “Its principal concerns are food security and health; peace and freedom to make choices; the preservation of our environment and climate action; human rights and human dignity.” (BMZ, 2015, p. 3). This is elaborated upon by the eight priority areas that are treated in the document. Scholz (2014) points out that these include policy areas that are not usually part of development policy. Indeed, the list suggests a very broad understanding of the term “development”. Those priority areas<sup>28</sup> are:

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<sup>27</sup> A member of the parliament asked the government exactly this question, however, the response offered by a state secretary of the BMZ was not very revelatory (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018b).

<sup>28</sup> The list of priority areas was taken unchanged from the Charter (BMZ, 2015, p. 9).



1. Ensure a life of dignity for all everywhere
2. Protect natural resources and manage them sustainably
3. Combine economic growth, sustainability and decent work
4. Promote and ensure human rights and good governance
5. Build peace and strengthen human security
6. Respect and protect cultural and religious diversity
7. Drive transformational change through innovation, technology and digitalization
8. Forge a new global partnership and develop multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development

Every priority area has its own dedicated chapter in the Charter. Each chapter consists of an assessment of the current situation in the respective field, as well as a statement on the related goals for the future.

One characteristic that stands out is the general viewpoint from which individuals and countries are described. It does not adhere to a relationship between donors and recipients. Instead, it recognizes the effects of globalization and emphasizes the belief that all humans share a responsibility to contribute to sustainable development. For example, it states that the Charter “addresses all the questions that are fundamental to our lives, on which depends the very survival of humanity” (2015, p. 3).

### *c) Aspects of Interest*

This study pitches development, poverty and good governance in recipient countries against German interests of promoting exports and curbing migration. Because contemporary concepts of development include the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the quality of national institutions (Todaro & Smith, 2015), one could correctly consider poverty and good governance under the general term of development. However, this would not be beneficial for this section of this study, since then everything in the Charter is more or less related to development. Insofar, we must consider development in one of its narrower definitions. That is, economic development, or more precisely, economic growth (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

This section will now assess how salient our aspects of interest are in the Charter. First, the document is examined regarding poverty, economic development and good governance. The attention then turns to trade and migration. The last subsection presents and discusses the results.

### *Poverty and Economic Development*

During a speech to the German parliament, in which Müller announced the initiation of the Charta, the minister declared that “absolute poverty and hunger are the biggest inequities” (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014). Correspondingly, these issues are addressed very early in the Charter. The goals presented in the first chapter promise a focus on the poor and vulnerable. It is stated that ending extreme poverty and hunger by 2030 is the top priority and that income inequality ought to be reduced. Further, it is proposed to develop new indicators that go beyond income and include other dimensions of poverty, such as health and education, which are also addressed in the chapter.

Poverty is addressed in several other chapters as well. The second chapter postulates that the rights of the poor need to be considered in efforts related to climate change management. The fourth chapter argues that unequal opportunities in terms of gender equality are greatly contributing to poverty. In the seventh chapter, it is argued that technology can contribute to the fight against hunger and poverty.

In the third chapter, it is recognized that economic growth has contributed to prosperity and alleviated poverty. However, it is argued that economic development should not be measured only through GDP growth. Instead, the document proposes a concept of economic development that takes social and environmental aspects into account. It is stated that for example “decent jobs” (2015, p. 27) can contribute to the eradication of poverty and inequality. The need for economically sustainable growth is also stressed in the second chapter.

### *Good Governance*

The Charter contains several references to good governance and its more specific aspects. In fact, the title of the second chapter directly stipulates the promotion of good governance and human rights. Especially the latter term is used extensively throughout the document. The second chapter promises a commitment to “working ever harder to respect, protect and promote civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights in a comprehensive way” (BMZ, 2015, p. 34). Guaranteeing the respect for human rights ought to be the overarching objective of German policy. It is also argued that human rights are the “cornerstone to all development” (BMZ, 2015, p. 32) and that they are key to sustainability.

There are also several references to democracy and the rule of law. It is argued that states can only guarantee human rights if they are functioning under a democratic rule of law. Poor

governance and corruption are described as detrimental to sustainable development. Further, it is stated that German development cooperation can only contribute to the basic requirements of good governance and the guarantee of human rights if it supports its partner countries in building the appropriate public institutions.

Good governance is further addressed in several places outside of the dedicated chapter. In the first chapter, it is argued that poor governance and authoritarian regimes often stand in the way of development and that authoritarian structures are regularly disregarding the needs of the poor. A similar point is made regarding human rights. Human rights are also addressed in the third chapter, where it is argued that they need to be protected during the process of economic development. They are further mentioned in the context of migration in the fifth chapter, as well as in the sixth, where they are brought up in the context of culture and religion.

### *Trade*

The Charter does not pay all that much attention to the topic of trade. In chapter one, it is argued that policies that are supposed to promote a life in dignity – under which the document discusses poverty – must transcend policy areas, one of which is trade policy. It is stated that industrialized states ought to design their international trade policies in a way that it reduces poverty and environmental damage. A similar point is made in chapter two, which deals with the protection of the natural environment.

Specifically referring to Germany, the third chapter states that the country, as a trading nation, “should promote all trade and foreign direct investment regulations that support sustainable growth, respect human rights and protect the environment” (BMZ, 2015, p. 29). The chapter dealing with good governance declares that the German people recognizes the impact of its actions on human rights in its trade policy.

### *Migration*

References to migrants and refugees are similarly scarce. However, the issue appears a bit more salient because chapter one includes two paragraphs dedicated to those topics. In those, it is pointed out that the number of displaced people is the highest since the end of World War II and that many of which are located in states that are recipients of German aid. In the following, the importance of combatting the causes of displacement is underlined. Furthermore, countries that host large numbers of refugees are supposed to receive support. Finally, it says that Europe

ought to implement a migration policy that “allows people to live with dignity” (BMZ, 2015, p. 17), referring to the circumstances of the refugees in southern Europe.

The second chapter repeats the human rights dimension of displacement and also recognizes that besides political and economic conflicts, climate change and the struggle for natural resources are important factors. Lastly, chapter five, concerned with peace building and human security, states that the German government should “work towards a German and European policy on migration that takes due account of human rights and fosters development” (BMZ, 2015, p. 40).

#### *d) Findings*

Economic development and especially poverty are clearly a high priority in the Charter for the Future. This is due to the fact that poverty is addressed in its first chapter and furthermore, references to poverty are found in several other chapters. This notion is supported by the name of the first chapter. Placing poverty under the term dignity gives the issue a lot of weight through the rhetoric. Economic growth also seems important, given that it is addressed in the first chapter, as well as in the dedicated third chapter. Good governance also seems to have a high priority for the authors of the document, as there is a dedicated chapter and the topic is addressed in several different contexts. However, in the ranking of priorities, it comes only fourth, after the protection of the environment and issues related to economic growth. Nonetheless, the topic is very salient throughout the Charter.

Trade on the other hand does not seem as important. Related statements regularly refer to its role for the eradication of poverty, its contribution to economic growth and its environmental dimensions. Migration appears more salient than trade. However, related references are usually in the context of human rights. Though we must not forget that one aspect that has been mentioned is the fight against the causes of displacement.

Since the Charter was published while the coalition agreement of the 18th legislative period was still in effect, we may draw some comparisons. Both documents put an emphasis on poverty, development and good governance, particularly on human rights. Trade and migration however are addressed more carefully in the Charter. Also, the qualification regarding the German interests is missing. This is not so surprising, since it is labeled “development policy”. It is not verbally referred to as a global structural policy, but its wide scope clearly reflects this viewpoint.

All in all, the Charter promises a rather altruistic approach to development policy. While Germany would surely benefit from its implementation in some ways, key areas like poverty and good governance are obviously problematic outside of German soil. However, it has been pointed out that the Charter is not binding for all actors of the German aid regime (Moreira da Silva, 2018). In its foreword, minister Müller states that it “serves as a benchmark against which we can all be held accountable” (BMZ, 2015, p. 3), but this appears to be pure rhetoric since there is no evidence of the Charter being legally binding for any political actor. It has also been pointed out in the foreword of the Charter that the responsibility of the implementation lies with the BMZ, but as it has been shown above, the ministry only administers a relatively small amount of German ODA. Furthermore, the document includes many policy areas that are beyond its competencies. It must also be noted here that the Charter spreads the responsibility of implementation across the general public and not only to policymakers, so this statement appears a bit incoherent.

Another critical aspect of the Charter is its vagueness. It has even been pointed out in its foreword that it “lacks clear targets and a practical plan for its implementation” (BMZ, 2015, p. 5). This has also been recognized by different commentators. For example, Scholz (2014) points out that the document does not indicate with which states exactly Germany ought to cooperate in the future. Bohnet (2019) too criticizes the lack of clear statements.

At the face of these two criticisms, it remains questionable how strongly the Charter is actually guiding German development policy. If we consider this in relation to the 18th coalition agreement, we may argue that the characteristics of the Charter very well allow for the consideration of “German interests” in development policy.

## **II) The 19th Legislative Period, 2018-2021**

This section will survey the most important policy documents from the subsequent legislative period. The first one is again the coalition agreement, the second is a strategy paper by the BMZ, called Development Policy 2030.

### **1) Coalition Agreement of the 19th Legislative Period**

The purpose of this section is to analyze the successor of the previously examined coalition agreement. Parallel to the previous section, it includes an introduction to the background and structure of the agreement, which is followed by a general analysis, before the attention turns to our four topics of interest. The last subsection again presents and discusses the findings.

### *a) Background and Structure*

The coalition agreement of the 19th legislative period carries the long title “A New Departure for Europe – A New Dynamic for Germany – A New Cohesion for Our Country”<sup>29</sup> and was signed in March 2018 (CDU, CSU, SPD, 2018). The parties were the same that formed the previous government. The CDU had won the majority again, this time with just 26.8% (Bundeswahlleiter, 2017), and established the same coalition as before. This marked the beginning of Angela Merkel’s fourth term in the office as chancellor (Bundesregierung, 2021), BMZ minister Müller kept his office as well (BMZ, 2021d).

One circumstance that needs to be noted in the context of this study is the refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016. In those years, Germany was confronted with numbers of asylum seekers that have been unprecedented since the early 1990s (Worbs et al., 2019). Reportedly, almost 700,000 Syrian nationals resided in Germany towards the end of 2017. This development was subject to quite some controversy, both in the public discourse and on the political level, and led the government (still under the previous coalition agreement) to make several decisions regarding migration control (Blätte et al., 2019). Naturally, the topic of refugees remained an important issue during the 2017 elections (Korte, 2019).

Structured a bit differently than its predecessor, the new agreement consists of 14 chapters. Again, the last chapter is concerned with the operation of the coalition and the parliamentary parties, while the others are dealing with all kinds of policy. This time, the main chapter of interest is the twelfth one, bearing a similar name as the equivalent from the previous agreement, being called “Germany’s Responsibility for Peace, Freedom and Security in the World”<sup>30</sup>. Three subchapters are directly related to foreign aid. One is concerned with bilateral cooperation, another with human rights, crisis prevention and humanitarian aid, while the last one is termed “Development Policy for a Just Globalization”<sup>31</sup>. Added together, these three subchapters make up about nine pages of the 175-page agreement.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa - Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland - Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land“. Instead of “cohesion“, one might also translate “Zusammenhalt“ to “bond“ or “solidarity“.

<sup>30</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Deutschlands Verantwortung für Frieden, Freiheit und Sicherheit in der Welt“.

<sup>31</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Entwicklungspolitik für eine gerechte Globalisierung“.

<sup>32</sup> The higher page count of the agreement is at least partially caused by a different formatting. Therefore, the it is not comparable to the one of the previous agreement.



The title of chapter 12 may again be seen as an expression of moral obligation. But similarly to the last agreement, security and foreign policy-related topics are also addressed in the chapter. There are sections on European foreign and security policy, international alliances and partnerships, disarmament and arms export policy and again a section on the German armed forces. Interestingly, the chapter also includes a section on foreign trade policy and foreign cultural and educational policy. We may again interpret the placement of those topics under one headline as an expression of aid policy being a global structural policy, while the reference to foreign trade was not included in the last agreement.

### ***b) General Aid Policy and Relations with Africa***

The preamble of the agreement does not include a direct reference to aid policy this time. However, it includes a brief paragraph stating that German international engagement intends to make a larger contribution to improve living standards on the global level and to restore and secure peace. An introductory section mentioning some key points from every chapter promises increased international cooperation, a sustainable development policy and increased funding for related efforts.

The introduction to chapter 12 stipulates a commitment to a peaceful, stable and just world order and lists development cooperation as one of the instruments to contribute to this goal, along with diplomacy, cooperation, dialogue, and the armed forces. The end of the paragraph includes a similar qualification as the previous agreement: “Our policy is based on our values and serves our interests”<sup>33</sup>. It also recognizes that the increase of global crises poses a challenge for German foreign, security and development policy and declares the supply of humanitarian aid in cases of war, civil war, hunger and hardship as a “political self-understanding”. The section also repeats the increase of funding. Another one expresses the need to align policy with other EU states. Generally, statements on humanitarian and development aid are blended together with security and foreign policy-related topics.

The subchapter specifically dedicated to development policy begins with the rather vague statement that globalization ought to be shaped equitably and that the gap between rich and poor must not become wider. This is followed by references to the G7 and G20 summits and

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<sup>33</sup> Translation by the author. Original phrase “Unsere Politik basiert auf unseren Werten und dient unseren Interessen“.



Agenda 2030. A later paragraph once again expresses the intention to reach the goal to provide 0.7% of the GDP as ODA. The corresponding section also promises efforts to meet the goal of providing 0.15 to 0.2% of the GDP for LDCs. However, a clear-cut, general policy goal, as it was formulated in the previous agreement, is nowhere to be found.

The African continent is addressed in several different chapters of the agreement. One section declares the intention to increase general cooperation by adhering to a coherent Africa-strategy. Another one refers to the Marshallplan with Africa, which intends to create more opportunities and jobs on the continent. It is also mentioned in the contexts of emerging markets and flight.

A dedicated section in chapter 12, under the headline of bilateral and regional cooperation, declares the partnership with African countries a “central quest of our time”. It argues that alleviating the wealth and development gap is in the German interest due to considerations of economics, security and migration. These topics are addressed several times in different contexts throughout the agreement. Latin America is only referred to three times, while the African continent is mentioned in more than ten different places. Overall, the impression is that Africa is quite important to the policymakers.

### *c) Aspects of Interest*

In parallel to the analysis of the previous coalition agreement, the focus will now again shift to the areas of interest particularly related to this study. The first section examines the document in regards to the role of poverty and development in German aid, while the second one is focused on good governance. The third section is concerned with trade, the fourth one is dealing with the issue of migration. The last section again presents and discusses the findings.

#### *Poverty and Development*

As already stated above, the preamble of the agreement includes the rather vague intention to make larger contributions to improve the living standards on the global level. The following summary promises a sustainable development policy. To these rather imprecise statements we can add the intention to “shape globalization in the spirit of Agenda 2030, which offers a life in dignity and security for all human beings”.

A clearer statement is found in a paragraph of the section specifically dedicated to development policy. Under the headline “For a World Without Hunger and Poverty” it is declared that

“Overcoming hunger and poverty world is a central goal of our development policy”<sup>34</sup>. The following elaboration puts rural areas in the focus of nutrition-related efforts. Poverty is not addressed again. One feature that stands out is the use of an indefinite article – it implies that there are other central goals, but it is not specified what those are. Structurally, the placement of said paragraph is also interesting. The development section is divided into ten different subsections, the one referring to hunger and poverty is only the fifth. Before that, the section addresses fair trade, the Marshallplan with Africa, gender equality, as well as social security and health. Naturally, those areas are not unrelated to development, but given the early and clear statement in the previous coalition agreement, this placement is quite noticeable.

The subsection on the Marshallplan emphasizes the role of medium enterprises and start-up companies on the continent for “more chances and humane labor”. Next, equality between men and women is declared a basis of German development policy. The next subsection stipulates the implementation of universal social security systems and the investment in research on poverty-related diseases.

#### *Good Governance*

The term “good governance” again is directly used twice in the agreement. The subsection dedicated to Africa under the headline of bilateral and regional cooperation mentions the requirement for German and European policymakers to find “new approaches for good governance”. The wording is again rather vague and does not clarify what this means in detail. The introduction to the development policy section declares good governance in the partner countries a prerequisite for the success of development. Just like in the previous agreement, a definition of the term is not included.

While the terms “democracy” or “democratic” are used over 20 times in the context of domestic and European policy, it is not mentioned a single time in the development policy section. The only reference in chapter 12 is found in the subchapter dealing with human rights, crisis prevention and humanitarian aid, where the coalition positions itself against the restriction of civil societies and promises to advocate for democracy, the rule of law and the adherence to human rights.

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<sup>34</sup> Translation by the author. Original phrase: “Die Überwindung von Hunger und Armut in der Welt ist ein wesentliches Ziel unserer Entwicklungspolitik“.

The rule of law also does not receive much more attention. Besides the reference just mentioned, it is only addressed in a foreign policy context regarding China, Turkey and the Western Balkans.

Human rights are mentioned more often, but the issue does not quite reach the salience it had in the previous agreement. The mentioning in a dedicated subchapter has already been pointed out. The advocacy for human rights is also underlined in the summary of the key points of chapter 12 at the beginning of the agreement. They are also given importance regarding the treatment of asylum seekers. In the development policy section, they are only mentioned in the context of fair trade. Nonetheless, when it comes to foreign policy, human rights receive a lot more attention than democracy and the rule of law.

### *Trade*

The topic of trade is much more salient in the development policy section than it was in the previous agreement. In its introduction, the need for a fair trade policy is declared a necessity to “tackle the future global challenges”, along with public funding and sustainable private investment that “fosters development”.

Notably, the first subsection under the development policy headline is dedicated to fair trade. It points out the necessity for clear rules and emphasizes the role of UN and other international organizations, such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, the WTO and the ILO. It also includes a statement regarding the WTO which is similar to the one from the previous agreement. The second paragraph expresses the intent for Germany to be “a vanguard for fair trade policy with Africa”. In that sense, trade agreements between the EU and African states are supposed to be examined regarding their potential to serve economic and social development on the continent. It also mentions social, human rights and ecological standards in this context.

We cannot rule out that policymakers have commercial self-interest in mind when it comes to trade. But naturally, they would not clearly state this. Judging the fair trade section from a developmental perspective, it supports the previously made conjecture that policymakers believe that functioning markets and trade contribute to the process. But even if we assume that this is true, there might still be benefits for the German economy.

Chapter 12 includes another subchapter related to trade. Under the headline “Foreign Trade Policy and Foreign Culture and Educational Policy”<sup>35</sup>, the coalition states that Germany’s economic power is the foundation of its prosperity and at the same time a prerequisite for its importance on the international level. It continues that the strength of the German economy is rooted in its competitiveness and international interconnectedness.

Unsurprisingly, foreign trade is again rather salient in the rest of the agreement. Even through the German economy is only addressed in the fourth chapter of the document, there are several references. For instance, Germany is declared a “foreign trade-oriented” country. Secured access to raw materials is also termed a key factor for the economy. A section dedicated to foreign trade expresses the wish for free and fair trade and emphasizes the role of international organizations in this regard. It also mentions the intention to develop more instruments for the promotion of foreign trade, especially referring to emerging markets in Africa.

### *Migration*

The development policy section includes a very clear statement related to migration. In a dedicated subsection, the agreement asserts that “existential emergencies lead to flight and migration” and then lists several intended methods to combat such outcomes. Those are the “alleviation of acute and structural causes of flight”, contributions to reconstruction and the return of refugees and the support of refugee-receiving countries. All in all, the paragraph conveys quite a negative sentiment regarding flight and migration to Germany.

The issue of flight and migration is also very salient in the rest of the agreement. In fact, it the eighth chapter is dedicated to immigration, named “Steering Immigration - Demanding and Supporting Integration”<sup>36</sup>. The first subchapter contains explanations regarding Germany’s refugee policy. It promises the compliance with legal and humanitarian commitments, but also points out certain limits regarding the absorptive capacity of the country. Referring to the developments in 2015, it postulates a management and limitation of migration to Germany. The section also mentions development policy and humanitarian aid as instruments to combat the causes of flight. The second subchapter appears in a different light, as it underlines Germany’s

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<sup>35</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Außenwirtschaftspolitik sowie Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik“.

<sup>36</sup> Translation by the author. Original title: “Zuwanderung Steuern - Integration Fordern und Unterstützen“.

need for suitable and qualified professionals from abroad. The rest of the chapter is dealing with integration into German society and procedures regarding migrants and refugees.

The preamble of the agreement promises a better steering and organization of migration, as a response to the international migration movements. The challenges are also mentioned in the context of the partnership and solidarity between the European countries. The preceding summary of the key points of the agreement speak of improvements in development cooperation to limit migration. The topic is also made a priority regarding the funding of research in the social sciences. Finally, the section regarding relations with Africa points out that the development of the continent is in the German interest in terms of migration.

#### *d) Findings*

Once again, the title of the chapter that includes positioning on foreign aid policy suggests a moral obligation to the efforts. However, the “responsibility” has been specified, as the title includes the terms “peace”, “freedom” and “security”. “Development” or “poverty” are not included, which would have stressed the importance of those issues on the global level. Aid is unsurprisingly still seen as a foreign policy tool, which is intertwined with other aspects of relations with other states and regions. Africa as a continent also still seems to be rather important to the policymakers.

The late placement of the section dealing with poverty and hunger make those issues appear less salient than in the previous agreement, where they were addressed very early and clearly in the general poverty goal. Furthermore, they are described only as “a” central topic of Germany’s development policy and are therefore clearly not “the” central topic. The issue of development is addressed, but the references appear rather vague. All in all, it appears that poverty and development have lost some salience when compared to the previous document.

A similar point may be made regarding aspect of good governance. Democracy is only referred to once in the aid-related sections, the same goes for the rule of law. Just like in the previous document, human rights receive more attention. But the lack of a general policy goal which includes aspects of good governance makes this issue seem less important.

The topic of trade on the other hand has received increased attention. Placing it first in the aid policy section is quite a statement. We need to keep in mind that it is named “fair trade”, but the qualification does not distract much from the commercial focus. It has been made clear previously that foreign trade is quite important for the German economy. Of course, this didn’t

change since the formulation of the last coalition agreement. In fact, the share of the GDP generated through exports has increased to about 47% in 2017 (World Bank, 2021b). Insofar, it is not surprising that policymakers generally pay a lot of attention to this matter. However, there remains the question of how we should judge its salience in the context of development policy. As pointed out before, neoliberal critics of aid tend to mistrust government interventions and prefer market solutions to foster development (Klees, 2010). Possibly, the salience of trade in the development policy is evidence for Germany policymakers agreeing to this very mindset. If they truly believe in the neoliberal doctrine, it would mean that development through market mechanisms is a priority. On the other hand, the emphasis on trade could also be a disguised attempt to promote exports to recipients of German aid. The quantitative analysis in the next chapter will show whether or not major importers do receive more aid, which may contribute to a more qualified statement on this issue.

Our last subject of interest, migration, has also gained a drastic increase of attention. While aid was already seen as an instrument to manage migration in the last agreement, the topic has been addressed directly under a dedicated headline in the development policy section. The wish to reduce the number of refugees coming to Germany, as well as having currently present refugees return to their home countries, is expressed very clearly. The importance is further underlined by the fact that the agreement contains a dedicated chapter for the topic. Given the impact of the refugee crisis in the two years prior to the elections, this is hardly surprising. Despite the great attention the topic had received in the public discourse, the governing parties did not address it much in their election campaigns (Blätte et al., 2019). They received the lowest percentages of votes since the foundation of the Federal Republic, while the percentage for the right-wing populist AfD (Alternative für Deutschland<sup>37</sup>) drastically increased (Niedermayer, 2017). At that background, a more restrictive positioning regarding migration may very well be interpreted as an attempt to regain the lost political support.

If we look at the big picture, it seems that trade and migration have definitely gained attention when compared to the last agreement. Poverty, development and good governance on the other hand seem to have lost importance. While the coalition agreement is still only a declaration of intent, it does seem like the self-interested motives are more salient than the ones corresponding

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<sup>37</sup> The name translates to “Alternative for Germany”.



to recipient need in terms of poverty, development and good governance. However, given the weak legal character of the agreement, we cannot go as far as confirming the realist prediction.

## **2) Development Policy 2030**

Besides the coalition agreement and the Charter for the Future, German development policy is guided by a strategy paper issued by the BMZ, named “Development Policy 2030: New Challenges – New Solutions” (OECD, 2021b). The first section offers some brief background information and discusses some characteristics of the document. The second section examines its general concept and within the role of Africa, while the third is dedicated to the four aspects of interest for this study. The last section presents and discusses the findings.

### ***a) Background, Characteristics and Structure***

The strategy paper was published in October 2018 (BMZ, 2018) and according to minister Müller, it is “an overall concept for German development policy until 2030” (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018a). Müller also explained that the document does not contain any concrete measures and that is supposed to give “impulses for the future and serve as a basis for a corresponding discussion”.

Just like the Charter for the future, the paper does not have any direct binding effect, since it does not constitute any kind of law. We may therefore consider it a declaration of intent as well. Unlike in the case of the Charter, the target audience of the document does not become very clear. It continuously uses the term “we”, but does not specify who is meant. It could be decision-makers within the BMZ, or, as German aid is administered outside of the dedicated ministry as well, policymakers in general. However, the paper does not refer specifically to the general public as the Charter for the Future does.

Lastly, it may be noted that the strategy paper presents itself rather short. It only consists of 26 pages, divided into eight chapters. Given the large headlines used and the number of graphics in the document, it contains much less information than the Charter for the Future. Just like the Charter, the paper is available in English language.

### ***b) General Concept and the Role of Africa***

The first chapter sets the tone of the paper by pointing out the chances and challenges brought by globalization. It preaches sustainability in its economic, ecological and social dimensions and mentions the “right to a life in dignity” (BMZ, 2018, p. 2) already known from the Charter



for the Future. There is also a reference to the SDGs and their overarching goal of eradicating poverty by 2030. Lastly, it picks up on the German responsibility that was also present in all previously analyzed documents.

Chapter two offers a list of five “megatrends” (BMZ, 2018, p. 3), which ought to be addressed by the German development efforts. Those are demographic development, resource scarcity, climate change, digital technology and interdependence, as well as displacement and migration.

The third chapter introduces different instruments of foreign aid. The introduction includes a rather well-hidden statement: “Development policy must be perceived as an integral component of our economic, security and foreign policy interest in building and maintaining peace, justice and respect for human rights.” (BMZ, 2018, p. 5). While peace, justice and human rights are of course conducive to development in recipient countries, the idea of doing so to foster German political interests does not sit all too well with the previously asserted “German responsibility”.

Chapter four is the longest one of the paper. Under the title “Making globalization fair” (BMZ, 2018, p. 13) it lists ten focal areas of German aid, which, as far as they are relevant to this study, will be discussed in the next section. Other chapters are dealing with international partnerships on the donor side, particularly with aid through the EU and multilateral organizations, and development finance. Of course, in the latter one it is stated once again that the industrialized countries ought to provide 0.7% of their GDP as ODA.

Lastly, one aspect that quickly meets the eye is the strong emphasis on the importance of the African continent. There are a few references to Asia and Latin America, but Africa is generally much more salient. The terms “Asia” and “Latin America” are used five times in the whole document, while “Africa” is used a total of 56 times. Specific examples are usually referring to the latter continent. In fact, the fifth chapter is dealing with the implementation of the so-called Marshallplan with Africa, where it says that “Africa will have a decisive impact on Europe’s future” (BMZ, 2018, p. 11).

### *c) Aspects of Interest*

The four aspects particularly relevant for this study will now be examined in the same fashion as it has been done for the Charter for the Future. The first subsection is dedicated to poverty and economic development, the second one is concerned with aspects of good governance. The attention then shifts to the role of trade and migration in the document.

## *Poverty and Economic Development*

Besides the mentioning of the SDGs in the introductory chapter, which aim to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, one needs to go quite far into the paper to find any direct references to poverty. There are none in the second chapter, which describes the five “megatrends” that are changing our planet, even though one might interpret the description of global population growth as a challenge in a poverty-related way. Chapter three underlines the success that aid had for the eradication of poverty in the past and demands an increase of funding to further these positive results.

A direct reference to the eradication of poverty is found in the chapter dealing with the Marshallplan with Africa, arguing that 22 of the 25 poorest countries are located in the continent. Also, in chapter six, where the ten focal points of German aid are discussed, the first issue that is addressed is the eradication of absolute poverty and food security. However, the emphasis is on the latter aspect. The following two priority areas are education and health, which are considered human capital (Todaro & Smith, 2015) and may therefore also be considered in this context. Hunger, health, primary education and extreme poverty are again referred to in the chapter concerned with development finance.

The eighth priority is directly referring to economic development. It is pointed out that Africa will have a large demand for jobs in the future and postulates certain measures that support the African economies to alleviate this issue. This is also addressed in the second chapter dealing with the “megatrends”, along with the challenges of increasing populations. In the chapter which lists different instruments of aid, it is pointed out under the headline of Fair Trade that globalization and digitalization have contributed to economic development and that investment and trade can help with the eradication of poverty. The same point is made in the chapter on development finance, even though the role of private investment is underlined here.

The chapter specifically dedicated to Africa makes economic development appear very important. In a graph describing the approach towards the continent with three pillars, the first one names economy, trade, employment, vocational education, financing, which are all related to economic progress. Lastly, economic development is mentioned in several other sections that are concerned with different topics, particularly education, trade, climate change and also migration.

### *Good Governance*

Good governance is also one of the ten focal points of German aid, being discussed there in the ninth place. It is argued that the amount of money illegally diverted from Africa every year is about the same that the continent receives in aid. Furthermore, good governance is described as both a goal and a precondition of development policy. The document does not provide any definition for the term. All explanations regarding the approach to the topic are related to fiscal policy and corruption.

However, different aspects of good governance are addressed in other places of the paper. Most notably, the last of the ten focal points is human rights and women's empowerment. There it is declared that "development policy is human rights policy" (BMZ, 2018, p. 21), that human rights ought to be implemented at the global level and that they must not only exist on paper. Gender equality is supposed to receive special attention in this context. They are also addressed in several other chapters of the paper. For instance, in the introduction it says that "both good sense and responsibility dictate that we should preserve and protect life and creation and guarantee fundamental human rights" (BMZ, 2018, p. 2).

Democracy and the rule of law do not receive as much attention. Democracy is only mentioned once in the document. In the chapter dedicated to the cooperation with Africa, it is mentioned first in the pillar concerned with good governance. Other aspects noted there are the rule of law, human rights, political participation and the fight against corruption. The rule of law is mentioned again in the chapter discussing aid instruments, along with the fight against corruption and the observance of human rights. There it is argued that it is key for success that partner countries make progress in these issue areas. Corruption is also addressed in a few other sections of the paper, making it appear more salient than democracy.

### *Trade*

Trade, or more precisely, fair trade, is the seventh focal point mentioned in the sixth chapter, together in one headline with digital technologies. It is argued that export revenue is the most important source for external financing for almost all developing countries and that it is key for self-sustaining economic development that this trade happens on fair terms. The section also demands a reform of the WTO. The same point is made in the chapter that discusses the instruments of German aid.

There are also references to trade in three of the five “megatrends” outlined in the second chapter. Under the headline of demographic development, it is argued that developing countries need a “new, smart infrastructure” (BMZ, 2018, p. 3) for trade and other issue areas. In the context of digital technology and interdependence, it is argued that global markets and trade links create opportunities and jobs, but that regulations and standards are needed to ensure the respect of human rights and to make global value chains equitable. The paragraph on displacement and migration also mentions trade, as improved relations in this regard are seen as a way to secure a future for people in their home countries, as they would otherwise migrate to Europe.

The topic of trade is addressed in several other places in the paper. As already mentioned above, it is listed in the first pillar of the graph that describes the approach towards Africa discussed in the fifth chapter. In the introduction of the following one, it is argued that fair trade is necessary for “the people of the world to live together in peace” (BMZ, 2018, p. 13). Again, the requirement for social and ecological rules is stressed here. The point is repeated in the seventh chapter, which addresses the need for internationalization of aid, as well as in the eighth, which is dealing with development finance.

### *Migration*

Unlike the aspects we have examined so far, migration is not among the ten focal points postulated in chapter six. However, the topic is still a very salient one, since there is essentially an entire chapter dedicated to it. The title of chapter four is referring to aid to areas struck by crisis and conflict, but this is rather misleading. There are references to humanitarian need in such regions, but the chapter is largely concerned with migration. Notably, this is the second-longest chapter, after the one outlining the ten focal points.

The humanitarian aspect is referring to emergency aid, particularly food security. But the authors did not attempt to hide the objective of related measures, stating that the goal is “to give people reasons to stay, reasons to return and hope for the future” (BMZ, 2018, p. 7). Certainly, the measures listed to achieve this goal are very much related to development in the affected regions (e.g. developing infrastructure, education and training, promotion of the private sector and good governance), but that doesn’t take away from the stated goal of curbing migration with aid.

Also relevant for this study is the regional focus outlined in the chapter, which lies on the MENA region. However, it is stated that the expansion of one particular program is supposed to be extended to go further into Africa. The chapter also mentions so-called “Advice Centres” (BMZ, 2018, p. 10), that are supposed to be contact points for locals, refugees and return migrants in the partner countries. Notably, six of the ten centers are located on the African continent.<sup>38</sup>

The importance of the matter is further underlined by the fact that flight and migration are one of the “megatrends” described in the second chapter. After stating that 85% of which are staying in developing countries, it is warned that a lack of action would result in millions of people migrating to Europe. The reasons mentioned are related to development and poverty, security, but also climate change. The latter point is picked up again in the chapter dealing with Africa, where it says that up to 85 million climate refugees are expected by 2050.

#### *d) Findings*

The role of poverty in the strategy paper is a rather peculiar one. On the one hand, the issue is made top priority among the ten focal points of German hand. On the other, one needs to go halfway into the document to find this clear statement. Placing the issue in the introductory chapter would have made it seem much more important. Nonetheless, the adherence to the MDGs mentioned there imply that poverty at least should be a focus. Aspects related to economic development are much more common in the paper. Good governance is the ninth focal point. Given that it is described as a precondition for development, that is surprisingly late. Regarding its different dimensions, human rights clearly seem much more important than democracy and the rule of law.

Trade, or fair trade, seems to play a key role for the policymakers. It is the seventh of the ten focal points and besides that, the topic is addressed in many other sections of the document. We may point out that trade is viewed in rather altruistic terms here, since the idea is that global trade should be recalibrated in a way that developing countries can benefit more. Migration too appears to be quite an important concern. This is clearly visible due to the fact that an entire

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<sup>38</sup> The African countries with such facilities are Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt (still in planning), Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria.

chapter is dedicated to the issue. The focus here is generally on the MENA region and also on sub-Saharan Africa, which is not surprising, given the regional proximity.

In light of the coalition agreement, the emphasis on the wish to curb migration with aid is not very surprising. Its salience may very well be interpreted as an extension of the statements made there. The same argument seems valid for (fair) trade. It was mentioned first in the agreement, and also plays an important role in the strategy paper. Even though poverty was made the first of the ten focal points, it slid a bit into the background, given the salience of migration and trade. This sits quite well with the vagueness of related statements in the coalition agreement and the fact that it was “a” priority but not “the” priority. The salience of human rights is very consistent with the previous findings, just like democracy and the rule of law clearly appearing less important.

Altogether, it is debatable how altruistic the approach outlined in the strategy paper is. The prevention of migration appears very much like a self-interested motive. On the other hand, one might argue that development in emigration-prone regions is still development. The focus on facilitating trade may also be interpreted ambiguously. It might foster economic growth in developing countries, which could translate into improved living conditions. However, it could also be understood as Germany trying to maintain its role as a trading giant. A truly altruistic approach would arguably be more focused on extreme poverty. The focus on human rights appears commendable, if it in fact translates into policy outcomes. Lastly, we must keep in mind that the paper stated that development policy ought to serve German economic, foreign and security policy interests.

Just like the Charter for the Future, the strategy paper has also been subject to some criticism. For example, a development policy spokesperson from the German Green Party lamented that the concept neglects the poorest countries and that migration should not be a part of development policy (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2018). Bohnet (2019) made a similar point, arguing that too many NICs receive German aid and generally questioning the approach of attempting to curb migration with aid.



### III) Results

This chapter has examined four key policy documents from the 18th and 19th legislative period regarding the salience of poverty and development, good governance, trade and migration. It has also investigated the role of the African continent in the context.

First of all, the examination clearly supports the argument that German policymakers view development policy as a global structural policy. That is, development policy is inseparable from other dimensions of foreign policy, such as economics and security. We may also note that at least on paper, German policymakers dedicate a substantial amount of attention to the African continent. Insofar, they have followed chancellor Merkel's stipulation.

Second, poverty and development appeared like a high priority in the 18th legislative period. They were very salient in the Charter for the Future and were also included in the overall policy goal stated in the coalition agreement. However, we must not forget the qualification referring to "German interests" in the latter document. In the 19th legislative period, it seems that poverty has lost a little bit of salience in the corresponding documents. It was addressed first among the ten focal points outlined in the strategy paper, but there were not too many other references. In the coalition agreement, poverty and development were described as "a" central topic, but they were not included in a clear policy goal as it has been the case before. Even though references to development were rather vague in the agreement, the concept appeared much more salient in the strategy paper.

Third, direct references to the term "good governance" were quite scarce in the examined documents. However, the disaggregation into some of the aspects of the concept delivered some nuanced results. Democracy and the rule of law were included in the overall policy goal of the first coalition agreement, but the protection of human rights received considerably more attention. The inquiry into the Charter for the Future painted a similar picture. Democracy and the rule of law did not receive too much consideration in the second coalition agreement, while human rights appeared like a more important issue. The same applies to the strategy paper. Overall, the findings support the argument that democracy and the rule of law might have lost a bit of importance over time, while the protection of human rights appeared like a high priority throughout.

Fourth, trade is generally an important topic in both coalition agreements. The first agreement did not discuss trade very much in the context of development policy. The second one however



shows a vast increase of attention to the issue, underlined by the fact that it is discussed first in the development policy section. In parallel, trade was also referred to much more in the strategy paper than it was in the Charter. Insofar, we may argue that trade has become a higher priority in the 19th legislative period. However, the emphasis is on *fair* trade. It is framed as a tool to contribute to the development of the recipient countries. Therefore, based on these findings, we cannot validly argue that Germany is attempting to boost its economy with aid, but finding a stated confirmation of that argument was not expected either.

Fifth, much more explicit statements were found on the issue of migration. In the first coalition agreement, it was openly stated that aid ought to be used to manage migration. Related sections in the Charter were worded more softly, but were along the same lines. In the 19th legislative period, migration has received even more attention. Not hidden in a section unrelated to aid, the development policy section of the coalition agreement contained a dedicated section discussing migration. Additionally, the strategy paper contained an entire chapter on the topic. It is therefore not difficult to argue that migration has gained a drastic increase of attention in the second time period considered here.

In summary, we may note that poverty has lost a bit of salience in the transition between legislation periods, while development received a similar amount of attention. Similarly, democracy and the rule of law have received less consideration, while the strong focus on human rights remained. Trade and migration on the other hand both received considerably more attention in the 19th legislative period. This argument describes how the salience of our aspects of interests changed, but without a quantitative starting point, this qualitative analysis does not allow us to rank them relatively.

We must also not forget that none of the documents examined here are legally binding and that aid decisions are subject to quite some political discretion. They are also not only made within the authority of the BMZ. It is imaginable that the coalition agreements carry more political weight than the documents of the ministry. After all, the agreements are made by parliament members and for parliament members, while the BMZ is only an executive entity. Both coalition agreements included statements that development policy is based on or supposed to serve German interests. Keeping in mind the increased attention that trade and migration have received in the 19th period, the following chapter will employ quantitative data to examine how the policies stated on paper have translated into reality.

## Chapter 5: Quantitative Analysis - What Do They Actually Do?

The previous chapter has shown that at least on paper, the topics of trade and migration have received an increase of attention, while poverty, development and good governance have not. The purpose of this chapter is now to assess these findings using a quantitative approach. As it is common practice in the literature, this task is performed by performing regression analyses.

The first section defines the hypotheses that are to be tested. The second section presents the methodology and data. The third section presents the results, before the fourth section discusses their implications for this study and outlines the possibilities for future research.

### D) Hypotheses

In the first chapter, the realist hypothesis on foreign aid has already been stated. It argues that political and commercial interests are dominant over developmental and humanitarian concerns. For this study, this means that the containment of migration and the promotion of trade are more important to German policymakers than the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of development, for which good governance in the recipient countries has been shown to be key. However, the previous chapter has shown that German policymakers do consider poverty, development and good governance at least to some degree. This leads us to the hypotheses which will be tested in the following:

- H1a: Recipients with a higher number of citizens in Germany receive more aid.
- H1b: Recipients with shorter geographical distance to Germany receive more aid.
- H2a: Recipients who receive a larger amount of exports from Germany receive more aid.
- H2b: Recipients who send a larger amount of imports to Germany receive more aid.
- H3: The effects described in H1a and H1b increase in the second time period (2018-2019).
- H4a: Recipients with a higher GDP per capita receive less aid.
- H4b: Recipients with higher values in the HDI receive less aid.
- H4c: Recipients which qualify as LDCs receive more aid.
- H5a: More democratic recipients receive more aid.
- H5b: Recipients with a better rule of law receive more aid.
- H5c: Recipients with higher PTS scores receive less aid.
- H6: Recipients with larger populations receive more aid.
- H7: Recipients with larger amounts of aid in the previous year receive more aid.

## **II) Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology employed to test the hypotheses. The first subsection briefly explains the models, while the second discusses their variables.

### **1) Model**

I test the above hypothesis using three models, employing ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to test the continuous dependent variable. The unit of analysis is country-year. The sample size of the first model contains 300 observations from between 2014 and 2019, covering the entire time period considered in this study. The second model only includes the 203 observations from the period between 2014 to 2017, thus covering the 18th legislative period. The third model considers the 97 observations from 2018 and 2019, covering the 19th legislative period as far as data is available. This approach allows us to draw conclusions regarding the aid allocation of the entire time period of this study, as well as regarding the changes that may have occurred between the 18th and 19th legislative periods.

As it is common practice in the literature (Carey, 2007), I lag most independent variables by one year to account for the fact that policymakers can only draw on past data to make their allocation decisions. Naturally, this does not apply to the variables that do not change over time, such as their status as a former colony or their geographical distance from Germany. The data has been tested for multicollinearity and the result showed that the independent variables of this study are not interrelated. Therefore, it is unproblematic to run a full model.

### **2) Variables**

#### ***a) Dependent Variable***

The dependent variable in the models are the yearly net ODA disbursements from Germany to all 54 African states in the years from 2014 to 2019. By choosing this time frame, I cover the 18th legislative period and the first half of the 19th legislative period. I chose 2014 as the starting year because the elections from the 18th legislative period took place towards the end of 2013. Therefore, the majority of the 2013 disbursements are attributable to the previous government. The end point is dictated by data availability, as figures on aid flows are not yet available for the years after 2019.

The original dataset includes negative aid flows for 15 out of the 324 country-year dyads. Presumably, this is because those states have paid off concessional loans that qualified as ODA

and have not received any more aid in that year. I replaced the negative numbers with zeros, because the greater variability skews the results and furthermore, I am only testing for actual flows of aid. The net ODA flow data is available through the website of the OECD (2021a).

### ***b) Key Independent Variables***

#### *Migration*

The relevance the recipient countries have for the German efforts in curbing migration will be assessed using two different indicators. First, I am following Bermeo and Leblang (2015) by using the number immigrants from the recipient states that are residing in Germany. Migrant flows would be an alternative, but the data availability is rather poor. Using migrant stocks is further an appropriate measure because according to the policy documents discussed above, German politicians are not only attempting to keep migrants from coming to Germany, but also to provide incentives for foreign residents to return to their home countries. Data on migrant stocks is available through the German Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021a).

Second, I am again adhering to the approach used by Bermeo and Leblang (2015) by using the geographical distance between Germany and the recipient states. This expresses the idea that migrants from states that are geographically closer might be considered more likely to immigrate to Germany. Corresponding data was drawn from DistanceFromTo (2021).

#### *Trade*

Trade will be operationalized through two indicators. As the previous literature has shown, there was quite some evidence for German aid being correlated with the country's exports. Therefore, I include this variable into the equation as well, measured through the value of German exports to the recipient countries.

Furthermore, some of the realist works have highlighted the possibility that donors may secure access to natural resources through aid. Therefore, I include imports from recipient countries as well. Just like exports, they're measured through their value. Corresponding data is available through the website of the German Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021b).

#### *Poverty and Development*

The poverty and development orientation of German aid will be assessed using three different indicators. First, I employ GDP per capita as a variable, which is commonly used to measure

recipient need (see for example Bermeo, 2017; Davenport, 1970; Dollar & Levin, 2006). Data is well available through the World Bank (2021e).

However, it has been argued both in the theoretical literature (Todaro & Smith, 2015) and by the German policymakers that development goes beyond the financial dimension. Therefore, I employ the Human Development Index (HDI) as a second indicator, which covers the financial dimension (GNI), education (expected and mean years of schooling) and health (life expectancy at birth) (UNDP, 2020b). The index ranges from 0 to 1, where larger numbers represent higher development. The data is obtained from UNDP (2020a).

Third, as German policymakers have promised a focus on the ones most in need, I add a dummy variable which captures whether or not a recipient state qualifies as a Least Developed Country. The information is available through UNCTAD (2021a, 2021b).

Lastly, it would be desirable to include a measure to test for poverty more specifically, but correlating data, such as poverty headcounts, are subject to rather poor availability, as figures are nonexistent for many of the relevant recipients and years. Therefore, I decided not to include the variable in the analysis.

### *Good Governance*

As the previously analyzed documents have shown, German policymakers largely conceptualize good governance through three aspects. Each of those will be measured with a separate variable.

First, I use the liberal democracy index by Varieties of Democracy to measure how democratic the recipient countries were ruled. The indicator ranges from 0 to 1, where higher values stand for more democratic structures. The data is available through the website of Varieties of Democracy (2021).

Second, I measure the rule of law through the corresponding indicator of the World Governance Indicators (WGI) by the World Bank. It ranges from approximately -2.5 to 2.5, where larger values implicate a better rule of law (World Bank, 2021a) The data is available through the World Bank (2021f).

Third, I am following Carey (2007) by employing the Political Terror Scale (PTS) to account for human rights violations in the recipient countries. The scale uses interval values from 1-5, where higher values represent more severe human rights valuations. Since the qualitative

analysis showed that German policymakers give substantial attention to the issue, I follow the example of Carey by disaggregating the PTS into binary variables. This allows us to see whether German aid is discriminating against human rights violations of all kinds or only against more severe ones. Since PTS Level 1 is the reference category and therefore fulfilled by every state, I omit this variable. This leaves us with a dummy variable for each of the four remaining levels of the PTS. The data is accessible online (Gibney et al., 2020).

### *c) Control Variables*

Furthermore, I am using four additional control variables. First, I am including a dummy variable to identify states that were part of the German colonial empire. Since it has been argued regularly that former colonies of France and the UK receive more aid, it seems appropriate to test this for the case of Germany as well. The information was obtained from the work of Conrad (2012).

Second, I include the population of the recipient countries to see whether the previously found bias towards more populated states can still be confirmed for the recent years. Population data is available through the World Bank (2021e).

Third, I am using a dummy variable to incorporate whether or not the recipient countries have an official aid relationship with the BMZ. As noted before, Germany disburses aid to many countries that are not technically considered aid partners. With this variable, we can draw conclusion on whether or not the partner status leads to higher disbursements of aid. The list of partners was compiled from the 2030 Reform Strategy by the BMZ (2020c) and records of the German parliament (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020).

Last, as previous work has found evidence for German aid being path-dependent (Faust & Ziaja, 2012), I include the amount of ODA the recipients have received in the previous year as an additional variable. An overview of the independent variables is found in table 3. Table 4 shows the summary statistics for the variables used. Missing observations result from lacking data in the original datasets. The data on Net ODA and migrants show a high variability. So do the figures on exports, imports and GDP per capita, which may be caused by the high variation in the development of African states.

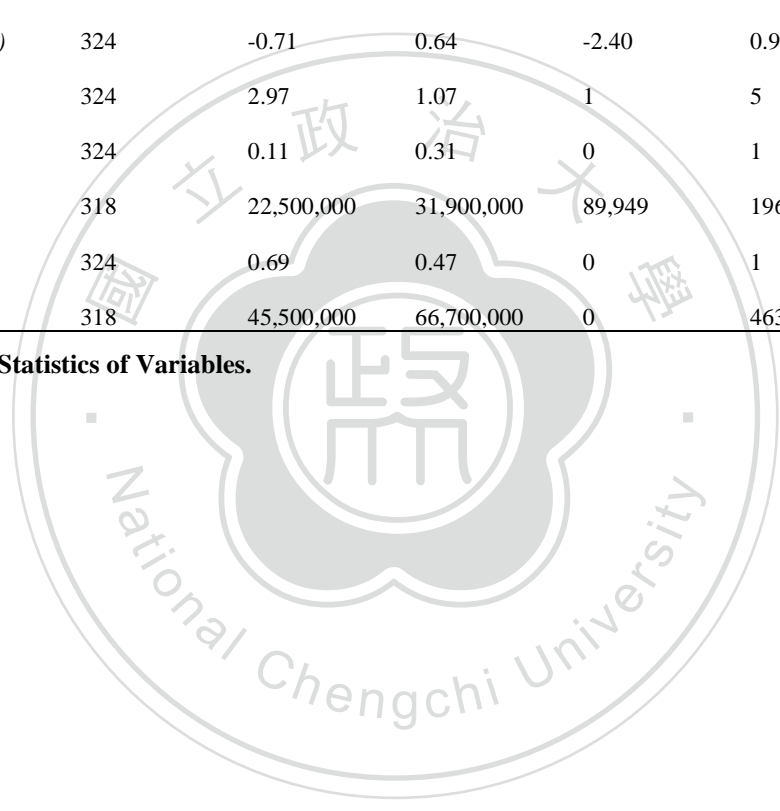
Variable/Indicator	Expected Sign	Source
<b>Migration</b>		
Migrants ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	Federal Statistical Office
Distance	Negative	www.distancefromto.net
<b>Trade</b>		
Exports ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	Federal Statistical Office
Imports ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	Federal Statistical Office
<b>Poverty and Development</b>		
GDP per capita ( <i>lagged</i> )	Negative	World Bank
Human Development Index ( <i>lagged</i> )	Negative	UNDP
LDC status ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	UNCTAD
<b>Good Governance</b>		
Democracy ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	Varieties of Democracy
Rule of Law ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	World Bank
Human Rights Violations ( <i>lagged</i> )	Negative	Political Terror Scale
<b>Control</b>		
Former Colony	-	Conrad, 2012
Population ( <i>lagged</i> )	Positive	World Bank
Official Aid Partner	-	BMZ, German Parliament
Previous ODA	Positive	OECD

**Table 3: Overview of Independent Variables.** With their respective indicators, predictions of their signs based on the realist hypothesis and their sources.



<b>Variable</b>	<b>Obs.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
<b>Net ODA</b>	318	49,931,202	69,570,629	0	174,630,000
<b>Migrants (lagged)</b>	324	8,402.56	14,711.85	20	76,200
<b>Distance</b>	324	5,882.06	1,797.97	1,766.40	9,202.27
<b>Exports (lagged)</b>	324	517,000,000	1,590,000,000	295,000	11,300,000,000
<b>Imports (lagged)</b>	324	451,000,000	1,240,000,000	0	9,440,000,000
<b>GDP per capita (lagged)</b>	315	2,662.43	3,281.96	256.98	20,390.72
<b>HDI (lagged)</b>	318	0.55	0.11	0.36	0.8
<b>LDC (lagged)</b>	324	0.62	0.49	0	1
<b>Democracy (lagged)</b>	324	0.30	0.19	0.01	0.73
<b>Rule of Law (lagged)</b>	324	-0.71	0.64	-2.40	0.95
<b>PTS_S (lagged)</b>	324	2.97	1.07	1	5
<b>Former Colony</b>	324	0.11	0.31	0	1
<b>Population (lagged)</b>	318	22,500,000	31,900,000	89,949	196,000,000
<b>Official Aid Partner</b>	324	0.69	0.47	0	1
<b>Previous ODA</b>	318	45,500,000	66,700,000	0	463,000,000

**Table 4: Summary Statistics of Variables.**



### III) Results

	(1) 2014-2019	(2) 2014-2017	(3) 2018-2019
<b>Migrants</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	1584.8*** (333.1)	3491.8*** (407.9)	-948.8 (484.0)
<b>Distance</b>	2001.5 (1875.5)	7164.8** (2176.7)	-5585.6 (2880.5)
<b>Exports</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	0.0162*** (0.00317)	0.0162*** (0.00351)	0.0130* (0.00614)
<b>Imports</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	-0.0143** (0.00433)	-0.0113* (0.00504)	-0.0100 (0.00763)
<b>GDP per capita</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	1123.8 (1237.2)	1915.2 (1273.8)	-3432.9 (2875.0)
<b>HDI</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	-41737477.0 (53829722.2)	-74466193.3 (59901344.6)	-9567280.9 (95251010.0)
<b>LDC</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	-361570.3 (8541451.6)	7585532.2 (9595189.4)	-20319212.8 (14773926.6)
<b>Democracy</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	44873298.4* (21592973.8)	33879689.5 (23884580.3)	73543218.3* (35830512.3)
<b>Rule of Law</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	-5076771.9 (7627813.3)	-7131662.9 (8578237.0)	246451.2 (12446432.9)
<b>PTS_S Level 2</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	-3722085.0 (11452839.9)	-1417952.6 (12576052.1)	7420259.9 (19758626.8)
<b>PTS_S Level 3</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	12469106.2 (11954629.4)	8330438.8 (13053663.3)	17671403.4 (20379642.0)
<b>PTS_S Level 4</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	14978001.0 (13781843.3)	11609083.4 (15250531.8)	29560550.5 (22982409.1)
<b>PTS_S Level 5</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	31082929.4 (16730813.0)	28430539.7 (18261803.3)	46903286.8 (30012476.4)
<b>Former Colony</b>	2643111.3 (9015967.1)	2184989.9 (10166065.7)	6115774.8 (13978072.1)
<b>Population</b> ( <i>lagged</i> )	0.00925 (0.109)	-0.241 (0.125)	0.560** (0.185)
<b>Official Aid Partner</b>	17978992.1* (8148850.5)	18554681.3* (9093057.7)	14564492.6 (13400426.7)
<b>Previous ODA</b>	0.458*** (0.0545)	0.376*** (0.0631)	0.378*** (0.0976)
_cons	-17845837.5 (42955456.5)	-39534845.2 (48173597.2)	33688892.1 (71885218.3)
<i>N</i>	300	203	97
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.659	0.743	0.705
adj. <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.638	0.720	0.641

**Table 5: Regression Results.** Model (1) shows the results for the entire time period, models (2) and (3) show the results for the 18th and 19th legislative period, respectively. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Table 5 shows the results of the analyses. First, the results show that the correlation between aid received and the number of migrants from recipient countries is positive and significant if we consider the entire time period. Insofar, H1a holds. The results show the same effect for the 18th legislative period. However, if we only consider the 19th legislative period, the result becomes insignificant. The correlation between aid and distance is significant for the 19th legislative period, however it does not have the expected sign, as it was hypothesized that a shorter geographical distance would entail more aid. In fact, countries located further away from Germany were more likely to receive larger amounts. As a consequence, H1b has to be rejected. It follows from the combination of these two results that H3 has to be rejected as well.

Second, the correlation between German exports and aid is, as expected, positive and significant in all three models. This indicates that more important export destinations in terms of volume are more likely to receive larger amounts of aid. Insofar, H2a is confirmed. The correlation between import volume and aid shows significant results in the model covering the entire time period, as well as in the one covering only the 18th legislative period. However, the sign is unexpectedly negative. That is, countries from which Germany imports more in terms of volume were actually less likely to receive larger amounts of aid. Therefore, H2b has to be rejected.

Third, the results show no evidence for the development variables having any impact on aid allocation, as GDP per capita, HDI and LDC status do not show any significant correlation, no matter the time period considered. Accordingly, H4a, H4b and H4c have to be rejected.

Fourth, there is very little indication that good governance influences German aid flows. The results show no significant correlation between the rule of law or the level of human rights violations in the recipient countries and the aid they receive, regardless of the time period. Thus, H5b and H5c have to be rejected. However, the results indicate that more democratic recipients were more likely to receive larger amounts of aid in the entire time period. The same applies to the results that are based only on data from the 19th legislative period. In the 18th legislative period however, the results were insignificant. Insofar, H5a is confirmed for model 1 and model 3.

Fifth, the results do not suggest that former German colonies are more likely to receive more aid. However, recipient population and aid are positively and significantly correlated in the 19th legislative period, which suggests a population bias. That is, more populated states tend to

receive more aid. Accordingly, H6 is confirmed in model 3. Furthermore, the results show that states that were official aid partners of Germany were more likely to receive larger amounts of aid if we consider the entire time period. If we only draw on data from the 19th legislative period however, this effect disappears. Finally, the results suggest that German aid is path-dependent. As the variable accounting for aid from the previous year shows positive and significant results in all three models, H7 is confirmed.

#### **IV) Discussion**

The closing discussion of this thesis is divided into four sections. The first section goes beyond the mere description of the findings of the quantitative analysis by linking them to those from the previous chapter and interpreting them in the greater context. The second section provides the answer to the question that was formulated to guide this thesis, while the third one addresses its limitations. The last section outlines how this study could serve as a starting point for future research endeavors.

##### **1) Reflection on the Findings**

###### *Migration*

The qualitative analysis has shown that German policy openly state that foreign aid ought to be used as a tool to manage migration. It has also shown that the issue received increased attention in the later time period examined. While the latter could not be confirmed quantitatively, the results do indicate that recipient states with higher numbers of citizens in Germany do receive more aid if we consider the whole time span.

Insofar, we may assume that aid is indeed used to manage migrant flows. However, the distance variable only came to be significant in the 18th legislative period and even there the sign was unexpectedly positive. This suggests that German policymakers may not target countries that are geographically closer. However, we need to keep in mind that this study only examined aid to African states. The results might have turned out differently if it had included the entirety of Germany's recipients, especially those in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the operationalization of migration might leave some important aspects out of the picture. For instance, African migrants who travel by land usually have to transit through various other states in order to reach Europe. It seems possible that Germany and other European donors strategically target specific countries to either strengthen their capabilities to

keep migrants at bay themselves or to serve as alternative migration destinations. It also seems plausible that European donors coordinate their aid to manage migration, as such efforts could be viewed as a shared interest, given the open borders within Europe. Insofar, only examining one European donor may skew the results.

Empirical research aside, it is questionable on the theoretical level whether aid is even a suitable tool to manage migration flows. As Bermeo and Leblang (2015) point out, the idea is based on the Push-Pull-Theory of migration. Pioneered by Lee (1966), the theory proposes that every geographical area has factors attached to it that either attract people or repel them when they are making a decision on whether or not to migrate. That is, if there are numerous or very strong repelling factors in the current residency of an individual, he or she will migrate to another place with more attractive features. However, intervening obstacles between the two places, such as geographical distance or transportation costs, are also part of the equation.

When policymakers attempt to curb migration with aid, they aim to decrease the push factors in the current residency of potential migrants. More specifically, they attempt to foster development in such areas in order to provide incentives for individuals to stay. Even if we assume that aid in fact does foster development and alleviate poverty, it is not clear that this equals a reduction in the push factors. Instead, increased incomes of the individuals in the recipient countries could simply reduce the intervening obstacles, such as transportation costs, and therefore entail increased migration flows. This result would be largely in line with the approach laid out by Todaro (1969), who argues that migration decisions are made based on the expected income in the potential migration destination. That is, if the incomes in wealthy industrialized countries keep exceeding those in the Global South, migration flows will not cease. Of course, the effects of foreign aid on migration are too complex to cover them with such simplistic theoretical approaches. For instance, the effects will strongly depend on the type of aid that is applied, as well of the sectors that are funded. Nonetheless, the attempt to curb migration with aid appears questionable from a theoretical standpoint.

### *Trade*

The documents examined have shown that foreign aid and trade seem to be viewed as more interconnected in the 19th legislative period than it was the case before. The emphasis is on fair trade, but this is not too surprising, as policymakers would presumably not directly state that aid ought to be used to benefit the German economy. The quantitative analysis confirmed the

correlation between German exports and trade. This is not very surprising, given that several authors have come to the same conclusion before. The negative correlation between aid and German imports however is quite unexpected.

The argument regarding exports is quite straightforward. Donors choose to channel aid towards recipient states who import larger shares of their goods because in that way, they can get a return on their aid in the form of more business for their home economy. Regarding imports, the situation is a bit more complicated. As realist thought proposes, donors may use aid to secure access to important goods, such as raw materials. Insofar, aid would function as a kind of bribe. However, this argument does not hold in our case, since recipients that Germany imports larger amounts of goods from were less likely to receive higher funding. Supposedly, Germany wishes to not strengthen the economies of states on which it is already dependent because of its resources. However, further research is required to draw clearer conclusions on this relationship.

One aspect that needs to be kept in mind when it comes to the relationship between aid and trade is the direction of causality. On the one hand, recipients that are more important trading partners might receive more aid *ex post*. On the other hand, larger trade figures might be the consequence of improved economic performance in the recipient country brought by through aid. Once again, this is an aspect that requires more detailed research to offer more reliable conclusions.

Given that exports are a crucial factor of the German economy, it is again not surprising that they were and are correlated with aid. Even from an idealist viewpoint, one might argue that nothing speaks against the donor getting economic returns on its aid, as long as the recipients benefit as well. However, if we assume that the causality is from trade to aid, that is, more important trading partners receive more aid *ex post*, countries with lower economic output are less likely to receive aid. This, as has been mentioned before, would punish the populations of such states twice, as they're living in poorer economic conditions and are consequently deprived of efforts to improve the situation. In other words, giving aid to trading partners makes it less effective, as fair as the terms of trade may be.

### *Poverty and Development*

Poverty and development seemed to have a relatively high priority in the 18th legislative period. However, related statements included the qualification that decisions are made under the

consideration of “German interests”. In the following time period it then seemed that those issue areas have lost a bit of significance. The regression analysis did not specifically account for poverty, as the data availability was insufficient to produce useful results. Nonetheless, it appears striking that none of the development measures employed showed a significant correlation with aid.

One explanation for this outcome could be that German policymakers use different indices to measure development and poverty. However, GDP per capita is a commonly used measure and the HDI includes life expectancy (which by definition covers infant mortality) and education as well. It would be useful to test whether the results appear differently if those concepts are measured separately.

A more drastic interpretation of the results from this study suggests that poverty and development are simply not a high priority in the German policy. This would mean that “German interests”, may they be related to trade, migration, or other areas, outweigh poverty and development by a large margin. This may make sense to a realist, but would be a devastating conclusion for anyone viewing aid from an idealistic point of view. Either way, Germany’s development and poverty orientation clearly deserves more scrutiny in the future.

#### *Good Governance*

The policy documents did mention the rule of law and democracy several times, but it has become clear that human rights appear like a much more important issue to the policymakers. Surprisingly, the quantitative results paint a different picture. The rule of law and human rights violations came out insignificant throughout all time periods and levels. Only democracy showed some positive and significant signs.

The findings on human rights violations and the rule of law are similarly striking as the ones regarding poverty and development. Again, German policy makers might use different indices to measure the rule of law. Some that come to mind are the Doing Business Index by the World Bank, as well as the CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index). It should be examined if employing those or other measures yield different outcomes.

The more radical way to consider the lack of correlation between aid and the rule of law is again to argue that Germany simply does not value the latter very much in its aid allocation. However, the argument is not as straightforward as it was in the case of poverty and development. Even if the policymakers may not value the altruistic components of aid as much, disregarding the



rule of law the same way does not make much sense. This is because even if Germany acts based on its own merit, the policymakers should have an interest in sound governance in the recipient states. For once, trade will arguably be more beneficial if it happens with states that have institutions that foster these relations. The same goes for migration, as individuals are probably more likely to remain in states with governments that are reliable and trustworthy. All in all, the benefits of aid are most likely to be larger if recipients are well-governed, no matter if they are self-interested or altruistic ones.

In the context of good governance, a peculiar case is Burundi, which was removed from the list of partner countries due to its “bad governance” (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020) as part of the recent policy update. The country was assigned Level 4 on the Political Terror Scale for all years considered in this study, but so was Egypt (Gibney et al., 2020), which was the 7th largest recipient worldwide in 2019 (OECD, 2021a). Burundi fared worse in the rule of law category (World Bank, 2021f), but actually shows better democracy ratings than Egypt (Varieties of Democracy, 2021). One possible explanation is that Germany made an example of Burundi to show that it accounts for governance quality and picked a country that is not very important in regards to German political or commercial interests.

In any case, the lack of correlation between German aid and two of the three good governance indicators, especially the one for human rights violations, seriously puts Germany’s credibility in this regard in question. The analyzed documents emphasized human rights so much, policymakers must ensure that violations in recipient countries are taken into account in the future. If this does not happen, this moral component appears like empty rhetoric and sends very questionable signals to the rest of the world.

#### *Control Variables*

A few conclusions may be drawn from the remaining control variables. The fact that the variable accounting for the status as a previous German colony suggests that aid is, as conjectured earlier, indeed not allocated under such consideration. This sets Germany apart from the UK and France. The population bias found in the 19th legislative period may again be interpreted in two ways. Highly populated states may bear more economic potential, which suggests a commercial motivation. On the other hand, in such states, aid might reach more people in need, which would speak for an altruistic notion. Further, the positive correlation between aid and the status as an official German aid partner suggests that it might indeed pay

off for recipients to attempt to be included in that list. This is an interesting finding, since Baydag et al. (2018) have pointed out that in earlier years, half of Germany's top ten recipients worldwide were not official aid partners. Lastly, the variable accounting for aid from the previous year came out positive and significant in all models. This path dependency is not too surprising, since the period studied here is relatively short and aid is presumably disbursed based on international agreements that are in effect for multiple years.

## **2) Result**

This study was conducted to test the extent to which interests regarding trade and migration dominate considerations of poverty, development and good governance in German bilateral aid to Africa. The qualitative analysis has provided us with important insights regarding those aspects, but proved insufficient to answer the question by itself. For once, this is because the criteria for allocation reportedly vary between recipients. Furthermore, we need to keep in mind that none of the documents are legally binding and that related decisions are subject to political discretion. Therefore, it appears only reasonable to turn to the quantitative results in order to come up with an answer.

This chapter has suggested that migration and exports do influence the allocation of German aid, while development does not. Democracy, as an aspect of good governance, has had some impact, but the rule of law and human rights violations did not. Insofar, we may argue that the self-interested motives dominate the altruistic ones to quite a large extent when it comes to Africa as a recipient continent. This finding confirms the realist hypothesis, which proposes that self-interest outweighs humanitarian and developmental considerations in the allocation of foreign aid.

As it has been argued above in the section discussing the role of trade, one might argue that self-interested aid is still more beneficial to recipient states than no aid at all. However, as the corresponding literature has shown, allocation based on self-interested motives can seriously impede the effectiveness of aid. It is of course not an easy task to quantify how much the effectiveness of German aid is reduced by the pursuit of self-serving goals, but the logical consequence from the findings here is that the funds could be disbursed in different ways, which would make larger contributions to the promotion of development and the alleviation of poverty.

### **3) Limitations**

This being said, we must not forget that this study is subject to multiple limitations. One important issue in regression analyses is that we are regularly unable to include all relevant variables into the equation. For the case of German aid, climate change and ecological sustainability is an aspect that was not included in the research design. It is possible that the inclusion of related variables would have changed the results.

Furthermore, the time frame of this study is relatively short. This has the advantage that the results can be attributed to the legislative periods, which allows the outcomes to be put in context political developments during their respective time frames. However, this approach also limits the amount of available data, which renders the results less convincing than those of long-term studies.

Also, quantitative approaches force us to use indices that are measuring complex qualitative concepts, such as democracy, the rule of law, but also poverty and development. First, this practice might not pick up on nuances of those concepts and second, policymakers may use different measures during their decision making processes, which may skew the results of related research.

Last, even though aid disbursements are measurable quantitatively, their complexity is not covered entirely by simple approaches using aid flows as the dependent variable. Aid comes in the forms of financial and technical assistance, which may produce vastly different outcomes. In the realm of technical assistance, there are many possibilities of how it can be applied. From providing goods for basic needs care, to projects fostering vocational education to campaigns promoting gender equality, different measures might work to promote development and help to eradicate poverty (or serve the donors' interests) in various different ways. However, despite its various limitations, quantitative approaches are needed to find general trends and point the way for future research into the more delicate aspects of foreign aid.

### **4) Possibilities for Future Research**

Even though a vast literature already exists on foreign aid, there is plenty of room for more in the future. Since the majority of studies covers large numbers of donors, it would be desirable if more researchers dedicated their work towards case studies of single donors. By using a mixed method approach, Maurits van der Veen (2011) has demonstrated what intensive studies of single donors can look like. This thesis may serve as a starting point for future works on the

case of Germany. Given the recent policy update in the form of the BMZ 2030 Reform Strategy, many opportunities lay ahead.

Africa appears as a subject worthwhile studying in the context of German aid for a number of reasons. As shown in this thesis, the continent has clearly been made the regional priority by the German policymakers. However, this stated priority has not quite translated into actual aid flows. In fact, the share of bilateral aid channeled towards Africa has decreased from 2014 to 2016 and only gotten slightly larger in each of the following years (OECD, 2021a). Notably, over those years, the share of the Asian continent always was and still remains larger. It seems to be worthy to investigate why this is the case.

Another aspect that requires further investigation is the role of Germany's so-called reform partners. After previously just containing three states – Ivory Coast, Ghana and Tunisia – the list was extended by three more countries, since Ethiopia, Morocco and Senegal were elevated into the special status as part of the policy update (BMZ, 2020c). As previously mentioned, those recipients will receive higher aid commitments in the future due to their strong reform orientation. From a development standpoint, including Tunisia and Morocco in the list appears questionable, as they are respectively ranking 4th and 10th in terms of the HDI (UNDP, 2020a) in the African context. They are also important trading partners to Germany, as Morocco is the third and Tunisia the fifth biggest importer of German goods in Africa (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021b). A similar point can be made regarding imports from those two countries. Furthermore, these two states, along with Ghana and Ethiopia, are among the ten countries with the most migrants in Germany if we only consider African states. It seems appropriate to investigate how reform-oriented and well-governed these states actually are, how much they are in need in regards to poverty and development and whether or not the additional funding might be caused by particular German interests in those countries.

Due to its regional proximity, Africa also appears to be the first choice for future studies investigating the relationship between aid and migration. It has already been shown here that German policymakers are concerned with the issue. The first chapter of the recent BMZ 2030 Reform Strategy underlines this notion. For instance, it points out that the African labor force is growing by 20 million people annually and that experts are expecting up to 85 million climate refugees until 2050 (BMZ, 2020c). Therefore, it might be fruitful if researchers kept investigating this topic, as it might become a crucial factor for aid from Germany and other

European countries. Given their shared interest, future research should also relate the efforts of single countries to European multilateral aid.

Another factor that deserves attention in the future is the interplay between the traditional DAC donors and the so-called emerging donors. It is undeniable that foreign aid policy is a subset of foreign policy and that political aspirations are influencing aid allocation for most donors. As it has been pointed out at the beginning of this study, particularly China has increased its political and economic activity on the continent in the last decade (Mlambo et al., 2016). It would be useful to enhance our understanding of how these developments influence the behavior of Germany and other DAC donors.

On a last note, it seems that the work of Bermeo (2017) deserves to be developed further. Differing from much of the previous literature, Bermeo has transcended the conventional mindset of donor interest being pitched against recipient need. Coining the term “targeted development” (2017, p. 1), the author argues that donors in fact wish to contribute to development effectively, but that they are targeting areas in which negative spillovers are likely. It goes without saying that this concept seems suitable to be applied to aid from European donors to Africa, as well as the Middle East.

As it has been pointed out already more than a decade ago, “more of the same research is not needed” (Klees, 2010, p. 21). This is not to say that foreign aid research has exhausted its possibilities and should be terminated. Instead, it is now the time to leave the beaten paths and to readjust the focus to the new political developments and challenges we are facing in the world today.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study was conducted to test whether the self-interested motives of promoting trade and curbing migration are dominant over the more altruistic rationales of contributing to development, eradicating poverty and fostering good governance in German aid to Africa. It has drawn on four key policy documents from Germany's 18th and 19th legislative periods to allow conclusions on the ostensible priorities of the policymakers. The findings were then contrasted with the actual policy outcomes, which were examined quantitatively using data on several variables, covering the time period from 2014 to 2019.

The quantitative analysis has shown that the self-interested objectives are very well present in the policy documents and that their salience has increased over time. The more altruistic motives are present in the official documents as well, but their salience has stagnated or decreased over time. The quantitative examination supports the hypothesis that German policymakers allocated aid based on considerations regarding trade and migration. The results indicate that major export destinations and states with larger migrant populations residing in Germany are in fact more likely to receive larger amounts of aid. The developmental status of the recipients appears to be irrelevant. While democratic states are found to have better chances to receive more aid, the quality of governance seems to be neglected. The extent of human rights violations in recipient countries appears to be irrelevant as well.

The argument that German aid is allocated based on self-interested motives is in line with the realist viewpoint on foreign aid, which proposes that developmental aspects and humanitarian need may not be entirely irrelevant, but that self-serving objectives are always dominant. This finding implies that German aid is lacking effectiveness when it is judged by its capability to reduce poverty and to promote development and good governance in the recipient countries.

Based on the results of this thesis, there are three policy implications. First, it has been stated before that the German government has mandated that Africa should be the regional focus of German aid. The analyzed documents have also shown that the policymakers have followed this stipulation at least on paper. In fact, 33 of the 60 current partner countries are located in Africa. However, the quantitative data has exposed that Africa is clearly not the focus of German bilateral aid. Even though the share that has flown to the continent has increased in 2018 and 2019, Asian countries have continuously received more aid since 2010. Furthermore, in 2019, there were only two African states among the ten largest recipients, with Egypt ranking



7th and Tunisia ranking 10th. Even added together, those countries did not even receive half the amount of aid that the largest two recipients, India and the PRC, have received in sum. If the ostensible goals and priorities laid out in the policy documents are supposed to be taken seriously, policymakers need to ensure that African states actually do receive larger amounts of aid in the future.

Second, the quantitative results evidently put the allocation criteria purported in the policy documents in question. Policymakers put a strong emphasis on the promotion and protection of human rights, but the numbers showed no indication for such considerations when it comes to actual aid flows. If human rights are indeed such a high priority, then Germany should act upon the statements found in the policy documents and punish human rights abusers by consequently withholding aid from them. A similar point may be made regarding the rule of law in recipient countries. Furthermore, more aid should be channeled to states with lower GDP per capita or lower values in the HDI, as well as towards LDCs. If adjustments are not made here, the altruistic declarations by the BMZ appear worthless.

Third, this thesis has shown that Germany's formal policy is resting on very loose foundations and is subject to political discretion at multiple levels. It has been pointed out that the resulting flexibility might be useful to respond more easily to the developmental needs of recipient countries. However, the results have shown that German aid is not very development-oriented after all. This issue might partly be resolved by the introduction of stricter policy guidelines. If it is not possible for political reasons to pass related federal legislation, it might be a good start to at least develop and publish clearer criteria for the selection of recipients and their respective aid allocation. It would surely be desirable if both researchers and the general public had access to such information, since policymakers could be held accountable more easily that way. Keeping the realist hypothesis in mind, it is of course questionable if it is desired on the political level to make German aid more needs-oriented and to hold the key institutions more accountable.

Even though a vast literature on aid allocation already exists, this thesis could function as a starting point for much fruitful research in the future. It has demonstrated how mixed methods approaches can help us to provide more fine-grained understandings of the behavior of single donors. One key aspect that has not received much attention in academia so far is the interlinkage between foreign aid and global migration movements, possibly in combination with the adverse effects of climate change. Given the regional proximity, these issues are particularly relevant for aid from European donors to Africa.



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