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**An eroding relationship:
An inductive analysis of the relations between the
European Union and the Development Assistance Committee of
the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development**

Doctoral dissertation submitted by:

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation explores the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). While both are important pillars of the international aid architecture, their interactions have thus far been overlooked in the fields of (i) EU development cooperation, (ii) EU-IOs studies, (iii) development studies and (iv) IR. This is problematic as it hampers our understanding of the politics underlying international development cooperation as well as the interplay between the multilateral and European level in the field of development cooperation. The central objective of this doctoral dissertation is to address the above shortcomings in literature by acquiring an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the EU and the DAC. Methodologically, this study adopts an inductive research design, inspired by grounded theory. This allows to capture the full complexity of the EU-DAC relationship, stemming from its flexible nature and the fact that the risk of being preconceived by existing literature is reduced to a minimum. Data are gathered through a combination of document and archive analysis, semi-structured interviewing and participant observations. In doing so, particular attention is paid to (i) the way in which the EU organizes itself in the DAC, (ii) the role of the DAC in the changing international development landscape, (iii) the EU's full membership status of the DAC, (iv) the DAC's impact on the EU, (v) the EU's impact on the DAC and (vi) the rise of PCD on the Western donors' aid agenda. The thesis argues that the relationship between the EU and the DAC evolved from an interdependent to a dependent relationship from 2005 onwards. While traditionally relations were stable, stemming from the fact that they were mutually beneficial, they have become increasingly unstable in more recent years. Applying the Aristotelian four causes, this *eroding relationship* can be understood by looking at the role of the EU, the DAC Secretariat and the EU Member States (efficient and final causes), the inherent complex nature of the relationship (material cause) and the EU's changing nature as a development actor as well as the shift in power and ideology between the EU and the DAC (formal causes).

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List of abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CEE	Central and Eastern European (countries)
CEUS	Centre for EU Studies
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CoE	Council of Europe
CRS	Credit Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCD	Development Co-operation Directorate
DCs	Developing Countries
DFID	Department for International Development
DGs	Directorate Generals
DIE	Deutsch Institut für Entwicklungspolitik
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DPS	Development Policy Statement
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDF	European Development Fund
EDRC	Economic Development and Review Committee
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
ETTG	European Think Tank Group
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization

FRIDE	Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDI	German Development Institute
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPGs	Global Public Goods
GT	Grounded Theory
G07	Group of countries that reach the 0,7% ODA target
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
HI	Historical Institutionalism
HLFs	High Level Forums
HLM	High-Level Meeting
IAI	Istituto Affari Internazionali
IDIs	International Development Institutions
IDCRs	International Development Cooperation Reports
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOs	International Organizations
IR	International Relations
LICs	Low-income Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICs	Middle-income countries
MS	Member State
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OESC	Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM	Senior-Level Meeting
TPC	Trade Policy Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN-DCF	United Nations – Development Cooperation Forum
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or shortened Soviet Union
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Development is often said to be the movement towards a better, more just society. In the words of Amartya Sen, the winner of the 1998 Noble Prize for Economic Science, development equals freedom as it *“consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency”* (Sen, 1999, p. xii). Hence, development cooperation is an inherently political process as promoting the development of a country, region or society involves the distribution of social, political and economic benefits and costs (Gänzle, Grimm, & Makhan, 2012; Sen, 1999). This is also the view taken in this doctoral dissertation, as such distinguishing myself from those studies and scholars which see development cooperation predominantly as a (technical) transfer of resources from donor to partner countries.

At the heart of international development cooperation lays the objective of reducing poverty. For several decades now, the international community has sought ways to reduce the number of poor people in the world. While considerable progress has been made – in recent years most notably through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – still one out of five people face in today’s world a life of extreme poverty, living on less than 1,25 dollar a day (UN, 2014). Therefore, the fight against poverty will unfortunately remain a primary concern for the international community in the following decades (OECD, 2013b; UN, 2015).

This doctoral dissertation aims to make a small, yet valuable contribution to the eradication of poverty by seeking to achieve a better understanding of the politics underlying international development cooperation. This is done by studying the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC¹) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Both institutions are important pillars of the international aid architecture, yet their interactions thus far did not attract any scholarly attention. Furthermore, the DAC itself has been massively overlooked in academic literature. This is remarkable, to say the least, given that

¹ In the remainder of this doctoral dissertation, the words ‘DAC’ and ‘the Committee’ are used interchangeably.

the DAC has been extremely influential in defining what we today see as development cooperation (Boas & McNeill, 2004; Heiner, Klingebiel, & Mahn, 2014; Manning, 2008). Grouping the world's largest donors, it has served for more than fifty years as a forum for defining and monitoring global development standards. For example, the concepts of ODA, policy coherence for development (PCD) or untied aid all find their origins within the DAC (Führer, 1996; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011). Furthermore the Committee helped forging major international development commitments, including the MDGs and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Eyben, 2013; Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008).

One of the DAC's most important members is the EU. This comes as no surprise given that the EU is arguably one of the world's main development actors, combining the characteristics of a bilateral donor – i.e. providing aid through the Union's budget – and a multilateral donor – i.e. embodying the collective efforts of all 28 EU member states (Carbone, 2007; Farrell, 2008). The sum of both makes the EU an impressive actor in international development, having a global presence in over 140 countries and holding the world's largest budget of official development assistance (ODA)². Furthermore, the EU has shown on numerous occasions its determination to shape international development cooperation (Gänzle et al., 2012; Holland & Doidge, 2012; OECD/DAC, 2012c). However, whether and how the EU's development power and ambitions influence the DAC's work is at present unclear. Indeed, neither the study of EU development cooperation (e.g. Arts & Dickson, 2004; Carbone, 2007; Holland & Doidge, 2012), nor the literature on the interaction between the EU and IOs paid thus far attention to the relations between the EU and the DAC (e.g. Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013; Kissack, 2010). Furthermore, and as outlined in the previous paragraph, the fields of IR and development studies hardly paid any attention to the DAC, let alone its relationship with the EU (most notable exceptions are: Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008).

The main objective of this doctoral dissertation is thus to acquire an in-depth understanding of the EU-DAC relationship. By doing so, this study not only addresses the

² Collectively, the EU provides more than half of the world's ODA, while bilaterally the EU ranks as the third largest provider of development aid (OECD, 2014b).

above gap in literature, but more importantly seeks to achieve a better understanding of the politics underlying international development cooperation. To achieve this, this study opts for an inductive research approach, inspired by grounded theory. The starting point of this doctoral research is the collection and analysis of data from which theoretical insights and research questions inductively emerge. In turn, these are tested and further refined during the research process. This approach is favored over traditional/deductive ones given that it offers the flexibility that is necessary for the explorative nature of this doctoral study. Furthermore, by allowing theoretical insights and research questions to emerge from the data (i.e. its open-ended nature), it is complexity sensitive given that it does not favor a certain set of explanations *a priori*. It also avoids the potential restraints imposed by existing literature.

The remainder of this doctoral dissertation is structured as follows. The first part, constituted by three chapters, provides a general introduction to this study. More specifically, the first chapter elaborates on the larger context in which the EU and the DAC interact with one another. In doing so, particular attention is paid to the policy evolutions and dynamics at the level of the EU, the OECD and the international level. Chapter two positions this doctoral dissertation within the literature on (i) EU development cooperation, (ii) EU-IOs interactions and (iii) IOs/development cooperation, arguing that each study systematically overlooked the EU-DAC relationship. The third chapter of this dissertation elaborates on the research design of this study. More specifically, particular attention is paid to grounded theory, outlining the main underpinnings of this study and showing how these relate to my personal ontological and epistemological positions. Furthermore, chapter three also discusses the processes of data generation and analysis. The second part of this doctoral dissertation presents the empirical findings of this study and is constituted by chapters four to nine. More specifically, I broke down the EU-DAC relationship into six papers (i.e. five journal articles and one book chapter), each focusing on a particular element of the relationship. Each paper is discussed separately in a corresponding chapter (see table 1 below). The third and final part of this doctoral dissertation is constituted by chapter ten. In this chapter, I integrate the findings of the previous chapters into a

theoretical framework. Furthermore, I elaborate on the main contributions of this doctoral dissertation and put forward an agenda for future research.

Chapter	Co-author(s)	Status	Focus
4: The EU's International Identity: the Curious Case of the OECD	Prof. Dr. Tamara Takacs	Published in 2013 in: Henri Dewaele & Jan-Jaap Kuipers (Eds.) <i>The emergence of the European Union's international identity. Views from the global arena.</i> Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.	How does the EU organize itself in the OECD and DAC?
5: The DAC is dead, long live the DCF? A comparative analysis of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and the UN Development Cooperation Forum.	Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie	Online published in <i>European Journal of Development Research</i>	How does the DAC function? How does its legitimacy compare to the DCF?
6: Once a member, always a member? Assessing the importance of time in the relationship between the EU and the DAC	Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie	Online published in <i>Cambridge Review of International Affairs</i>	Why has the EU always been a full member of the DAC?
7: Let's talk about international organizations: EU development integration through the lens of the DAC	Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie	Under review in <i>Journal of European Integration</i>	What was the role and influence of the DAC on European development integration?
8: Ignoring the elephant in the room? Assessing the impact of the EU on the DAC	Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie	Under review in <i>Development and Change</i>	What is the impact of the EU on the DAC?
9: The rise of policy coherence for development: a multi-causal approach	Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie Dr. Sarah Delputte	Forthcoming in <i>European Journal of Development Research, special issue (2016), January</i>	What causes underlie the rise of PCD on the Western donors' agenda? What was the role of the EU and the DAC?

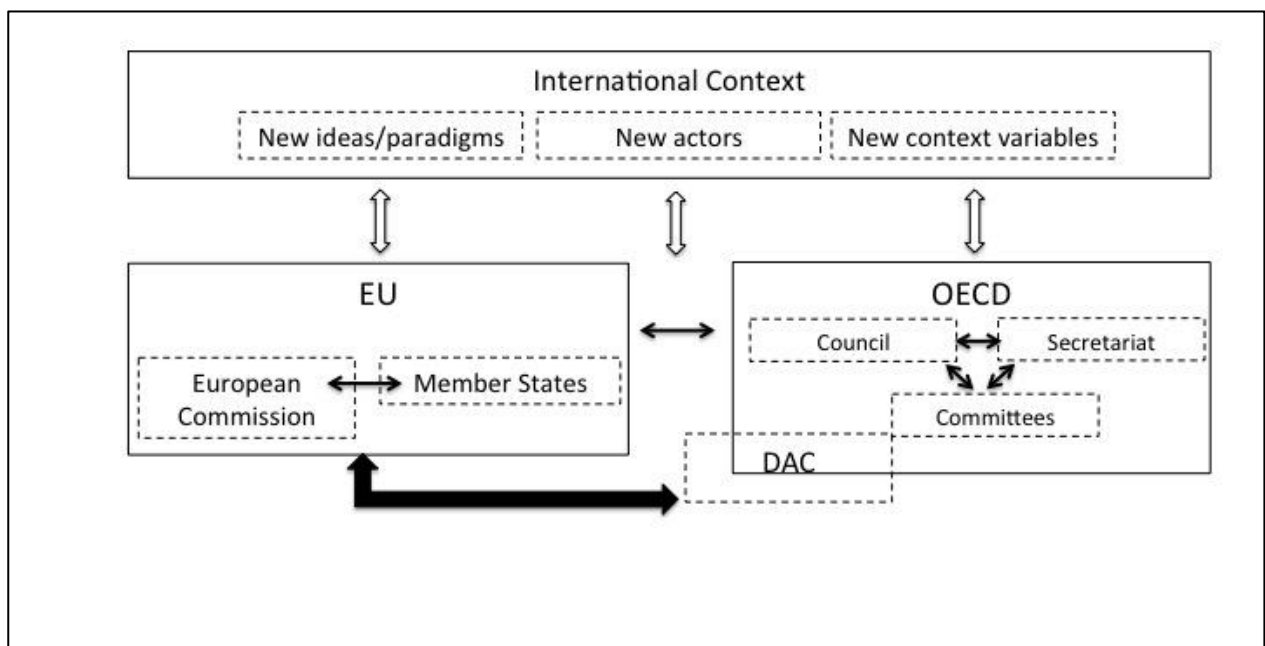
Part one

Part one is dedicated to the introduction of this doctoral dissertation, providing a general overview of the research topic (chapter 1), the academic literature (chapter 2) and the research design of this study (chapter 3).

Chapter 1: Mapping the research field

As is the case with studying all social phenomena, it is important to first grasp the larger context in which certain interactions or events take place before taking a closer look at the phenomenon itself. Therefore, this first chapter provides an overview of the larger context in which the EU and DAC interact with one another. This is particularly relevant for this doctoral dissertation given that it is a combination of articles, as such not always providing sufficient space to elaborate in depth upon the larger context of this study. This context can be visualized as follows:

Figure 1:



As reflects from the above figure 1, and as already outlined in the introduction to this doctoral dissertation, the central aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the interactions between the EU and the DAC, represented by the thick black arrow in the lower left corner. However, in order to fully grasp the EU-DAC relationship one needs to take into account the policy dynamics at the level of the (i) EU, (ii) the OECD and (iii) the international level. Therefore, this first chapter discusses each of these policy levels separately, focusing on those elements that are relevant for interpreting the empirical findings in the second part of this dissertation. Before doing so, however, it is important to

outline that the following sections predominantly build upon secondary literature. This is different for the section on the DAC, stemming from the fact that the Committee has rarely been the subject of scholarly attention. Therefore, it includes a first set of empirical results on its history, functioning and role in international development cooperation.

1. The European Union

The first central actor in this doctoral dissertation is the EU. Therefore, this section provides a general introduction to EU development integration, followed by an overview of the dynamic interplay between the EU institutions and Member States in this policy area. Other aspects of the EU's development policies (e.g. involvement of the European Parliament, the trade-development nexus) are not addressed given that they are not relevant for understanding the EU-DAC relationship.

1.1. EU development integration

The history of EU development cooperation goes back to the inception of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Similar to Carbone (2007), I distinguish between three phases in EU development policy. The first phase started with the signing of the Treaty of Rome (1957) and lasted until the Treaty of Maastricht (1993). During this period, the EU could be considered a weak development actor, especially seen in the light of its current impressive development portfolio. Indeed, the EU essentially lacked real development competences and as such had to pursue its development objectives through its trade relations with the global South (Carbone, 2007; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie, 2012).

The rationale behind this situation was that most EU Member States were at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Rome unwilling to transfer much power to the European level when it came to development cooperation (Cosgrove-Twitchett, 1978; Drieghe, 2011). While the fourth section of the Treaty - titled *'L'association des pays et territoires d'outre-mer'* - foresaw in the creation of a development partnership between the EEC and the former European colonies with as main objective *'la promotion du développement économique et social des pays et territoires, et l'établissement de relations économiques étroites entre eux et la Communauté dans son ensemble'* (1957, art. 131), it did not envisage

the creation of a full-blown development policy at the European level. Rather, EU Member States foresaw in the creation of three policy instruments which have characterized EU development policy ever since. These are, respectively, (i) the preferential trade relationship between the EU and the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, (ii) the European Development Fund (EDF) and (iii) the European Investment Bank (EIB). Indeed, putting the EU's trade competences aside, the European Commission was only granted a (small) role in managing the intergovernmental EDF and EIB (Arts & Dickson, 2004; Cosgrove-Twitchett, 1978; Grilli, 1993). As a result, the EU had to extensively rely on its trade instruments during most of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to pursue its development objectives (Frisch, 2008; Orbie, 2012). Indeed, despite the EU's clear development aspirations – most notably during the seventies as reflects from several Commission's communications at that time (European Commission, 1972, 1974) – a majority of EU Member States continued to be reluctant to grant the European Commission legal competences in the field of development cooperation (Cosgrove-Twitchett, 1978; Dimier, 2014; Grilli, 1993; Holland & Doidge, 2012).

The Treaty of Maastricht (1993) fundamentally altered the above situation, heralding the second phase in EU development integration. More specifically, with the signing of the Treaty, development cooperation was added to the EU's portfolio, allowing the European Commission to set up its own bilateral development programs alongside those of the EU Member States. In doing so, it had to take into account the so-called triple Cs as laid down in Article 130 of the Treaty, referring to the principles of complementarity, coordination and coherence (Carbone, 2007; Hoebink, 2005).

Initially, though, the EU's development programs faced severe teething problems. Due to inexperience, a lack of staff and a scattered division of development responsibilities across different Directorate Generals (DGs) within the European Commission, the EU struggled during most of the nineties to implement its large and ambitious development programs in an effective way (Holland, 2002; Orbie, 2012). Most notable was the strong delay in the disbursement of development funds, but there were also other problems related to, for example, the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the European development programs (Holland & Doidge, 2012; Van Reisen, 1999). For understandable

reasons, this sparked much criticism about the EU's new gained role as a development donor. In 1998, for example, the DAC issued a highly critical peer review of the Union's development policies, scrutinizing the fact that the Commission lacked an overall vision on development and failed to successfully implement and follow up on its development programs (OECD/DAC, 1998). Most outspoken, however, was the then UK Secretary of State for Claire Short who publicly accused the Commission in June 2000 for being '*the worst development agency in the world*', providing '*aid that doesn't help*' (Short, 2000).

Obviously, the above situation was unsustainable. Therefore, by the time the new Prodi Commission took office in September 1999, the reform of EU development policy had become a key priority. More specifically, under the craftsmanship of Poul Nielson, the then European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, a series of reforms were initiated, aiming to turn the EU into a full-blown development donor (Harding, 2000; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Nielson, 2012; Orbie & Versluys, 2008). Most notable was (i) the establishment of EuropeAid, (ii) the strengthening of the role of the Commission's delegations in the management of the EU's development funds and (iii) the adoption of the 2000 Development Policy Statement which for the first time ever laid out an overarching EU strategy on development (Bossuyt, Lehtinen, Anne, Laporte, & Gwénäelle, 2000; Orbie, 2012; Stocchetti, 2013). As a result, the EU had become a full-blown donor by the turn of the Millennium. Or as stated by Poul Nielson, the EU had become mainstream, referring to the fact that it had turned itself into a traditional donor – in the DAC sense of the word (Nielson, 2012).

The third and final phase in EU development policy – or new season as coined by Carbone (2008a) – started from the turn of the millennium onwards. This period is characterized by a growing emphasis on enhancing the EU's coordinating role over the different Member States' development policies (Carbone, 2007, 2008a; Orbie & Versluys, 2007). Indeed, while EU Member States are still reluctant to integrate in the field of development cooperation, the 2000s have witnessed a move towards soft integration and the development of a common European vision on development. This is reflected most clearly in the European Consensus on Development (2005), a document jointly agreed upon by the EU Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament,

outlining a common focus on poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs (Delputte & Verschaeve, 2015; Stocchetti, 2013). Also on other topics such as aid effectiveness, policy coherence for development (PCD), the untying of aid and most notably the scaling up of ODA, joint European pledges and/or commitments have been made during the 2000s (e.g. Carbone, 2007; Gänzle et al., 2012; Hoebink, 2010; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Stocchetti, 2013; Stroß, 2014).

In sum, it can thus be concluded that the EU has developed itself as a multilateral development actor in the new millennium. However, this does not mean it put aside its role as a bilateral development donor. Taking a closer look at the EU's bilateral ODA budget, the Union continues to be one of the largest providers of official aid in the world. In 2014, for example, it ranked in absolute terms as the third largest ODA donor, outnumbering all other EU Member States, including Germany, France and the UK (OECD, 2014b). Also in terms of objectives, the EU continues to be an ambitious donor – at least when focusing on its discourse. More specifically, over the past decade and a half, the overarching objective of the EU's development policies has been the eradication of poverty. In doing so, particular attention has been given to achieving the MDG and implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Carbone, 2013a; Delputte & Orbie, 2014; OECD/DAC, 2007, 2012c). In recent years, however, the EU's development discourse seem to be changing slowly, mainly in response to the changing international development landscape. More specifically, and as reflects from the Agenda for Change (2011), the eradication of poverty and achieving the MDGs continue to be EU's primary objectives, though in order to achieve these the Commission has come to put more emphasis put on the promotion of human rights and democracy and aims to gradually shift its ODA budgets away from the middle-income countries (MICs) to the least-developed countries (LICs) in order to maximize its impacts. Furthermore, the EU has become one of the key advocates of policy coherence for (sustainable) development – especially in the context to the post-2015 framework, as such explicitly moving beyond the traditional development paradigms (see chapters 8 and 9). Finally, the Commission also increasingly explores ways to strengthen the involvement of the private sector in development cooperation, for example, by setting-up so-called blending instruments (Delputte & Verschaeve, 2015; ETTG, 2011; European Commission,

2011). In sum, it can thus be concluded that the EU has become in recent years a more strategic development actor (see e.g. CONCORD, 2012b; Delputte & Verschaeve, 2015; Holden, 2014; Mah, 2014).

1.2. EU Member States and EU institutions

As outlined in the previous sector, the EU turned itself over the past two and a half decades into a full-blown international development actor. In doing so, it combines the characteristics of a bilateral and multilateral donor (Carbone, 2011b). This section explores in greater detail the interaction between the EU Member States and the EU institutions (i.e. the European Commission) within both roles. This is essential for understanding the EU-DAC relationship given that (i) the EU's involvement in the Committee is not limited to one of both roles and (ii) both the EU institutions and EU Member States take part in the work of the DAC (see also chapter four).

Multilateral role

As a multilateral actor, the EU embodies the collective efforts of all 28 Member States including its own development programs. For obvious reasons, this multilateral side of EU development cooperation is shaped by the interaction between the EU institutions and the EU Member States. In doing so, both group of actors see the European level as a venue for potential influence (Carbone, 2011b; Frisch, 2008). Indeed, by striving for a common position on a particular issue, the European Commission and/or EU Member States typically aim to put their stamp on the general direction of the Union's development policies. Furthermore, by setting certain priorities they can also strengthen their own position within the European construction, or use the Union as a whole as a vehicle for international leverage (Carbone, 2013a; Farrell, 2012; Holland & Doidge, 2012). A text-book example are the joint European commitments that have been agreed upon at the Barcelona Council Meeting (2002) to scale up European ODA towards 0,7% by 2015. By doing so, the EU first of all strengthened its leverage at the UN's Financing for Development Conference in Monterey (2002). Furthermore, these joint commitments also played into the hand of the European Commission which was granted a role in monitoring progress among its Members (Carbone, 2007; Delputte, Verschaeve, Lannoo, & Orbie, 2015).

Applied the EU-DAC relationship, it is thus important to pay particular attention to the dynamics that underlie certain common European development positions. This is particularly relevant since the EU Member States and EU delegation in Paris are politically bound by what they have previously agreed upon in Brussels. As such, there is always the question of what collective actions take place – or have taken place – in Brussels when studying the DAC’s work on a particular issue. For obvious reasons, this might lead to certain frictions between the EU and the DAC given that the Brussels level may serve as an (alternative) venue to bypass the work that has been carried out in Paris (see chapter 8).

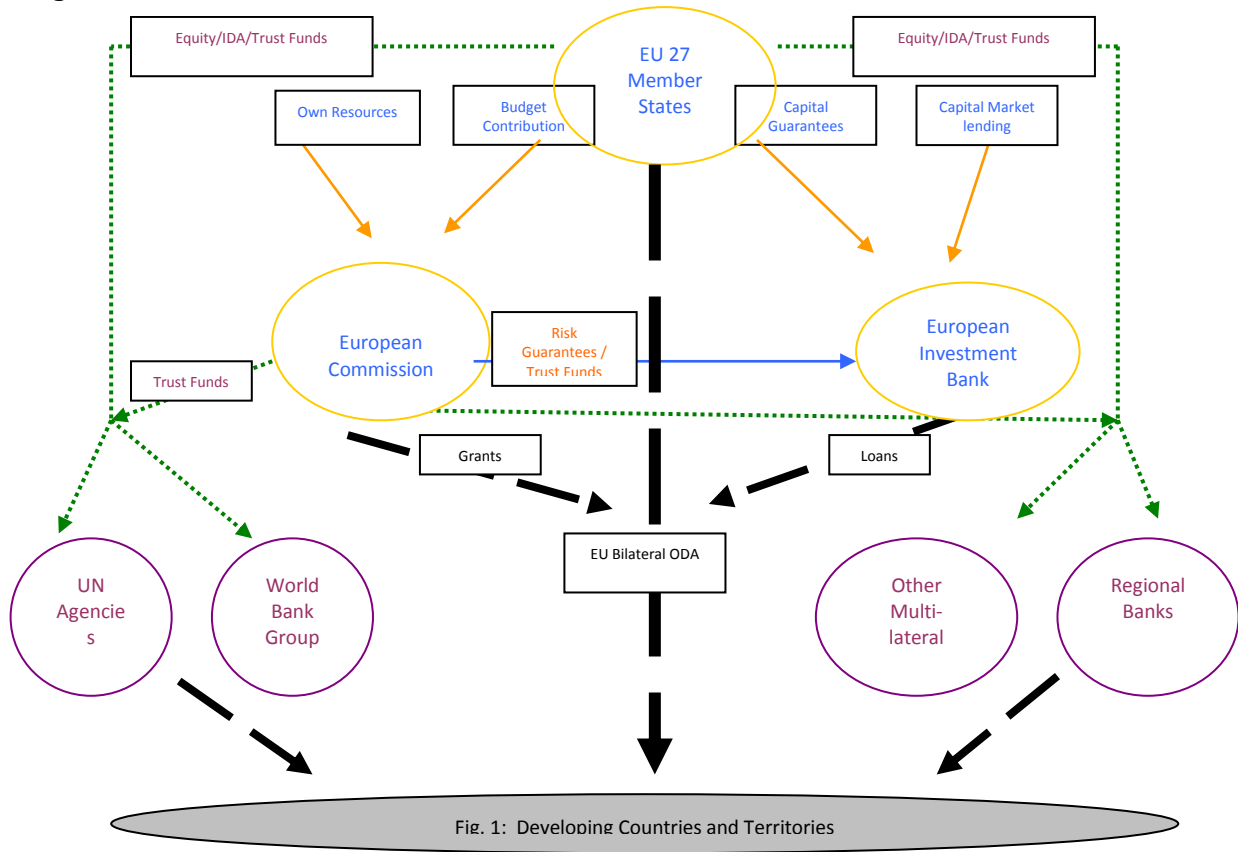
Bilateral role

As a bilateral donor, the EU should be looked upon as a donor in its own right, alongside the other EU Member States. This being said, one cannot simply disregard the EU Member States when studying the Union’s bilateral development policies. Obviously, the central actor one needs to take into account is the European Commission³, channeling European ODA to its partner countries through various EU funds. However, EU Member States play an important role in providing resources to these funds. More specifically, the EU’s bilateral development programs are financed from two main sources, respectively, (i) voluntary contributions of the Member States through the EDF – governed by its own rules (see supra) and (ii) own resources from the Union’s budget (e.g. share of Member States VAT, custom duties...). Schematically, this looks as follows⁴:

³ Other EU institutions such as the European Parliament are also involved in the EU’s development policies, though, only play a secondary role (e.g. Delputte & Verschaeve, 2015), explaining why these are not taken into account in this section as well as the remainder of this doctoral dissertation.

⁴ Figure 2 has been derived from a study of the World Bank from 2010, explaining why it only makes reference to 27 EU member States instead of 28 EU Member States (Kitt, 2012).

Figure 2



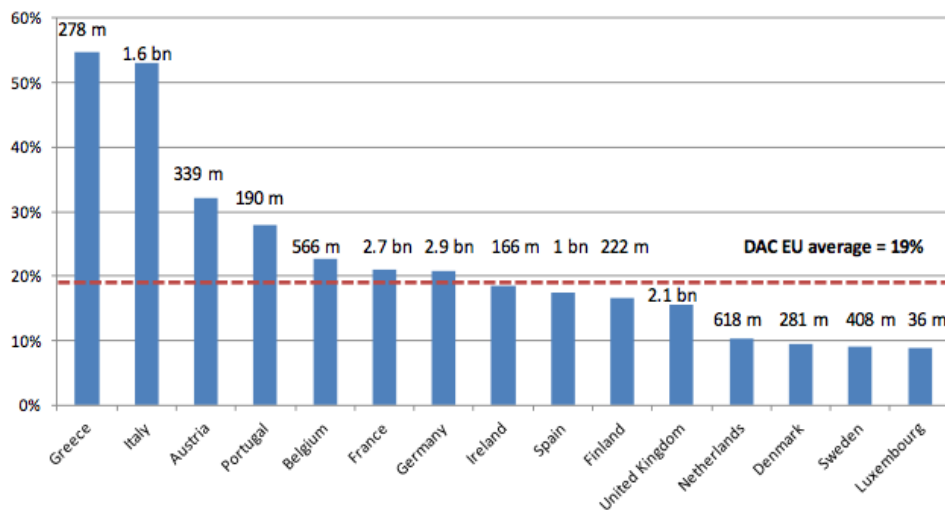
Source: Kitt (2010, p. 2)

Moreover, if one further brake down the financing of the EU’s bilateral development programs, it becomes clear that not all EU Member States contribute equally to the Union’s developement budget. The extent to which each Member State does is visualized in figure 3 below⁵.

⁵ Note that figure 3 is slightly outdated as it does not lists the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia as DAC EU Members. This stems from the fact that figure 3 is derived from the most recent DAC multilateral aid review of 2012, whereas the above countries only joined the DAC in 2013.

Figure 3

Figure 1.4 Total contributions to EU institutions (core and non-core) as percentages of gross ODA disbursements (2010)
(excluding debt relief, in constant 2010 prices)



Source: OECD/DAC (2012)

As reflects from the above figure⁶, there exists a great deal of variance across the different EU Member States when it comes to channeling ODA through the EU institutions. While some of Member States rely quite extensively on the EU – most notably Greece, Italy and to a lesser extent also Austria and Portugal, others channel only a small portion of their ODA budget through the EU – this is particularly true for those EU Members States that are part of the Nordic (plus) and/or the so-called g07⁷ grouping (OECD/DAC, 2012d). Applied to the EU-DAC relationship, it is thus important to take into account the above context given that the degree to which certain EU Member States are involved in the Union’s bilateral development programs may potentially impact the position of some of them when discussing certain (EU) related issues in the DAC (see chapter 8).

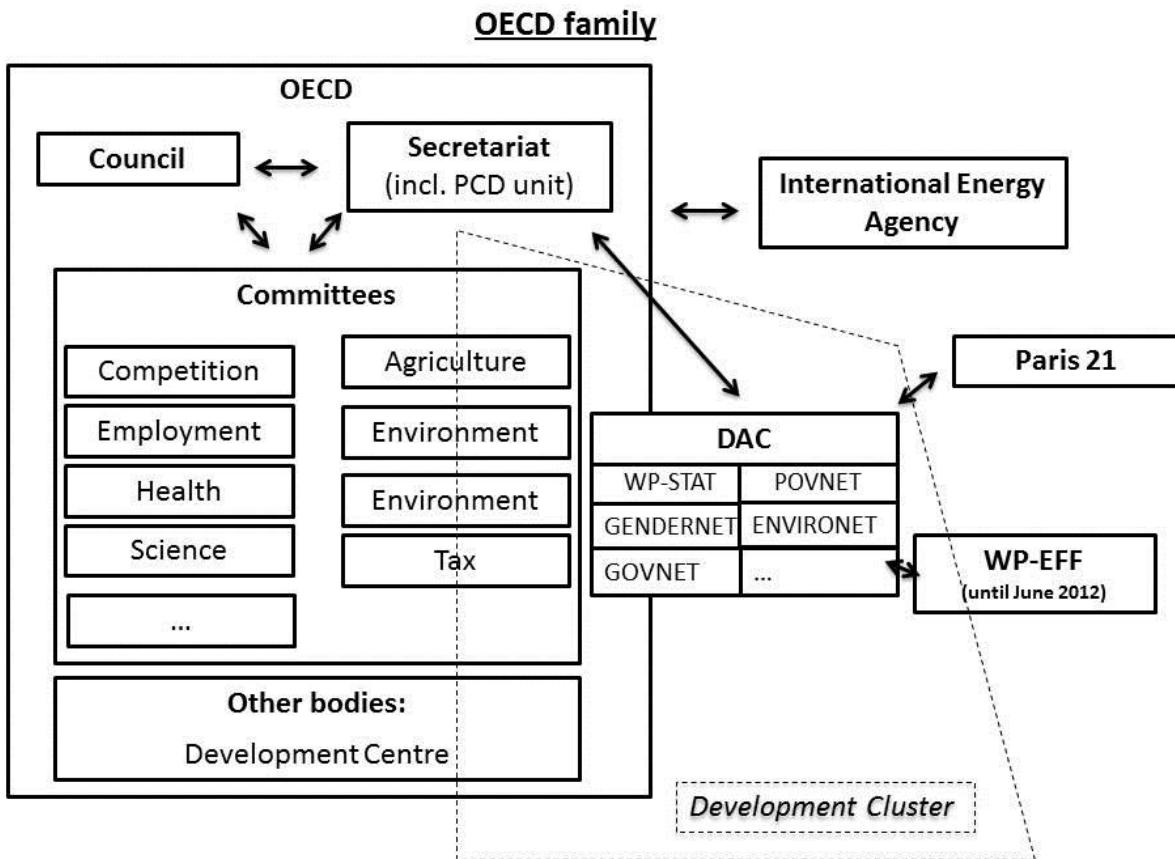
⁶ Note that the data in figure 3 should not be seen as a proxy for the ‘EU mindedness’ of the Member States, or only to a small extent. This stems from the fact that so-called country specific contribution keys are used to determine the amount of ODA channeled through the EDF by the different Member States. These keys are only to a certain degree open for negotiations in the sense that Member States can only discuss about the weight given to certain parameters. As such, Member States which give little ODA in general channel in relative terms a lot of their aid through the EU.

⁷ Referring to those countries that have successfully reached the 0,7% ODA target.

2. The OECD family

The second actor that takes in a central role in this doctoral dissertation is the DAC. However, in order to fully capture its history, role and functioning, one first needs to look at the large context in which it operates, namely, the OECD family. Indeed, rather than seeing the OECD as a monolithic bloc which includes the DAC, it is better to see it as a family (or system) which is composed by the OECD itself, but also a number of other bodies/IOs – most notably the DAC and the International Energy Agency (IEA) – which are closely linked to it (see also Lesage & Van de Graaf, 2013) . Schematically, this as follows:

Figure 4:



In what follows, I will first discuss the OECD's history, functioning and role in international relations, followed by an overview of the DAC. In this second section, I will also briefly touch upon the so-called Development Cluster. Other bodies/IOs such as the IEA, Paris 21 will not be addressed given that they fall beyond the scope of this doctoral dissertation. This is different for the WP-EFF and the Development Centre, though, both will not be addressed in this section, but in the different chapters of this study – stemming from the fact that they are only relevant with regard certain specific research questions. Finally, it should be pointed out that the section on the DAC largely builds upon my own empirical findings, stemming from the fact that the Committee has been massively overlooked in the literature (see supra).

2.1. The OECD

2.1.1. History

The OECD is an intergovernmental IO whose primary objective is *'to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world'* (www.oecd.org). It was established in 1961, though, its roots go back to 1948. At that time, European countries established the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). The OEEC was set-up to administer the Marshall plan for the reconstruction of Europe. As such, it served as one of the first successful exponents of European integration (Griffiths, 1997; Woodward, 2009). However, by the end of the 1950s, the OEEC had lost most of initial glance. This was the case for two reasons. First, the Organisation had outlived most of its purpose once the Marshall plan evaporated in 1952. While the OEEC continued to be operational – focusing on topics such as trade liberalization – it essentially had become an institution without a clear purpose (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Griffiths, 1997). Second, the OEEC was challenged by two new organizations, respectively, the EEC and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Both had become in no time the new drivers of European integration, further adding to the OEEC's irrelevance. As a result, the OEEC went through an existential crisis in the late fifties, and ideas arose to *"kill the Organisation all together"* as suggested by France (Griffiths, 1997; Woodward, 2009).

This gradually changed by the end of the fifties. At that time, Western countries raised the idea to reform the OEEC and turn it into a forum for transatlantic cooperation⁸, which happened by the end of 1961. This effort should be seen in the light of the political situation at that time. First, transatlantic relations were at a historic low. Especially the relationship between Washington and Paris was increasingly tense, most notably over the nuclear aspirations of French president Charles de Gaulle, better known as *'force de frappe'* (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Wolfe, 2007). Furthermore, within European countries were divided on what path to follow towards integration, giving ground to a more supranationalist camp (i.e. EEC countries) and an intergovernmentalist camp (i.e. EFTA countries). Second, several countries – most notably the US, UK and Canada – were frightened by the creation of the EEC's common market. More specifically, and as stipulated in Article 1 of the Treaty of Rome (1957), the EEC countries engaged in an economic liberalization that went far beyond the traditional free trade liberalizations as that time. As such, most non-EEC countries were afraid of the potential discriminatory impact of the creation of this European Common market (Griffiths, 1997; Wolfe, 2007; Woodward, 2009).

By reforming the OEEC, the US aimed to kill both challenges with one stone. More specifically, and as envisaged by the Eisenhower administration, the new OECD first of all needed to serve as a forum for permanent dialogue between the different Western countries. This would smoothen political relations across the Atlantic and give a strong signal to the rest of the world that Western countries were still a united bloc. Furthermore, by focusing on socio-economic issues – including trade (!) – the idea was that the OECD could serve as a default structure for influencing the EEC's common market if necessary (Griffiths, 1997; Wolfe, 2007; Woodward, 2009).

⁸ Note that the initial plan was to expand the mandate of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, in the end the choice fell on reforming the OEEC, amongst other reasons, because of the French position *vis-à-vis* the NATO (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Griffiths, 1997).

2.1.2. Membership

In terms of membership, the OECD is currently composed out of 34 countries⁹, including most of the world's so-called advanced or industrialized countries. These span all continents, with the exception of the Africa. However, due to the OECD's establishment history – i.e. originating from the OEEC and being established during the Cold War – most of its members are traditional European/Western powers. This explains why the OECD carries the image of being a *'rich man's club'* or *'club of western countries'* (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Mahon & McBride, 2008). In recent years, however, the Organization is trying to abandon this image¹⁰. It does so by trying to expand its membership, reaching out to the so-called emerging countries – most notably the BRICs and Indonesia (Clifton & Díaz-Fuentes, 2011; Lesage & Van de Graaf, 2015; Woodward, 2011). These efforts paid off, at least to some extent. While close collaborations and partnerships – or in OECD terms *'enhanced engagements'* – have been set up with all BRIC countries, only Russia has shown a real interest in joining the Organization. However, the latter's accession has been put on hold because of the ongoing conflict (or war) in Ukraine (www.oecd.org).

Furthermore, the OECD also tries to involve other actors – i.e. third countries, IOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) – to the greatest extent possible. However, it should be noted that the involvement of third countries and CSOs varies greatly across the different bodies of the OECD. While most IOs easily find their way to Paris– to list a few: the United Nations (UN), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) or World Bank all take part in the OECD's work on an almost permanent basis (OECD, 2007, 2013c, 2014c) – third countries and CSOs often show less enthusiasm to take part in its work (Carroll & Kellow, 2011).

⁹ At present, the OECD is composed out of 34 countries. These are respectively: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, The United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).

¹⁰ This also clearly reflects from the appointment of the Mexican Angel Gurría in 2006 as new Secretary-General of the OECD, whose election programme predominantly revolved around expanding the Organization's membership in order to secure its future.

2.1.3. Functioning

In terms of functioning, the OECD's decision-making process is shaped by three actors (cf. figure 4). These are, respectively, (i) the OECD Council, (ii) the OECD Secretariat and (iii) the different OECD Committees. Starting with the OECD Council, this body constitutes the highest political level within the Organization. It meets regularly – on average once a month – at the level of the permanent representatives to the OECD to oversee the work of the Organization. Furthermore, once a year, the Council meets at the ministerial level to discuss the key priorities and issues for the OECD, as such given strategic direction to the Organization. For example, the outreach of the OECD towards the BRICs (see supra) has been initiated by the OECD Council (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Clifton & Díaz-Fuentes, 2011; OECD, 2007; Woodward, 2009). In both constellations, the OECD Council is chaired by the Secretary-General and decisions are taken by consensus (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Woodward, 2009).

A second actor in the OECD's decision-making is the Secretariat. Essentially, its role is twofold, namely, (i) supporting the work of the different OECD committees with analysis and input and (ii) carrying out the priorities that have been set by the Council (e.g. implementing institutional reforms). At the head of the OECD Secretariat, one can find the OECD Secretary-General, assisted by several Deputy Secretary-Generals¹¹. At a lower level, the Secretariat is made up by different Directorates, each responsible for a specific policy area and/or more horizontal issues such as the promotion of policy coherence. In total, the OECD Secretariat is made up of around 2500 officials, of which a majority are highly-qualified experts – often with a background in economics, international law or political science (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; www.oecd.org).

A third and final actor are the different OECD committees. At present, the OECD is composed out of over 250 committees, working groups and expert groups. It is here that the center of gravity of the decision-making lies given that these specialized committees

¹¹ In the period between 2011 and 2014 former Belgian prime minister Yves Leterme was one of the OECD's Deputy Secretary-Generals, being in charge of Social Affairs, Education, Governance and Entrepreneurship.

and bodies serve as the meeting place for the representatives of the different OECD Member States and officials from the OECD Secretariat. Typically, most of these Committees hold a great deal of autonomy in terms of determining their agenda, working pace or level of involvement of non-OECD members (see supra). This is particularly true for the so-called first-level committees, which are the most important committees (*de jure* the DAC is also one of them). These committees are allowed to establish subcommittees, working parties and expert groups to address certain aspects of their work. This makes the OECD a very decentralized IO, given that it is an amalgam of committees, bodies, subsidiary bodies and working groups which all function in the same way (i.e. soft law mechanisms), though work at different paces and meet in different constellations (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Woodward, 2009).

2.1.4. Role in global governance

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the role of the OECD in global governance. As already outlined in one of the previous sections, the OECD's overarching objective is to 'promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world' (www.oecd.org). This ambition builds upon the first article of the OECD convention, which stipulates that the Organization shall design and promote policies to:

- (a) achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;*
- (b) contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-Member countries in the process of economic development; and*
- (c) contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations (OECD, 1960, Art. 1).*

As reflects from the above article, the OECD holds a broad and extremely flexible mandate. This explains why the Organization has been active on a wide range of issues, covering almost the entire socio-economic policy spectrum ranging from agriculture, corruption or environment to energy, employment, taxation, trade or science

(www.oecd.org). Only in a small number of policy areas – i.e. defense, culture and sports – the OECD lacks competences or has shown no ambition thus far (Carroll & Kellow, 2011). Because of its broad and flexible mandate, the OECD holds a distinctive role in global governance. Indeed, at a meta-level, its functioning is not constrained by a narrow/well-defined mandate as is the case for most other IOs. This makes the OECD a very flexible IO, which is able to quickly address gaps in global governance. During the 1970s, for example, it was one of the first IOs to address the emerging issues of environment¹² and energy¹³ in its work (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Lesage & Van de Graaf, 2013; van Lennep, 1998; Woodward, 2009).

Finally, taking a closer look at the actual work of the OECD, its current role in global governance is twofold. First and most important, the Organization serves for its Members as a forum for information sharing, policy learning and standard setting in a wide range of policy areas. More specifically, the OECD committees serve as meeting places for national servants – typically specialists in a certain policy area – to jointly reflect upon (common) problems and try to come up with solutions based on analysis and deliberation (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Marcussen, 2003; Porter, 2007; Woodward, 2009). Furthermore, in most policy areas, the OECD developed some kind of system of peer reviewing, allowing its Members to scrutinize as well as learn from each other's policy performances (Ben-Artzi, 2013; Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Woodward, 2009). In sum, the OECD thus serves first of all as hub of global knowledge in a wide range of policy areas (Marcussen, 2003; Nay, 2014; Slaughter, 2004). Second, in recent years, the OECD has increasingly come to function as the *de facto* secretariat of the G20. Indeed, since the Pittsburgh summit (September 2009), the OECD has been actively taking part in the work of the G20. More specifically, and following an official request from the G20, the Organization provides policy expertise and analysis to the G20 meetings. Furthermore, it also carries out tasks mandated by the Group. On taxation, for example, the OECD has established in recent years several reports and standards, following discussions at the level of the G20 to tackle tax evasion (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; OECD, 2013d; Wouters & Kerckhoven, 2011).

¹² In 1970, for example, the OECD set-up its Environment Committee.

¹³ In 1973, for example, the OECD established the International Energy Agency (IEA).

2.2. The DAC

Having provided a general overview on the OECD, this section takes a closer look at the DAC. As previously outlined in this chapter (and also reflects from figure 4), it is important to make a distinction between the OECD and the DAC given that the latter holds a largely autonomous position within the OECD family. Or as coined by a former DAC delegate, the Committee should be seen as an “*OECD within the OECD*”, referring to the fact that while it operates in a similar fashion as the OECD, it holds a much more autonomous position.

2.2.1. History

The origins of the DAC lay in the late fifties/early sixties. At first sight this might seem obvious given that the DAC is *de jure* a committee of the OECD which was established at that time. However, what few people know is that the DAC is actually older than the OECD, initially being an independent IO called the Development Assistance Group (DAG). More specifically, the origins of the DAG go back to 13 January 1960, whereas the OECD became only operational on 30 September 1961 (Führer, 1996). Similar to the creation of the OECD (see supra), the establishment of the DAG came at the initiative of the US. It was established in response to the changing international context in the late fifties, referring first of all to a new wave of decolonization. Furthermore, the Soviet Union (USSR) was economically increasingly involved in the global South and communist forces were uprising in a number of countries, most notable Angola, Cuba and Vietnam (McWilliams & Piotrowski, 2009; Rostow, 1985). Against this background, a significant expansion of Western aid budgets was seen as self-evident, both for humanitarian and geopolitical reasons (Esman & Cheever, 1967). However, the US itself was unable to further expand its aid budget, stemming from the fact that the country faced its first balance of payment deficits since the end of the Second World War. On the other hand, countries such as Germany or Japan were economically thriving¹⁴ and had up until then provided – in relative terms – little development aid (Esman & Cheever, 1967; Gable, 1959; Rostow, 1985; Schmidt, 2003).

¹⁴ Germany was typically referred to as being a *wirtschaftswunder* (German for economic miracle) referring to its rapid economic reconstruction and recovery after the Second World War.

In response to the above situation, the Eisenhower administration raised in 1958 the idea of creating a partnership of Western countries on development cooperation. This proposal – later come to known as the Common Aid Effort – envisaged extensive burden-sharing and coordination among Western donors in order to increase the overall volume and effectiveness of Western development aid (Bracho, 2011; Esman & Cheever, 1967). Most Western countries quickly responded positively to the US proposal – regardless of some minor differences of opinions on how much aid was already provided by countries such as France or Italy. As such, by the end of 1958 diplomats started to discuss the implementation of the Common Aid Effort (Esman & Cheever, 1967; US, 1958a, 1958b). One of the important issues that needed to be tackled was the level of institutionalization of this partnership. While all negotiating parties insisted on the creation of a strong and permanent partnership, a majority of them rejected the idea of establishing yet another IO, stemming from the proliferation of IOs in the aftermath of the Second World War. Therefore, the idea was raised to implement the Common Aid Effort within the framework of an already existing IO. The choice ultimately fell on the OECD – which at that point still needed to be established (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Esman & Cheever, 1967; US, 1958a, 1958b, 1959c). However, given the strategic importance of aid at that time, the US – as well as others – worked out an interim solution, namely the immediate establishment of the DAG which upon the inception of the OECD would serve as an IO in its own right (Esman & Cheever, 1967; Führer, 1996; US, 1959a, 1959b, 1959c, 1959d).

The actual merger of the DAG and OECD took place on 5 October 1961. By that time, the DAG had already held 5 meetings¹⁵, respectively, in Washington (2x), Bonn, London and Tokyo (Führer, 1996). In doing so, it proved to be a well-functioning and effective organization. For this reason, the US ultimately decided that they wanted to maintain the integrity of the DAG within the OECD's framework. In addition, the Eisenhower administration had become rather skeptical about the potential effectiveness of the OECD given that the tensions on the European Common market continued to prevail and could

¹⁵ Note that the OEEC Secretariat also supported the DAG. Furthermore, a number of meetings of the so-called Working Party of the DAG which focused on the monitoring of development had also taken place in Paris in 1960.

easily paralyze the entire Organization. Therefore the line was taken that the DAC would replace the DAG on the condition that it would acquire the same functions, characteristics and membership possessed by the DAG (Esman & Cheever, 1967; Rostow, 1985; US, 1959c, 1959d, 1960). As such, the DAC was ultimately a continuation of the DAG, now operating from within the OECD's institutional framework (Esman & Cheever, 1967).

This unique/quasi-autonomous status of the DAC within the OECD has remained unaltered ever since. Today, for example, it is still reflected in the fact that the DAC is the only OECD Committee that is headed by a permanent chair, representing the Committee within the rest of the Organization as well as the larger international community. The DAC also upholds its own membership criteria¹⁶ and has a partly independent budget (Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008). Also geographically, the DAC Secretariat (hereafter Development Co-operation Directorate or DCD) is based in Boulogne-Billancourt – a suburb of Paris – whereas the OECD itself is housed in (or near) the Chateau de la Muette, located in the 16th arrondissement of Paris. However, meetings of the DAC do take place in the OECD's buildings. Finally, it should be noted that over time, the DAC has engaged in a slow but gradual process of strengthening its relations with the rest of the OECD. In 2002, for example, the DAC and OECD jointly established the so-called Development Cluster, grouping all bodies within the OECD family that touch upon issues of development cooperation in their work (Führer, 1996; Manning, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2010). This being said, strengthening the collaboration between the DAC and the rest of the OECD continues to be a delicate balancing act as it typically divides the DAC delegates and DCD officials in a group of people who want to safeguard the autonomy/integrity/budget of the DAC and another group of people who seek to mainstream development concerns into the work of the rest of the Organisation.

¹⁶ Members of the OECD are not automatically members of the DAC and vice versa. For example, the EU is a full member of the DAC, while only being a full participant in the OECD (see chapter 3). Furthermore, Australia and Japan joined the DAC prior to their accession to the OECD, whereas other countries such as Denmark or Switzerland did the opposite move (Carroll & Kellow, 2011)). It should be noted, however, that in recent years, the DAC is gradually bringing its membership in line with that of rest of the Organization (OECD/DAC, 2012b).

2.2.2. Membership

The DAC is currently composed out of 29 Member States. These are, respectively, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the US and the UK. As such, the DAC represents virtually all traditional donors as well as a number of so-called re-emerging donors from Central and Eastern Europe and Asia (i.e. Korea). In addition, also the World Bank, IMF and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) take part in the work of the DAC as permanent observers. This is also the case for a number of non-DAC OECD Members such as Chile, Estonia, Hungary, Israel or Turkey. In 2014 also the United Arab Emirates (UAE) became a participant to the DAC (Führer, 1996; Hynes & Carroll, 2013; OECD/DAC, 2012b, 2014). Furthermore, depending on the topic and/or subgroup/working party of the DAC (see *infra*), also a number of other stakeholders take part in the Committee's work. These include representatives from the BRICs, developing countries, IOs and CSOs (Manning, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2010, 2012a).

2.2.3. Functioning

In order to understand the functioning of the DAC, one needs to pay particular attention to the two main actors that take part in its work. These are, respectively, the DAC Secretariat (DCD) and the different Member States' delegations. *De jure* one should also see the DAC Chair as a separate actor as he or she¹⁷ is not affiliated to either the DCD or the DAC Member States, though, in practice the chair usually sides along the DCD.

Starting with the DCD, the role of the DAC Secretariat is to support the work of the Committee, i.e. its Members. It does so by providing analytical input to the meetings, follow-up on previous decisions and help building a consensus if needed. However, and as is the case with most agencies/bureaucracies, the DCD is not a passive player in the decision-making process. Due to its central position in the decision-making process, it is often able to actively steer the work of the Committee, especially if it feels that the integrity of the DAC's

¹⁷ Although, there has never been a female DAC chair thus far.

work is at stake. The second group of actors which take part in the work of the DAC are the different Member States' delegations. More specifically, each Member State is represented by a so-called DAC delegate – and in most cases also some additional staff members who follow up on the work of the Committee's subsidiary bodies (see *infra*). Importantly, DAC officials are typically residential in Paris, stemming from the high work pace of the Committee, which would make it too costly and/or time consuming to fly in for each meeting¹⁸. DAC delegates traditionally are senior level officials with a background in development. The sum of both makes that they constitute a kind of epistemic community, referring to the fact that they have a similar background and are – to some extent – isolated from their respective capitals¹⁹. It should be noted, however, that in more recent years, the DAC has witnessed a slow but gradual 'diplomatization' of its delegates. More specifically, a growing number of them no longer have a background in development cooperation, but originate from within the traditional diplomatic corps of their respective country.

Finally, taking a closer look at the actual interactions between the DAC Members and the DCD, it is important to keep in mind that the Committee operates at different levels. More specifically, the DAC meets at (i) the level of the Committee and (ii) the level of the subsidiary bodies. The meetings at the Committee level are the most important ones given that this is the place where all major political decisions are taken. These so-called DAC meetings are chaired by the DAC chair, supported by a number of senior DCD officials (most notably the Director). The Member States are represented in these meeting by their respective DAC delegate. Importantly, the DAC also convenes once a year a so-called High-Level Meeting (HLM) – typically in December – as well as a preparatory Senior-Level Meeting (SLM) – typically in May. As reflects from their name, the different DAC Members fly in high-level officials – including ministers – for the HLM. Consequently, the HLM typically gives strategic direction to the DAC, setting out the political agenda for the year(s) to come and/or tackling highly sensitive issues (e.g. reforming the ODA definition). At a lower political level, the DAC meets at the level of its subsidiary bodies. These subsidiary bodies focus on a particular aspect of the DAC's work, dealing with all the technicalities.

¹⁸ This is the case for most other OECD committees given that they gather once or twice a year, whereas the DAC holds meetings at least once a month.

¹⁹ This also reflects from the fact that DAC delegates often meet besides work.

Without doubt, the most well-known subsidiary body of the DAC is – or better was – the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), which operated between 2008 and 2012 and organized the High Level Forums (HLFs) on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (2008) and Busan (2012). Other important subsidiary bodies are, for example, the Working Party on Statistics, responsible for upholding the credibility and integrity of the ODA definition, or the Network on Development Evaluation, which undertakes studies to see what aid works (not) and why (not) (www.oecd.org; participant observations).

In this doctoral dissertation, the main focus lays on the DAC's meetings at the Committee level, stemming from the fact that the cases that are central to this study were predominantly addressed at this level. However, I also focused on the work of some of the DAC's subsidiary bodies (e.g. chapter 5) in order to fully grasp the complexity of certain issues as well as the work leading up to the decisions at the level of the DAC.

2.2.4. Role in global governance

Finally, it is important to elaborate on the DAC's role in international development cooperation. As already outlined in one of the previous paragraphs, the DAC was initially established to increase the volume and effectiveness of development aid (OECD/DAC, 1960). This objective has remained unaltered ever since (e.g. OECD/DAC, 2011). To pursue these goals, the DAC operates in a similar fashion as the rest of the OECD, that is to say that it relies on a unique mixture of soft-law mechanisms. First, the DAC serves as a forum for development standard setting and monitoring. In 1969, for example, it introduced the ODA definition, allowing the DCD to systematically monitor and compare the aid efforts of the different DAC Members (Hynes & Scott, 2013). In a similar vein, the DAC also established several other development principles, including the concepts of untied aid, PCD or donor alignment (Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008).

Second, the DAC serves as a forum for policy learning and development evaluation. More specifically, its peer reviews – but also other instruments – offer its Members a means for (i) scrutinizing the development policies of the donor under review, (ii) identifying best practices and (iii) mutual learning. Of course, these peer reviews are a legally non-binding

instrument. Nonetheless, they have proven to be very effective in a number of cases, creating a momentum for policy reform (Ashoff, 2013; Ben-Artzi, 2013; Paulo & Reisen, 2010).

Third and final, the DAC serves as a forum for policy dialogue and international consensus building. In recent years, for example, it played a leading role in forging international development commitments such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) or the MDGs (2000). More specifically, the Paris Declaration was the direct outcome of the HLF in Paris that was organized by the DAC. The role of the DAC in the establishment of the MDGs is less well-known. Basically, its 1996 report '*Shaping the 21st century*' set in to a large degree the tone of the debate in the late nineties given that it put forward seven International Development Goals, which in a first stage were endorsed by the Bretton Woods institutions, and afterwards evolved into the MDGs (Eyben, 2013; Eyben & Savage, 2012; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004).

In sum, the DAC can thus be seen as an important pillar of the international aid architecture given that it has been extremely influential in defining what we today see as development cooperation (Boas & McNeill, 2004; Heiner et al., 2014; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Nay, 2014).

3. The changing international context

Finally, it is important to elaborate on the international context in which the EU and the DAC operate and interact with one another. Therefore, this third section pays particular attention to the changing international development landscape given that it has been in a constant state of flux from the mid-2000s onwards. Indeed, over the past decade, the traditional aid model has increasingly become under pressure to change and adapt to the emergence of (i) new actor (ii) new ideas and (iii) other context variables (Janus, Klingebiel, & Paulo, 2014; UN, 2015). This has been particularly challenging for the DAC, stemming from the fact that it is arguably the most visible exponent of the traditional (Western) development model – think, for example, at the ODA regime (Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Paulo & Reisen, 2010). However, also the EU – both as a bilateral and multilateral development actor – is confronted with this changing international context and has to adapt

to it (DIIS, 2013; ETTG, 2014; ODI, DIE, & ECDPM, 2013). Therefore, the remainder of this section will elaborate in more detail on each of these three evolutions. Note, however, that while I discuss them separately for the sake of clarity, they cannot be disentangled from one another.

3.1. New actors

Without doubt the most visible evolution in international development cooperation has been the proliferation of new/(re) emerging development actors in the past decades(s) (Smith, Fordelone, & Zimmermann, 2010; Walz & Rachmandran, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Indeed, in recent years, a growing number of players have (re)entered the development stage, be it as a provider of development assistance (e.g. Korea, the Central and Eastern European Countries, philanthropic foundations, NGOs) or some kind of hybrid form between a receiver and provider of aid (e.g. most BRICs, Turkey). Furthermore, also private sector actors have become increasingly involved in development cooperation (Kragelund, 2011; Manning, 2006). Consequently, development cooperation is no longer the exclusive prerogative of the traditional DAC donors, but has become much more diversified at all policy levels (Brown & Morton, 2008; Smith et al., 2010; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Obviously, this evolution has (and still is) put(ting) significant pressure on the international aid architecture. For example, IOs such as the DAC, but also the World Bank, IMF are forced to adapt to this new (power) constellation (Besada & Kindornay, 2013; Birdsall, 2006). Furthermore, the proliferation of development actors has add to a further fragmentation of the donor landscape, making coordination more important than ever before. It also leads to a growing competition between donors in a number of cases in the sense that development countries have more options to choose from. In turn, this might inspire donors to act more strategically – think, for example, about the EU's agenda for change which puts forward the principle of differentiation. On the other hand, the increased number of development actors is not by definition a negative evolution. On the contrary, it might also improve the quality and/or quantity of aid (Janus et al., 2014).

3.2. New ideas

In parallel with – and as a result of/in response to – the proliferation of new development actors, the world has witnessed in recent years the emergence of new development ideas. Indeed, after more than five decades of dominant ‘traditional/Western’ development thinking, there is a growing range of ideas on how to tackle poverty. Perhaps most important or fundamental is the growing ‘beyond aid’ thinking in recent years, both within policy and academic circles (Barder, Clark, Lépissier, Reynolds, & Roodman, 2013; Janus et al., 2014; Janus, Klingebiel, & Paulo, 2015; Kharas & Rogerson, 2012; Mawdsley, Savage, & Kim, 2014; Severino & Ray, 2009; Andrew Sumner & Mallet, 2013; UK, 2015). While there exist various – often complex – interpretations of what this ‘beyond aid’ paradigm actually entails, the basic idea is that aid on its own is not enough to promote development (Janus et al., 2014). More specifically, in today’s globalized world, development cooperation is increasingly seen as only one part of the larger system of international cooperation system that is needed to tackle global challenges (e.g. poverty, climate changes) and as such promote (sustainable) development (Barder et al., 2013; ETTG, 2014; Janus et al., 2014).

Perhaps the first strong exponent of this ‘beyond aid’ thinking was the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011), referring to the outcome document of the fourth and final HLF on Aid Effectiveness (Eyben & Savage, 2012; Mawdsley et al., 2014). More specifically, in Busan the development community acknowledged for the first time “*the need to broaden our focus and attention from aid effectiveness to the challenges of effective development*” (art. 28). In the same period, we also witness a growing importance attached to the principle of PCD (see chapter 9). While the concept of PCD had been around for quite some time (cf. Forster & Stokke, 1999a), its interpretation shifted in the late 2000s from being a negative concept (i.e. a tool to avoid policy incoherence between development policies and other policies) to a more positive/holistic concept (i.e. PCD being a tool to build positive synergies across different policy areas)(Droeze, 2010; ECDPM, 2014; OECD, 2013a, 2014a; Prontera, 2014; Stroß, 2014). However, by far the most visible exponent of the ‘beyond aid’ thinking is the post-2015 process given that the ultimate object is to move beyond the traditional development

paradigm, aiming to link the promotion of (i) inclusive social development, (ii) inclusive economic development, (iii) environmental sustainability and (iv) peace and security (UN, 2012, 2013, 2015). Confronted with this context, the field of development cooperation today thus stands at crossroads as it will have to seek links with other policy areas (or even integrate) in order to maintain its relevance (cf. Janus et al., 2014).

Also within the field of development cooperation, recent years have witnessed a proliferation of new ideas. First, traditional development concepts as defined by the DAC and the Bretton Woods Institutions have become increasingly challenged and/or complemented by development thinking and practices of non-traditional donors such as the BRICs. For example, the latter actors put a lot of emphasis on the principle of South-South cooperation, but also stress the importance of non-interference and mutually beneficial types of cooperation (Bräutigam, 2011; Janus et al., 2014; Kragelund, 2011). Obviously, the latter challenge traditional Western concepts such as the ODA definition, aid conditionality or the principle of untied aid (Bräutigam, 2011; Chandy & Kharas, 2011; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Second, recent years have also witnessed the rise of new ideas on how to achieve the MDGs. Most notably is the growing emphasis that is being put on economic growth and private sector engagement, a shift that can be clearly witnessed in, for example, the G20's Seoul Consensus (2010) or the EU's Agenda for Changes (2011).

3.3. Other context variables

Finally, in addition to the proliferation of new actors and ideas, there are also a number of other context variables that are worth elaborating on given that they have strongly influenced the context in which development policies have come to exist in recent years. More specifically, while there are countless variables that have an impact on the creation of development policies, two are worth pointing out. The first one is the global financial and economic crisis, which emerged in 2008 and fundamentally altered the financial situation in which countries had to operate. More specifically, and contradictory to what was initially expected, the financial crisis affected above all the traditional Western donors, in particular the EU countries. The emerging economies and developing countries

were affected to a (much) lesser extent (DIIS, 2013). In this context, European ODA budgets suffered hard, leading to 'impressive' cutbacks in countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy (CONCORD, 2012a; OECD, 2014b). Furthermore, due to the fact that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth fell across the EU, European trade with developing countries fell back (or stagnated), especially in the period between 2008 and 2010 (DIIS, 2013; EU, 2014). As a result, in Africa²⁰, China overtook Europe as the largest trading partner. In sum, one could thus conclude that the global financial and economic crisis affected the position of traditional donor countries. While it first of all negatively influenced their aid budgets, it also played into the hand of the already ongoing process of developing countries increasingly turning towards the (re)emerging development actors (DIIS, 2013; Grimm, Humprey, Lundsgaarde, & John de Souza, 2009; Humprey, 2010).

The second context variable that changed profoundly over the last decades (and will continue to do so) is the geography of poverty. More specifically, since 1990 a substantial number of countries have graduated from being a low-income countries (LICs) to middle-income countries (MICs) (DIIS, 2013). However, underlying these macroeconomic success stories lies in most cases a growth path that has not been inclusive, to say the least. As such, the global distribution of poor has shifted from LICs to MICs, meaning that a large majority of today's poorest people live in MICs, most notably India and China (Sumner, 2010; Sumner & Mallet, 2013). While several studies point out that this will only be a temporary phase, predicting that by 2030 the majority of poor people will live in fragile and low-income African states (DIIS, 2013; Kharas & Rogerson, 2012), it does raise the question on where to distribute aid. Indeed, while traditionally donors have always focused on *countries* – think about the list of ODA-eligible countries – one could wonder to what extent the focus should not lay on *people*. Again, these types of questions put pressure on the existing aid regimes to reform and adapt to the changing international context. To what extent, for example, does the DAC need to reform its ODA definition to this new geography of poverty? And how does the EU's agenda for change and its growing emphasis put on LDCs correspond to the above reality?

²⁰ Note that it is by no means my intention to reduce developing cooperation to helping African countries.

Chapter 2. Literature overview

In this second chapter of this doctoral dissertation, I situate my research within the broader realm of literature on (i) EU development cooperation, (ii) EU-IOs relations and (iii) international relations (IR) and international development studies. While this has already been done to some extent in the previous chapter – in the sense that it clearly revealed the lack of literature on the EU-DAC relationship as well as provide a general overview of the main actors and dynamics – this chapter looks at the literature from a more general perspective, focusing on the main evolutions within each of these field.

2.1. The study of EU development cooperation

The scholarship on EU development cooperation has gained momentum in the 2000s. Indeed, in parallel with the EU's transformation towards a full-blown bilateral and multilateral development actor (see *supra*), a growing number of scholars have started to study the EU's development policies (e.g. Arts & Dickson, 2004; Carbone, 2007, 2009, 2013b; Delputte, 2013; Gänzle et al., 2012; Hoebink, 2010; Holland, 2002; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie, 2012). This stands in sharp contrast with the previous decades during which only a selected number of scholars took an interest in the EU's development policies – notable exceptions were Cosgrove-Twitchett (1978, 1981), Faber (1982), Frey-Wouters (1982) or Grilli (1993). However, despite this increasing scholarly attention, EU development cooperation remains understudied – especially in comparison to other donors (e.g. France, Germany, the UK or UK) and other fields of EU external action (e.g. climate, trade, security).

Generally speaking, the aforementioned studies (i) provided an overview of the main evolutions in EU development cooperation (e.g. Arts & Dickson, 2004; Carbone, 2007; Hoebink, 2005; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie, 2012) or paid particular attention to (ii) a specific country or region (e.g. Carbone, 2013b; Holland, 2002; Söderbaum & Stålgren, 2010) and/or issues such as (iii) donor coordination (e.g. Carbone, 2013a; Delputte & Orbie, 2014; Delputte & Söderbaum, 2012), (iv) the coherence between the EU's aid and non-aid policies (e.g. Carbone, 2011a; Carbone, 2009; Hoebink, 1999; Stroß, 2014; Van der Hoeven, 2010), (v) the involvement of CSOs (e.g. Carbone, 2008b; Huybrechts & Peels, 2008) or (vi)

the role of the so-called 'new' Member States in EU development cooperation (e.g. Horký & Lightfoot, 2012; Lightfoot & Szent-Iványi, 2014; Paragi, 2010).

Of particular relevance for this doctoral dissertation, however, is the limited – or better almost complete lack of – attention for the multilateral level in the study of EU development cooperation. Indeed, despite a dramatic increase of interactions between the EU and IOs in recent years (Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Kissack, 2010; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006) and the fact that a number of scholars have convincingly argued (or implicitly shown) that EU development cooperation is the product of the complex interaction between the EU institutions, EU Member States, developing countries but also (!) IOs (Carbone, 2013a; Farrell, 2008; Holland, 2008; Olsen, 2005), virtually no studies explicitly address the link between the EU and the multilateral level with regard to development cooperation. Most notable – and to our knowledge only – exceptions are Baroncelli (2011, 2012), Carbone (2013a) and Farrell (2008, 2012). These studies have in common that they study the EU's role in a particular IO²¹, focusing on how the Union is institutionally represented and/or what its impact is on the decision-making of the respective Organization. However, while these studies are extremely useful – after all they are the first to provide a descriptive overview of the EU's engagement in a number of important development IOs – they do not move beyond offering a 'traditional' institutional/legal account of the EU's relations with IOs (see *infra*). To a certain degree, only the 2008 study of Mary Farrell is an exception to this rule in the sense that she not only looks at both the institutional and ideational dimension of the relations between the EU and the Bretton Woods institutions. Basically, the argument she makes is that the EU (i) came too late to the party (i.e. the Washington consensus was already hegemonic) and (ii) subscribes to the neoliberal development agenda (Farrell, 2008). However, also this study faces a number of shortcomings, most notably a lack of depth in the sense our comparative perspective does not allow to study the IMF, UN, World Bank and WTO in much detail.

Finally, paying particular attention to the topic of this doctoral dissertation, there are at present no studies devoted to the EU-DAC relationship. More specifically, the only

²¹ More specifically, Baroncelli focuses in her work on the World Bank, Carbone on the different HLFs on aid effectiveness and Farrell on the UN, World Bank and IMF.

insights that can be gained from the literature on EU development cooperation are those from a small number of studies which indirectly – and thus also rather briefly – touch upon the topic. Maurizio Carbone (2011a), for example, makes reference to bureaucratic tensions/competition between the DAC and the EU on the issue of PCD, and a joint study of Jan Orbie and Heleen Versluys (2008) launched the idea of a kind of ‘OECD-isation’ of EU development policy, referring to the similarities between the EU and DAC when it comes to soft-law integration in the field of development. Apart from both studies, however, literature on EU development cooperation leaves us wondering about the relationship between both institutions, illustrating the added-value of this doctoral dissertation.

2.2. The study of EU-IOs relations

Similar to the study of EU development cooperation, research on EU-IOs relations gained momentum in the 2000s. While for several decades now, there has been a growing intensification of relations between the EU and IOs, it was not until the European Security Strategy (2003), outlining the ‘effective multilateralism’ doctrine, that the scholarly community took a real interest in the studying the interplay between Brussels and the multilateral level. This clearly reflects from the numerous journal articles, special issues and (edited) volumes on this topic, which emerged from the second half of the 2000s onwards (e.g. Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Debaere, 2014; Dewaele & Kuipers, 2013; Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013; Kissack, 2010; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006; Niemann & Bretherton, 2013; Orsini, 2014; Van Schaik, 2013; Wouters, Basu, & Schunz, 2008; Wouters, Bruyninckx, Sudeshna, Basu, & Schunz, 2012).

Taking a closer look at this ever-increasing number of studies, one can identify two stages in the research. Initially, most of the research involved the mapping of the field. Basically, what scholars did was providing detailed accounts of how the EU organized itself across the spectrum of IOs (cf. Orbie, Saenen, Verschaeve, & De Ville, 2015). During the second stage, however, a growing number of researchers began to build upon these descriptive accounts, seeking ways to integrate the different studies that had been carried out thus far (cf. Saenen, 2014). These efforts gave ground to a number of theoretical debates. Most notable is the so-

called 'one voice debate', referring to the discussion on whether or not there is a causal link between EU coherence and effectiveness in IOs (e.g. Kissack, 2009; Saenen, 2014; K. E. Smith, 2010; Van Schaik, 2013; Wouters, Hoffmeister, & Ruys, 2006). In parallel, and to some degree overlapping with the single voice debate, a growing number of EU-IOs scholars have also been struggling with how to incorporate the international context in their work (Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Orbie et al., 2015). Indeed, most studies thus far offered a very Eurocentric perspective, paying particular attention to intra-EU variables such as actorness or coherence, explaining why more recently a number of scholars have started to wonder how these link with 'external variables' (e.g. the opportunity structure on the receiving end of the relationship, the (mis)fit between the EU norms and the international norms...) (e.g. Groen & Oberthür, 2013; Jørgensen, Oberthür, & Shahin, 2012; Thomas, 2012). However, despite these impressive efforts, the field of EU-IOs studies still faces a number of severe teething problems. Stemming from the fact that the study of EU-IOs is still relatively young and that only recently its scholars have taken an interest in moving beyond the descriptive studies, it bears little surprise that this field still lacks theoretical strength. Or as stated by Joachim Koops, the study of EU-IOs offers: "[...] a wide range of pre- or a-theoretical case studies and largely unconnected attempts of tentative theorizing" (Koops, 2012). Furthermore, and of particular relevance for this doctoral dissertation, the focus predominantly lays on traditional foreign policy domains and trade, paying little attention to development policy.

Paying particular attention to the OECD and DAC, the study of EU-IOs almost completely ignores both institutions. First, it fails to map out how the EU organizes itself within the OECD, and more specifically within the DAC. Indeed, to my knowledge there is only one other study – besides the one I published in co-authorship with Tamara Takacs (chapter four) – which focuses on the EU-OECD relations (Carroll & Kellow, 2012). Apart from that, this relationship is also briefly touched upon in the work of Sieglinde Gstöhl (Gstöhl, 2009) and a working paper of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) (Comelli & Matarazzo, 2011). Both studies, however, provide a snap shot overview of how the EU delegations are organized across the spectrum of IOs, devoting not more than one paragraph to the OECD. Furthermore, what all the aforementioned studies have in common is that while they (superficially) touch upon the EU-OECD relations,

they almost completely overlook the Union's relations with the DAC. At first sight, this comes as no surprise given that development cooperation in general hardly seems to be a policy of interest for EU-IOs scholars as it are typically EU development scholars which reach out to this community (e.g. Baroncelli, 2012). On the other hand, the DAC is – to our knowledge – the first IO in which the EU obtained full membership (cf. chapter six), which makes it an extremely interesting case and even more remarkable that over the past five decades nobody has taken a real interest in studying this relationship.

Second, the literature on EU-IOs offers little theoretical insights that are relevant for this doctoral dissertation²². Indeed, most of the studies have been focusing on more 'traditional' IOs, referring to those institutions in which the decision-making is determined by coalition building, voting cohesion and/or extensive coordination – think, for example, about the UN general assembly or the IMF. However, and as already outlined in the previous chapter, the OECD and DAC are very different IOs given that they operate in a much more deliberative way and rely on a unique mix of soft-law policy instruments to pursue their objectives. As such, existing accounts on EU influence/effectiveness are not fine-grained enough to fully capture the EU-DAC relationship. Furthermore, and as touched upon in one of the previous paragraphs, they have only recently started to pay more attention to so-called 'external variables', whereas the external context is crucial for understanding the EU-DAC relationship (cf. chapter 1).

2.3. The studies of IR and international development

Finally, a third and fourth strand of literature that is worth mentioning is, respectively, the study of IR and international development. While both fields are very distinctive from one another, I have chosen to lump both together given that they have similar characteristics. More specifically, both fields have paid some attention to, respectively, the OECD and the DAC, though, failed to make the link with the EU.

Starting with the study of IR, there has been ample attention from different schools/traditions for the role, functioning and relevance of IOs in global governance (e.g.

²² As a grounded theorist, it should be emphasized that this was discovered at a later stage of this study (see *infra*).

Barnett & Finnemore, 1999; Putnam, 1988; Risse, 2000). Consequently, most IOs have received considerable scholarly attention, ranging from the UN (e.g. Weiss, Thakur, & Ruggie, 2010; White, 2002) to the G7/8/20 (e.g. Cooper & Thakur, 2013; Hajnal & Meikle, 1999), IMF or World Bank (e.g. Boughton & Lateef, 1995; Peet, 2003; Wade, 2011). Importantly, also the OECD has been the subject of scholarly attention, be it still to a much lesser extent than most other IOs and only from the mid-2000s onwards. More specifically, while several studies looked at the functioning of the OECD at large (e.g. Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Mahon & McBride, 2008; Marcussen, 2003; Woodward, 2009), other paid attention to one particular aspect of its work such as taxation or energy (e.g. Eccleston & Woodward, 2013; Kudrle, 2013; Lesage & Van de Graaf, 2013) or studied the OECD from a specific perspective such as multipolarity or policy transfer (e.g. Clifton & Díaz-Fuentes, 2011; Pal, 2014; Woodward, 2011). However, with regard to this doctoral dissertation, the above studies have their limitation in the sense that they (i) pay little to no attention to the EU-OECD relationship (see *supra*) and (ii) almost completely overlook the DAC, typically considering it to be one of the many committees of the Organization;

In a similar vein, also the study of international development does not touch upon the EU-DAC relationship. Indeed, development scholars have systematically overlooked the DAC, with the exception of its work on aid effectiveness or the norms it produces such as the ODA concept. To some extent, this limited attention for the DAC comes as no surprise given that at a more general level development scholars have only recently taken an interest in the role of IOs. One of the first studies that explicitly argued for incorporating the multilateral level into the field of development studies was the edited volume of Bøås and McNeill (2004). Indeed, both editors convincingly illustrated the ever-more important role of IOs in today's aid architecture, ranging from agenda-setting to providing development assistance. One particular chapter in this edited volume touches upon the DAC, though, only offering a basic overview of its functioning and role in development cooperation, while elaborating much more extensively on the DAC's role in the emergence of the good governance concept (Masujima, 2004). Importantly, the above edited volume of Bøås and McNeill set – at least to some extent – the wheel into motion, given that an increasing number of development scholars have started to pay attention to the

role of IOs (e.g. Birdsall, 2006; Hibben, 2013; Scholte, 2012). However, with regard to the DAC little is moving thus far. A rare exception is the book chapter of Arne Ruckert in 2008, though, this study analyses the Committee at a meta level, wondering about its role in the creation of a neoliberal development agenda, while not elaborating in much depth on the functioning of the DAC. As such, the study of international development continues to lack a basic work on the DAC which outlines its history, functioning or specific role in development. To some extent, the work of Richard Manning (2008) and Helmut Führer (Führer, 1996) provide such an overview, however, both authors previously held key positions within the DAC, respectively, as DAC Chair and director of the DCD. Consequently, there continues to be an urgent need for more independent/academic accounts of the DAC.

This being said, some aspects of the DAC's work did receive sufficient scholarly attention. This is first of all the case for its work on aid effectiveness. More specifically, several scholars and think tanks have studied the way in which the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) or the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) came to exist. In doing so, particular attention was paid to the legitimacy of the DAC's WP-EFF, stemming from the fact that it only from 2005 onwards significantly expanded its membership (Brown & Morton, 2008; Dijkstra & Komives, 2011; Eyben, 2013; Eyben & Savage, 2012; Hammad & Morton, 2009; Owa, 2011; Steinle & Correll, 2008). A second – and partly overlapping – strand of literature focuses on the changing international development landscape (i.e. the proliferation of new actors), wondering how this affects the DAC's role. In doing so, particular attention is paid on whether and how the so-called DAC regime – referring to, for example, the ODA concept or the Paris agenda – will be able to survive in the light of the (re)emergence of the BRICs and other actors given that these actors often provide foreign assistance on their own terms (Bräutigam, 2011; Chandy & Kharas, 2011; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). However, with regard to this dissertation, the above studies have their limitations in the sense that (i) they hardly pay any attention to the DAC's day-to-day functioning, (ii) the DAC's work on aid effectiveness is very distinctive from the rest of its work and (iii) almost completely overlook the EU.

Chapter 3: Research design

As previously outlined in the introduction to this doctoral dissertation, the central aim of this study is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the EU and the DAC. To achieve this goal, this study opts for an inductive research approach, inspired by grounded theory (GT). This research method is particularly well-suited for explorative and in-depth research, providing a general strategy to develop theoretical insights based on empirical observations. The data for this study were obtained through a combination of (i) archive study and document analysis, (ii) semi-structured interviews and (iii) participant observations. In this chapter, I will first provide a detailed overview of GT in which I lay out the foundations of this research method and elaborate the way in which I applied this framework. Furthermore, I also elaborate on my personal ontological and epistemological motivations to engage with this approach. In the subsequent section, I discuss the process of data collection. More specifically, I focus on the qualitative research methodologies that have been applied during the process of data generation, respectively, (i) document analysis, (ii) interviewing and (iii) participant observation. In the third section, I discuss the process of data analysis, paying particular attention to the different coding strategies that have been applied throughout this study. Finally, this chapter concludes with a critical reflection on the research design of this study.

3.1. Grounded Theory

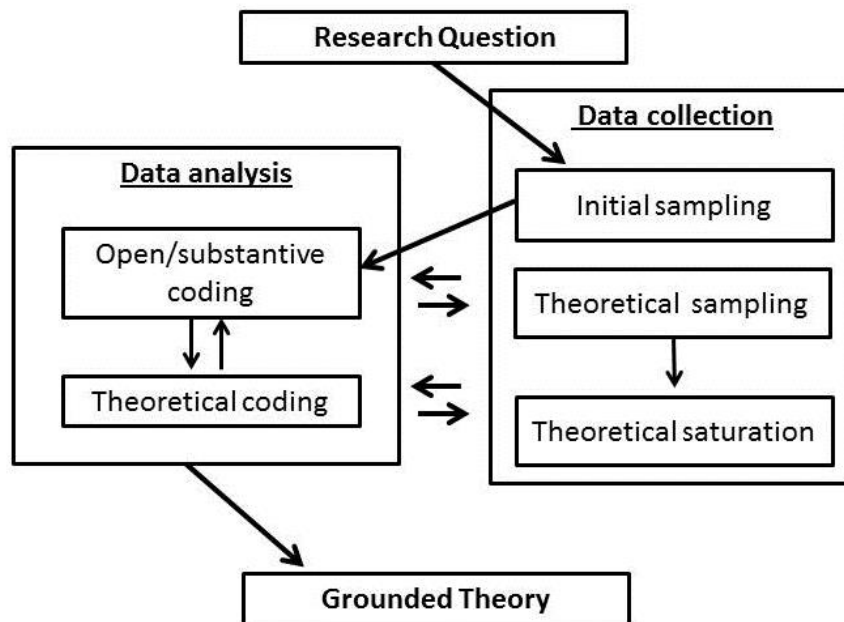
Grounded theory is a general research method – one could also call it an approach or strategy – which involves a fundamentally different way of thinking about the collection and analysis of data than traditional (positivist) research does. More specifically, it explicitly unites both processes, as such challenging the dominant practice of collecting data prior to the analysis. While being largely unknown in the fields of EU studies, development studies or IR, it is actually one of the most popular research methods in social sciences, being widely applied in various disciplines ranging from anthropology and sociology to political science, psychology and nursing studies (e.g. Becker, 2012; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2004, 2006; Glaser, 1998; Klotz & Prakash, 2008; Locke, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; McNabb, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The main premise of GT is the discovery of new theory – or the rediscovery of existing ones – through the systematic and simultaneous collection and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach was first developed by two sociologists, respectively, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 in their influential book *'The Discovery of Grounded Theory'*. Essentially, both railed against the dominant deductive way of doing research that prevailed at that time. More specifically, Glaser and Strauss criticized the fact that most scholars spent a disproportionate amount of time testing existing theories, relying on a set of clear-cut hypotheses that had been adopted prior to the data collection. This was considered to be problematic given that the scientific community at that time was – in their views – dominated by a small group of leading scholars, the so-called *"theoretical capitalists"* (p. 11). These scholars had monopolized to a large degree the theoretical thoughts, downgrading the rest of the scientific community to what they called a *"proletariat of testers"* of the former's intellectual efforts (p. 11). As such, the primary concern of most research was to adhere to the dominant theoretical paradigms, offering no guarantee that the phenomena under research were tackled from an appropriate theoretical angle, let alone that relevant research was carried out in the first place (1967, pp. 7-11). Apart from that, Glaser and Strauss were also frustrated by the fact that, back in the sixties, qualitative research methods were still considered to be inferior to quantitative approaches (Becker, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

As a reaction to the above situation, Glaser and Strauss developed GT as a fundamentally different approach to research. Essentially, and not surprisingly, they provided researchers a set of inductive and qualitative strategies, allowing to discover (new) theory. By doing so, both scholars aimed to liberate the social sciences from its hypothetico-deductive as well as quantitative straightjacket (Charmaz, 2004; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The most basic and fundamental idea of GT is that of explicitly uniting the processes of data collection and analysis. In contrast to virtually all other research methods, GT does not start with a careful review of the existing literature. Rather, the starting point of a study is the actual collection and analysis of data. As such, the researcher avoids – or better reduces – the risk of being preconceived by existing theoretical frameworks and concepts (Becker, 2012; Böhm, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Initially, data are gathered based on the idea of theoretical sampling, referring to analyzing “as many different people, situations and documents as possible [...] to obtain data covering the entire spectrum of the research question” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 35). Afterwards, when the researcher has successfully analyzed his/her first set of data, additional data are collected in function of the emerging theoretical concepts and ideas. This process continues until the point of ‘theoretical saturation’ is reached, referring to the point at which new data stop providing novel theoretical insights (Charmaz, 2006). Schematically, a stereotypical GT study looks as follows:

Figure 5:



Based upon Glaser & Strauss (1967) , Glaser(1998) and Maxwell (2005)

As reflects from the above figure, GT thus aims to develop new theoretical insights – or verify/refine existing ones. However, it should be outlined that these theoretical insights should not be seen as final truth statements about social reality – assuming this is even possible (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Indeed, similar to other inductive approaches, GT is by its very nature an open-ended and explorative research method. In contrast to deductive research, whose conclusions are ‘certain’, inductive research offers conclusions that are most ‘probable’, based on the evidence given (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This also links with the primary aim of GT, namely eliciting potentially fresh theoretical insights of a specific

social relationship or phenomenon, which then afterwards can be further tested and refined through more traditional (deductive) research²³ (Becker, 2012; Glaser, 1998; Suddaby, 2006).

As outlined in the previous paragraphs, perhaps the key feature of GT is its unique stance *vis-à-vis* the traditional literature review. Indeed, GT explicitly advises to start research with the collection and analysis of data, raising the question what place existing literature holds within this research tradition. To be honest, there is no straightforward answer to this question. On the contrary, over the past decades, it has been the subject of much debate among GT scholars as well as misconceptions from other scholars. To a large extent this can be explained by the fact that Glaser and Strauss initially remained rather vague on the issue. Indeed, while both advocated in favor of starting research without a prior knowledge of the literature (see *supra*), it remained unclear if, when and how to engage with the literature once entered the field, not to mention questions about whether it is possible or desirable to enter the field without prior knowledge (Dunne, 2011; Suddaby, 2006). This gave ground to various methodological positions, ranging from extremist approaches (i.e. staying away from the literature during the entire research process), to more moderate and mainstream approaches (cf. Cutcliffe, 2000; Suddaby, 2006).

This dissertation positions can be situated within this second tradition. In essence, the guiding principle of my approach was to avoid preconception to the greatest extent possible. In doing so, I did not take the extreme position that a researcher should enter the field with a blank mind (i.e. no prior knowledge), or with a blank research agenda (i.e. no predefined research topic). The underlying rationale is twofold. First, it is simply impossible to have no prior knowledge. After all, every researcher has its own personal history, background and knowledge which he or she cannot simply put aside²⁴. Second, it is not

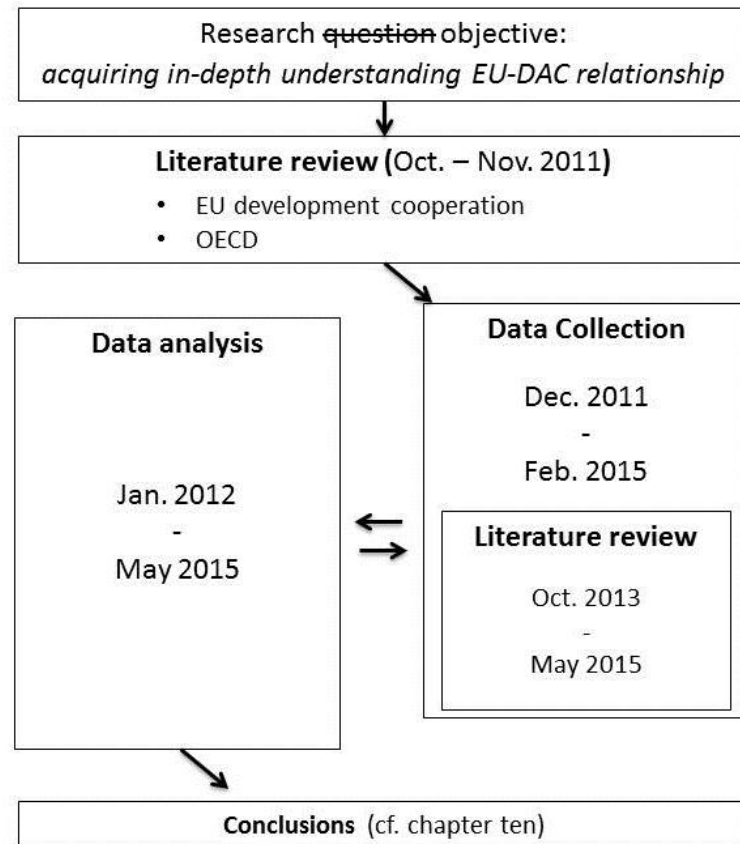
²³ This was also the case for this particular Ph.D. project. More specifically, by studying the EU-DAC relationship, it appeared that the Union's membership status was sticky (cf. chapter 6). This inspired a number of colleagues and myself to test whether also in other IOs the initial decision on the EU's membership status installs a path dependence (cf. annex 1).

²⁴ In my personal case, for example, I engaged with the existing literature during my undergraduate studies. Or when applying for funding for this doctoral dissertation, I had to provide an overview of the literature that was relevant for this study. In fact, simply by being a part of the scholarly

desirable that a scholar has no prior knowledge of the topic he or she is about the study. At the very least, every scholar at some point needs to know whether his or her research has been carried out before. After all, there is no point in reinventing the wheel again, especially not when research is financed by public money as was the case for this Ph.D. project (Cutcliffe, 2000; Suddaby, 2006). As such, the question which I had address – or better struggle with – was when and how to engage with the existing literature. Essentially, I followed a two-track approach which involved engaging with literature that provides factual information during the entire research stay (e.g. studies on the origins of the DAC), whereas only looking at the theoretical literature at a later stage of the research, i.e. only after I had gained my own theoretical insights on the EU-DAC relationship. At this stage, the existing theoretical literature was used both as a means to test my theoretical concepts and potentially integrate new concepts into the coding process (see also Glaser, 1998; Suddaby, 2006). Importantly, it is worth pointing out that the risk of being preconceived was rather limited in this particular study. This has everything to do with the fact that there exists virtually no literature on the DAC, let alone the relationship between the EU and the DAC. Furthermore, also most of the literature on EU development cooperation is descriptive in nature. The biggest challenge came from the study of EU-IOs relations and the field of IR (e.g. regime complexity) given that both strands of literature are more theory oriented – in particular the field of IR – which could potentially result in preconception on my behalf. Therefore, I only delved into this literature at a later stage of my Ph.D. research, more specifically from the third year onwards. By that time, I had already formed my opinion on the EU-DAC relationship, making alternative (theoretical) insights useful to further challenge, test and refine my insights. Linking back to figure 5, the way in which this research unfolded itself can be schematically visualized as follows:

community one automatically comes into contact with existing literature and theory, for example, while chatting with colleagues in the office or attending panels at conferences.

Figure 6:



Finally, it is important to provide a brief outline of the main ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study. Indeed, while the previous paragraphs might have given the impression that, regardless of methodological discussions, there is a single and universal interpretation of GT, the opposite is actually true. Ever since the establishment of GT in 1967 (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the scientific community has witnessed the emergence of various schools of GT, coinciding with the different ontological and epistemological positions out there. These range from, on the one hand, positivist and post-positivist accounts (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1998; Locke, 1996) to, on the other hand, more pragmatist (e.g. Bryant, 2009), constructivist (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006) and feminist accounts (e.g. Keddy, Sims, & Stern, 1996; Wuest, 1995). My research approach situates itself within this second tradition.

At the ontological level, I assume that reality is socially constructed, that is to say that I believe that each and every one of us constructs his or her own subjective interpretation of reality (Dessler, 2005). At an epistemological level, I position myself as a pragmatist. In line with the founding fathers of pragmatism John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce (Hookway, 2015; McDermott, 1989), but also with several GT scholars (Bryant, 2009; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007), I believe that research should be problem-driven rather than theory-driven. More specifically, in my personal view, the purpose of research is not to offer transcendental/philosophical accounts of truth given that this is impossible and has few practical consequences. Rather, the purpose of research is to acquire an in-depth understanding of relevant social phenomena and processes. What is relevant here, however, is the way in which such knowledge can (or should) be obtained. In line with pragmatism, I believe that social inquiry is the best way to such acquire knowledge. More specifically, given that reality is a social construct, one ideally studies social phenomena from within, actively taking part in the social world (Bryant, 2009; Hookway, 2015). In order to achieve this, research requires an open-ended and flexible method, explaining my choice for GT. As already outlined previously in this chapter, GT has the advantage that it offers a set of strategies which liberate a researcher from the potential straightjacket of existing theoretical concepts and theory, as such enabling him or her to fully grasp the complexity of the phenomena under research (Charmaz, 2004, 2006; Mills et al., 2006; Suddaby, 2006).

Finally, it is important to elaborate on the finalities of this doctoral dissertation. As reflects from the previous sections, the objective of GT studies – including this doctoral dissertation – is to develop new (or refine) existing theoretical insights. However, and in line with my ontological and epistemological positions, this doctoral dissertation has not the ambition to develop a theoretical framework in the positivist sense of the word. Indeed, stemming from the fact that social reality is too complex to be captured by laws (in the natural science sense of the word), I consider such an endeavor impossible, nor desirable as it hampers us to see grasp the full complexity of a certain social phenomenon. Therefore, the objective of this doctoral dissertation is to move beyond a purely descriptive analysis of social reality, offering a so-called thick description of the EU-DAC relationship (cf. Geertz,

1973). More specifically, the aim of this GT study is to look at the complexity of this case and by doing so unravel the different layers of understanding that structure the EU-DAC relationship. Furthermore, and similar to all research, also this doctoral dissertation strives for a higher level of generalization (cf. chapter 10).

3.2. Data collection

As outlined in the previous section, one of the main features of GT is that it explicitly unites the processes of data collection and analysis. This being said, the remainder of this chapter will discuss both processes separately for the sake of clarity. However, as a reader it is important to keep in mind that both took place simultaneously and that new data was collected in function of the theoretical insights that emerged during the analysis (cf. Glaser, 1998; Martin & Gynnild, 2011).

In line with all GT studies, the starting point of this doctoral research was the actual collection of a first set of data. Based upon the strategy of initial sampling (Glaser, 1998; Maxwell, 2005), this first set of data was explicitly intended to be as broad and diverse as possible in order to cover the entire research topic. To achieve this, I collected data from a wide range of different actors and situations, guided by a set of broad and explorative questions such as: “What is the DAC’s role in international development?” ; “Why and how did the DAC come to exist?” ; “Why is the EU a full member of the DAC?”, “What is the EU’s role in the DAC?”. Gradually, this process of data collection became more targeted, building upon the emerging theoretical insights. New/more refined research questions that structured the data collection were, for example, “Why was the EU’s full membership of the DAC not altered when the latter became adopted by the OECD in 1961?”; “What reforms did the DAC implement to accommodate to the changing aid landscape and what was their impact on its relation with the EU?”; “What was the role of the EU in the DAC’s work on policy coherence for development or the concessionality of ODA loans?” ...

To address the above research questions, data was generated through a mixture of qualitative research methodologies. In what follows, I will discuss in greater detail the three different methodologies that have been applied for data gathering. These are, respectively,

(i) document analysis, (ii) interviewing and (iii) participant observation. By combining these different research methodologies, this dissertation meets the criteria for 'methodological triangulation', referring to the technique of validating research findings by cross-checking them with two or more other sources (Denzin, 2006; McNabb, 2010; Olsen, 2003).

3.2.1. Document analysis

The first data gathering technique that has been applied in this doctoral dissertation is that of analyzing primary documentation. The majority of these documents have been obtained from the OECD library and archives²⁵. Its collection dates from 1947 and includes records from the OECD as well as its predecessors, respectively, the Committee for European Economic Co-operation (CEEC) and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC). The collection contains a rich repository of items that document the Organisation's work, including agendas and minutes of meetings, background documents, technical papers, speeches, publications and internal communications between the OECD's bodies and the different Member States' delegations. This dissertation made use of all these types of document, though, relied most extensively on (i) agendas and minutes of the DAC's meetings, (ii) speeches of the DAC chair and other DAC officials and (iii) communications between the different DAC delegations and the DAC Secretariat. This is motivated by the fact that these documents provide the richest account of the views of the different actors that are central in this study, i.e. DAC officials, EU officials and DAC delegates.

Concerning the accessibility of these documents, I never encountered real problems. This was particularly true with regard to the Organisation's work from the period before 1990 given that all documents from this period have been declassified. Unfortunately, however, most of these documents are still in the process of being digitalized for online availability. Therefore they needed to be consulted on microfilms and microfilms at the OECD's archives in Paris. Hence, I spent countless hours on going through these

²⁵ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jan-Anno Schuur, Ms. Marie Khalil and the other colleagues for their enormous help and hospitality during my countless hours at the OECD's archives.

documents²⁶ on 'ancient' and noisy microfilm and microfiche readers, allowing me to make copies of all relevant data²⁷. This was done during the course of several research stays in Paris, respectively, in January 2012, June 2012, June 2013 and October and November 2013²⁸. Regarding the Organisation's work from 1990 onwards, I first of all relied on the online database of Official Unclassified OECD documents (<http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments>). This database contains all policy documents that have explicitly been declassified. In total, it includes more than 2000 declassified documents on the DAC and especially for more recent years it provides an accurate overview of the Committee's work²⁹. This dataset has been consulted almost continuously over the past four years. Off course, not all documents from the period between 1990 and 2015 are declassified. This is particularly true for confidential documents such as minutes of important meetings (e.g. HLM or SLM meetings) or correspondence between the different DAC delegations. Therefore, I acquired (temporary) access to several of these documents, in close collaboration with the people from the OECD archives, the DAC Secretariat. Furthermore, I also obtained documents from a number of Member States' delegations – most notably the Belgian and EU delegations. Off course, it was impossible to consult all sensitive documents, hence, I relied on interviews and participant observations to fill in the remaining gaps (see *infra*).

In addition to the OECD library and archives, I also retrieved primary documentation from the US Department of State's archives. More specifically, I consulted its online database 'Office of the Historian' (<http://history.state.gov/about>). Its collection covers the

²⁶ While it is impossible to tell the exact amount of documents that I have consulted, the total sum will lay somewhere between 1000 and 2000 documents. Note that not all documents have been thoroughly analyzed – depending on their usefulness – and that a lot of them were only one or two pages (e.g. agendas of meetings).

²⁷ Relevant data was interpreted very broadly, i.e. all documents that were potentially linked to the EU and/or relevant cases. This allowed me to consult these documents afterwards, as such ensuring the continuous interplay between data collection and analysis during the entire period of this dissertation.

²⁸ During this last research stay, I was also a visiting scholar at the Centre d'études européennes of Sciences Po.

²⁹ From 2013 onwards, the DAC has undertaken a series of efforts to increase the transparency of its work. An important element of this strategy was to significantly increase the declassification of its work, of course with the exception of the more sensitive documents.

US foreign policy up until the Carter administration and contains a rich dataset of reports of meetings, telegrams, letters and a wide range of other primary documentation. For this dissertation, I consulted all documents covering (i) European integration and (ii) foreign aid assistance from the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. This can be explained by the fact that the OECD crosscuts both topics given that it initially was a European integration project (cf. chapter one) and off course deals with development cooperation through the DAC. The data obtained from the US Department of State's archive have been particularly useful for acquiring a better understanding of the DAC's establishment – and more specifically the EU's full membership of the Committee. Furthermore, they also provide relevant information on the establishment of the OECD and the integration of the DAC in its work in 1961. This can be explained by the fact that the US played a key role in the creation of the DAC and the OECD, stemming from its hegemonic role in international relations at that time (cf. chapter 1). As such, the US administration upheld close bilateral contacts with all important players on these issues, resulting in rich primary documentation for empirical analysis. The actual consultation of these documents took place during the first stage of this Ph.D. research, more specifically in the course of the first six months. The stems from the fact that above all, I first wanted to become more familiar with the DAC's history as well as understanding the reason why the EU has always been a full member of the Committee. However, also at a later stage of my research, I have consulted the US department of state's archives to collect additional data – for example on the establishment of the OECD's Development Centre –, allowing me to test and refine emerging theoretical insights.

Finally, I retrieved a – limited and miscellaneous – set of data from (i) the '*Archives nationales*' of France and (ii) autobiographies and other personal writings of important persons in the OECD and/or DAC's history. Starting with the former source of data, I consulted the French national archives in October 2013 in order to obtain detailed information about the French position on the EU's accession to DAC in 1960. This information was retrieved from a set of memos and telegrams from this period. These documents were consulted at the *Archives Nationales*, based in Pierfitte-sur-Seine, during the course of my final research stay in Paris. The latter set of data contains personal

writings of key persons in the DAC's history. These are, respectively, Walt Whitman Rostow – advisor to President Eisenhower on foreign aid – ; Emile Van Lennep – former OECD Secretary General – ; Helmut Führer – former director of the DAC's Development Cooperation Directorate – ; Richard Manning – former chair of the DAC – and Brian Atwood – former chair of the DAC. While these writings cannot be considered primary sources in the strict sense of the word, they did provide useful (factual) information on certain topics as well as personal insights on the general functioning of the OECD and DAC. As such, they also cover – at least to some extent – for the lack of interviews for the period before 1970.

3.2.2. Interviewing

The second data gathering technique that has been applied in this doctoral dissertation is that of semi-structured export interviewing. This methodology was particularly useful for gathering views, attitudes and perceptions of different actors on the EU-DAC relationship. In doing so, I have focused on 'experts', here referring to persons that are familiar with the functioning of the OECD, DAC and/or the EU-(OECD)/DAC relationship. Most of them were (or had previously been) affiliated with the OECD and DAC, the EU or the different Member States³⁰ delegations in Paris. In addition, I also selected a number of interviewees from developing countries, NGOs and IOs, allowing me to validate the data retrieved from the so-called 'insiders' – here referring to DAC officials and delegates. This was particularly useful with regard to questions related to the Committee's role and relevance in the changing international aid landscape (cf. chapter 5).

Typically, interviewees were selected through the snowball sampling method (Klotz & Prakash, 2008; McNabb, 2010). To contact them, I used a standard invitation mail, accompanied with a personal resume and a reference letter from Prof. dr. Jan Orbie. In general, the response rate was high and positive, allowing me to interview virtually all experts I intended too. Three factors have contributed to this success. First, the DAC does not attract much scholarly attention (see chapter 1). As such, experts are not overburdened with requests for interviews as, for example, is the case in other IOs. Consequently, most were positively surprised by my request and therefore showed a strong eagerness to share

³⁰ Here referring to OECD and DAC Member States instead of EU Member States.

their thoughts on the DAC and its relations with the EU. Second, a large number of DAC and OECD officials have a background in academia, explaining why they are in most cases very accommodating to help researchers. Third, by staying a substantial period of time in Paris – nine weeks in total, spread over several research stays (see supra) – I was very flexible to make appointments with the selected interviewees at those moments that were most convenient from them. This greatly improved the quality of the interviews as most experts had scheduled at least one hour to discuss the EU-DAC relationship.

In total, 49 semi-structured interviews have been carried out in the period between 16 January 2012 and 24 February 2015. As already outlined in the previous paragraph, these have been conducted primarily in Paris. Furthermore, interviews have also been conducted in Brussels, London³¹ and over Skype³². The reason why I carried out 49 interviews – and not, for example, 35 or 54 – is that the point of theoretical saturation was reached from around the 40th interview. From then onwards, new interviews stopped providing new information and insights (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2010). However, to be completely sure that I did not miss out on important information, I scheduled another 9 interviews, all confirming the fact that I had reached the point of theoretical saturation. As such, it can be confidently stated that the insights presented in this dissertation do not build upon an unbalanced and incomplete set of data (cf. Saumura & Given, 2008).

Finally, and closely linked to the next section, this dissertation also builds upon a large number of so-called informal and spontaneous interviews (cf. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). These are unplanned interviews that have been conducted during the course of my participant observations. Interviewees included, amongst others, DAC delegates and officials which I accidentally encountered in the OECD's corridors/cafe/restaurant before and after the meetings of the DAC. Typically, these interviews were short – in most cases less than 5 minutes – and almost completely

³¹ In 2012 the DAC High Level Meeting took place in London.

³² While I prefer interviewing in person, I always offered respondents the option to have an interview over Skype from the first remainder email onwards. By doing so, I essentially tried to further reduce the possible 'escape strategies' on their behalf. In a small number of cases, Skype was also the best option for more practical reasons (e.g. when the interviewees were based in the US).

unstructured. Nonetheless, they did provide useful insights, especially in relation to the topics that were addressed in the DAC's meeting at those particular days.

3.2.3. Participant observation

A third and final data gathering technique that has been applied in this doctoral dissertation is that of participant observation. During the course of the past four years, I participated as an observer in six meetings of the DAC. These took place, respectively, in January 2012, June 2012, October 2013 (2x) and November 2013 (2x) at the OECD's headquarters – located in the Château de La Muette – and typically lasted for an afternoon or a full day. They addressed a wide range of topics, including (i) the DAC's role in international development, (ii) the reform of the ODA definition, (iii) the OECD's Strategy on Development, (iv) the promotion of PCD, (v) the DAC's working budget, (vi) the enlargement of the Committee, (vii) the global partnership on effective development-cooperation, (viii) the data revolution in development cooperation, and (ix) financing for development. Beside these topics, each meeting also addressed a number of practicalities such as making arrangements on future meetings.

Access to the DAC's meetings was obtained through the Belgian permanent delegation to the OECD³³. This was necessary given that the Committee's work takes place behind closed doors. More specifically, I signed an internship agreement from January 2012 to December 2013, allowing me to accompany the Belgian DAC delegate to the meetings of the Committee. It has to be noted, however, that this internship did not involve any practical commitments *vis-à-vis* the Belgian delegation to the OECD. As such this study can be qualified as a passive participant observation study given that my role as a researcher did not involve actively taking part in the Committee's work (DeWalt, Dewalt, & Wayland, 1998; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001). In line with my personal research ethics, I never hide the fact that I was a researcher when talking with people. However, it should be noted that my presence went in most cases unnoticed due to the large number of people in the room. On several occasions, persons even assumed that I was an assistant to the Belgian DAC

³³ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Martinus Desmet, Mr. Lieven De la Marche and Mr. Yves Haesendonck.

delegate, stemming from the color of my badge³⁴. As such, I am confident that my presence did not influence the course of the DAC's meetings, strengthening the validity of my findings (cf. Jorgensen, 1989).

The actual data obtained through these participant observations consists of field notes. These are mainly textual, but also contain a limited number of drawings and schedules, for example, on the seating arrangements during the meetings. Field notes were typically taken during the observations, though, in a number of occasions notes were made afterwards as this was the only feasible option (e.g. during lunch breaks/receptions and discussions in the corridors before and after the meetings). The insights retrieved from these field notes were useful for this dissertation in two important ways. First, they allowed me to acquire a much better understanding of the functioning of the DAC. Indeed, while interviews and document analysis already offered important insights on the working of the Committee, additional – and sometimes more nuanced – insights were obtained through taking part in the DAC's work. Furthermore, the participant observation also strengthened my understanding of how DAC delegations – in this case the Belgian one – prepare for meetings of the Committee³⁵. This was particularly useful in the first stage of this Ph.D. research in order to get a much better grip on my research topic. Second, at a later stage of my research, participant observation allowed me to (i) validate the findings of my semi-structured interviews and document analysis, (ii) gather new data and (iii) test and refine theoretical insights. Especially the latter was important, and from June 2012 onwards meetings were solely selected in function of their topic – off course to the extent possible³⁶. More specifically, I paid particular attention to those meetings that focused on the ODA reforms and PCD – off course to the extent possible – given that it had become clear by that time that both cases were particularly relevant for gaining a better understanding of the EU-DAC relationship.

³⁴ While visitors to the OECD buildings obtain a white colored visitors badge, I had a blue badge, corresponding with the color of the different delegations to the DAC.

³⁵ During my first research stay in January 2012, I spent a lot of time at the Belgian delegation to the OECD. Furthermore, I stayed at the place of the then Belgian DAC delegate, allowing me to gain a better understanding of the work that is carried out by the different DAC delegates.

³⁶ It was, for example, impossible to gain access to the DAC's annual High-Level Meetings.

3.3. Data analysis

The process of data analysis followed the three stages as advocated by Glaser and Strauss. These are, respectively, the stages of (i) open, (ii) axial and (iii) selective coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first stage of open coding involved identifying, naming, categorizing and describing the EU-DAC relationship. Basically, this first stage of coding takes place in the beginning of the data collection. At that time, data are still selected in a rather chaotic way – I like to use the term *problematizing stage* –, stemming from the type of questions that are raised (e.g. how does the DAC function, how does the EU organize itself in Paris, how about the interplay between the DAC and the OECD...). This is also reflected in the open codes, given that these basically address each time the question: “What is this about?”, “What is being referred to?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this stage, I applied various codes such as ‘beyond aid’, ‘bureaucratic competition’, ‘DCF’, ‘DAC enlargement’, ‘EU coordination’, ‘EU enlargement’, ‘European consensus’, ‘full membership’, ‘inclusiveness’, ‘new donors’, ‘post-Busan’, ‘policy learning’ and so on. This process of open coding was done document-by-document for most primary documents and paragraph-by-paragraph for the interviews, field notes and some key primary documents. This was considered to be the best choice as line-by-line coding would have resulted in too many codes, something which was not necessary for the purpose of this research, whereas only document-by-document coding would have created too few coding terms.

The second stage of the data analysis involved axial coding, referring to the process of linking codes to one another (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this second stage of coding, the focus increasingly came to lay on integrating/linking the open codes. To facilitate this process, I applied, albeit not rigorously³⁷, the coding framework that was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) (see table 1) and ever since has been widely applied in GT studies (Charmaz, 2004; Locke, 1996). By doing so, I defined a number of key concepts/core categories. Examples are ‘EU structure’, ‘mutually beneficial relationship’, and ‘power shift’, ‘legitimacy DAC’.

³⁷ Stemming from the fact that it has a positivist undertone.

Table 1

Elements to focus on	Description
Phenomenon	The concept that holds the bits together.
Causal conditions	Events or variables that lead to occurrence of the phenomenon
Context	Background variables
Action strategies	Purposeful, goal-oriented activities in response to the phenomenon
Consequences	Consequences of action strategies, intended and unintended

However, what is particularly important to point out is that this stage of axial coding determined the case selection of this doctoral dissertation. Indeed, as will become clear in the following chapters, particular attention will be given to the (i) the EU's membership status in the DAC (chapter six), (ii) the impact of the DAC on the EU (chapter seven) , (iii) the issue of concessional ODA loans (chapter eight) and (iv) the promotion of PCD (chapters eight and nine). While at first sight these different topics seem not – or vaguely – related to one another, I selected them in function of the (emerging) axial codes. Put differently, while the first stage of open coding (and corresponding data collection) allowed me to become fully acquainted with the general contours and evolution of the EU-DAC relationship, the stage of axial coding focused explicitly on those cases and topics that stood out from a theoretical point of view in order to acquire a more in-depth understanding of my research topic.

The final stage of the data analysis was that of the selective coding, referring to the process of choosing one core concept around which all the others could be draped. The basic idea essentially is that there always exists one dominant storyline for each and every GT study. This is not different for this dissertation. Indeed, the core concept of this study is 'erosion', referring to the fact that the EU-DAC relationship has evolved from an interdependent to a dependent relationship (cf. chapter ten). However, as already outlined previously in this chapter, I do not put forward one single theoretical framework that explains this evolution. Rather, I search for explanations – or as coined in the conclusions 'causes' – at different levels of social reality, focusing both on agency and structure.

3.4. Critical reflection

Having outlined the general research design of this doctoral dissertation, it is finally important to take a critical stand *vis-à-vis* towards my own research. More specifically, and in line with my ontological position, it should be emphasized that research can never be neutral and value-free given that reality is socially constructed by each and every one of us (Dessler, 2005). While I do not consider this to be a problem – after all there is no alternative – one should keep in mind that the results of this dissertation are inevitably shaped by my own biases as well as those of the interviewees and observed persons.

Of course, this is not an excuse to not be reflective on how these biases might have potentially shaped the processes of data collection and analysis. Starting with the potential impact of my personal normative and political beliefs, I have tried to be aware of my own biases at all stages of the research. During the interviews, for example, I explicitly aimed for open questions in order to stay as close to the personal accounts of the interviewees as possible (cf. Klotz & Prakash, 2008). Furthermore, during the entire research process, I explicitly tried to position myself in the different paradigms on the DAC and its relations with the EU, as such challenging my own beliefs and the findings of this study.

Accounting for the biases of the interviewees and the observed persons is much harder, if not impossible. Nonetheless, I tried to do so, starting from the basic assumption that their views are shaped by their personal backgrounds as well as the contemporary context in which they operate. As such, it is possible to account – at least to some degree – for the broader context in which the data for this study were obtained. More specifically, during virtually the entire period of data collection, relations between the EU and DAC were quite tense on several issues. While this dissertation shows that this is not incidental, one should keep in mind that this might – and almost certainly – has influenced the accounts of the respondents. Indeed, in a number of instances, interviewees clearly vented their personal frustrations about, for example, certain persons and/or practices. This has been taken into account to the largest extent possible while analyzing the data. Nonetheless, also as a reader one should be aware of this context and the potential biases it may have caused.

Finally, it is also worth pointing out that the fact that the DAC thus far has been largely overlooked in academic literature might have influenced the behavior of some interviewees. More specifically, while it clearly improved their willingness to collaborate (see supra), several interviewees also clearly – and not necessarily implicitly – liked to use the opportunity of being interviewed for highlighting the – in their view – added value of the DAC in international development. Again, this has been taken into account to the largest extent possible while analyzing the data, each time wondering what might be the underlying ‘agenda’ of certain statements.

Part two

Part two is reserved for the six papers – and corresponding chapters – of this doctoral dissertation. As became clear in the introduction to this study, each of these papers addresses a particular aspect of the EU-DAC relationship. For the sake of clarity, each chapter starts with a brief introduction, elaborating on how the respective paper fits into the larger research project.

Chapter 4: The EU's International Identity: the Curious Case of the OECD

Status: Published in co-authorship with Prof. Dr. Tamara Takacs (2013) in Henri Dewaele & Jan-Jaap Kuipers (Eds.), *The emergence of the European Union's international identity. Views from the global arena*. Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, pp. 187-209.

General introduction: This first paper offers a general (institutional) overview of the EU's relations with the OECD at large. More specifically, it looks at how the EU organizes itself in Paris and breaks down the Union's identity into four dimensions – note that the concept of identity was the general framing of the edited volume. Subsequently, this paper illustrates how these four dimensions vary across the Organization's different committees and bodies, arguing that there is not a single dominant way in which the EU organizes itself in the OECD. To illustrate this point, particular attention is paid to, respectively, the OECD's Economic Development and Review Committee (EDRC) and the DAC. The main added-value of this paper lays in the fact that it is the first study which provides a detailed overview of the way in which the EU organizes itself in the OECD at large. As such, it constitutes a welcome addition to the first generation of EU-IOs studies (cf. chapter 2). It should be pointed out, however, that in parallel with our efforts also Peter Carroll and Aynsley Kellow (2012) undertook a similar effort. The main limitation of this study is that it is framed from a legal/institutional perspective, corresponding with the overall framework of the edited volume. As such, the main focus of this study is on the legal reality of the EU-OECD and EU-DAC relationship, whereas in a number of cases it would have been more interesting to delve deeper into the underlying political reality – as will be done in the remaining chapters. This also explains why only limited attention has been given to the distinction between the OECD and DAC given that from a legal point of view the latter serves as a Committee of the former.

Chapter 5: The DAC is dead, long live the DCF? A comparative analysis of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and the UN Development Cooperation Forum.

Status: Published online (forthcoming on paper) in co-authorship with Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie (2015) in *European Journal of Development Research*.

General introduction: At first sight this second paper might seem a bit misplaced in this doctoral dissertation. Indeed, as reflects from its title, the main focus of this study is on the DAC and the DCF, and thus not on the EU. Nonetheless, such a perspective is crucial for understanding the remainder of this doctoral dissertation. More specifically, as outlined in chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, the DAC thus far hardly attracted any scholarly attention, leaving us wondering about its role in international development cooperation. Therefore, this article pays particular attention to this topic, with an explicit focus on how the changing aid landscape potentially alters its position in the constellation of international development organizations. In doing so, the DAC is put against the UN's Development Cooperation Forum, a forum that has been established in 2007 and explicitly presents itself as a more legitimate alternative to the DAC. In this paper, we address this claim by breaking down the DAC's and DCF's legitimacy alongside the lines of input, output and throughput legitimacy. The main strength of this article is that by doing so, this study is among the very first to offer a comprehensive and nuanced overview of the role of the DAC and DCF in international development. The main 'limitation' of this study is its comparative and generalist approach that did not allow focusing in more depth on a number of specific issues³⁸, most notably the EU. This is problematic – to a certain degree – given that the EU does have an impact on the DAC's output and throughput legitimacy (see *infra*).

³⁸ Furthermore – and certainly not to hide behind the editors and reviewers given that it ultimately was my personal choice – also the review process pushed in the direction of this generalist approach, advising to stick to the comparative analysis of the DAC and DCF, rather than trying to force to much of my findings (i.e. the role of the EU) into this paper.

Chapter 6: Once a member, always a member? Assessing the importance of time in the relationship between the European Union and the Development Assistance Committee.

Status: Published (online) in co-authorship with Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie (2015) in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*.

General introduction: Having acquired a sound understanding of the relationship between the EU and the OECD at large (chapter 4) and the role, functioning and legitimacy of the DAC (chapter 5), this third paper further breaks down the EU-DAC relationship. More specifically, particular attention is paid to the EU's full membership status in the DAC. The article wonders why the EU has been able to join the DAC in the first place in 1960, knowing that (i) it lacked legal development competences at that time and that (ii) it holds an observer status in the rest of the OECD. In addition, it also wonders why this membership status has remained unaltered over time. The major strength of this article is that it offers an important theoretical contribution to the study of EU-IOs, outlining the importance of time for understanding the EU's membership status in a particular IO. This illustrates the strength of inductive research as it allows (new) theoretical insights to emerge from the data. In this context, it is also worth mentioning that the historical institutionalist hypothesis that emerged from this study was further tested and confirmed, together with several other colleagues (cf. annex one). The main shortcoming of this paper is the problem of causality in historical research. More specifically, one of the central events in this study is the establishment of the DAC in 1960. In order to reconstruct this event, a wide range of historical documents were consulted. For obvious reasons, however, interviews were impossible to carry out. As such, this study inevitably missed out on some detailed/background information that might be relevant and is not included in, for example, minutes of meetings or telegrams – think for example about personal relations between the main actors. A second (minor) shortcoming relates to the presentation of this paper. While this research came to exist in an inductive way, the reviewers urged to present it otherwise, explaining why it might give the impression that the historical institutionalist framework was adopted prior to the study.

Chapter 7: Let's talk about international organizations. EU development integration through the lens of the Development Assistance Committee

Status: under review (awaiting first revision) in *Journal of European Integration*.

General introduction: Similar to the previous chapters, this paper further breaks down the relationship between the EU and the DAC. As reflects from this chapter's title, the main focus of this article lays on understanding the impact of the DAC on European development integration. Linking back to figure 1, we study the EU-DAC relationship from a top-down perspective, referring to the fact that we only pay attention to the influence of Paris on Brussels. The major strength of this article is that it illustrates the importance of the multilateral level for understanding EU development cooperation. More specifically, by rereading the history of European development integration through the lens of the DAC, this article shows how the Committee on a number of occasions helped shaping the EU's development policies in important ways. As such, this article explicitly seeks to integrate the multilateral level into the studies of EU development cooperation and European integration. This being said, this article also has one important shortcoming, namely the fact that it is not easy to draw causality in the historical sections of this paper. Similar to the previous chapter, it was impossible to triangulate the empirical findings for the period before 1970.

Let's talk about international organizations: EU development integration through the lens of the Development Assistance Committee.

Abstract

This article studies the role of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in European development integration. While literature thus far focused on the European Union (EU) institutions and Member States as main drivers of integration, we argue that also international organizations (IOs) should be brought into the picture. By rereading the history of EU development integration through the lens of the DAC, we show that the latter has shaped the Union's development policy in a number of important ways. More specifically, through its membership of the DAC, the EU was able to become an assertive development actor in the pre-Maastricht era, whereas in more recent years the DAC was instrumental in triggering a series of policy reforms at the European level, which helped turning the EU into a full-blown development actor.

KEYWORDS: EU, DAC, OECD, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a unique actor in international development cooperation, combining the characteristics of both a bilateral donor – providing development assistance through the EU budget – and a multilateral donor – embodying the collective efforts of all 28 Member States (Carbone, 2007). Collectively it provides more than half of all Official Development Assistance (ODA), while bilaterally the EU ranks as the world's third largest donor (OECD, 2014). The sum of both, arguably, makes the EU one of the world's key development actors (Farrell, 2008; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie, 2012). Remarkably, however, EU development policy thus far attracted only limited scholarly attention – especially in comparison to other donors (e.g. US, UK, France, Germany) and fields of EU external action (e.g. climate, trade, security) (Gänzle, Grimm, & Makhan, 2012; Hoebink, 2010). Indeed, notwithstanding the significant efforts of several scholars (e.g. Arts & Dickson, 2004; Carbone, 2007, 2008, 2013b;

Hoebink, 2005; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie, 2012), EU development cooperation remains greatly understudied.

Perhaps the biggest shortcoming to the current literature on EU development cooperation is its lack of attention for the multilateral level. Indeed, despite a dramatic increase of interactions between the EU and international organizations (IOs) (Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Kissack, 2010), as well as the fact that some authors suggest that EU development cooperation is the product of a complex interaction between the EU institutions, EU Member States and IOs (e.g. Farrell, 2008; Olsen, 2005), EU development literature so far overlooked the EU's relations with international development organizations (e.g. Arts & Dickson, 2004; Carbone, 2007; Dearden, 2008; Hoebink, 2005; Holland, 2002; Orbie, 2012). Furthermore, also the burgeoning study of EU-IOs relations (e.g. Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013; Kissack, 2010; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006) and the literature on international development organizations (e.g. Birdsall, 2006; Boas & McNeill, 2004b; Nay, 2014; Woods, 2008) thus far paid no attention to this topic. Most notable – and to our knowledge only – exceptions are Baroncelli (2011), Carbone (2013a) and Farrell (2008, 2012). However, while these studies are extremely useful, they 'only' offer a bottom-up perspective, focusing on the EU's impact at the multilateral level³⁹, while ignoring the potential role of IOs in EU development integration.

The lack of attention for the multilateral level in the study of EU development cooperation is problematic for two reasons. First, and following the suggestions of Farrell (2008) and Olsen (2005), it is reasonable to assume that the EU's development policy is shaped by the complex interaction between the EU institutions, the Member States and IOs – not to forget other actors such as partner countries and NGOs. After all, also in other fields of EU external action (e.g. trade, climate, migration), studies show the importance of IOs for understanding certain policies (e.g. Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013). Especially,

³⁹ More specifically, Baroncelli focuses on the EU's performance in the World Bank, focusing on its impact during the decision-making process. In a similar vein, Farrell wonders why the EU's influence in the World Bank, IMF and UN has been limited. Finally, Carbone addresses the EU's actorness at the High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness.

neofunctionalist scholars have elaborated on this dynamic, being part of a larger research agenda on '*exogenous spillover*' (Niemann, 2006). Second, by ignoring the multilateral level, we are potentially trapped in a Eurocentric reading of EU development cooperation. Indeed, when explaining EU development integration, scholars thus far have focused on the Member States (e.g. Cosgrove-Twitchett, 1978; Grilli, 1993; Hoebink, 2005; Holland & Doidge, 2012), the European Commission (e.g. Babarinde, 1998; Holland, 2000; Olsen, 2005) or both (e.g. Carbone, 2007; Dearden, 2008; Orbie, 2012), seeing them as main and only drivers of political change. However, by ignoring the potential role of non-European actors, in particular IOs, it is essentially impossible to know whether or not we – EU development/integration scholars – are blindsided.

In sum, there is thus a clear need to bring the multilateral level into the picture of EU development cooperation. This article takes a first tentative step in this direction by studying the relationship between the EU and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). While being largely unknown – or better understudied –, the DAC is arguably the most important international development organization in which the EU takes part (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Orbie, Saenen, Verschaeve, & De Ville, 2015; Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015). Hence, by rereading the story of EU development integration through the lens of the DAC, we wonder whether – and if so to what extent – the latter has been a shaping factor of EU development policy. For several reasons, we expect the DAC to have influenced the course of EU development history. First, the DAC has an impressive track record of influencing the aid programs of its members, most notably through its peer reviews (Ashoff, 2013; Ben-Artzi, 2013; Masujima, 2004). Second, the EU has a long and deep relationship with the DAC, stemming from the fact that it has been a full member of the Committee ever since the latter's inception in 1960 (Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013). Third and final, studies have shown that the EU typically is a norm taker when it comes to development cooperation, adopting norms that have been set by others – most notably influential donors (e.g. US, UK) and IOs (e.g. WTO, IMF, World Bank) (Arts & Dickson, 2004; Farrell, 2008; Holden, 2009).

To study whether and to what extent the DAC has shaped the course of EU development integration, this study opts for an inductive research approach. We favor such an approach over

more traditional (i.e. deductive) ones for two important reasons. First, given the explorative nature of our research question, a flexible research approach is required as it is *a priori* impossible to tell what data are relevant to look at. Second, the ultimate goal of this article is to bring the multilateral level into the study of EU development cooperation, as such potentially providing new theoretical insights on this topic. Again, this particularly fits inductive research as it allows insights to emerge from the data without the potential restraints imposed by existing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Maxwell, 2005). Empirically, this study draws on a combination of qualitative methods. More specifically, data were collected through (i) archive study and document analysis⁴⁰ (e.g. minutes of meetings, intra-delegation's correspondence), (ii) semi-structured interviews with in total 22 DAC and Member States' officials⁴¹ and (iii) participatory observation⁴² in several meetings of the DAC during the period 2012-2013.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, we provide a general overview on the DAC in which we briefly discuss its role and functioning in international development. We also focus on its relationship with the EU. Then, we shift our attention to the central research question of this study: has the DAC been a driver of European development integration. In doing so, we distinguish between the period before and after the Treaty of Maastricht (1993). It will become clear the DAC has always been an important shaping factor of EU development policy, though, the way in which it did so changed significantly over time. The article concludes with some general reflections on the main findings of this study.

⁴⁰ Data were retrieved from and consulted at the OECD's archives in Paris. We are grateful to Mr. Jan-Anno Schuur and Ms. Marie Khalil for their help during our research stays.

⁴¹ As various officials were only willing to share their views on the condition of absolute anonymity, interviews are indicated by a general reference only.

⁴² We are grateful to the Belgian delegation to the OECD, in particular to Dr. Martinus Desmet and Mr. Lieven De La Marche.

The (EU-)DAC (relationship) in a nutshell

For more than fifty years now, the DAC has grouped the world's main donors⁴³, serving as a forum for policy dialogue, coordination and international consensus building (OECD/DAC, 2011). Its history goes back to 1960. At that time, the world witnessed a process of rapid decolonization, forcing Western countries to rethink their relations with their former colonies. Against this background, they established the Development Assistance Group (DAG), serving as a forum to reflect upon development cooperation. More specifically, its purpose was to increase the volume and effectiveness of Western development aid, which would be achieved through burden sharing, coordination and mutual learning (Esman & Cheever, 1967; OECD/DAC, 1960; Rostow, 1985). Afterwards, in 1961, the DAG became adopted by the newly established OECD – explaining its current name – and ever since it has been the main body through which the Organization deals with development cooperation⁴⁴ (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Griffiths, 1997; Masujima, 2004).

As previously outlined, the DAC seeks to increase the volume and effectiveness of development aid (Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011). It pursues these goals in three distinctive ways. First, the DAC serves as a forum for standard setting and monitoring. In 1969, for example, the Committee developed the ODA definition, allowing its Secretariat to monitor the aid efforts of its Members. In a similar vein, the DAC also established several other development principles, ranging from untied aid to policy coherence for development or donor alignment (Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008). Second, the DAC serves as a forum for policy learning and evaluation. Most notable are its peer reviews, providing its members a means for scrutinizing the donor under review, identifying best practices and mutual learning (Ashoff,

⁴³ The DAC is currently composed out of 29 Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and United Kingdom.

⁴⁴ Given the DAC's unique history, it always remained a largely autonomous body of the OECD. For example, the DAC has its own – more restricted – membership criteria and it holds its own – partly independent – budget. It is also the only OECD committee that is headed by a permanent chair, allowed to speak on behalf of the DAC without gaining prior approval of the OECD Council (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Verschaeve, 2013).

2013; Ben-Artzi, 2013; Paulo & Reisen, 2010). Third and final, the DAC serves as a forum for dialogue and consensus building. In recent years, for example, it played a key role in forging international development commitments, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Millennium Development Goals⁴⁵ (Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004). In sum, the DAC can thus be seen as a central pillar of the international aid architecture (Boas & McNeill, 2004a; Heiner, Klingebiel, & Mahn, 2014; Nay, 2014).

Of particular relevance for this study is the DAC's relationship with the EU. As became clear in the introduction to this article, the EU has strong historical and institutional ties with the DAC. This is the case for two reasons. First, the EU – here referring to the European institutions – has always been a full member of the DAC, taking part in its work alongside the EU member states (Führer, 1996). This makes the DAC one of the few IOs in which the EU is represented as a full member (Debaere, De Ville, Orbie, Saenen, & Verschaeve, 2014). Initially, this membership entailed the representation of the European Development Fund (EDF) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) (see *infra*), though, over time the EU has also come to represent its own development programs as well as those of its members that are not represented in the DAC (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia, Malta) (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013). Second, there has always been a strong overlap in membership between the EU and the DAC. While at the time of the DAC's inception in 1960, the EU already made up for 6 of the 11 members, it currently accounts for 20 of the 29 DAC members. In sum, it can be concluded that the EU and DAC are strongly intertwined institutions. Indeed, ever since the DAC's inception in 1960, relations between Brussels and Paris have been strong from an institutional point of view.

EU development integration through the lens of the DAC

Having provided a general overview of the DAC's role in international development and its relationship with the EU, the remainder of this article addresses the central research question of this study: Has the DAC – and if so to what extent – shaped the course of EU development policy? At a first level, we distinguish between two periods, respectively before

⁴⁵ The MDGs built upon the International Development Goals as put forward by the DAC in 1996 (OECD/DAC, 1996).

and after the Treaty of Maastricht (1993). This is motivated by the fact that this Treaty significantly altered the EU's role in development cooperation by adding this policy to the Commission's portfolio⁴⁶ (see *infra*). At a second level, a further selection has been made within both time periods in function of our dependent variable, i.e. European development integration. More specifically, particular attention is paid (i) the European Commission's growing development assertiveness from the second-half of the 1960s onwards and (ii) the reforms of EU development cooperation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This is motivated by the fact that our analysis clearly illustrates the importance of the DAC in both cases, whereas the literature on EU development cooperation thus far largely failed to explain both periods of European development integration.

Finally, and before jumping to our empirics, two important considerations must be made. First, this article offers a meta-perspective on the past 55 years of EU-DAC relations. However, this analysis builds upon a rigorous and in-depth study of the relationship between both institutions. Second, our analysis should be seen as complementary to the existing literature on EU development cooperation. Indeed, while this article might give the impression of offering an alternative and competing framework for understanding EU development integration, the opposite is true.

From Rome to Maastricht

The role of the DAC in EU development integration was quite substantial in the period before 1993. According to our findings, the DAC helped the European Commission establishing itself as a strong and assertive development actor *vis-à-vis* the EU Member States. The underlying story goes back to Treaty of Rome in 1957. While this Treaty foresaw in the establishment of a preferential trade relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the creation of the intergovernmental EDF, it essentially did not grant the European Commission real development competence. Indeed, Member States were reluctant to transfer development competences to the European level, with the sole exception of the small

⁴⁶ Before, the European Commission pursued its development objective through its trade relations with the global South and its role in managing the intergovernmental EDF.

role the Commission obtained to help managing the EDF and EIB (Carbone, 2007; Holland & Doidge, 2012). Consequently, the Commission was initially nothing more than an implementing agent of its Member States, helping to implement the development programs they had previously agreed upon. Moreover, due to the fact that the Commission lacked institutional capacities on development, it was virtually impossible for its officials to assume themselves a more assertive role in this policy area. Indeed, compared to their national counterparts, European Commission officials faced an ‘aid information gap’, hampering them from proactively fostering a European development policy (Arts & Dickson, 2004; Frisch, 2008; Grilli, 1993).

This gradually changed in the beginning of the 1960s. According to Cosgrove-Twitchett (1978), the Commission gave first evidence of more development assertiveness during the negotiations of the first Yaoundé convention (1963). However, she – but also other scholars – failed to explain this shift given that the political constellation in Brussels had not changed since the Treaty of Rome. What did change though, was the establishment of the DAC in 1960. While at that time most EU Member States were still reluctant to transfer development competences to the European level, they did support the EU’s accession to the DAC as they felt it was in their own interests that Commission officials represented the work of the EDF and EIB (see Esman & Cheever, 1967; Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015). What they did not anticipate upon, however, was the potential impact of such decision. Indeed, as reflects from our empirical findings, the EU’s membership of the DAC helped the Commission to assume itself a much stronger role on development cooperation. This was the case for two reasons.

First, the DAC served as an important source of information for the European Commission, as such helping the latter’s officials to overcome their ‘aid information gap’. To explain this, one needs to take a closer look at the DAC’s initial work. As previously outlined in this paper, the DAC was established in a period of rapid decolonization. In the same period, most Western countries also set-up their development agencies⁴⁷ (Führer, 1996; Rostow, 1985). Most of these agencies, however, faced severe teething problems. Furthermore, it was unclear which country provided what (and how much) aid in what country, as such hampering more

⁴⁷ To list a few: DANIDA (1962), French Ministry for Co-operation (1960), KfW (1961), USAID (1961).

coherent and coordinated Western aid programmes. Therefore, the DAC's initial meetings (1960-1962) were used to reflect upon improving the management of these newborn aid agencies. Furthermore, the DAC also mapped in detail the ongoing aid efforts of its members as well as the needs of the developing countries (Cunningham, 1974; OECD/DAC, 1961a, b, 1962b). This allowed the Commission to become a well informed and more assertive development actor, knowing the nitty-gritty of its Members development programs⁴⁸.

Also at a later stage, i.e. when the DAC started to work more thematically from second half of the 1960s onwards, the Commission continued to benefit from its involvement in the Committee's work. This clearly reflects from the strong interconnectedness between the European Commission's development initiatives and the work of the DAC in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, if we take a closer look at some of the most important development communications of the Commission during this period – i.e. the memorandum on a Community development cooperation (1972), the 'Fresco' communication (1974) or the Pisani memorandum (1982) – one clearly sees a strong overlap with the DAC's work, both in terms of substance and sequence. To give one example, the DAC focused between 1970 and 1973 extensively on the least-developed countries (LDCs) and the principle of basic human needs in its work (Führer, 1996; OECD/DAC, 1970-73). Obviously, the European Commission took part in all these meetings, though, its role was quite limited compared to the other DAC members given that it was unable to actively contribute to the discussion due to a lack of in-house expertise on these topics (OECD/DAC, 1970-73; 1971). Or as stated by a former DAC official: *"We had no illusions about the European Commission [...] With the exception of the trade or EDF related discussions, it essentially lacked the capabilities to provide intellectual input to our meetings"* (interview 1). However, the very same European Commission issued one year later its 'Fresco' communication in which it paid particular attention to both topics (1974). As such, it can be reasonably assumed that there was – at least to some extent – a link between the DAC's work and the initiatives taken in Brussels during this period. Especially with regard to the 'pure'

⁴⁸ Off course, and as is the case with all historical research, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact impact of the DAC's initial work on the EU's development assertiveness. However, through counterfactual reasoning, we believe that it is fair to assume a clear and direct link between both.

development initiatives – and thus not trade related initiatives – “ *the Commission built upon the work that had been done by others, including ours* [referring to the DAC]” (interview 1) given that it lacked the institutional capacities to carry out similar work itself.

Second, the DAC indirectly served as a driver of European development integration. More specifically, through its recommendations – most notably in the context of its peer reviews⁴⁹ – it fostered the Commission’s development aspirations. Essentially, the DAC did not threaten the EU different from its other members, that is seeking ways to improve the effectiveness of its development programs. However, given that all European aid at that time was distributed through the EDF, an intergovernmental fund outside the Community’s budget, it was virtually impossible for the DAC to provide recommendations without touching upon the division of powers within the EU. Indeed, taking an aid effectiveness perspective, the DAC raised several times the idea to strengthen aid coordination at the European level and simplify the EDF’s procedures – for example by partly budgetizing⁵⁰ the fund (OECD/DAC, 1967-69; 1970-73; 1980-85). It did so in the context of the EU’s peer reviews, though, also on other occasions similar ideas were raised (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1980). Again, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact impact of this. After all, also a number of EU member states – most notably Germany – advocated in favor of, for example, strengthening European aid coordination (Carbone, 2007; Delputte, 2013; Grilli, 1993). This being said, however, our data show that one also cannot simply neglect the DAC’s influence. More specifically, internal communications between the European Commission and the DAC Secretariat, as well as minutes of several meetings indicate that the Commission officials attached much importance to ideas and recommendations (OECD/DAC, 1967-69; 1980). Furthermore, in several meetings of the DAC, the Commission strategically referred to these recommendations while advocating, for example, for highly politicized issues such as a (partial) budgetization of the EDF (OECD/DAC, 1967-69; 1980-85; interview 1). As such, it can be concluded that the DAC not only fostered the Commission’s

⁴⁹ Until 1978, DAC peer reviews were conducted on an annual basis. For this reason, they were initially called Annual Aid Reviews.

⁵⁰ Referring to incorporating the EDF within the EU’s budget.

development aspirations, it also served a source of legitimation when advocating further European development integration.

From Maastricht to Lisbon and beyond

Also after 1993, the year in which the Treaty of Maastricht entered into force, the DAC continued to be one of the shaping factors of EU development policy. However, its relationship with the EU changed profoundly due to the fact that development cooperation was added to the EU's portfolio. As such, the EU turned itself into a bilateral donor, alongside the other EU Member States (Carbone, 2007; Hoebink, 2005; Orbie, 2012). Not surprisingly, this fundamentally altered the EU's relationship with the DAC. Whereas traditionally, this relationship had been determined by the EU's limited development capacities (see supra), relations between both institutions gradually became more balanced, in the sense that by acquiring proper development capacities, the EU grew more independent from the DAC (interviews 2,3,4). As such, the EU thus turned into a more 'typical' DAC member, taking part in its work to improve the effectiveness of its development programs, coordinate with other donors and upload its own preferences (interviews 2,5 ; observations).

This being said, the DAC did not become irrelevant for understanding EU development policy. On the contrary, the Committee has been instrumental in triggering several political reforms in Brussels, most notably in the period before 2005. More specifically, and similar to the problems most development agencies faced in the early sixties, the EU's development programs initially experienced severe teething problems (Carbone, 2007; Holland & Doidge, 2012). Due to a lack of staff and expertise, the EU struggled throughout the nineties to effectively implement its large and ambitious development programs. This resulted in a strong delay in the disbursement of development funds, as well as a lack of monitoring and evaluation of European aid programs afterwards (Orbie, 2012; Van Reisen, 1999). For understandable reasons, this sparked much criticism, both in and outside Europe (Holland & Doidge, 2012). Most outspoken was the UK's then Secretary of State for International Development Claire Short who publicly accused the Commission in June 2000 for being '*the worst development agency in the world*', providing '*aid that doesn't help*' (Short, 2000). Obviously, this situation was unsustainable and

the newly appointed Prodi Commission – under the craftsmanship of development commissioner Poul Nielson – initiated a series of reforms from the turn of the Millennium onwards which gradually turned the EU into a modern and effective donor (Harding, 2000; Holland & Doidge, 2012; Orbie & Versluys, 2008).

Of particular relevance for this study is, however, the role of the DAC in this transformation. While being overlooked in the literature, the Committee played a catalytic role in the EU's process of becoming a full-blown development donor. Going back to 1998, the DAC was among the first to openly criticize the EU's development policies. It did so in an extremely⁵¹ critical peer review of the EU (OECD/DAC, 1998). In fact, its criticism about the Union's development programs was not new, but already went back to 1995 (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1995). However, while initially the DAC Secretariat assumed/hoped that the EU would outgrow its teething problems, it gradually became clear that the situation had only worsened, explaining the critical 1998 peer review (interviews 2,6-8). Essentially, the DAC criticized the fact that there was *“no coherent Commission-wide development strategy or statement on development co-operation and the policies [...] lack consistency and coherence. Because of this divided, splintered framework, the Commission must pay a heavy price in organisational efficiency and effectiveness”* (OECD/DAC, 1998, p. 10). Furthermore, concerns were also raised about the significant gap between ODA commitments and disbursements and the lack of decent evaluation systems to follow up on European aid (OECD/DAC, 1998).

The importance of this peer review was twofold. First, at a general level, it set the tone of the debate, both at the European (e.g. European Commission, 2000a; European Parliament, 1999) and Member States level (e.g. International Development Committee, 2000). As such, it helped to create a momentum for policy change, something that has been acknowledged by several (former) Commission officials (interview 9-11). Second, at a more substantial level, the DAC's peer review has been influential in determining what policy reforms took place within the EU. Indeed, while in that period virtually all aspects of the EU development cooperation faced criticism, there is a strong link between on the one hand the DAC's criticisms and

⁵¹ While DAC peer reviews are always critical, they often spell out donor's weaknesses in a diplomatic way (Ashoff, 2013). From this point of view, this peer review was surprisingly open and critical.

recommendations and on the other hand the policy reforms implemented at the European level (interview 2,9,11). Most notable in this regard was the adoption of the 2000 Development Policy Statement (DPS) by the European Commission (2000b). By doing so, the EU addressed the most fundamental critique of the DAC's peer review, namely the fact that it lacked an overarching strategy on development (OECD/DAC, 1998). Furthermore, also several – more technical – reforms to strengthen the coherence, oversight and evaluation of European aid programs largely corresponded with the recommendations made by the DAC (Bossuyt, Lehtinen, Anne, Laporte, & Gwénäelle, 2000; Lehtinen, 2002; interviews 9,12).

Of course, it is important to outline that it is impossible to pinpoint to what extent the DAC exactly triggered and influenced the above reforms. After all, also other actors (e.g. Member States, European Commission, European Parliament) advocated in favor of substantial reforms of the EU's development policy. However, both opinion makers (Bonaglia, Goldstein, & Petitto, 2006; Bossuyt et al., 2000; Grimm, de Bergh, & Freres, 2005; Lehtinen, 2002) as well as (former) Commission and DAC officials (interviews 2,10,12-13) highlight the importance of the DAC in the above reforms – especially with regard to the DPS - or as stated by then Development Commissioner Poul Nielson, the main objective of these reforms was *'going mainstream'* (2012, p. 6), bringing the EU's development practices in line with the principles of the DAC and others (Nielson, 2012)

Also in the first years after the turn of the Millennium, the DAC remained important for understanding EU development policy. First, its 2002 peer review of the EU helped maintaining the momentum for policy reforms in Brussels (interviews 10,11). More specifically, the review praised the substantial reforms that had taken place since 1998, though, also pointed out that *"several potential challenges [remained] for the reform process and for implementing the programme"* (OECD/DAC, 2002, p. 16). Especially, with regard to carving out itself a clear role in international development, based on the EU's comparative advantage in a number of policy areas, the DAC recommended the Commission to push the envelope. In a similar vein, recommendations were also made to strengthen the promotion of PCD and country ownership (OECD/DAC, 2002). Second, on a bilateral basis, there were close and regular contacts between the DAC Secretariat and Commission' officials in the first half of the 2000s, which helped the EU

to implement a series of more technical reforms (interviews 2,6,13). These meetings came at the initiative of both the DAC Secretariat and European Commission⁵² and addressed, amongst other things, the adjustment of the EU's budget lines to the DAC's Credit Reporting System and the establishment of the EU donor atlas (interviews 6,14). Through these technical reforms/initiatives, the EU further improved the monitoring and evaluation of its development programs (Bossuyt et al., 2000; Lehtinen, 2002; interview 5,10).

In more recent years, the DAC's impact on the EU has become less prominent as once was the case (interviews, 15-16). More specifically, while the DAC continues to seek ways to improve the volume and effectiveness of European development programs, it is no longer an important factor for understanding the evolution of EU development policies in the period from 2005 onwards (interview 17). This is the case for two reasons. First, by the mid-2000s, the EU had successfully completed its development reforms. As such, there was little room left for the DAC to make further recommendations on the overall direction or institutional design of EU development cooperation (interviews, 15,18). This clearly reflects from the 2007 peer review, which draws a rather positive picture of the EU's development performances and only in the margins makes a number of smaller recommendations for further improvement⁵³ (OECD/DAC, 2007; interview 15). It also explains why in the latest peer reviews much attention is paid to strengthening the EU's so-called federator role, i.e. its multilateral donor role, given that here there still is ample room for improvement (e.g. strengthening the institutional mechanisms for coordination) (interviews 16,18-21). Second, the EU has also become (much) less responsive for the DAC's influence. This can be explained by the fact the EU has become a more powerful development actor with clear international leadership aspirations (Gänzle et al., 2012), as can be witnessed by, for example, the European Consensus on Development (Council, 2005) or the Agenda for Change (European Commission, 2011). For obvious reasons, this evolution decreased the DAC's ability to influence EU development cooperation. More specifically, while

⁵² At that time, there was a very strong relationship between on the one hand DAC chair Richard Manning and director of the DAC Secretariat Richard Carey and on the other hand EU Development Commissioner Poul Nielson and director of DG Development Koos Richelle.

⁵³ It should be noted, though, that the recommendations on policy coherence on development were more critical and substantial.

the EU traditionally saw the DAC as a partner (and still does), it has also increasingly come to see the Committee as a venue for potential international influence (interviews 8-9,17), and even a competitor on a number of topics (Carbone, 2012; interviews, 15,22). To what extent this is a permanent swing remains to be seen. However, at present it clearly hampers the DAC's ability to influence the EU's decision-making on development cooperation.

Discussion and conclusion

The EU is arguably one of the most important players in international development cooperation. Nonetheless, EU development cooperation thus far only attracted limited scholarly attention – relatively speaking – and especially the relationship between the European and multilateral level has been massively overlooked. This is remarkable – or even problematic – given the dramatic increase of interactions between the EU and IOs in recent years (e.g. Jørgensen & Costa, 2012; Kissack, 2010), and the fact that several scholars already hinted at the fact that EU development cooperation is shaped by the complex interaction between the EU institutions, Member States and IOs (e.g. Farrell, 2008; Olsen, 2005). Therefore, the central aim of this article was to bring the multilateral level into the study of EU development policy. We did so by studying the relationship between the EU and the DAC, wondering whether – and if so to what extent – the latter has been one of the shaping factors of EU development policy.

As expected, the main finding of this article is that there is an urgent need to focus more extensively on the multilateral level in the study of EU development cooperation. This clearly reflects from our empirical findings which show that the DAC has always been an important shaping factor of the EU's development policy. Nonetheless, the Committee has thus far been largely overlooked in the literature, as such hampering our understanding of a number of key moments in European development integration.

Taking a closer look at our empirical findings, it can be concluded that the DAC influenced the course of EU development integration in a number of important ways. More specifically, it helped the EU becoming a professional and full-blown development actor. However, the way in which it did so changed profoundly over time. Essentially, the DAC has

acted consistently *vis-à-vis* the EU during the past half century, that is making recommendations to improve the effectiveness of its development programs. However, the impact and relevance of its work was different over time. Indeed, initially the DAC served as a source of inspiration and legitimation for the EU, helping the latter to become an assertive development actor in the absence of clear and strong development competences. Afterwards, when development cooperation was added to the EU's portfolio, the DAC's relevance changed as it became a partner for the Commission to improve the effectiveness of its development programs. In sum, one could say that in a first stage the DAC helped the EU acquiring development competences, while subsequently it was instrumental in helping the European Commission taking full advantage of its newly gained competences.

Importantly, our findings suggest that the relations between the EU and DAC might have entered a new era in recent years. Indeed, from 2005 onwards, the DAC has become less important understanding EU development cooperation given that it no longer prominently helped shaping the course of this policy. Whether this is a temporary or permanent situation still remains to be seen. However, one could assume this to be the case, stemming from the fact that there is a clear structural dimension underlying the decreasing influence of the DAC on the EU. Only if the EU institutions and Member States would decide to further integrate (i.e. strengthening the multilateral development role of the EU), one can expect the DAC to play some kind of role in this transformation given that this has historically always been the case.

In sum, this article has shown that it is important to talk about international organizations when studying EU development cooperation. While literature thus far saw the EU institutions and its Member States as the main – and often only – drivers of policy change and only considered IOs to be a venue of potential influence for the EU, our analysis revealed the urgent need of moving beyond this Eurocentric view on EU development cooperation. Indeed, this single case study took a first tentative step in the right direction, demonstrating the importance of the DAC for acquiring an in-depth understanding of several key moments in EU development integration. However, additional research should follow, otherwise we will continue to be trapped in a too narrow view on EU development cooperation.

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List of interviews

In order of appearance:

- 1: former DAC official, London, 06/12/2012.
- 2: former DAC official, London, 05/12/2012.
- 3: DAC official, London, 06/12/2012.
- 4: former DAC official, Skype, 19/02/2012.
- 5: EU official, Brussels, 28/03/2012.
- 6: DAC official, Paris, 30/10/2013.
- 7: DAC official, Paris, 11/06/2012.
- 8: DAC official, Brussels, 07/05/2012.
- 9: EU official, Paris, 13/06/2012.
- 10: former EU official, Ghent, 25/11/2014.
- 11: former EU official, Brussels, 24/02/2015.
- 12: DAC official, Brussels, 26/11/2013.
- 13: former DAC official, Skype, 17/10/2013.
- 14: DAC official, Paris, 19/01/2012.
- 15: DAC official, Paris, 05/11/2013.
- 16: Member State official, 16/01/2012.
- 17: EU official, Paris, 15/11/2013.
- 18 : former DAC official, Paris, 17/01/2012.

19: Member State official, Paris, 17/10/2013.

20: Member State official, Paris, 22/10/2013.

21: DAC official, Skype, 13/12/2015.

22: Member State official, Paris, 23/10/2013.

Chapter 8: Ignoring the elephant in the room? Assessing the impact of the European Union on the Development Assistance Committee's role in international development.

Status: in co-authorship with Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie and currently under review (awaiting first revisions) in *Development and Change*.

General introduction: Chapter eight goes further down the road taken by the previous chapters, studying the impact of the EU on the DAC's role in international development cooperation. As already became clear in chapters 2 and 5 of this doctoral dissertation, a number of scholars have in recent years been puzzled by the DAC's future, especially seen in the light of the proliferation of new development actors and/or the establishment of the DCF. This article speaks to this literature, though, taking a fundamentally different perspective. More specifically, whereas scholars thus far focused on challenges that are external to the DAC, this paper's focus lays on the EU, wondering whether, how and to what extent the Committee is also challenged from within. By doing so, the major strength of this article is that it explicitly unites different strands of literature, respectively, on (i) international development cooperation, (ii) EU development cooperation and (iii) EU-IOs relations. Furthermore, this study is – to my knowledge – the first one that addresses the recent reforms of the ODA concept. The main limitation of this study is that it was without doubt the most difficult one to account for the personal opinions of the different interviewees, stemming from the fact that several responses of interviewees were (partly) inspired by conflicts at the personal level (e.g. mismatch of personalities between DCD officials and EU officials) at the time of carrying out the research.

Ignoring the elephant in the room?

Assessing the impact of the European Union on the Development Assistance Committee's role in international development.

Abstract

This article studies the impact of the European Union (EU) on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). While literature thus far focused on the external challenges for the DAC's role in international development, we argue that the EU should be taken into account as well. By focusing on the cases of policy coherence for development and the concessionality of ODA loans, we show that the EU poses a structural challenge for the DAC's role in international development given the strong overlap in membership between both institutions and the Union's changing nature as a development actor.

Keywords: OECD, DAC, EU, development cooperation, policy coherence for development, official development assistance.

1. Introduction

For more than fifty years now, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has grouped the world's main donors⁵⁴, serving as a forum for dialogue, coordination and international consensus building. Through its role in defining and monitoring global development standards, it has been influential in defining what we today see as development cooperation. For example, the concepts of official development assistance (ODA), policy coherence for development (PCD) or (un)tyed aid find their origins in its work (Eyben, 2013; Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004). Furthermore, the DAC also had a strong impact on the way in which the delivering of aid is currently

⁵⁴ The DAC is composed out of 29 Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and United Kingdom.

structured, most notable, through its work on aid effectiveness – e.g. the Paris declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) – and its influential report ‘Shaping the 21st century’ (1996), which paved the way for the Millennium Development Goals (Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Manning, 2008; Ruckert, 2008).

In recent years, however, the DAC’s role in international development cooperation has increasingly been challenged. This has everything to do with the changing development landscape – i.e. the proliferation of new development actors and ideas – which calls into question the legitimacy of the existing aid architecture (Besada & Kindornay, 2013; Kragelund, 2011; McEwan & Mawdsley, 2012; Woods, 2008b). This sparked much debate among scholars and practitioners on whether or not the DAC will remain a relevant forum for global aid negotiations (e.g. Besada & Kindornay, 2013; Bräutigam, 2011; Brown & Morton, 2008; Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Kindornay & Yiagadessen, 2013; Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015). More specifically, literature distinguishes between two major challenges for the DAC, respectively, (i) its lack of inclusiveness, referring to the fact that only traditional donors take part in its work (Besada & Kindornay, 2013; Brown & Morton, 2008; Eyben, 2013) and (ii) the proliferation of ‘new’ providers of aid (e.g. BRICs, philanthropic foundations, private sector) which challenge its pre-eminent status in defining donor norms and principles (Dreher, Fuchs, & Nunnenkamp, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Quadir, 2013; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011).

The central aim of this study is to engage with the ongoing debate on the DAC’s role in the changing development landscape. We wonder to what extent the European Union (EU) poses a challenge for the DAC. Indeed, while literature thus far focused on the challenges *outside* the DAC’s membership (e.g. Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Paulo & Reisen, 2010; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011), it overlooked the elephant *within* the room: the EU. For two reasons, however, one could expect the EU to have a detrimental impact on the DAC. First, the EU has increasingly assumed itself a coordinating role on development from the turn of the Millennium onwards. Indeed, while initially the EU was preoccupied with establishing itself as a bilateral donor alongside its members (Arts & Dickson, 2004; Holland & Doidge, 2012), it gradually also started to play an active role in the coordination of the development policies of its members, relying on a set soft-integration mechanisms such as target-setting, monitoring and peer pressure (Carbone, 2008a; Orbie, 2012). Second, the overlap in membership between the EU

and DAC has significantly increased in recent years. While at the time of the DAC's inception in 1960 the EU already made up for 6 of the 11 members, it currently accounts for 20 of the 29 members⁵⁵. Especially the accession of the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia in 2013 further expanded the EU's numerical weight in the DAC.

Taking both evolutions together, one can thus logically assume the EU's impact on the DAC to be substantial. This observation is not new. Already in 2008 the then outgoing DAC chair Richard Manning pointed out that *“with 15 EU Member States and the European Commission in an membership of 23, the question of what collective action takes place in Brussels and what in Paris is a live issue”* (2008, p. 14). However, how this exactly plays out in practice has thus far been neglected in literature. Notable exceptions are Carbone (2007, 2013) and Keijzer (2011) which studied the High Level Forums (HLFs) in Paris, Accra and Busan and find that EU coordination in the run up to these meeting left little political room for other DAC members and the DAC Secretariat (hereafter Development Co-operation Directorate or DCD). However, while these studies are useful for understanding the EU's actorness and effectiveness at the DAC's HLFs, they do not capture the day-to-day relations between both organizations. Indeed, the DAC's work on aid effectiveness is – or better was⁵⁶ – very distinctive from the rest of its work (Eyben, 2013; Manning, 2008). For one thing, there is virtually no EU coordination in Paris as both the EU delegation and its Member States feel such efforts would run counter the DAC's way of functioning⁵⁷ (Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013). Therefore, it remains unclear how the EU's changing nature as a development actor and the growing overlap in membership with the DAC affect the latter.

The central aim of this study is to address the above gap in literature. By doing so, we add to the literature in several ways. Empirically, this study provides the first analysis on this topic. Indeed, neither the study of the DAC (Bräutigam, 2011; Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Masujima, 2004; Ruckert, 2008), nor the literature on EU development policy (Carbone, 2007; Gänzle, Grimm, & Makhan, 2012; Holland & Doidge, 2012) or the EU's role in international institutions (Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013;

⁵⁵ Note that the EU has always been a full member of the DAC, and therefore in this calculation is included in the group of EU countries.

⁵⁶ Following the agreement reached in Busan (2011), the DAC turned its work on aid effectiveness over to the newly established Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation.

⁵⁷ Most EU Member States also do not want to coordinate.

Kissack, 2010) thus far paid attention to the EU-DAC relationship. Sole exceptions are two book chapters, both providing a first institutional overview of the relationship (Carroll & Kellow, 2012; Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013). Finally, this study also adds to the literature on international development cooperation (Besada & Kindornay, 2013; Boas & McNeill, 2004; Woods, 2008a) as it extends our understanding of the DAC's functioning. Moreover, it provides a detailed account of the impact of regional integration processes on the existing international aid regime.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. First, we provide a brief methodological overview in which we discuss our case selection and data collection. Then, section three constitutes the main empirical section of this study. We pay particular attention to the cases of PCD and the concessionality of ODA loans and show how the EU structure poses a structural challenge for the DAC's role in international development cooperation. The article concludes with some general reflections on the main findings of this study.

2. Methodology

As outlined in the introduction to this article, this study provides the first analysis of the EU-DAC relationship. More specifically, we wonder whether the EU poses a challenge for the DAC's role in international development given its changing nature as a development actor and the growing overlap in membership between both institutions. To answer this research question, we address two topical cases, respectively, the promotion of PCD and the concessionality of ODA loans. Both cases dominated the DAC's work in recent years. Moreover, they are very distinctive from one another – both in terms of substance and role played by the EU –, as such providing a comprehensive overview of the EU-DAC relationship. The data for this study were obtained through (i) semi-structured interviews with in total 37 DAC and Member States' officials⁵⁸, (ii) archive study and document analysis (e.g. minutes of meetings, intra-delegations' correspondence) and (iii) participatory observation⁵⁹ in several meetings of the DAC during the period 2012-2013.

⁵⁸ As various officials were only willing to share their views on the condition of absolute anonymity, interviews are indicated by a general reference only.

⁵⁹ We are grateful to the Belgian delegation to the OECD, in particular to Dr. Martinus Desmet and Mr. Lieven De La Marche.

3. Results

3.1. Policy coherence for development

Our first case deals with the EU's role in the prioritization of PCD in the DAC. The principle of PCD refers to the general idea that non-aid policies of donor countries have an impact on the developing world and therefore should take into account the latter's needs and interests (Ashoff, 2005). The principle was already introduced by the DAC in 1991 (OECD/DAC, 1991), however, it only became one of its key priorities in recent years. Indeed, while during the 1990s and early 2000s, the DAC sought to avoid policy incoherence through its peer reviews (Manning, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2006), it has become more ambitious as it now also aims to achieve a better understanding of the potential positive synergies between development cooperation and other policy areas (OECD, 2013; OECD/DAC, 2013d). This is most clearly reflected in the DAC's new mandate according to which the promotion of PCD is a key priority (OECD/DAC, 2011). In this section, we pay particular attention to the EU's pivotal role⁶⁰ in prioritizing PCD in the DAC. We argue that while the EU's efforts to prioritize PCD may seem positive for the DAC, they actually had a detrimental impact as they eroded its internal legitimacy.

The underlying story goes back to 2007. At that time, the DAC initiated its '*strategic reflection exercise*'. This was a process it undertook to reevaluate its role, structure, functioning and composition in the changing aid landscape (OECD/DAC, 2008, 2009). This effort came at the initiative of the DCD and served as a response to the mounting criticism the DAC had faced in the aftermath of the HLFs in Paris and Accra. The ultimate goal of the *reflection exercise* was to adopt a set of policy recommendations which afterwards could be used as stepping-stones to revise the DAC's mandate for the first time ever (OECD/DAC, 2009; Verschaeve, 2012).

To facilitate the entire process, the DCD set up a number of task forces, each focusing on a particular topic or question. Initially, the plan was to establish two of them, respectively, on the role of the DAC in global aid governance and on the Committee's functioning and composition. By doing so, the DCD aimed to tackle questions such as: "What role has the DAC

⁶⁰ At a more general level, it should be noted that a number of other dynamics also account for the rise of PCD on the western donors' aid agenda, ranging from the changing development landscape to securitization trends or an emerging beyond aid thinking (e.g. Prontera, 2014; Thede, 2013).

in the global aid effectiveness regime?”, or “Should the DAC reconsidered its composition?” (OECD/DAC, 2009, 2010b). Ultimately, however, the idea was launched to also establish a third task, focusing on the promotion of PCD and Global Public Goods (GPGs). This came at the suggestion of the EU delegation, the Netherlands and Finland who felt it was necessary to focus on these issues in the light of the changing development landscape.

While being well intended, this idea divided the Committee into two groups: EU and non-EU countries. Starting with the latter group, all influential non-EU countries (i.e. Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, US, Switzerland) opposed the proposal. This was also the case for most DCD officials. Both rejected the idea for two reasons. First, and in line with the *Strategic Reflection Exercise’s* underlying rationale, it was argued that the DAC needed to focus all its attention on its most important – read existential – questions (interviews, 4-5,17-18,23-24,32). Second, several of these countries (e.g. Australia, Canada, Japan, US) were reluctant to put too much emphasis on the promotion of PCD, while others (e.g. Norway, Switzerland) did supported the idea, though, argued that addressing the potential positive synergies between different policy areas fell beyond the scope of the DAC’s work and therefore should be left to the OECD. The latter was also the line taken by most DCD officials (interviews, 12,17,23-27).

On the other side of the spectrum, virtually all EU donors supported the idea to establish a third task force on PCD and GPGs. What is remarkable, however, is that this outcome cannot be explained by prior EU coordination on the issue. Rather, the prioritization of PCD was self-evident for most EU members of the DAC (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, UK), whereas others (e.g. Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal) felt politically constrained to support the proposal (interviews 1,8,17-19,28-29). This outcome can be explained by the engagements on PCD that were previously made at the European level. More specifically, from the turn of the Millennium onwards, the European Commission and some of its Member States (i.e. Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden) had systematically promoted the principle (Carbone, 2008b; Hoebink, 2005). Most notable in this regard is the European Consensus on Development (2005) which makes explicit reference to the promotion of PCD, granting the Commission a key role in monitoring progress on this topic within both its own policies as well

as those of its member states⁶¹ (Carbone, 2008b). As such, most EU countries had already become engaged with the promotion of PCD by the time of the DAC's *strategic reflection exercise* was initiated, explaining why they supported the idea of establishing this third task force. Moreover, those EU countries that did not favor the idea (e.g. Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal) found themselves rhetorically entrapped because of the collective commitments they had previously made at the EU level. This was clearly pointed out by several interviewees who argued that in the absence of the EU structure, these countries would almost certainly have sided with the US, Canada or Japan (interviews, 2-4,11,13-14,32).

Ultimately, following several discussions, an agreement was reached on the issue by 2008. Essentially, the former group gave up their opposition, resulting in the establishment of the third task force on PCD and GPGs. More specifically, they had come to realize that it was a battle that could never be won. Not only was it considered to be impossible to convince the large group of EU members from their argument – decisions in the DAC are taken by consensus –, there was essentially no alternative as continuing arguing over the issue could jeopardize the entire *strategic reflection exercise* (interviews, 12,23,25,28). This also explains why further down the process, it was never considered to be an option to only take those policy recommendations that originated from the first two task forces into account while writing the new DAC mandate (interviews, 24,27). Therefore, and as outlined in the beginning of this section, the DAC adopted in 2011 a new mandate that pays particular attention to the promotion of PCD. More specifically, it puts forward the principle as one of its key priorities, one that needs to be achieved in close collaboration with the rest of the OECD (OECD/DAC, 2011).

At first sight, the above outcome may seem beneficial for the DAC, knowing that the Committee had undertaken several failed attempts in the past to prioritize PCD (Carbone, 2008b; Forster & Stokke, 1999). However, this is only half of the story. While the DAC indeed obtained a much stronger mandate on PCD, it came at a high cost. More specifically, the way in which PCD made its way up the agenda of the DAC was detrimental for its internal legitimacy⁶². While traditionally, the DAC has always derived a great deal of its internal legitimacy from the fact that it offers its Members an unique forum to deliberate on what collective actions to taken

⁶¹ This gave ground to a series of biannual follow-up reports on PCD, issued by the European Commission from 2007 onwards.

⁶² Here defined as the popular support the DAC receives from its Members.

(Manning, 2008; Masujima, 2004; Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015), this case illustrates how the EU structure is eroding this decision-making culture. More specifically, due to the strong overlap in membership, internal EU dynamics constitute a magnifying impact on the DAC. As such, non-EU members of the DAC are increasingly confronted with a decision-making culture in which they no longer have an equal chance to weigh upon the DAC's work, whereas this used to be the case in the past. Especially, when clear and/or strong collective targets have been set in Brussels on a particular issue – as was the case with PCD –, it is difficult and perhaps even impossible for the non-EU members (but also the DCD) to prevent its rise on the political agenda of the DAC (interviews, 3,7,12,23-27).

This dynamic poses a structural challenge for the DAC's internal legitimacy in two important ways. First, non-EU DAC members risk being confronted with a political agenda that no longer reflects their own interests. In this case, for example, countries such as the US, Japan, Canada or Australia had – and still have⁶³ – a lukewarm attitude towards the promotion of PCD. However, due to the ambitious provisions on PCD in the DAC's mandate, they are currently subjected to several initiatives taken by the OECD and DAC on this topic. Second, some EU countries have come to depreciate the DAC because of the above-described dynamic. More specifically, due to the often strong overlap in agenda between the EU and the DAC, questions increasingly arise within a number of European capitals about the latter's added value in international development (6,16,36). This is most visible in the case of Austria, as the country no longer has a permanent representative to the DAC⁶⁴, motivated by the fact that it is cheaper and more efficient to shift their development efforts towards Brussels (interview, 10,33).

3.2. Concessionality of ODA loans

This second case focuses on the issue of concessional loans, which basically is the question of how to count loans as ODA. As outlined in the introduction to this article, one of the DAC's main responsibilities is the monitoring of aid flows. For this purpose, it adopted already in 1969 the definition of ODA⁶⁵ (Hynes & Scott, 2013). Importantly, while most official aid is provided through grants, loans can count as ODA as well. More specifically, the face value of a

⁶³ This was outlined by several interviewees and also reflects from the fact that they abstain from most PCD related events/meetings.

⁶⁴ Instead, the Austrian DAC delegate flies in for every meeting of the Committee.

⁶⁵ Aid flows count as ODA if they flow from official agencies to official agencies, promote economic development and are concessional in character.

loan is ODA-eligible if the loan contains a grant element of at least 25%. This is calculated based on a reference rate of 10%, a convention that was adopted in 1972⁶⁶ (Manning, 2008). However, in today's world of historic low interest rates, this reference rate is no longer an appropriate proxy for measuring donor efforts. As such, loans easily contain a grant element 25% and even profit-making loans can pass the concessionality test (i.e. donors raise funds on the private capital market at a low rate and re-lent it at harder terms, though, below 10%). This created a clear tension between the spirit of the ODA definition – i.e. aid flows need to involve a donor effort – and the letter of the ODA definition – i.e. loans are concessional if they contain a grant element of 25% (Colin, 2014; Roodman, 2014). In this section, we focus on the EU's role in this debate. More specifically, we elaborate on the Union's practice of reporting profit-making loans as ODA and argue that the existence of the EU structure hampered the DAC from tackling this issue in an effective way.

The issue of concessionality emerged in parallel with the financial crisis of 2008. Due to the fact that interest rates had fallen sharply and remained at historic lows, a number of DAC donors started to report profit-making loans as ODA. Importantly, the EU was one of them, reporting loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB). Similar practices were also applied by France and Germany (Colin, 2014; Manning, 2013; Roodman, 2014). Initially, this went unnoticed. However, when the EU provided in 2009 more detailed information about its ODA figures of 2008 as part of its annual reporting, DCD officials found out. Confronted with this act of “*creative accounting*”, they asked the EU to stop the reporting of profit-making loans, as they were not in line with the spirit of the ODA concept. Moreover, the DCD openly wondered to what extent the EU was actually capable of reporting the EIB's loans as ODA since “*the grant element concept is not applied to the market-based lending operations of the multilateral development banks*” (OECD/DAC, 2013a, p. 2). Read between the lines: the EU cannot add the EIB's loans to its ODA budget due to its particular nature as a development actor (interviews, 6,9,31,34).

⁶⁶ At that time, this served as a proxy for the opportunity cost of public investment required to make funds available for lending. A detailed overview on how the concessionality of loans is calculated can be found here: (OECD/DAC, 2012c).

For understandable reasons, the latter caused hard feelings in Brussels⁶⁷ and a heated discussion emerged between the EU and the DCD, both on concessionality and the Union's membership status in the DAC (European Commission, 2010; OECD/DAC, 2010c, 2012a) (interviews, 6-7,20,32). In 2010, the issue further escalated when the DCD found out that also Germany and France had been reporting similar loans (interview 28). Initially, DCD officials tried to solve the issue bilaterally with the EU, France and Germany. However, after several failed attempts, the discussion was broadened to all DAC members. Given that none of the other DAC members had been reporting similar loans, the DCD hoped to finally solve the issue and come up with a new and clearer definition of "concessional in character" (Colin, 2014; OECD/DAC, 2013c; interviews 28-29,31-32,34).

This turned out to be much harder than initially expected. While there was indeed a large majority of DAC members – both EU and non-EU donors – that condemned the practice and argued in favor of lowering the discount rate of 10% towards the prevailing market rates, the EU, France and Germany were not willing to give in on the issue (interviews, 1,7-8,22-26). Their argument was twofold, namely, (i) that they had not violated the ODA definition and (ii) promoted development through these loans as they were offered at lower rates than the ones these countries could possibly obtain at private capital markets. Moreover, the EU also pointed out that these loans targeted middle-income countries, and often even projects that were potentially profit-making in the long run (OECD/DAC, 2010a, 2010c; interviews 6,13,29,31,34).

Most of the remaining DAC members did not agree with these arguments. On the contrary, the reporting of profit-making loans undermined in their views the credibility of the ODA concept. Moreover, it was argued that the DAC urgently needed to tackle the concessionality issue otherwise other donors could also be tempted to start reporting similar types of loans. Especially at a time of austerity and declining ODA budgets, this could create a dangerous competition among donors to inflate⁶⁸ their aid figures towards 0,7%, easily undoing all previous efforts of debt forgiveness (interviews, 9,23,28,35-36).

⁶⁷ The EU has always been extremely sensitive about being threatened equal to all other members of the DAC (see e.g. Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015).

⁶⁸ To some extent this is a false argument as repayments of loans are counted as negative ODA. Traditionally, however, repayments only start after 3 years, creating a situation in which a donor counts the face value of a loan to its ODA budget in year one, while deducting the repayments from its aid budget

By 2012, still no agreement had been reached on the issue. Therefore, in an attempt to break this deadlock, the DAC scheduled the concessionality issue at its annual High-Level Meeting (HLM) in December. At this meeting, DAC Members agreed to disagree at the latest until 2015⁶⁹. By that time, a larger reform of the ODA definition was scheduled in which adopting a clear and quantitative measure of concessionality was one of the priorities. Other issues that needed to be tackled were whether or not to maintain student scholarships, in-donor refugee costs and debt relief within the scope of the ODA definition. Moreover, the DAC also aimed to reconsider the overall relevance of the ODA concept, focusing on questions such as: “Is ODA outdated?”, “Should ODA – or a new concept – also focus on climate change, or development efforts made by the private sector?” (OECD/DAC, 2013b; interviews, 16-18). In sum, the DAC HLM adopted an ambitious ODA agenda and the idea was that a solution to the concessionality issue would be a part of a larger package deal (interviews, 31-32).

Nonetheless, also in the following years, the concessionality issue continued to dominate most of the ODA related discussions in the DAC given that the EU, France and Germany were still unwilling to change their stance on the issue (OECD/DAC, 2012b, 2012c, 2013c, interviews, 21,36) It was only in the second-half of 2014 that a compromise was finally reached which envisaged a significant lowering of the reference rate of 10% (Barder & Klasen, 2014). This agreement was further refined by December 2014 when the DAC presented its larger ODA reform. More specifically, the DAC agreed to apply from 2018 onwards the IMF’s variable discount rate – at present 5% - and then apply an adjustment factor – varying from 1% to 4% - depending on the income group of the borrowing country. In layman’s terms: the need for concessionality reduces as countries become richer (OECD/DAC, 2014). The ODA agreement also foresees in a number of measures to increase official aid towards the LDCs, and it mandates the DAC to create a new measure called Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSD). This measure will complement ODA and as reflects from its name it will cover resource

from year four onwards. The potential danger of this situation – and the argument that was made by the DCD and the first group of countries – is that donors thus could continue providing new loans in order to artificially level these negative repayments out. In our example, there is no fall in ODA budgets if a donor provides in year four a new loan with a face value higher than the repayments it receives that year.

⁶⁹ This deal gave ground to much criticism. Most notable was an opinion piece of former DAC chair Richard Manning in the Financial Times in which he openly states that the DAC allows *‘finance ministries to get away with murder as they seek to massage reported aid upwards at minimum costs. If the OECD cannot do a professional job on this, the UN should take over the reporting for international aid flows’* (Manning, 2013).

flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions in support of sustainable development (OECD/DAC, 2014, interview 37).

Of particular relevance for this paper is, however, the fact that it took the DAC more than five years to reach the above agreement. While to some extent one could rightly argue that revisions of the ODA definition have historically always been difficult and lengthy processes (e.g. Führer, 1996; Hynes & Scott, 2013), our findings indicate that the EU structure hampered the DAC from tackling the concessionality issue in an effective way. This was the case for several reasons. First, several EU Members refrained from taking a clear/strong position on the issue as they did not want to offend the EU delegation. Indeed, while from the very start virtually all EU Members were against the reporting of profit-making loans, several of them refrained from actively defending this position. For example, the Czech Republic, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia often remained silent during the discussions on this topic for the simple reason that the EU had been the main advocate of their (ongoing) accession to the DAC (interviews 11,19,22,33,36). Also other EU countries found themselves in a difficult position to criticize the EU, for example, because they distribute a large share of their ODA through the Unions budget ⁷⁰(e.g. Austria, Greece, Italy) or simply because they did not want to undermine their relations with Brussels, especially in the light of the ongoing Eurozone crisis⁷¹ (interviews, 2,10,13-14). In sum, the EU's structure – unintentionally (!) – poses a structural problem for the DAC's functioning as it constrains several EU Members to actively take part in the Committee's deliberative decision-making.

Second, the EU complicated the DCD's efforts to reach a compromise by trying to bypass the DAC and adopt a common European position on concessionality in Brussels. Indeed, in 2012, the EU – supported by France and Germany – organized a meeting on concessionality in Brussels. This meeting was organized on short notice and the idea was that most delegations would be insufficiently prepared to fully capture the importance of a seemingly technical issue.

⁷⁰ Note that to a large degree this is determined by their fixed contributions to the EDF and as such not necessarily should hamper their behavior. However, given that they provide little aid in general, and channel most of their aid through the EU, they are in a political rather difficult position to strongly criticize the European Commission.

⁷¹ Illustrative for this is also the fact that several of these countries went behind the EU's back to the DCD or the chair of the DAC's working party on statistics, asking the latter not to give in on the concessionality issue (interviews 33-34).

As such, the EU hoped to adopt a common European position in support of its own view on concessionality, which then afterwards would become *incontournable* for the DAC (interviews 21,33-35). Ultimately, such an agreement was not reached as most EU countries did not want to bypass the DAC (interview 31,33). However, and essential to this study, it does illustrate the structural threat caused by the EU level. Indeed, the Brussels' level offers both the European Commission and its Member States an alternative venue to discuss issues that are at the core of the DAC's work. Moreover, when such meetings take place, the DAC is essentially forced to stop its ongoing work and shift its complete attention towards Brussels, as was the case here. Obviously, the DCD is well aware of this imminent threat⁷², explaining why it invests much time and efforts in following up on Brussels. Since 2005 – not surprisingly the year in which the European Consensus was adopted – it holds, for example, regular six-monthly meetings with the Commission. The downside of this, however, is that these efforts are time consuming and further add to the image of the DAC being a “*European club*” (interviews 2-3,7,12,23,36).

4. Discussion and conclusion

The central aim of this study was to assess to what extent the EU poses a challenge for the DAC's role in international development. While literature thus far focused on the challenges outside its membership (i.e. its lack of inclusiveness and the re-emergence of new providers of aid), this study wondered to what extent scholars did not overlook the elephant within the room, namely the EU. Indeed, literature thus far paid no attention to the EU-DAC relationship. Nonetheless, there has been a growing overlap in membership between both organizations – currently the EU accounts for almost two third of the DAC's Members. Furthermore, the EU evolved in recent years from a purely bilateral donor *alongside* its Members to an actor that also increasingly aspires itself a coordinating role *over* the development policies of its Member States.

The main finding of this study is that the EU indeed poses a major challenge for the DAC's role in international development. While the DAC has always been an effective and deliberative functioning organization (e.g. Manning, 2008; Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015), our

⁷² Ironically, though, the DAC does advocate in favor of strengthening the EU's federating role in its peer reviews (OECD/DAC, 2002, 2007, 2012d) as it makes more sense from an aid effectiveness point of view to strengthen the EU coherence and coordination. Again, this illustrates the structural dimension to this problem.

findings indicate that the EU increasingly hampers this decision-making culture. More specifically, according to our analysis, the problem is not so much the growing overlap in membership between the EU and the DAC – of course this does not help the situation (see *infra*) – but rather the EU’s changing nature as a development actor, turning itself from a bilateral donor *alongside* its Members into an actor which also increasingly assumes itself a coordinating role *over* the development policies of its Members. Moreover, our findings also reveal that the EU structure by itself – regardless of collective actions at the European level – has an impact on the DAC’s functioning.

The most prominent problem for the DAC is the EU’s changing nature as a development actor. This hampers its decision-making in two important ways. First, the collective actions that take place at the European level are a constraining factor for its functioning. This is most clearly reflected in the PCD case. Indeed, because of the already existing strong and collective European targets on policy coherence, EU Member States felt constrained – both in a positive and negative way – to support the EU’s idea of prioritizing PCD during the DAC’s *strategic reflection exercise*. This made it virtually impossible for the other DAC Members to prevent the rise of PCD on the DAC’s agenda. Second, the EU’s changing nature as a development actor offers both the Commission and the EU Member states an alternative venue to discuss issues that are at the core of the DAC’s work. This is exactly what happened in the concessionality case as the EU, France and Germany tried to bypass the DAC at the European level. At present, there still is general unwillingness among most EU donors to do so. However, at the same time one cannot ignore the fact that Brussels continues to put much emphasis on streamlining the Union’s external action – think for example at the creation of the EEAS or the dominant discourse on coherence –, as such gradually decreasing the costs to bypass the DAC.

Apart from the EU’s changing nature as a development actor, our findings also reveal that the EU structure by itself can be detrimental for the DAC’s functioning. As reflects from the concessionality case, the EU structure had a constraining effect on several of its member states, as is witnessed by the fact that several of them refrained from condemning the EU’s reporting of profit-making loans as ODA. Indeed, Member States refused to openly scrutinize the EU on this issue for various reasons, ranging from strategic motives to the fact that they distribute a larger share of their ODA through the Union’s budget.

Importantly, the impact of the growing overlap in membership between the EU and the DAC is less relevant than initially expected. Essentially, it is an important variable for understanding the EU's impact on the DAC, though, only in relation to the above described dynamics. This clearly reflects from the PCD case as the collective EU commitments on PCD constituted a magnifying impact on the DAC due to the large overlap in membership between both organizations.

Taking the above elements together, it can be concluded that the EU's impact on the DAC is substantial, to say the least. While the DAC has always derived its internal legitimacy from its deliberative and effective functioning, one cannot ignore the fact that the EU is eroding the Committee's legitimacy basis. Indeed, the fact that the EU structure functions – often unintentionally (!) – as a straightjacket for (some) of its Members inevitable raises questions about the Committees added-value in international development, both among EU and non-EU Members of the DAC. Moreover, while the DAC has struggled with the image of being a “*European club*” for most of its existence, this perception has only been further enforced by the EU's changing nature as a development actor and the DCD's reaction to this new political reality.

In sum, this study sheds a rather pessimistic view on the DAC's future role in international development. While literature thus far already identified two major external challenges for the DAC's role in international development (i.e. its lack of inclusiveness and the emergence of new providers of aid), we add a third one to the list. Indeed, our findings clearly indicate that the EU is the elephant within the room that nobody is talking about. Moreover, unlike in the case of the first two challenges, there is no easy/clear fix to the challenge posed by the EU – assuming there is a fix at all. While the DAC could try to diversify its membership as an attempt to level out the magnifying effect constituted by the large overlap in membership between both institutions, its future essentially lies to a large degree in the hands of the EU and its Member States.

5. References

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6. Interviews

MS= Member State

- 1: MS official, 16/01/2012, Paris
- 2: DAC official, 17/01/2012, Paris
- 3: DAC official, 19/01/2013, Paris
- 4: ex-DAC official, 19/02/2012, Skype
- 5: MS official, 20/02/2012, Skype

- 6: MS official, 28/03/2012, Brussels
- 7: DAC official, 07/05/2012, Brussels
- 8: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 9: DAC official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 10: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 11: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 12: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 13: MS official, 12/06/2012, Paris
- 14: MS official, 12/06/2012, Paris
- 15 : MS official, 13/06/2012, Paris
- 16: MS official, 04/12/2012, London
- 17: DAC official, 05/12/2012, London
- 18: MS official, 06/12/2012, London
- 19: MS official, 06/12/2012, London
- 20: ex-MS official, OECD official, 06/12/2012, London
- 21: MS official, 17/10/2013, Paris
- 22: DAC official, 17/10/2013, Skype
- 23: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris
- 24: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris
- 25: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris
- 26: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris

- 27: MS official, 23/10/2013, Paris
- 28: MS official, 23/10/2013, Paris
- 29: MS official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 30: OECD official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 31: DAC official, 30/10/2013, Paris
- 32: DAC official, 05/11/2013, Paris
- 33: MS official, 12/11/2013, Paris
- 34: MS official, 13/11/2013, Paris
- 35: MS official, 13/11/2013, Paris
- 36: DAC official, 26/11/2013, Brussels
- 37: DAC official, 13/12/2014, Skype

Chapter 9: The rise of policy coherence for development. A multi-causal approach

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General introduction: The sixth and final paper of this doctoral dissertation addresses the rise of policy coherence for development on the Western donors' aid agendas. As such, and unlike the previous chapters, this article is not framed from the perspective of either the EU or the DAC. Instead, the perspective that is taken is that from the special issue in which this article will feature, namely, seeing PCD as a tool for transformative development. Hence, the overall purpose of this article is, as already outlined, understanding why PCD thrives well, allowing to reflect on its potential as a transformative tool for development. Off course, this article fits in perfectly with the rest of the doctoral dissertation. This is the case for two reasons. First, in terms of focus, this article addresses the rise of PCD within the OECD and DAC. In doing so, particular attention is being paid to all relevant actors – including the role played by the EU and its Member States on this issue. Second, while for the sake of clarity the previous papers addressed one particular aspect of this dissertation's research topic (cf. figure 1, chapter 1), this article illustrates how the different actors (e.g. EU, Member States DAC, OECD) and dynamics (e.g. changing international system) interact with one another. This multi-causal approach constitutes the major strength of this article. Indeed, while various scholars have explicitly advocated such an approach, very few studies have actually implemented a complexity sensitive perspective. The main limitation of this study is the limited attention for the potential subtle nuances in interpretation given to the concept of PCD by the different actors. While such an approach was not necessary to address our research question – explaining why we did not engage with such type of analysis – it does has the potential to provide additional insights on the rise of PCD.

The rise of policy coherence for development: a multi-causal approach

Abstract

In recent years policy coherence for development (PCD) has become a key principle in international development debates, and it is likely to become even more relevant in the discussions on the post-2015 sustainable development goals. This article addresses the rise of PCD on the Western donors' aid agenda. While the concept already appeared in the work of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the early 1990s, it took until 2007 before PCD became one of the Organisation's key priorities. We adopt a complexity-sensitive perspective, involving (i) a process-tracing analysis and (ii) a multi-causal explanatory framework. We argue that the rise of PCD is not as contingent as it looks. While actors such as the EU, the DAC and OECD Secretariat were the 'active causes' of the rise of PCD, it is equally important to look at the underlying 'constitutive causes' which enabled policy coherence to thrive well.

KEYWORDS: policy coherence for development, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, multi-causality, Aristotle

Introduction

With only a couple of months left on the clock, discussions on the successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are heating up. While at present there is a general consensus that the post-2015 framework needs to be a *"truly international framework of policies to achieve sustainable development"* (UN, 2013: 2), discussions are ongoing on how to translate this objective into a set of specific targets and strategies. So far, a recurring theme in these discussions has been that of policy coherence for development (PCD), referring to the general idea that non-aid policies of donor countries have an impact on developing countries

and therefore should take into account the latter's needs and interests (Forster & Stokke, 1999a). However, and as already outlined in the introduction to this special issue, it remains unclear what the concept of PCD exactly entails and how it could concretely feature as a tool for transformative development in the post-2015 framework.

The central aim of this study is to extend our understanding of the concept of PCD. More specifically, we seek to explain the rise of the concept on the Western donor's aid agenda. While donor countries traditionally had a lukewarm attitude towards the promotion of PCD (Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Ashoff, 2005; Carbone 2009), since the mid-2000s the concept has become '*one of the most hotly debated issues among donors*' (Hoebink 2010b: 9) and has increasingly been seen within policy circles as a tool for transformative development (DIIS, 2013; ECDPM, 2014; ODI, DIE, & ECDPM, 2013; OECD, 2013b). This shift is most clearly reflected in the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC). While the DAC already introduced the concept of PCD in 1991, only limited progress was made throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to further develop and promote it. Moreover, the concept was mainly framed negatively, in terms of avoiding policy incoherence (Carbone, 2009; Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Picciotto, 2005). As we will show in this article, it took until 2007 before PCD became a central issue on the OECD's political agenda and was further elaborated as a tool for transformative development. It continues to figure prominently in the work of the OECD until today, as reflects from the OECD Strategy on Development (2012a) or the new DAC mandate (2011), which both put forward the PCD concept as a key development principle. Moreover, several efforts have been undertaken to further advance the concept and place it at the heart of the post-2015 discussions (ECDPM, 2014; OECD, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b; Stroß, 2014).

Importantly, literature has not addressed the rise of PCD on the Western donors' aid agenda. Indeed, while there is an emerging literature on *how* OECD donors promote PCD at the institutional level, both in general (e.g. Ashoff, 1999; Ashoff, 2005; Carbone, 2009; Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Hoebink, 1999; Stroß, 2014) and within a particular policy field (e.g. Makhan, 2012; Morrissey, 1999; Youngs, 2007), scholars have thus far paid little attention to *why* donors increasingly attach importance to the principle of PCD. Most notable exceptions are the studies

of David Chandler (2007) and Nancy Thede (2013), though, both studies focus on the security-development nexus. The central aim of this article is to address the *'why'* behind the rise of PCD in all its aspects.

Some tentative explanations for the rise of PCD on the Western donor's aid agenda have been suggested. The European Union (EU), for example, has been undertaking a series of efforts from 2005 onwards to promote PCD *vis-à-vis* its Member States and the development community at large (Carbone, 2008; Hoebink, 2010; Stroß, 2014) and the EU has been called "*one of the leading proponents of PCD in the OECD/DAC*" (ODI et al., 2013: 22). It could also be that the concept of PCD thrives well in today's globalized world in which the boundaries between different policy areas and levels have become blurred, forcing donors to think 'beyond aid' (Barder, Clark, Lépissier, Reynolds, & Roodman, 2013; Janus, Klingebiel, & Paulo, 2014). It is also possible that donor countries have finally taken the criticism on their incoherent policies to the heart and aim to increase the impact of their aid (OECD/DAC, 2005, 2008f), or perhaps the promotion of PCD is not good at all but simply serves the interests of Western donors (Chandler, 2007). It may also reflect a commitment to neoliberalism (Thede, 2013). Another option is that the rise of PCD can be attributed to the efforts of the OECD and DAC Secretariat, or more specifically to OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría who has taken a particular interest in the topic (Manning, 2008). In sum, various (f)actors may have contributed to the surge of PCD on the Western donors' aid agendas. However, given the absence of systematic and comprehensive studies on this topic¹, it is impossible to tell if and how these relate to one another, let alone whether they have explanatory power at all or need to be complemented with other/alternative explanations. Therefore, the central aim of this study is to unravel the underlying puzzle of *'why'* PCD thrives well in recent years.

We do so by adopting a complexity-sensitive perspective, which has ontological, epistemological and methodological implications (see Figure 1). Ontologically, and in line with critical realist assumptions, we recognize that social reality consists of multiple strata in which different causal mechanisms interact in a complex manner (Bailey, 2008). This allows us to provide a more 'stratified and integrated, and therefore more adequate, account' (Bailey 2008: 232) of the (f)actors that enabled the rise of PCD on the Western aid agenda. Epistemologically,

this requires a multi-causal approach to social reality (Eun, 2012; McKelvey, 2004). Hence, by embracing a deeper and broader meaning of ‘cause’ we accept that factors not inevitably ‘push and pull’ in a ‘when A, then B manner’ but rather ‘constrain and enable’ in complex combinations (Kurki 2006: 202; Eun 2012: 167). Applied to our case, it leads us to think beyond seemingly obvious causes such as the impact of the EU, the DAC secretariat, or specific individuals, by putting these into perspective and relating them to other sorts of causes.

One way to engage in a multi-causal analysis is to use an Aristotle framework on causality. Aristotle identified four types of causes – material, efficient, final and formal causes – each offering a different perspective on why a certain phenomenon took place. While traditional accounts usually take a narrow view in terms of efficient causes, this framework provides us a deeper understanding of the ‘*why*’ as it also elaborates on various types of causes and how they relate to one another. Some studies have advocated such an approach in IR (Kurki, 2008; McKelvey, 2004; Wendt, 2003), and an Aristotle framework on causality has proven its merits in others social sciences such as psychology, health or business (e.g. McKelvey, 2004; Pérez Álvarez, 2009; Sunday, Eyles, & Upshur, 2001). However, notwithstanding some partial exceptions (e.g. Bailey, 2008; Jutila, 2009) applications in the field of IR and development studies are missing.

Methodologically, we apply process-tracing to reconstruct how the concept of PCD made its way up the political agenda of the OECD and DAC (cfr. Bennett & George, 2005). The data for this study were obtained through (i) semi-structured interviews with in total 28 OECD, DAC and Member States’ officials², (ii) archive study and document analysis (e.g. minutes of meetings, working reports, intra-delegations’ correspondence) and (iii) participatory observation³.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the next section, we provide a process-tracing analysis of how the concept of PCD made its way up the political agenda of the OECD and the DAC. Subsequently, in section three, we discuss the different causes underlying the rise of PCD within the OECD system from 2007 onwards. The paper concludes with some general reflections on the main findings of this study, linking them to the broader question of this special issue “What role for PCD in the post-2015 framework”.

The rise of PCD within the OECD

The principle of PCD came to the fore in the OECD in December 1991, when it was first discussed at the DAC's annual High-Level Meeting. In the light of the ending of the Cold War, which profoundly altered the North-South relations, the DAC called for greater coherence in the policies of its Members *vis-à-vis* the developing world in order to make aid more effective (Carbone, 2008; Forster & Stokke, 1999a). More specifically, the DAC Secretariat (hereafter Development Co-operation Directorate or DCD) put forward an agenda which revolved around four key priorities, namely (i) establishing a clear-cut definition of PCD, (ii) developing a methodology to assess the cost of policy incoherence, (iii) identify best practices in the promotion of PCD and (iv) promoting horizontal work within the OECD on PCD related issues. Moreover, the DAC called for PCD at various levels, respectively, within the framework of a country's development policies, within the framework of domestic and foreign policies (e.g. agriculture, trade, migration) and within the framework of donors' policies *vis-à-vis* the developing world (OECD/DAC, 1991, 1991b, 1991c, 1992).

However, while the DAC successfully drew international attention to the need of greater policy coherence, few further efforts were undertaken to implement the above agenda (Carbone, 2008; Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Führer, 1996). On the contrary, in the subsequent years the focused of its work predominantly lay on good governance, aid effectiveness and participatory development. Furthermore, the DAC reviewed in 1993 its list of ODA-eligible countries and in 1995 it initiated a so-called '*exercice de réflexion*' to reevaluate the role of development cooperation in the 21st century (Führer, 1996; OECD/DAC, 1994a; 1994b; interviews 14,15). This being said, the issue of PCD did not fall completely off the radar during the 1990s. At a rhetorical level, the principle was reaffirmed on a number of occasions, most notably in the DAC's report '*Shaping the 21st century*'. However, while this report put forward a series of well-defined international development goals, its provisions on PCD were short and ambiguous (OECD/DAC, 1996b; interview 22). In a similar vein, the principle of policy coherence was also reaffirmed on a small number of other occasions, though, typically in the margins of discussions on other – more important – discussions such as the establishment of the MDGs or

financing for development (Forster & Stokke, 1999b; Führer, 1996; OECD/DAC, 1994a,1995, 1996a).

Also at the beginning of the new Millennium, the promotion of PCD was not considered to be a priority by the OECD. In 2000, for example, the DCD and a coalition of countries (i.e. Belgium, Canada, Netherlands and UK) were keen on placing the issue of PCD more central in the work of the OECD, though, failed in doing so (OECD/DAC, 2000a; 2000b; interviews 8,14). In 2002, the same actors did successfully push the OECD's Ministerial Council to adopt the '*OECD action for a shared development agenda*', which called upon the Organisation to '*enhance the understanding of the development dimension of member country policies and their impact on developing countries*' (OECD, 2002). However, and similar to the early 1990s, few efforts were undertaken to implement this agenda. In fact, the only important achievement was the inclusion of a PCD chapter in the DAC's peer reviews from 2002 onwards (Ashoff, 2013; OECD/DAC, 2002). As a result, DAC donors were forced – at least to some extent – to pay attention to policy coherence in their policies *vis-à-vis* the developing world. Moreover, it allowed the DCD to identify best practices on how to promote PCD at the institutional level (Ashoff, 2013; Manning, 2008; Picciotto, 2005; interview 14). Nonetheless, the inclusion of PCD in the DAC peer reviews was in many aspects also a missed opportunity. More specifically, the DAC did not put forward a clear definition, nor measurement of the concept, making it impossible to systematically track progress on the issue (Carbone, 2009; Picciotto, 2005; interviews 2,4,10,21). Moreover, by focusing exclusively on how to achieve PCD at the institutional level (i.e. *how* to avoid policy incoherence), the DAC did not address the larger question of what potential positive synergies exist between development cooperation and other policy fields such as agriculture, health, trade or migration (interviews 5,14,21,22).

From 2007 onwards, the concept of PCD rapidly made its way up the political agenda of the OECD. More specifically, while the DAC had traditionally been the main (and often only) advocate of PCD –focusing on the institutional dimension of policy coherence, the OECD Secretariat-General increasingly took an interest in enhancing the understanding of PCD. More specifically, the OECD established in 2007 a PCD unit within the office of the Secretariat-General, responsible to stimulate horizontal work on policy coherence across the Organisation

and to address the potential synergies between different policy areas. In the same year, the OECD also set-up an informal network of focal points for PCD to strengthen the dialogue on this topic between the Organisation and its Members (Manning, 2008; OECD, 2007a; OECD/DAC, 2007a; interviews, 5,8,14,16,21) and in June 2008 the OECD Ministerial Council explicitly reaffirmed the principle of PCD, stressing the need for greater policy coherence and a better understanding of the concept (OECD, 2008). Furthermore, the DAC issued in 2007 and 2008 a number of reports on how to promote PCD at the institutional level, building upon insights it had drawn from its peer reviews (OECD/DAC, 2007b, 2008a, 2008f).

However, it was the DAC's strategic reflection exercise that heralded the breakthrough of PCD within the OECD. This strategic reflection exercise took place between 2007 and 2009 and was a process to review the DAC's mandate, i.e. its role, structure, functioning and composition in the light of the changing development landscape (Manning, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2008b, 2009a). This effort was undertaken in response to the mounting criticism on the DAC, which revolved around the fact that both developing countries and (re)emerging donors were not represented or unwilling to take part in the Committee's work (Eyben, 2013; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011). To facilitate the process, the DAC set-up three task-forces, each dealing with a particular topic. Importantly, one of these task forces focused exclusively on the issues of PCD and Global Public Goods (GPGs), following the suggestion of the European Commission, the Netherlands and Finland (OECD/DAC, 2009a, 2010b). Consequently, the DAC's new mandate – which built upon the recommendations of the reflection exercise – puts much emphasis on PCD. More specifically, it puts forward the promotion of policy coherence as one the DAC's key priorities, and stipulates that this needs to be achieved in close collaboration with the rest of the OECD (OECD/DAC, 2011).

The OECD warmly welcomed the DAC's invitation and in May 2011 its Ministerial Council decided that the Organisation needed to engage in drawing its first-ever overarching strategy on development in which particular attention needed to be paid to the promotion of PCD (OECD, 2011). This process led to the adoption of the '*OECD Strategy on Development*' in May 2012 according to which '*enhancing policy coherence for development is one of the [OECD's] primary objectives*' (2012a: 5). In pursue of this objective, the OECD put forward a clear set of priorities,

namely (i) develop systematic and evidence-based analyses of the costs and benefits of (in)coherent policies, (ii) establish robust indicators to monitor progress on PCD, (iii) focus on key issues such as food security, illicit financial flows and green growth and (iv) foster dialogue on PCD within the organisation as well as across different development stakeholders (OECD, 2012a). Ever since, the Organisation has been in the process of implementing these objectives (OECD, 2012b, 2013c). While the DAC continues to identify good practices on how to promote PCD at the institutional level through its peer reviews, the OECD's PCD unit is engaged in a process of drawing a clear-cut definition and measurement of PCD (OECD, 2013c). Moreover, several OECD committees have collectively been undertaking studies to address the potential positive synergies between development cooperation and other policy areas, for example, on food security (OECD, 2013a), sustainable development (OECD, 2014b) or illicit financial flows (OECD, 2014a). Finally, in the context of the post-2015 discussions, the OECD Secretariat-General has been undertaken a series of efforts to place the principle of PCD at the heart of the international agenda (e.g. OECD, 2013a; OECD, 2013b; interviews 3,5,21,23,24).

Four causes

The previous section clearly shows that PCD became a priority for the OECD from 2007 onwards, even if the principle had been around for at least 15 years. This section unravels this puzzle. Taking a complexity-sensitive approach whereby different types of causes are identified at different levels of explanation, we structure our analysis around the four causes identified by Aristotle: material (i.e. the matter out of which things come to be), efficient (i.e. the initiator of change), final (i.e. the ultimate purpose or aim) and formal (i.e. that what shapes or defines matter) causes (Caksu, 2007; Kurki, 2008). (Figure 1). We use the Aristotelian categories purely for heuristic purposes, acknowledging that they interact in complex ways.

Material cause

Explanations according to the Aristotle framework usually start with the material causes or 'the matter out of which things come to be'. This 'matter', or 'stuff' (Gorham, 2009: 6), has a 'passive potentiality' (Kurki, 2006: 206) in that it does not directly nor intentionally determine

the phenomenon, but it constitutes an essential element without which the phenomenon would not exist. As such material causes are necessary ingredients to any explanation, but they are never sufficient. They tend to be *an inherent part of* the phenomenon that needs to be explained, which implies that they are not necessarily independent of it and that they do not necessarily precede it temporally. Just like formal causes, material causes constitute the social world in the sense of enabling and constraining it (Kurki 2006:208).

Whereas they are easy to identify in exact sciences such as biology (e.g. the genetic code of an organism), it proves harder to pinpoint material causes in a social context. Perhaps counter-intuitively, material causes are also intangible and have an ideational component alongside interests. The material cause 'out of which' a social event has come to be is inevitably also a social construction. For example, the material cause of a war between two countries may involve the specific fights that have taken place, which are part of and constitute the war.

Applied to our case, the very notion of 'PCD' forms the material cause for the rise of the idea on the agenda. There was nothing new about the notion of policy coherence, which had long been considered an important prerequisite for effective public management. Also in the context of development policy, it had been long established that the potentially detrimental effects of trade and agricultural policies need to be considered (Forster & Stokke, 1999a). As mentioned in the previous section, PCD already appeared in the OECD in the early 1990s. However, it was for a long time a 'vaguely defined' and 'flexible' term (Forster & Stokke, 1999a; OECD/DAC, 1996b, 2001; Stroß, 2014; Thede, 2013). It took until the mid-2000s before experts, officials and policy-makers started to develop more precise and elaborate interpretations (Führer, 1996; Manning, 2008; OECD, 2006; OECD/DAC, 2007d, 2008f; Thede, 2013). Whereas previously PCD was mostly framed negatively, in terms of avoiding incoherence between development policy and other policy domains, it became increasingly seen as a positive notion, i.e. a tool for transformative development. In other words, it evolved from a criticism against existing practices towards a new organizing narrative for development debates.

In short, the success of the PCD concept comes out of its technical and intellectual potential for being a steering concept in international development policy. The elaboration of

the notion around the mid-2000s proved to be a necessary material condition for its rise on the agenda. However, it cannot be seen as a sufficient condition, which begs the question to underlying explanations. For example, which (f)actors account for policy-makers' increased interest in elaborating the notion of PCD in the mid-2000s? Why is it that quite suddenly the notion of PCD was fully embraced and elaborated?

Efficient and final cause

Material causes are necessary but not sufficient as an explanation: there also needs to be an account of why and by whom the 'matter' (i.e. the elaborated PCD notion) was 'triggered' or 'activated' (i.e. prioritized on the agenda). This leads us to consider the efficient and final causes, which both concern the 'agency' side of the Aristotelian framework. Efficient causes closely relate to mainstream explanations of causality in the sense of 'source of change' or 'pushing and pulling' (who or what provoked the change?), whereas final causes address the intentionality behind change (what was the intended impact of the change?).

Searching for the main drivers of the rapid rise of PCD up the political agenda in Paris from 2007 onwards, we can identify (i) the European Commission (EC), (ii) a small group of EU Member States (the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden), (iii) the OECD Secretariat-General, and (iv) the DAC Secretariat. These actors' ambitions to prioritize PCD in international development debates constitute the efficient cause. They are inspired by final causes such as lifting countries out of poverty, but also bureaucratic politics – i.e. strengthening the position of the OECD Secretariat-General – and institutional survival strategies – i.e. securing the role of the DAC in the changing aid landscape.

The first and perhaps most important actor that accounts for the rise of PCD in the OECD is the European Commission. Through its efforts in Paris (i.e. putting the item on the agenda) and Brussels (i.e. promoting policy coherence *vis-à-vis* its Member States), the EC played a catalytic role in making the principle of PCD *incontournable*. The EC's efforts to promote PCD go back to mid-2000s. While the issue of policy coherence was already introduced with the Treaty of Maastricht (1993), the Commission only became a strong advocate of PCD from 2005 onwards, both in its own policies as well as *vis-à-vis* its Member States (Carbone, 2008; Hoebink,

2005). This shift was rooted in a growing belief that aid in itself is an insufficient tool to lift countries out of poverty (European Commission, 2005). In parallel to the proceedings in Brussels, the Commission also increasingly emphasized the importance of PCD in the OECD from the mid-2000s onwards, something which has been openly acknowledged by the DAC (OECD/DAC, 2007c, 2012b). Or as put by a senior-level official from the OECD's PCD unit: *"The European Commission has been one of the strongest and most persistent advocates of PCD within the OECD"* (interview, 21). This was particularly true from 2007 onwards. For example, the Commission accounts to a large extent for the establishment of the task force on PCD and GPGs in 2007, which operated in the context of the DAC's strategic reflection exercise (interviews 1,7,13,16). More specifically, while the DCD was afraid this task force would divert too much attention away from the DAC's key priorities (i.e. the traditional 'ODA' dimension of aid) and other countries (i.e. Canada, Japan, US) had a lukewarm attitude towards the promotion of PCD, a majority of DAC Members supported the EC's proposal, i.e. mainly EU countries which were either convinced of the idea (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, UK) or unwilling to go against the Commission (e.g. Italy, Greece, Portugal, Poland) (interviews 3,9,11,14-15,18-20). Furthermore, in 2008, the EC was one of the main advocates of PCD at the DAC's High-Level Meeting (OECD/DAC, 2008d) and the OECD's Ministerial Council (interviews 5,9,12), illustrating its commitment to put policy coherence high on the political agenda. Also in more recent years, the EC has been one of the strongest advocates of PCD, for example, during the writing of the new DAC mandate and the OECD Strategy on Development (interviews 6,21,22,26-28). Importantly, the EC also played an important role in advancing the understanding of the concept (cf. the material cause), for example, by undertaking various studies on the topic which it presented in meetings of the DAC and the OECD informal network on PCD (e.g. OECD, 2007a; OECD/DAC, 2008e, 2012a). Moreover, the Commission helped the OECD with the establishment of the informal network on PCD focal point in 2007, building upon its own experiences in setting-up such a network in 2003 (OECD, 2007a), and it maintained close relations with the PCD unit with whom it regularly exchanged views (interviews 21,24) and organized events on policy coherence (e.g. European Commission, 2013; OECD/DAC, 2009b). Finally, also in terms of financial support, the EC has been one of the larger voluntary

contributors to the OECD's and DAC's work on PCD (OECD/DAC, 2008c; interviews, 21-24,26-27).

A second group of actors that account for the rise of PCD are the Netherlands, Finland and to a lesser extent also Sweden. Similar to the EC, these countries have systematically put the issue of PCD on the agenda of the DAC and OECD, motivated by a shared conviction that policy coherence fosters development (interviews 2,21,26). During the DAC's strategic reflection exercise, for example, they advocated in favor of including PCD in the mandate of the Committee – the task force on PCD and GPGs was also chaired by a Dutch official – (OECD/DAC, 2010a), a plea which was repeated at the OECD Ministerial Council of 2008 (interviews 5,9,12). Furthermore, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden have devoted an important part of their voluntary contributions to the DAC's budget to advancing its work on PCD from 2006 onwards (OECD/DAC, 2006; 2008c; interviews 2,9,14,26). They have also been engaged in organizing events⁴ on the topic and/or conducted pilot-studies on PCD in collaboration with the OECD's PCD unit (Department of Foreign Affairs Finland, 2013; Manning, 2008; OECD, 2007b).

Third, also the OECD Secretariat-General has been an important driver of the PCD agenda. More specifically, the OECD took a particular interest in the promotion of the principle from 2007 onwards, whereas before the DAC had typically been the main – and often only – advocate of policy coherence. This shift can first of all be explained by the election of Angel Gurría as new Secretary-General of the OECD in 2006. Unlike his predecessors, he took a personal interest in the promotion of PCD, convinced of the intrinsic value of the concept, and therefore was in 2007 one of the main architects of the PCD unit which operates from within his own office (Manning, 2008; interviews 14,22,23). However, the OECD's interest towards promoting PCD should also be seen in the light of the Organisation's efforts to become a more modern and legitimate organisation. While in the 1990s and early 2000s the OECD successfully expanded its membership and modernized its decision-making procedures, from the mid-2000s onwards its focus shifted to finding new flagships that could give direction to the work of Organisation (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Woodward, 2009). The promotion of PCD – especially the transformative notion of the concept – was considered to be such an issue given its potential to cover and link different areas of OECD expertise. Moreover, the promotion of PCD was also seen

as a way to strengthen the position of the Secretariat-General as a central actor in the OECD's decision-making process. Finally, it also allowed the OECD to engage in the debates on achieving the MDGs as well as the emerging discussion on how the post-2015 development agenda should look like (Atwood, 2012; interviews 14,16-17,21,28).

Finally, also the DAC played an important role in the rise of PCD. As reflects from our empirical analysis, the DAC had always been the main driver of the PCD agenda within the OECD (Manning, 2008). However, in the period before 2007 it mainly framed PCD in a negative way, i.e. avoiding incoherence between development policy and other policy domains, while ignoring the notion of PCD being a transformative notion (see supra). This can be explained by the fact that the DAC did not want to divert too much attention away from its key priorities, i.e. its work on ODA and aid effectiveness. However, the DAC changed its stance on the issue from 2007 onwards. At that time the DAC faced an existential crisis due to the changing international aid landscape, the emerging 'beyond-aid' discourse and the mounting criticism on the legitimacy of its work on aid effectiveness⁵, explaining why the Committee undertook its *strategic reflection exercise* (Manning, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2008b; 2009a; interviews 1,14). In this context, the promotion of PCD – more specifically its transformative notion – was seen as a strategy for institutional survival (Carbone, 2011; interviews, 1,11,14,20,26). This also clearly reflects from various speeches of the then DAC Chair Eckhard Deutscher according to whom “*the development community will become increasingly marginalised [...] without a strong and serious engagement with PCD*” (2009), which “*is also why the DAC has decided to put a much stronger emphasis on PCD in the future*” (2010). Moreover, it also allowed the DAC to strengthen its ties with the OECD. While traditionally the DAC had always been a quasi-independent body operating within the OECD's institutional framework⁶ – and was keen on maintaining this autonomy (Masujima, 2004; Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013), it felt that it could better face the challenges ahead by joining efforts with the OECD. Moreover, integrating more strongly within the OECD also offered a number of opportunities. The latter, for example, was increasingly acting as the *de facto* Secretariat of the G8/G20, potentially providing the DAC a role in implementing/monitoring the decisions taken within these forums, as well as a venue for its own work on development (Manning, 2008; Woodward, 2009; interviews 1,3,9,14,21).

Formal cause

Although we have identified now the various actors that played a significant role in the prioritisation of PCD (efficient cause), and showed why they decided to embrace this policy standard more actively from 2007 onwards (final cause), the analysis of active causes is silent on the underlying, structural factors that enabled the rise of PCD. In general scholars tend to concentrate on the role of the aforementioned 'active' pushing and pulling causes, neglecting the institutional and ideational forces that constrain and enable them (Kurki, 2006: 207). Hence, in order to understand the prioritisation of PCD since 2007 one has to look more carefully at the constitutive 'formal causes' that have enabled such a rise. While Aristotle referred to 'formal causes' as 'that which shapes or defines matter' (Kurki, 2006: 207), in social sciences these can be understood best as the 'ideas, rules, norms and discourses' that define and structure social practice. In contrast to the 'active' efficient and final causes that we discussed above, formal causes should be seen as intrinsic, constitutive and structure-related causes. Consequently, we argue that both the institutional and ideational structure in which the aforementioned actors operate are key to fully understand the rise of PCD on Western donors' development agendas.

First, in relation to the institutional structure, we can point to the EU's dominance in Paris. Indeed, in order to understand why the EU has been able to place PCD on top of the agenda, we cannot ignore its significant weight within both the OECD and DAC. More specifically, in the case of the OECD, EU Member States constitute for 21 of the 34 Members, while in the DAC they account for 20 of the 29 Members⁷. Moreover, the EU – referring to the institution – is represented in the work of the OECD and DAC as well, respectively, as a full participant and a full member (Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015). Importantly, this allows the EU – and the EC in particular – to heavily influence the decision-making of the OECD and DAC, even though decisions in both institutions are taken by consensus and the EU typically does not present itself as a single-voiced bloc (Carroll & Kellow, 2012; Verschaeve & Takacs, 2013).

Another institutional factor that has enabled the rise of PCD on the OECD agenda relates to the mere existence of the EU as a structure within which reluctant Member States have come to accept policy standards such as PCD. Through their membership of the EU, even laggards

such as Greece, France and Italy have committed to PCD as a principle. The EC and several Member States (in particular the Nordic-plus) have systematically promoted the principle of PCD since the early 2000s. In doing so, they have also engaged some of the less PCD minded Member States in (at least rhetorical) support of PCD (Carbone 2008; Hoebink 2005). It could be argued that because of these commitments within the EU framework, these countries found it difficult not to embrace PCD at the level of the OECD and DAC. Stated otherwise, in the absence of the EU structure, some Members may have sided with countries such as the US, Canada and Japan; however their endorsement of the PCD principle within the Brussels context made it nearly impossible to resist in Paris (OECD/DAC, 2008d; interviews 3,9,11,14-15,18-20). As such internal EU commitments constitute a magnifying impact on the international level.

More broadly, globalization has entailed an increasingly blurred distinction between different policy levels (e.g. national, European, global) as well as different policy areas (e.g. development, trade, environment), thereby providing an enabling environment for the PCD concept.

Second, the ideational structure in the second half of the 2000s has had a conditioning impact on the acceptance of PCD as a new priority of Western donors, in the sense of providing an enabling intersubjective structure within which PCD became a feasible and legitimate project. This period shows the emergence of a strong anti-aid discourse. It is striking that the rise of PCD coincides with the re-emergence of a fierce debate on the nature of international development cooperation, spurred by the publication of a number of influential works such as Jeffrey Sachs' 'The end of poverty' (2006), William Easterly's 'The White Man's Burden' (2006) or Dambisa Moyo's 'Dead Aid' (2009)⁸. The ideational context is one in which Western donors' aid practices are severely questioned. At a more fundamental level, the prioritisation of PCD can thus be seen as an answer from Western donors who come to realize that their foreign aid model is increasingly under pressure (Deutscher, 2010; OECD, 2009; interviews 5,9,13). Arguably, this growing awareness that enabled the embracement of the PCD norm, was further strengthened by the changing landscape, characterized amongst others by the rise of the BRICS. At the same time, the rise of Western donors' aid budgets had come to an end between 2005-2007. In line with pledges made at the 2002 UN Monterrey Conference which focused on

Financing for Development, average ODA budgets had gradually increased since the early 2000s, but even before the global economic crisis started to hit most Western economies it had become clear that most donors were cutting their aid budgets. The PCD agenda provides the perfect legitimation for this, since PCD is essentially about development in the absence of growing ODA budgets (OECD/DAC 2008d; Deutscher, 2009; interviews 12,21,25,27).

Finally, the PCD agenda also fits within a broader trend of securitisation (Theede, 2013), whereby development is increasingly considered as part and parcel of a broader foreign policy agenda. While the international development consensus until the early 2000s focused on the objective of poverty reduction, since 9/11 we have witnessed a growing consensus that more attention should be paid to the security-development nexus. The mutual linkages between development and security are obvious and the need for coherence between development and foreign policy can hardly be denied. However, there has been an acute fear by critics that the former would become subordinated to the latter, whereby national security considerations would take priority over development concerns. There is also an institutional dimension to the discourse on the security-development nexus, since in many countries the ministry of foreign affairs' clout over development policy has been growing – examples are Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway (Ashoff, 2005; OECD, 2013). Also at the EU level, the creation of the European External Action Service and its partial incorporation of former DG Development staff and expertise can be seen in the light of the securitisation of EU foreign policy (Furness, 2010). Both the EU and the DAC have also become less technocratic and development-oriented and more politically oriented institutions. A specific illustration of this within the DAC is that there has been a shift in the profile of Member State delegates since the mid-2000s, from senior officials of the development administrations to less senior diplomats from the ministries of foreign affairs (interviews 1,3,8,15). Thus, the broader context is one in which the development sub-systems of several countries has been weakening. As such the PCD agenda can be seen as both an attempt to reconquer the loss of power of the development administrations and an indication of the growing impact of non-development spheres.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the rise of PCD on the Western donors' aid agenda. While the concept already appeared in the work of OECD in the early 1990s, it took until 2007 before it became one of the Organisation's key priorities. Furthermore PCD evolved during this period from being a negative concept, in terms of avoiding policy incoherence, to a positive concept, i.e. the notion of PCD being a tool for transformative development. Taking a complexity-sensitive approach whereby we used the Aristotelian framework of material, efficient, final and formal causes, this paper shows that the rise of policy coherence is not as contingent as it looks like.

Indeed, this study shows that while existing research provides us some answers why PCD thrives well, it fails to grasp the full complexity of the issue as it only takes stock of the active causes and ignores the constitutive causes (cf. figure 1). More specifically, and in parallel with what has been suggested in literature by some observers, our findings confirm that the elaborated notion of PCD (i.e. the 'matter') was activated by a number of actors, i.e. (i) the EC, (ii) the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden, (iii) the OECD Secretariat-General and (iv) the DCF. They successfully put PCD on the international agenda, inspired by a shared belief in its transformative power. Moreover, actors such as the OECD Secretariat-General and the DAC displayed bureaucratic interest in advancing the PCD agenda.

The added-value of this paper, however, lays in the fact that it moves beyond such 'efficient' and 'final causes' by also addressing the constitutive causes underlying the rise of PCD. More specifically, our analysis shows first of all that the success of the PCD concept comes out of its intellectual potential for being a steering concept in international development cooperation. While it had been established long before 2007 that donors need to consider the potentially detrimental effects of other policy areas, the technical elaboration of PCD as a concept around the mid-2000s proved to be a necessary precondition for its rise on the agenda.

Second, our findings illustrate that the structure in which the aforementioned actors operate enabled the rise of PCD (i.e. formal causes). The institutional structure in which the

aforementioned actors operate is characterized by an overrepresentation of the EU, a magnifying impact of internal EU commitments on laggards within the EU, and blurred boundaries because of globalization processes. The ideational structure in the second half of the 2000s also had a conditioning impact, in the sense that the growing anti-aid thinking, the changing aid landscape, and stalling ODA budgets provided an enabling climate within which policy coherence became a feasible and legitimate project. The rise of PCD also fits within a broader trend of securitisation, whereby development is increasingly considered as part and parcel of a broader foreign policy agenda.

In sum, this study shows that the rise of PCD is not as contingent as it looks. The implications of this finding are twofold. First, our study shows that PCD is there to stay in the work of the OECD. Even if the aforementioned actors would become less engaged with the PCD agenda, which at present is not the case, the underlying constitutive causes will continue to create a structure in which the concept thrives well. Second, this study raises the broader question to what extent the concept can really become a central element of the post-2015 agenda. While the aforementioned actors are keen on placing PCD at the heart of the discussions, one cannot ignore the fact that a number of constitutive causes will provide less of an enabling factor in the development community at large. While in the context of the OECD, the EU proves to be an important formal cause – both in terms of structure and overrepresentation – this obviously is not the case (or to a lesser extent) in the context of the ongoing UN negotiations. Moreover, other stakeholders such as developing countries or emerging donors may be more reluctant towards PCD given that they operate in a different ideational structure.

Notes

- 1) Also the study of the OECD and the DAC have thus far paid no attention to the rise of PCD (Carroll & Kellow, 2011; Eyben, 2013; Ruckert, 2008; Woodward, 2009).
- 2) As various officials were only willing to share their views on the condition of absolute anonymity, interviews are indicated by a general reference only. A complete list of interviews can be found at the end of this article.

3) One of the authors took part as an observer in the work of a number of DAC meetings in the period 2012-2013.

4) In May 2007, for example, the Netherlands hosted in Noordwijk a High-Level Meeting to promote more research for diseases of importance to developing countries (Manning, 2008).

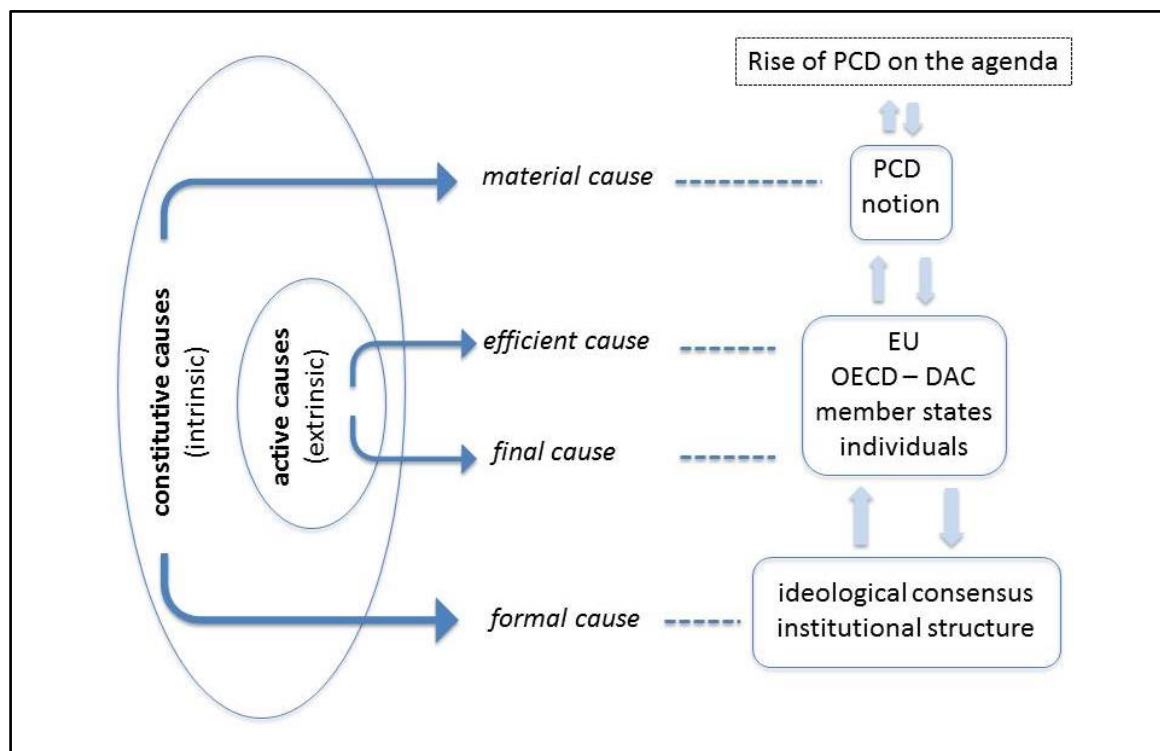
5) This ultimately even resulted in the establishment of a rivalry institution – the UN Development Cooperation Forum – in 2007 (Molina, 2008).

6) Stemming from the fact that the DAC was established before the OECD, and was only adopted by the latter afterwards (Verschaeve & Orbie, 2015).

7) Note that the DAC has a more restricted membership than the OECD, stemming from the Committee's unique establishment history (see supra).

8) Illustrative for this point is the fact that Dambisa Moyo presented the main findings of her book during the meeting of the OECD's informal network of PCD focal points on 8 June 2009 (OECD, 2009).

Figures



Aristotelian Framework of Causality (partly based on Kurki 2008: 220 & 229; Bailey 2008: 237)

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Interviews

MS= Member State

1: MS official, 16/01/2012, Paris

2: MS official, 16/01/2012, Paris

3: DAC official, 17/01/2012, Paris

- 4: DAC official, 19/01/2012, Paris
- 5: (ex)OECD official, 19/02/2012, Skype
- 6: MS official, 20/02/2013, Skype
- 7: MS official, 28/03/2012, Brussels
- 8: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 9: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 10: DAC official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 11: MS official, 11/06/2012, Paris
- 12: MS official, 13/06/2012, Paris
- 13: MS official, 04/12/2012, London
- 14: (ex)DAC official, 05/12/2012, London
- 15: (ex)MS official, , 06/12/2012, London
- 16: (ex)MS official, OECD official, 06/12/2012, London
- 17: MS official, 17/10/2013, Paris
- 18: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris
- 19: MS official, 22/10/2013, Paris
- 20: MS official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 21: OECD official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 22: OECD official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 23: OECD official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 24: OECD official, 28/10/2013, Paris
- 25: OECD official, 30/10/2013, Paris
- 26: DAC official, 05/11/2013, Paris
- 27: MS official, 13/11/2013, Paris

28: MS official, 13/11/2013, Paris

Part three

Part three provides a summary of the main issues covered in this doctoral dissertation. More specifically, chapter 10 first reconstructs the research process, followed by a section that provides a detailed outline of the main theoretical conclusions of this study. A third and final section of chapter 10 engages in a number of critical reflections about this doctoral dissertation, as well as outlines an agenda for future research.

Chapter 10: Discussion and conclusions

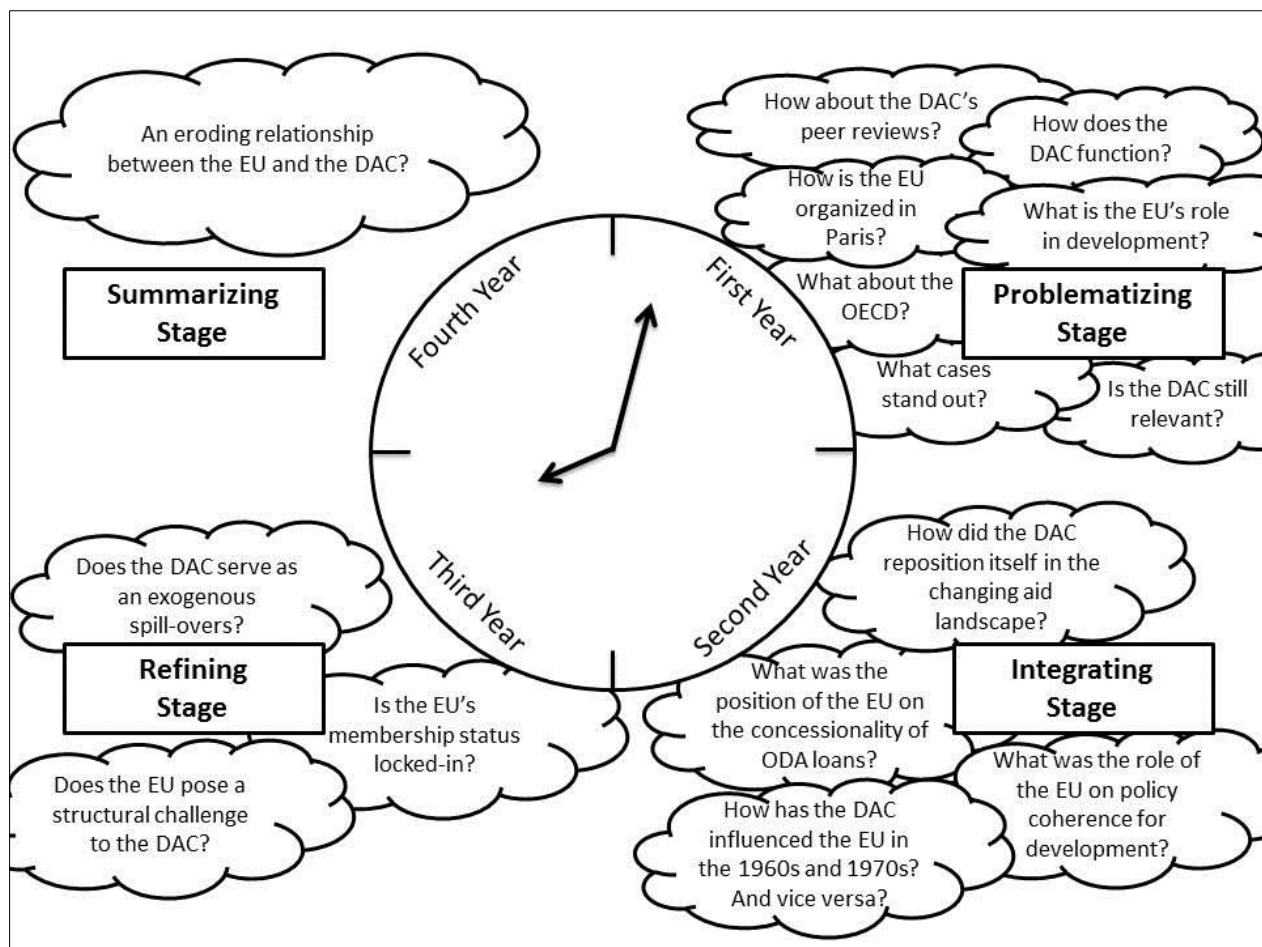
10.1. Reconstructing the research process

The central aim of this doctoral dissertation was to acquire an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the European Union and the Development Assistance Committee. This is relevant for two important reasons. First, both institutions are important – and intertwined – pillars of the international aid architecture. Yet, it is unclear how both institutions interact, let alone how their relationship influences the global fight against poverty. Therefore, this doctoral dissertation first of all contributes to gaining a better understanding of the politics that underlie international development cooperation. Second, by doing so, this dissertation addresses an important gap in the academic literature given that the relationship between the EU and the DAC thus far did not attract any scholarly attention. Indeed, both the burgeoning literature on EU-IOs relations and the study of EU development cooperation overlooked this particular relationship, which is quite remarkable given that, for example, the EU has been a full member of the DAC since 1960 or increasingly aspires itself a leading role in international development cooperation. Furthermore, also the literature on development studies and IR overlooked the EU-DAC relationship.

In order to unravel the EU-DAC relationship, this study opted for an inductive research approach, inspired by grounded theory. This choice was motivated by epistemological considerations, i.e. the pragmatist idea that social enquiry is the best way of acquiring in-depth knowledge on a particular topic. GT distinguishes itself from more conventional approaches by its unique stance towards existing literature and the processes of data collection and analysis. While research typically starts with an (extensive) literature review, followed by the steps of data collection and analysis, this study started almost immediately with the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. This should be seen as an iterative process whereby the processes of data collection and analysis continuously feed into each other, allowing research questions to emerge from the empirics and gradually become more targeted and theoretically inspired (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By doing so, the risk of being preconceived was reduced to a minimum, allowing theoretical insights to emerge from the data. Stemming from this inductive

approach, this doctoral dissertation did not started with a set of specific research questions. Indeed, there was basically no research question, but rather the objective to acquire an in-depth understanding of the EU-DAC relations. The research itself proceeded in four phases, corresponding with the different stages of coding (cf. chapter 3), respectively, open coding (i.e. problematizing stage), axial coding (i.e. integrating stage) and selective coding (i.e. refining and summarizing stage). This process can be visualized as follows:

Figure 7:



As illustrated above, the collection and analysis of data was in a first stage guided by a wide range of questions⁷³, all of them corresponding with a particular aspect of the relationship

⁷³ Note that figure 7 was designed for heuristic purposes only, and as such does not include an exhaustive list of research questions that inspired the collection and analysis of data.

between the EU and DAC which seemed potentially relevant and thus worth exploring. In a second and third phase, the collection and analysis of data gradually became more targeted. More specifically, while the second phase focused on integrating the different questions into larger and more substantial research questions, the third phase of this study was characterized by a move towards broader theoretically inspired research questions. Note that these research questions also served as the starting point of most of the papers that have been presented in the second part of this doctoral dissertation. A fourth and final stage involved the creation of an integrated theoretical account of the EU-DAC relationship. In line with my ontological and epistemological positions, the ambition was not to develop a single authoritative framework in the positivist sense of the word. Indeed, in my view this is neither possible, nor desirable given that social sciences are fundamentally different from natural sciences. Rather, the theoretical contribution of this doctoral dissertation lays in unraveling the EU-DAC relationship, offering a thick description (cf. Geertz, 1973) of the relations between both institutions in which particular attention is being paid to explanations at the different layers of social reality.

10.2. Main findings

Having provided a recapitulation of the objectives and methodological underpinnings of this doctoral dissertation, this section elaborates on the main empirical findings of this study. Combining the insights of the previous chapters, two general – and interlinked – findings can be drawn:

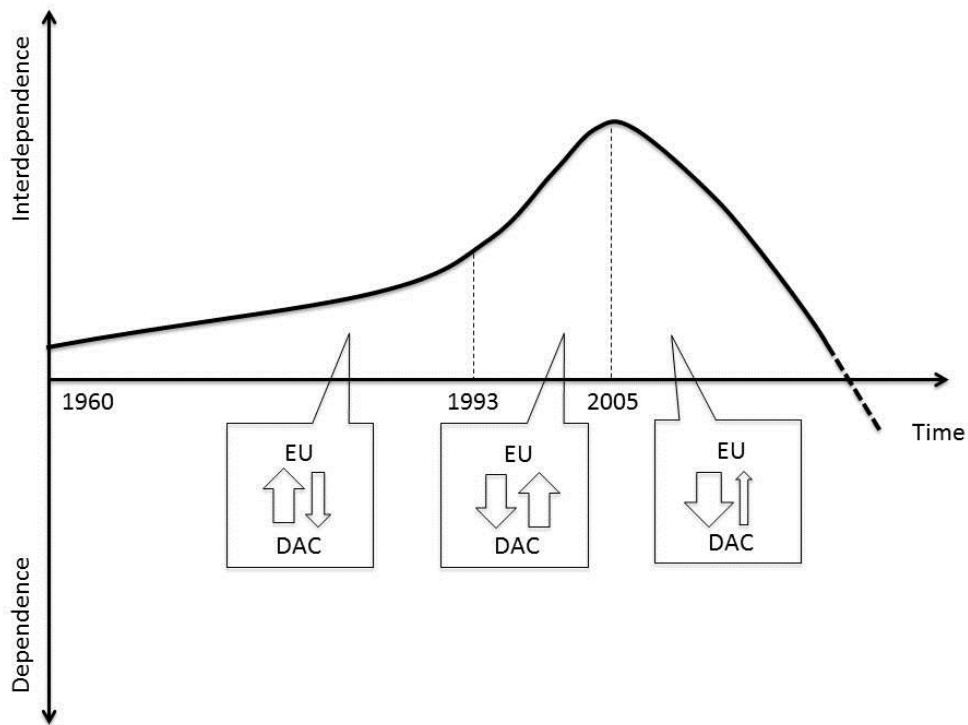
- First, the EU and DAC have been interdependent institutions for most of their existence, in the sense that the way in which both organizations influenced one another was mutually beneficial, giving ground to a stable relationship⁷⁴.

⁷⁴ Note that interdependence is here interpreted as something positive given that it leads to stability. This resembles the longstanding liberal claim that economic interdependence leads to stability and peace as it reduces the change of conflict. One of the first advocates of this claim was Montesquieu in the 17th century, though, up until now it has been repeated and/or further refined by various thinkers and scholars (e.g. Barbieri, 1996; Mansfield & Pollins, 2001; Rosecrance, 1986)

- Second, from the mid-2000s onwards, the level of interdependence between the EU and DAC has gradually decreased, to the extent that the relationship between institutions is evolving into a dependent relationship⁷⁵ whereby the DAC is the weaker partner. This undermines the stability of the interactions between Brussels and Paris.

In what follows, both findings will be taken together and discussed in more detail. In doing so, I distinguish between three periods in the EU-DAC relationship, respectively, (i) the period between 1960 and 1991, (ii) the period between 1991 and 2005 and (iii) the period from 2005 onwards. This distinction is based upon the level of interdependence between both institutions and the underlying dynamics of influence between the EU and DAC. Graphically, this can be visualized as follows:

Figure 8:



⁷⁵ Note the the concept of dependence has some clear resemblances with the concept of assymetrical interdependence as developed by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane (2001) in the sense that it increases the power of one actor, which in turn might lead to instability (e.g. Nye, 2007).

The above figure 8 plots the evolution of EU-DAC relationship over time (x-axis) in function of the degree of interdependence/dependence (y-axis). Basically, it summarizes the different chapters of this doctoral dissertation, and thus also the above outlined main findings, in a heuristic way. Indeed, what is important is not the specific height of the curve, but its general shape. This shape is determined by the degree to which both partners influenced one another – i.e. the thickness of the block arrows in the boxes below the curve – during each period. In the remainder of this section, each of the above periods will be discussed in greater detail, paying particular attention to the degree to which the EU and DAC influenced one another and whether this was beneficial.

10.2.1. Growing interdependence

The first phase in EU-DAC relations started with the inception of the Committee in 1960 and lasted until 1993. It is characterized, first of all, by a strong influence of the DAC on the EU (cf. chapters four, six and seven). Indeed, in the absence of strong and *de jure* development competences, the EU relied extensively on the DAC during this period, for example, for acquiring development expertise. Furthermore, the DAC also served as a source of inspiration and legitimation for the EU, helping to turn the European Commission into a more mature and assertive development actor. Also the other way around, the EU actively contributed to the work of the DAC. While initially rather hesitant and only in relation to the representation of the EDF and EIB, it gradually became actively involved in all aspects of the DAC's work (cf. chapter six). In doing so, the EU particularly active on a number of issues that were closely related to its own preferences/competences such as (i) regional integration in the developing world (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1966; 1971; 1973), (ii) trade related development assistance (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1966; 1971) or (iii) donor coordination (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1965; 1971; 1980).

In sum, it can be concluded that during this first phase of EU-DAC relations, both partners increasingly benefited from their interactions, thus became more interdependent. While this was clearly the case for the EU – i.e. its interactions with the DAC played an important role in its development as a development actor – also the DAC benefited from its partnership with Brussels – i.e. by influencing the EU, it was able to play its role as advocate of

more and better development aid. Furthermore, the EU strengthened the DAC's role in international development cooperation because (i) it adopted a lot of DAC norms and principles (one could even say became socialized) and (ii) became increasingly involved in the Committee's work.

10.2.2. A flourishing relationship

The second phase in EU-DAC relations began in 1993 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, granting the EU shared competences in the field of development cooperation. It lasted – roughly speaking – until 2005. The main characteristic of this second period is that the EU-DAC relationship flourished as never before, stemming from the fact that both institutions were strongly interdependent during this period and as such influenced each other in important and mutually beneficial ways. Starting with the DAC, its peer reviews of 1998 and 2002 helped creating a momentum for turning the European Commission into a full-blown donor – think, for example, about the adoption of the EU Development Policy Statement (2000). Furthermore, the DAC also helped implementing a number of more technical reforms, most notably bringing the reporting of European development aid in line with its Statistical Directives (cf. chapter seven). Also the other way around, the impact of the EU on the DAC was significant. Building upon its new status as one of the world's largest providers of ODA, the EU not only became one of the central actors in the DAC, it also actively used its leverage to contribute to the Committee's objectives – especially from the 1999 onwards⁷⁶. The EU, for example, became one of the driving forces of several task forces, sub groups or working parties, often as a (co-)chair and/or contributor of studies and financial resources (e.g. OECD/DAC, 1996a; 1997a; 1997b; 1998b). Furthermore, the EU used its political leverage *vis-à-vis* its own Members to actively promote/safeguard the DAC norms and principles – think, for example, about the Commission's role in safeguarding the adoption of the DAC's recommendation on aid untying in 2001 (cf. Carbone, 2007) and subsequently the EU commitment in 2002 to fully untie all bilateral European aid and the ambition of its Member States to follow this example (EU, 2002). At a higher level of abstraction, it can thus be concluded that the EU-DAC relationship reached a high

⁷⁶ Stemming from the fact that before the reforms of 1999, the EU spent a lot of energy in solving internal problems related to development cooperation (cf. chapter seven).

level of interdependence during this second period, given that both partners reinforced each other's role in development cooperation.

10.2.3. An eroding relationship

The third and final phase in EU-DAC relations started in 2005. Unlike the previous periods, it is characterized by a declining interdependence between Brussels and Paris. In recent years, the EU-DAC relationship is even evolving into the direction of a dependent relationship. At the empirical level, this is witnessed, by a declining impact of the DAC on the EU (cf. chapter seven), whereas the influence of the EU on the DAC has continued to increase in comparison with the previous period. Indeed, in recent years, the EU has become, arguably, the pivotal actor in the DAC's decision-making process. This reflects from the fact that it increasingly dominates the latter's work – not necessarily in an intentional way – which has given ground to much more unstable relations between Brussels and Paris. Clear examples are the discussions on the EU's status in the DAC's statistics (cf. chapter six) or its stance towards concessional loans (cf. chapter eight).

Finally, two important considerations must be made. First, the above shift did not happen overnight, but should be seen as a slow, yet gradual process. Second, the fact that the EU-DAC relationship is evolving into a dependent relationship does not imply that the interactions between Brussels and Paris are by definition not mutually beneficial – think, for example, about the EU's role at the HLF in Accra (Carbone, 2013a) or the joint efforts of the EU and DAC towards promoting aid for trade (e.g. OECD/DAC, 2013c). Therefore, combining the above insights, this third phase in EU-DAC relations can be best described by the concept of erosion, stemming from the fact that it is gradual process, which is not always visible at the surface, though, at a structural level undermines the stability of the relationship.

10.3. Explanations

Having provided a general overview of the main empirical findings of this doctoral dissertation, the central question that remains unaddressed is how to explain the eroding relationship between the EU and the DAC (i.e. the evolution from an interdependent to dependent relationship). Adopting a complexity-sensitive perspective, the remainder of this

section applies the four causes as identified by Aristotle (cf. chapter nine), allowing me to identify different explanations at different levels of social reality. These are, respectively, (i) material (i.e. the matter out of which things come to be), (ii) efficient (i.e. the initiator of change), (iii) final (i.e. the ultimate purpose or aim) and formal causes (i.e. that what shapes or defines matter) (Caksu, 2007; Delputte, 2013; Kurki, 2008).

The rationale behind adopting the above approach is that it inductively became clear that only a multi-causal approach is able to capture the full complexity of the EU-DAC relationship. Indeed, while existing theoretical frameworks come some way in understanding certain aspects of the eroding EU-DAC relationship, they can never explain the complete picture. For example, while historical institutionalism allows us to understand why certain tensions arise on the EU's status in the DAC's statistical directives (cf. chapter six), it does not explain why it took the DAC several years to deal with the issue of concessionality. This stems from the fact that most – if not all – theoretical frameworks typically focus on one particular type of cause, whereas the key to acquiring in-depth knowledge of a certain social phenomenon lays in mixing different perspectives – i.e. the foundation of analytic eclecticism (see e.g. Cornut, 2014; Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). Importantly, the Aristotelian framework on causality is one possible way of doing so as it provides four distinctive perspectives (or causes) to look at social phenomena, motivated by the fact that mixing these allows for understanding the full complexity of change. Consequently, the four causes of Aristotle should not be mistaken with a theory in the sense that they do not possess explanatory power on their own. Rather they serve as a kind of heuristic tool, enabling more abstract and complex reasoning on causality (Caksu, 2007; Delputte, 2013; Falcon, 2015; Kurki, 2008). Finally, it is important to outline that I did not choose the Aristotelian framework because I consider it to be superior to other 'eclectic' frameworks – think, for example, about the 3 I's, referring to interests, institutions and ideas (e.g. Hall, 1997). Indeed, ultimately it was a personal choice, motivated by the fact that I felt it captures the complexity of my empirical findings most clearly.

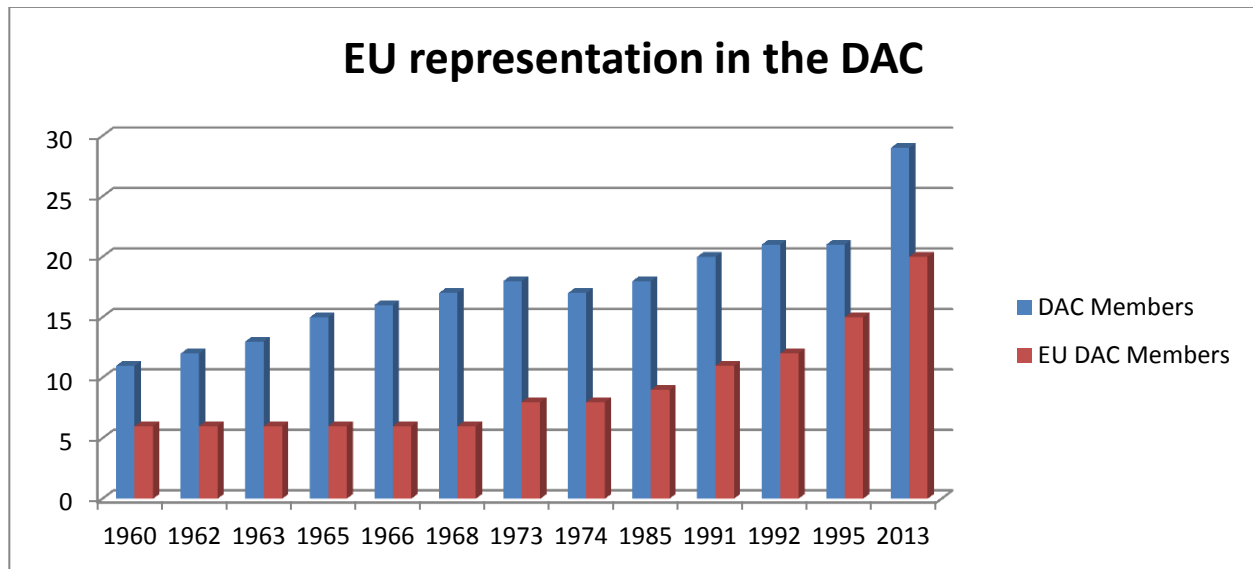
10.3.1. Material causes

Explanations according to the Aristotle framework typically start with the material causes, referring to the matter out of which things come to be. This ‘matter’ or ‘stuff’ has a passive potentiality in the sense that it does not directly nor intentionally determine the phenomenon, but it constitutes an essential element without which the phenomenon would not exist (Gorham, 2009; Kurki, 2006). Consequently, material causes are necessary ingredients to any explanation, but they are never sufficient (Falcon, 2015). Furthermore, they tend to be – but not necessarily are – an inherent part of the phenomenon that needs to be explained, meaning that they are not necessarily independent of it (Falcon, 2015; Kurki, 2006). This is best illustrated with an example⁷⁷, let us say understanding the rationale behind the establishment of the new EEAS building, commonly referred to as the Triangle. The material causes of the Triangle are, for example, Article 27(3) of the EU treaty which established the EEAS or the size and geographical location of the different EU external services prior to the Lisbon treaty. However, this obviously is only one part of the explanation, as it does not capture why or by whom the building was created.

Applying the above insights to this doctoral dissertation, one could thus say that the material cause of the eroding relationship between the EU and the DAC is the fact that at one point in history relations have been established between Brussels and Paris. Similar to any other social relationship – be it between humans or IOs –, the EU-DAC relationship had always the passive potentiality to erode. This is particularly true for this relationship, stemming from the fact that both partners are IOs, adding additional complexity to their interactions. Indeed, from the moment the EU became a full member of the DAG in 1960 (cf. chapter six), its relationship with the DAG/C had a passive potentiality to be challenged by policy dynamics such as European development integration – knowing that the EU is a more supranational and economic oriented IO – or the growing overlap in membership between both organizations (cf. figure 9).

⁷⁷ It should be noted that this is a fictitious example, in the sense that I did not carried out research on this topic and thus make assumptions why it has been established.

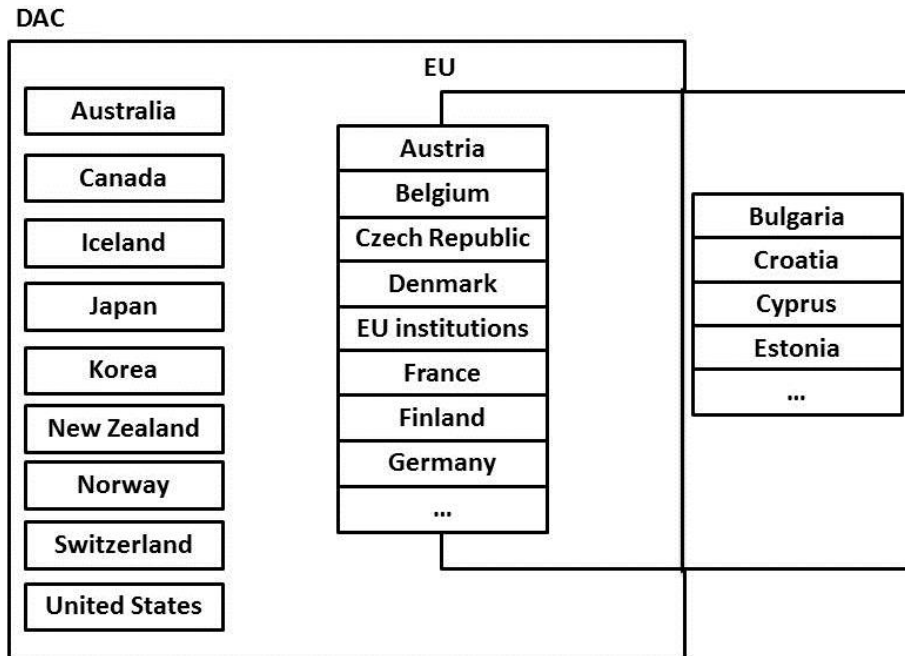
Figure 9:



(based upon own calculations, data obtained from Führer (1996) and www.oecd.org)

Consequently, one could say that the matter of the EU-DAC relationship (to apply the Aristotelian terminology) is essentially very complex in the sense that both institutions are interlinked in a rather complicated way – i.e. the different EU delegation and EU Member States represent their own bilateral aid policies in the DAC but also jointly constitute the European Union. Though, not all EU Members are represented in the DAC. Schematically, this complexity looks as follows:

Figure 10:



In sum, one could thus conclude that the EU-DAC relationship was to some extent flawed by design in the sense that there has always been a passive – yet realistic – potentiality of worsening relations between both organizations, stemming from the complex nature of their relationship.

10.3.2. Efficient and final causes

As outlined in the previous section, material causes are necessary but insufficient explanations of social phenomena given that they do not account why certain events take place or who triggered these. Indeed, while the complex nature of the EU-DAC relationship helps explaining its current erosion, it does not explain why this is happening today – and, for example, not in the early nineties. This is why the Aristotle framework on causality also pays particular attention to the source(s) of change – i.e. efficient causes – and the intentionality behind change – i.e. final causes (Falcon, 2015). Linking back to our example of the EEAS' building, one could identify the EU institutions and Member States as efficient causes, respectively, supporting the establishment of the Triangle for final causes such as increasing the visibility of the EU institutions or strengthening the coherence of the Union's external action by

physically grouping the different actors being involved. Finally, and as reflects from the above example, it is worth pointing out that both the efficient and final causes constitute the agency side of the Aristotelian framework, explaining why both are taken together in this section.

Applying the above insights on understanding the eroding EU-DAC relationship, one can first of all distinguish between three efficient causes, respectively (i) the EU delegation – i.e. the European Commission⁷⁸, (ii) the EU Members of the DAC and (iii) the DAC Secretariat or DCD. What these actors have in common is that they all contribute(d) – not always intentionally (!) – to the eroding relationship between the EU and the DAC. In doing so, they are driven by final causes such as promoting development, achieving institutional survival or minimizing the impact of the DAC on their own development programs. In what follows, each of the above efficient causes will be discussed in more detail, elaborating on the final causes that underlie their actions.

Starting with the first efficient cause, the EU delegation, chapters eight and nine clearly demonstrated that its role on prioritizing PCD during the DAC's strategic reflection exercise (2007) or its stance towards concessional ODA loans (2009-2014) were a source of instability. Nonetheless, in both cases, EU officials were first of all convinced that their actions helped lifting countries out of poverty. Indeed, the EU genuinely believes that PCD is the way forward in today's interconnected and multipolar world, and is convinced that concessional loans – even profit making ones – can be used as development tools in specific cases (e.g. *vis-à-vis* the BRICs). This explains why they pushed hard for uploading their approaches on both topics to the level of DAC, regardless of the appropriateness of the context (e.g. the strategic reflection exercise) or the position of the other Members of the Committee and the DCD. Furthermore, the EU's actions in the DAC are also inspired by other final causes, most notably winning the ongoing cold war with the DCD – to the extent this conflict can be won. More specifically, as outlined in chapters six and eight, recent years have witnessed the emergence of a series of – largely

⁷⁸ As outlined in chapter 4, the EEAS officially took over the representation of the EU in the DAC, whereas previously this had always been the job of the European Commission. However, in reality, the EU delegation to the DAC is composed by former Commission officials, and in a number of cases – e.g. on technical issues – the European Commission continues to take part in the DAC's work.

symbolic – conflicts on the EU’s status in the DAC statistics. While the DCD was not the only actor involved – think, for example, about the role played by other DAC Members in this discussion – it gave ground to a cold war between the EU and the DAC secretariat. This influenced the behavior of the EU delegation in various ways. It explains, for example, why the EU suspended its voluntary contributions to the DAC’s budget, but also why it tried to bypass the DAC – i.e. the DCD’s efforts – on the issue of concessional loans (cf. chapters six and eight).

The EU Member States of the DAC constitute the second efficient cause. Similar to the EU delegation, their actions on, for example, the topics of PCD, concessional ODA loans have proven to be harmful for the relations between Brussels and Paris. Again, the main motivation behind their actions was the final cause of achieving development. For example, the prioritization of PCD during the DAC’s strategic reflection exercise was considered to be vital for achieving development by most EU Member States (cf. chapters eight and nine). At the same time, also more pragmatic/interest driven final causes steer the behavior of the EU Members of the DAC. Examples are the support of France and Germany for the EU’s attempt to bypass the DAC on the issue of concessional loans⁷⁹ (cf. chapter eight) or the unwillingness of a number of EU countries (e.g. Poland, Greece, Italy, Portugal) to (openly) challenge the EU position on PCD or concessionality in the DAC in order to maintain good relations with Brussels or because they felt rhetorically entrapped (cf. chapters six, eight and nine). Finally, to single-out one country in particular, the declining presence of Austria in the DAC and growing reliance on the EU delegation also erodes the EU-DAC relations. It does so to downscale its overall diplomatic corps in times of economic crisis, potentially setting a dangerous precedent for other EU Member States (cf. chapter six).

The third and final efficient cause is the DCD. Similar to the above actors, its actions also contributed to the eroding EU-DAC relationship. Indeed, as outlined most clearly in chapters six and eight, the DCD often found itself diametrically opposed to the EU – think, for example, about its initial reluctance to prioritize PCD during the DAC’s strategic reflection exercise (2007),

⁷⁹ Note that most officials from both countries also intrinsically saw no flaws in the reporting of these loans (cf. first final cause).

its stance towards concessional ODA loans or its position on the EU's status in the DAC's statistical directives. These positions were first of all inspired by the final cause of promoting development. For example, DCD officials were convinced of the need to strengthen the lower the reference rate for concessional loans in order to discourage the (excessive) use of loans (cf. chapter eight). A second final cause that inspired the DCD's behavior has been that of securing the DAC's role in the changing international development landscape (cf. chapter five). Taking the example of concessionality again, the DCD was basically forced to solve the issue to secure its credibility as monitor of international aid flows – think, for example, at the highly critical opinion piece of former DAC chair Richard Manning in the Financial Times (2013) on this issue (cf. chapter eight). Also indirectly, this second final cause contributes to the eroding EU-DAC relationship given that it, for example, explains why the DCD has come to follow up much more closely what goes in Brussels (cf. chapter eight), which in turn cultivates the image of the DAC being an EU dominated IO. In a similar vein, the DCD has in recent years actively sought to expand the DAC's membership as a way to increase to Committee's inclusiveness (cf. chapter five). However, by doing so, it also further strengthened the EU's overrepresentation in the DAC (see supra) A third and final cause that drives the DCD's behavior is the cold war between Brussels and Paris (see supra). Indeed, similar to the EU delegation, the DCD basically does not want to lose this fight, explaining why it not always acts in the most diplomatic way *vis-à-vis* the EU. Again taking the example of concessionality, the DCD has been particularly hard for the European Commission, even though France and Germany played a similar role on this issue – both in terms of reporting these loans and actively seeking to bypass the DAC (cf. chapter eight).

10.3.3. Formal causes

Having identified the material, efficient and final causes of the eroding EU-DAC relationship, this third and final section elaborates on the formal causes that underlie this evolution. Formal causes are what shapes and defines matter (Falcon, 2015; Kurki, 2006). In social sciences these are ideas, rules, norms or discourses given that these structure and define reality. As such, formal causes should be seen as intrinsic, constitutive and structure-related explanations of a social phenomenon. Using the example again of the EEAS building, some of the formal causes that underlie the establishment of the Triangle are European integration in

the field of foreign policy or the dominant thinking that in today's multipolar world European countries need to work together when it comes to external policies. As reflects from the above example, formal causes can thus be parts of the institutional but also the ideational structure. They are an important part of any explanation as they provide a deeper understanding of agent's behavior (i.e. efficient and final causes).

Applying the above insights to the EU-DAC relationship, one can distinguish between a number of – interlinked – formal causes. These are, respectively, (i) a shifting balance of power between the EU and DAC, (ii) a growing impact of the EU structure on the DAC's functioning and (iii) an increasing ideological divergence between the EU and DAC. A fourth formal cause is the changing development landscape. It should be noted, however, that this cause intersects with each of the previous ones. Hence, I have chosen not to address it separately, but rather to discuss it in relation to each of the aforementioned formal causes.

The first formal cause that underlies the eroding relationship between the EU and DAC is the shifting balance of power between the Brussels and Paris, an evolution that took place between 2002 and 2007. As reflects from chapters five, six and seven, the DAC has historically always been more powerful than the EU in the sense that it played a leading role in international development, whereas the role of the EU was much more modest. Importantly, there are two sides to this story. On the one hand, before 2005 the DAC was almost *incontournable* in international development, stemming from the fact that it represented all important donors. This the allowed the Committee to strongly shape the international development agenda – think, for example, about its 1996 report '*Shaping the 21st century*', which paved the way for the MDGs (cf. chapter five). On the other hand, the EU could hardly be considered a prominent international development actor before the turn of the millennium. Indeed, before 1991, it lacked *de jure* development competences, but also once it obtained these it initially struggled quite a lot with its new role as bilateral development actor(cf. chapter seven).

However, the power balance between both actors gradually changed from the turn of the millennium onwards, with 2005 as symbolic tipping point. Starting with the DAC, its role in

international development has been declining in recent years. Due to the (re)emergence of new development actors, it no longer represents all major providers of development assistance (think about the BRICs). Furthermore, the Committee's prominent role in setting the global development agenda has been increasingly challenged, forcing the DAC to reevaluate its position in international development. Most notable in this context was the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – adopted in 2005 (!) – given that it spurred much debate on the DAC's legitimacy, stemming from the limited involvement of non-donor stakeholders in the drawing of the declaration, ultimately even inspiring the UN General Assembly in the same year to mandate the ECOSOC to establish the DCF (cf. chapter five). In sharp contrast, the EU increasingly came to play a much more prominent role in international development cooperation from 2000 onwards. Building upon a series of internal reforms, the EU developed itself as a full-blown development donor (cf. chapter seven). Furthermore, it also started to develop itself as a multilateral development actor, with the collective European ODA pledges in Monterrey (2002) being the first visible exponent of this process. However, the tipping point – be it to a large extent symbolic – can again be found in 2005 as this was the year in which the European institutions and Member States adopted the European Consensus on Development, outlining for the first time ever a common European view on development. Finally, and perhaps ironically to some, it worth pointing out that the DAC contributed – at least to some extent – to the EU's growing prominence in international development. Indeed, the DAC helped pushing for substantial reforms in Brussels around the turn of the millennium (cf. chapter seven) and its more recent peer reviews of the EU urged the latter to take on a more pro-active role in international development – e.g. in 2002 the EU was referred to as a 'timid giant' (OECD/DAC, 2002b) – and further develop its 'federator role' *vis-à-vis* its Member States (OECD/DAC, 2012c; 2007c).

The second formal cause that underlies the eroding EU-DAC relations is closely related to the previous one, namely, the impact of the EU structure on the Committee's work. More specifically, as outlined in chapters six, eight and nine, the emergence of the EU's role as a multilateral development actor has come to shape and constrain the behavior of several EU Members of the DAC, be it as straightjacket (i.e. limiting their policy choices, as illustrated by

the concessionality case) or an amplifier (i.e. enabling an easy uploading of priorities that have been set in Brussels, as illustrated by the PCD case). As such, the context in which the EU and DAC interact with one another is one whereby it has become increasingly important what collective actions take place in Brussels. This is particularly true from 2005 onwards, stemming from the magnitude of collective European efforts in Brussels (e.g. the European Consensus on Development, the joint commitments on PCD, Aid Effectiveness) as well as the enlargement of the EU, given that the so-called new EU Member States – which became active as an observer in the DAC from 2006-7 onwards and joined the Committee in 2013 – have proven to be particularly vulnerable for the constraining impact of the European construction.

Importantly, the above dynamic runs counter the DAC's traditional strengths in the sense that it challenges its output and throughput legitimacy (cf. chapter five). Indeed, as became clear throughout the previous chapters, the EU structure (potentially) hampers the DAC from tackling certain issues in an effective way – think about the struggles the DAC faced to address the concessionality issue or merge its statistical directives (cf. chapters six and eight) – or function deliberately – think about how PCD became a key priority of the DAC without the support of all its Members or the DCD (cf. chapters eight and nine). At a more general level, the above dynamic even stimulates forum shopping among the EU delegation and the EU Members States in the sense that they might use the Brussels' institutions to bypass the DAC's decision-making (cf. chapter eight). For obvious reasons, this challenges the DAC's role in international development cooperation⁸⁰, explaining why the DCD, for example, has come to follow up much more closely on Brussels or why recent years have proven to be a fertile ground for tensions between the EU delegation and the DCD (see *supra*).

The third and final formal cause that explains the eroding EU-DAC relationship situates itself at the ideational level. More specifically, recent years have witnessed a growing ideological divergence between the EU and the DCD, an evolution that for obvious reasons hampers relations between Brussels and Paris. As became clear throughout the previous

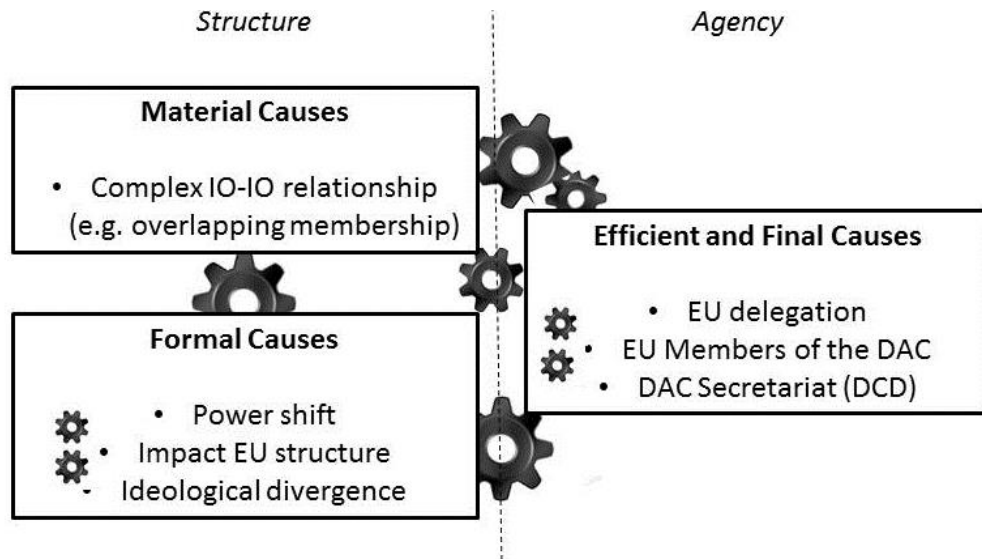
⁸⁰ It should be pointed out, however, that this is not – or to a much lesser extent – the case for the DAC's more technical work that is carried out predominantly by the DCD (e.g. studies, peer reviews).

chapters, the DAC intrinsically did not change its ideological stance towards promoting development over the past fifty years. This reflects most clearly from the DAC's strategic reflection exercise, which offered the DCD a window to fundamentally rethink the Committee's mandate, though, ultimately ended up re-endorsing its original objectives and principles (cf. chapter five). Indeed, notwithstanding the ideational challenges posed by the changing international development landscape (cf. chapter one), the DAC continues to promote its traditional norms and principles, be it in a slightly updated fashion – think, for example, about its recent efforts to modernize the ODA definition (cf. chapters five, eight and nine). The opposite can be said of the EU – here referring to European Commission. While during most of its existence, the EU was ideologically on the same page as the DAC – think, for example, at the fact that the Commission used the Committee as a source of inspiration during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s or the explicit ambition of the Prodi-commission to turn the Union into a mainstream DAC member (cf. chapter seven) – it more recently has come to adopt a new ideological stance towards development. Largely in response to the changing development landscape (but also the global economic crisis), the EU has become a more strategic development actor (cf. chapter one), increasingly emphasizing the need to move beyond aid from 2007 onwards (cf. chapters eight & nine). Furthermore, while theoretically speaking the beyond aid paradigm not necessarily conflicts with the traditional DAC principles and norms, it increasingly does in the case of the EU. This can be best illustrated by the following quote of an EU official, openly stating that “*ODA is an old-fashioned and neocolonial concept*”, when asked why the Union has come to put so much emphasis on the prioritization of PCD in the DAC (Paris, 8/11/2013).

10.3.4. Summary

The central research question that inductively emerged during this doctoral dissertation was “How to explain the eroding EU-DAC relationship?”. As reflects from the previous sections, there is no straightforward answer to this question. Indeed, in order to fully understand this process, one needs to look at different types of explanations – or causes – at different levels of social reality, as such moving beyond the traditional accounts of the active causes (i.e. efficient and final causes) that prevail in political science. Schematically this looks as follows:

Figure 11:



Indeed, and as I tried to visualize in figure 11, this complexity not only stems from the interactions *between* the different types of causes, but also from the interactions *within* each cause. For example, there was a clear agency side to the conflict on the EU's status in the DAC statistics (e.g. aspirations of the EU delegation, the concern of the DCD to maintain the integrity of its statistics...), though, at the same time this is an insufficient explanation given that the larger structure also 'enabled' this conflict (e.g. the complex situation of a DAC member being also a recipient of ODA, the EU's new status as a leading development actor...). However, the particular way and direction in which these different causes interact with one another varies from case to case, making it impossible to try to force the above schedule into a more law-like one – in the natural science fashion of the word.

This being said, the previous sections do show that there is a clear and strong structural dimension underlying the eroding EU-DAC relationship. Furthermore, most of these structure related causes are difficult to change in the sense that it cannot be done overnight. Consequently, the transformation of the EU-DAC relationship from an interdependent to a dependent relation (cf. figure 8) will continue to shape the interactions between Brussels and Paris in the next years, and perhaps even decades. However, this does not imply that this

dynamic cannot be slowed down, stopped or even reversed. Indeed, as reflects from this study, there is a continuous interaction between structure and agency, meaning the above discussed actors should not be looked upon as passive players given that they can (try to) influence the material and formal causes in order to remedy the eroding EU-DAC relationship.

10.4. Concluding reflections

Having outlined the main findings of this doctoral dissertation, this final section will establish a number of concluding reflections on the main contributions and implications of this study.

10.4.1. Towards a multicausal study of EU-IOs and EU development policies?

A first contribution of this doctoral dissertation is that it illustrates the importance of a multicausal perspective to understand social reality. This awareness has grown inductively, in the sense that at the outset of this study I was not concerned about whether to adopt a monocausal or multicausal perspective. However, it quickly became clear that the only possible way to achieve an in-depth understanding of the EU-DAC relationship was by adopting a multicausal perspective, i.e. analyzing why and how agents (i.e. efficient and final causes) are able to act and interact in the larger structure context (i.e. material and formal causes). To be honest, this argument can be hardly called original given that it echoes what a growing number of scholars have come to advocate in recent years (e.g. Delputte, 2013; Eun, 2012; Kurki, 2006 & 2008). However, and as is often the case in science, few scholars thus far actually adopted such a multicausal perspective in their research (exceptions are Delputte, 2013; Jutila, 2009 & Wendt, 2003). As such, at a general level, the contribution of this doctoral dissertation lays in the fact that it shows one possible way of doing so, both in terms of research approach (i.e. grounded theory) and way of structuring the empirical findings (i.e. Aristotelian framework on causality⁸¹).

⁸¹ Note that this would have never been possible without the help of Jan Orbie and Sarah Delputte. Indeed, it was only after writing our joint paper on PCD (cf. chapter 9) – and more specifically because of the numerous discussions during the writing process – that I became fully engaged with the Aristotelian framework on causality.

At a more specific level, the contribution of this doctoral dissertation is in the fact that the example provided by this study, arguably, might be the way forward to achieve more theoretical depth in the study of EU-IOs relations and EU development cooperation. Both fields have in common that they lack well-established theoretical frameworks to work with. Indeed, not only are most studies descriptive⁸², the scholars that do go down the road of theory typically single out one (or a limited number of) causal factors which they then study in detail and try to link. One such example are the recent efforts in the study of EU-IOs to incorporate the 'external context' and link this variable to the concepts of coherence and effectiveness (e.g. Drieskens, 2014; Groen & Niemann, 2013; Oberthür & Rabitz, 2014). However, as reflects from this doctoral dissertation such attempts are essentially flawed by design given that they *a priori* privilege a certain factor (or causal relationship), whereas this study shows that the EU-DAC relationship is defined by multiple causes which interact in complex and unpredictable ways. Therefore, it would make more sense to study EU development cooperation or EU-IOs relations from a multicausal perspective as this allows for a more in-depth understanding of social reality. However, also inveterate positivists would benefit from such an approach (see also Eun, 2010). More specifically, as reflects from the current state of the literature, the tasks of identifying explanatory variables is still unfinished, making multicausal – or at the very least an open-ended inductive approach – a much more efficient way of unraveling the different components of what could become – in their views – a general theory.

10.4.2. Do EU-IOs relations have an expiry date?

A second contribution of this doctoral dissertation lays in the fact that it gives ground to new theoretical insights and lines of enquiry – i.e. the hypothesis that some EU-IOs might have an expiry date. However, before elaborating on this hypothesis, it is important to provide a brief background on how it came to exist, at very least to not be mistaken for a poorly disguised positivist. More specifically, as outlined repeatedly in this dissertation, the aim of this study was never to develop a general (law-like) theory given that this is not possible, nor desirable. At the

⁸² This is particularly true for the field of EU development studies. However, it should be emphasized that I do not consider 'descriptive' as some kind of low-quality label. On the contrary, most of these studies are extremely useful and relevant. Furthermore, they typically pave the way for more theory driven research.

same time, however, the purpose of this dissertation – and multicausal studies more general – is not to point out that everything matters. Similar to others scholars, I also strive for a higher level of generalization of certain findings, off course only if possible and supported by additional empirical data⁸³.

Driven by such motivations, I therefore started to wonder to what extent the pattern of the EU-DAC relationship (cf. figure 8) also could be found in other EU-IO relations while wrapping up this dissertation. And if so, to what extent similar or completely different causes underlie this process. Thus far, only a first tentative attempt has been undertaken to address these questions and while there are no conclusive answers yet – but rather new lines of enquiry – it seems that similar patterns can be found in a number of EU-IOs relations. More specifically, institutions that clearly stand out are the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the NATO in the sense that their relationship with the EU shows similar dynamics as the ones observed in this study. More specifically, as put most succinctly by the CoE itself in one of its recent publications: *“In Vienna and Strassbourg, the syndrome of the EU shadow started to show its symptoms”* (2014, p. 8). This also applies to some degree to the case for the NATO, whose relationship with the EU has become increasingly unstable, swinging between co-operation and competition in recent years (e.g. European Parliament, 2006; Koops, 2010; Groeger & Haugevik, 2013). Finally, also the EU-ILO relationship – be it to a lesser extent⁸⁴ – shows some parallels with the EU-DAC relationship given that the (ideological) objectives of both not necessarily coincide, as well as the fact that the ILO is the weaker partner (e.g. Novitz, 2003, 2009).

Quite strikingly, all of the above IOs – with the exception of the ILO – have in common that they are regional (European/Western) organizations in which the EU’s power is

⁸³ Think, for example, about the finding that times needs to be taken more seriously in understanding the EU’s membership status in IOs (cf. chapter six). This finding was pushed to a higher level of generalization by testing it in a number of other additional IOs (cf. annex one), though, never with the intention of putting it forward as a kind of universal law.

⁸⁴ In the sense that this point is only made explicitly by Tonia Novitz (2003; 2009), whereas most other studies on EU-ILO relations do not pay much attention to this dynamic, raising the assumption to what extent it indeed is really prominent.

considerable in terms of representation and/or competences, which might hint at similar material and formal causes. However, at this stage it is still too early to tell whether this is actually the case. Indeed, virtually-all studies that addressed the relationship between the EU and one (or more) of the above IOs paid specific attention to one particular aspect of this relationship, as such adopting a monocausal perspective⁸⁵, whereas ideally each of the above relations is studied in much greater depth from a multicausal and open-ended perspective.

In a similar vein, I went searching in other fields of study for answers, but again they did not provide satisfactory answers. Nonetheless, two strands of literature are worth pointing out given that they also seem to support some of the findings of this study. A first strand of literature is that on regime complexity (e.g. Alter & Meunier, 2009; Lesage & Van der Graaf, 2013; Nye, 2007; Oberthür & Stokke, 2011). More specifically, it has been pointed out by several of its authors that conflict and troubled relations are more likely to occur between institutions that are overlapping and nested at the same time⁸⁶ (e.g. Alter & Meunier, 2009; Hafner, 2008) – applied to this study: the EU-DAC relationship has been nested from the start, but only became overlapping from turn of the Millennium onwards. Furthermore, there is a well-established link between asymmetrical interdependence and conflict/instability (e.g. .Nye, 2007). A second strand of literature is that on inter-organizational relations⁸⁷ (e.g. Cropper, 2008; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). More specifically, various scholars in this field have been developing so-called ‘life-cycle models⁸⁸, and while being extremely positivist, they virtually-all put forward patterns that are similar to the one witnessed in this study – i.e. an almost inevitable decline in relations between organizations from a certain point onwards (e.g. Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Phelps, Adams & Bessant, 2007; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Unfortunately, both fields have in common that they do not offer in-depth explanations of a

⁸⁵ An important exception is the study of Joachim Koops (2010) given that he – without explicitly referring to it as being a multicausal study – pays particular attention to both agency and structure related explanations at different levels.

⁸⁶ Albeit, it has been pointed out by Brian Uzzi (1997a, 1997b) that overlapping and nested regimes may also provide advantages (e.g. more problem-solving and risk taking). However, this requires a strong degree of trust between both partners.

⁸⁷ Referring to the strand of literature that predominantly focuses on the relationship between firms.

⁸⁸ Similar to evolutionary thinking, the idea is that relations between organizations progress through a number of subsequent and irreversible stages (Cropper, 2008)

changing relationship between IOs. Indeed, while they typically refer to explanations related to power or a growing distrust between both partners, it remains unclear how exactly such processes unfold over time.

Linking the above insights, it can thus be concluded that some of the findings of this dissertation can be generalized to a higher level. Indeed, also other EU-IOs relations (and more generally regimes and relations between firms) seem to have reached their expiry date at a certain point, and recurring (monocausal) explanations thus far have in common that they point more or less in the same direction of some of the material and formal causes identified in this study (e.g. complexity, shift of power). However, much more in-depth research is required on this topic, ideally starting with the IOs that have been put forward in this section.

10.4.3. Practical implications

While the previous sections elaborated upon the scholarly contributions and implications of this doctoral dissertation, it is equally relevant to think about its practical implications. Indeed, the objective of this study was never to acquire an in-depth understanding of the EU-DAC relationship for the sake of academia only. Indeed, one of the underlying motivations for this study was the need to gain a better understanding of the politics of international development cooperation in order to make a tiny, yet valuable contribution to the eradication of poverty. It does so in two important ways. First, this study brings some important nuances to the debate on the DAC's role and legitimacy in international development cooperation. This was necessary given that too often opinions about the DAC have proven to be unbalanced or incomplete⁸⁹, stemming from the fact that the Committee has hardly ever been the subject of scholarly attention. As such, this dissertation – and in particular chapter five – serves as a first step in the direction of more balanced and informed debate (and decision-making) on issues that are directly or indirectly related to the DAC.

⁸⁹ To give one example, in 2010 the Spanish presidency of the EU convened a conference on the topic of development cooperation in times of crises. At this conference, Owen Barder, Mikael Gavvas and Simon Maxwell presented a paper in which they portrayed the DAC as being an institution which fails to respond to the changing aid landscape, as such completely ignoring, for example, the DAC's strategic reflection exercise, its (future) enlargements (Barder *et al*, 2010).

Second, this doctoral dissertation has come to highlight the potential negative impact of regional development integration – in this particular case the EU – on the existing international aid architecture. This raises the bigger question whether or not European development integration – and more specifically the development of the Union’s role as a multilateral development actor – is something good or bad. Essentially, there is no straightforward answer to this question. Indeed, as became clear throughout this dissertation much depends on the particular context (i.e. the way in which the EU structure interacts with other causes). This makes that European development integration is not by definition something negative. Nonetheless, considering the case of the DAC, I tend to take the position that one must be extremely careful when it comes to strengthening the EU’s role as a multilateral development actor. Taking a functionalist perspective, the EU and its Member States should at the very least consider case by case whether or not the European level is the most appropriate level for collective action. After all, in many cases the collective actions that are agreed upon at the European level offer no clear advantage to the collective actions at the level of IOs such as the DAC, World Bank or UN in the sense that both are legally non-binding. However, as reflects from this particular study, the EU’s efforts (potentially) come at much higher costs given that they might undermine the role of existing IOs which are often more inclusive and potentially also more effective and/or deliberative. Therefore the contribution of this dissertation lays in the fact that it raises awareness for the potential detrimental impact of EU development integration, urging EU institutions and Member States to be extremely careful and reflexive about their collective development actions.

10.4.4. Limitations and an agenda for further research

Finally, it is important to elaborate on the main limitations of this doctoral dissertation. As is the case with all research, there is always room for improvement and this study is no exception to this rule.

First, this study has analyzed the past 55 years of EU-DAC relations in about three and a half year. This choice was inspired by the lack of literature on this topic, making it necessary to first develop a certain standard against which the current EU-DAC relations could be assessed.

However, by covering such a large time period, choices inevitably had to be made in terms of focus. More specifically, particular attention has been given to the establishment of the DAC as well as the more recent evolutions from the Maastricht Treaty onwards, whereas the period in between received less attention. As such, further research could explore in greater depth the EU's role in the DAC during the 1970s and 1980s. In doing so, topics that are worth further exploring are (i) regional integration in the developing world, (ii) trade related development assistance and (iii) donor coordination given that a first superficial analysis revealed that much emphasis was put into promoting these topics by the EU delegation.

Second, and similar to the first limitation, I also had to make certain choices in terms of focus for the most recent period in EU-DAC relations. More specifically, while I chose to focus on those cases that were most relevant for this study – in terms of the emerging theoretical insights – there are also interesting cases that I have not been able to study in greater depth. One such case is that of Aid for Trade, stemming from the fact that the EU and the DAC have always worked very closely together on this issue. Furthermore, the fact that this topic is jointly addressed by the DAC, the OECD and the WTO also makes it interesting from a theoretical point of view in the sense that this structural context may interact with the efficient and final causes in a different way. In a similar vein, also the interaction between the EU and the DAC in some of its subsidiary bodies might be worth further explorations. Unlike the cases in this dissertation, the work of these bodies is often more technical and less politicized, making it relevant to explore to what extent for example the substance of the work or the level of politicization influences the EU-DAC relationship.

Third, this study has predominantly focused on what goes on in Paris, be it at the level of the DCD, the EU delegation or the different Member States of the DAC. This, however, implies that I did not pay equal attention to the headquarter level. Indeed, while most of the interview with DAC delegates briefly touched upon this issue, it is something that needs closer attention, stemming from the fact that not all DAC Members – including the EU – have organized their representation in Paris in a similar way. For example, while some DAC delegates have a large

degree of autonomy, the opposite is true for others. Obviously, this might also influence their positions in the DAC, explaining why further research on this dimension is necessary.

Fourth, albeit this doctoral dissertation started from an open-ended and multicausal perspective, the primary units of analysis have always been states and IOs, whereas the level of the individual has been touched upon in a less systematic way. This is somewhat of a missed opportunity given that a growing number of studies more recently have come to acknowledge the importance of the individual in explaining policy change (or lack of change). Therefore, future research could look in greater detail to what extent the level of the individual indeed constitute an important causes that should be taken more seriously.

Annex

This fourth and final part of this doctoral dissertation is constituted by one paper that is more indirectly related to the topic of this study. More specifically, it is a book chapter which I have written together with Dr. Peter Debaere, Prof dr. Dr. Ferdi De Ville, Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie, Dr. Bregt Saenen and has been published in 2014 under the title “Membership: the evolution of EU membership in major international organisations” in the edited volume of Amandine Orsini (The European Union with(in) international organisations: commitment, consistency and effects across time). Its link with this doctoral dissertation is that it further investigates to what extent also in other IOs then the DAC the initial decision on the EU’s membership status installs path dependence.

The Evolution of EU Membership in Major International Organisations

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Summary

The EU's membership status, i.e. how it can and does act in international organisations, varies significantly. There is no single determinant that is able to explain this diversity. Neither the IOs' membership rules, nor the position of third states vis-à-vis the EU's status, the EU's legal competences, or internal preference distribution offer a satisfactory explanation. This chapter analyses the EU's membership status in eight key IOs in the socio-economic sphere (GATT, WTO, OECD, DAC, G8, G20, ILO and FAO).⁹⁰ It shows that the EU's status in IOs is varied, but has remained remarkably constant over time in each IO. To a large extent, the EU's current status in IOs is determined by the 'initial decision' made on the basis of the legal and political, internal and external contexts at the time. Changes to these contexts have not altered the EU's membership status in the cases of the GATT/WTO, OECD/DAC, G8 and ILO. However, in the cases of the FAO and G20, two critical junctures – short periods of rapid contextual change – have enabled a significant upgrade of the EU's status.

Key Words

Critical juncture; DAC; FAO; G8; G20; GATT; historical institutionalism; ILO; membership; observer; OECD; path dependency; WTO.

⁹⁰ We adopt here a broader definition of IOs than the one proposed in the introduction to this volume. Indeed, the G8 and G20 do not fit all the criteria for being IOs, mostly because they are informal clubs and do not have headquarters, budgets or staff. Yet they play a key political role on the international scene and are inter-governmental and multilateral. It is in this respect that we consider them as IOs.

Introduction

In this chapter, the volume's focus on the membership of the European Union in international organisations is narrowed down to the EU's 'membership status' in IOs, defined here as its politico-legal status. Our analysis is inspired by two puzzles. First, the membership status of the EU varies extensively across different IOs. Second, its status in any given IO seems to change only rarely over time. Traditional explanations for the variation in EU status focus on internal and/or external, legal and/or political factors (e.g. Jørgensen and Wessel 2011, Hoffmeister 2007, Wouters et al. 2008, Gehring et al. 2013). Some stress the importance of the division of competences within the EU (internal, legal) for the Union's status in IOs. Others emphasise the IOs' rules for participation as decisive (external, legal). A third independent variable in the literature is the degree of substantial homo/heterogeneity of preferences among member states in the domain where an IO is active (internal, political). A final explanation is the international context or support for EU involvement in an IO (external, political).

The existing literature concentrates mainly on explaining the EU's membership status at a specific moment in time rather than understanding its evolution over time. It does not adequately address the question whether and why the EU's status remains constant or changes when the above-mentioned factors change. Inspired by the aforesaid puzzles and hiatus in the literature, this chapter examines: (i) whether the EU's status is characterised by change or continuity; and (ii) why change occurs or continuity persists. By addressing these two questions, it also sheds light on why the EU's status varies significantly across a number of IOs.

We discuss the evolution of the EU's status in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the

International Labour Organization (ILO), the Group of Eight (G8), the Group of Twenty (G20), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). These organisations share sufficient background characteristics as they all represent different IOs in the socio-economic sphere, while a maximum of diversity within the sample is pursued in terms of membership status and in possible explanations for change or continuity (Rihoux and Ragin 2009: 20–21). With the notable exception of the GATT/WTO, the EU's role in these socio-economic IOs has been under-studied (Orbie et al. forthcoming).

With 'EU membership status' we refer to the politico-legal status of the European Union in IOs. Status focuses on the various forms of EU membership in IOs, thus not only on the division of competences between the EU and its member states within IOs, or the EU's performance or effectiveness in an IO. Since practices of EU membership in IOs may diverge significantly from what formal rules would lead us to expect (Jørgensen et al. 2011: 601), we do not limit ourselves to a legal argument and leave room for political elements too.

We discern five categories of membership status: 'member', 'participant', 'observer', 'attendant' and 'absent' (see Table 2.1). These categories do not necessarily correspond with the terminology used by the IO itself or with classifications of other authors (e.g. Wouters et al. 2008: 22). While categories are typically constructed based on the array of rights a member enjoys in an IO, we identify parameters or 'thresholds' that have to be met in order to obtain a certain membership status. In doing so, we concentrate on the question of what conditions need to be fulfilled to observe a change in status.

The threshold between ‘absent’ and ‘attendant’ depends on the presence of the EU at several meetings of an IO. An occasional invitation does not qualify for attendant status. In order to become an observer, the EU must be allowed to table proposals or amendments during negotiations. As an observer, the EU is, however, not allowed to vote. The right to vote represents the threshold to the status of participant. In this case, the EU possesses *de facto* membership. In settings where voting rarely occurs, the EU is considered as a participant when it has an equal say compared to the members of the IO. The fourth threshold for qualifying as a member is reached when the EU is recognised by the IO and its member states as a member. Often, full membership of the EU is then anchored in the IO’s statutes or in a similar legal document.

Table 2.1 EU membership statuses within a selection of IOs

Status	Threshold	IOs	Period
Member	Formal member	WTO DAC FAO G20	1995– 2014 1961– 2014 1991– 2014 2008– 2014
Participant	Allowed to vote but not legally recognised as formal member	GATT G8 OECD	1960– 1994 1977– 2014 1961– 2014
Observer	Allowed to table proposals or amendments but not allowed to vote	FAO	1972– 1991
Attendant	Attending several IO meetings but not allowed to table proposals or amendments	ILO	1953– 2014
Absent	Not attending several IO meetings	G20	1999– 2008

To analyse the evolution of the EU's membership status, we use an inductive approach. The first step is to scan through the history of the EU's membership in the identified IOs as well as the characteristics of such membership. A second section then looks at the mechanisms that explain such membership, i.e. path dependency and critical junctures. Finally, a third section examines the effects of the EU's membership status on the EU as well as on the IO.

Embracing Long-term Participation: The EU's Commitment to the GATT, WTO, OECD, DAC, G8, G20, ILO and FAO

The EU has been an 'original member' of the WTO since its establishment in 1995. In that way, the status since the 1960s whereby the EU had been recognised as a *de facto* contracting party of the GATT has been formalised (the GATT did not have 'members' but 'contracting parties'). The Agreement Establishing the WTO, Article XI.1, states that 'The contracting parties to GATT 1947 as of the date of entry into force of this Agreement, and the European Communities, ... shall become original members of the WTO' (WTO 1994: 16). The signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947 preceded the establishment of the EU. Although the Community became exclusively competent for trade policy through Article 113 of the Rome Treaty in 1957, it did not formally accede to the GATT, nor did the GATT contracting parties regulate the legal status of the Community.

Subsequently, the Community's status was set through its consistent practice, since the Dillon Round of 1960–1961, of acting as if it were a contracting party (Hirsch 1995: 39–43, Petersmann 1986). The European institutions have ever since been participating in negotiations and representing the member states – except in the Budget Committee as the contributions were paid out of national budgets by each member state individually (Petersmann 1986: 36). While the

member states remained present around the table and retained their right to vote, the Community over the years thus became a *de facto* contracting party. All GATT agreements and protocols provided that their acceptance is open to ‘contracting parties to the GATT and by the European Economic Community’ (Petersmann 1986: 37). With the exception of the Tokyo Round codes, the GATT agreements have been concluded by the EU as ‘Community Agreements’ without direct acceptance on the part of individual member states. The EU’s *de facto* assumption of GATT contracting party and recognition by the rest of the membership has also been visible in the GATT dispute settlement mechanism. From 1974 on, complaints by third parties were directed against the EU instead of individual member states.

This *de facto* recognition of the membership of the EU was unproblematic and uncontested as long as the GATT Rounds focused on tariffs. The Tokyo Round dealt for the first time with non-tariff barriers, however, with limited success. With the following Uruguay Round (1986–1994), the international trade agenda took a qualitative leap by focusing on several ‘new’ trade issues such as services and intellectual property rights. While during the Uruguay Round the EU maintained a pragmatic negotiating practice whereby the Commission represented the member states on all issues without prejudicing the formal division of competence, the conclusion of the Round led to a confrontation between the Commission and the Council (and most of the member states; Billiet 2006, Hilf 1995). The conflict revolved around who should sign what, and the consequent question of whether the EU and/or the member states should become members of the new WTO. The Commission put the issue before the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 1994. It was subsequently ruled (Opinion 1/94) that while the EU has exclusive competence for trade in goods (and cross-border services), this was not the case for other modes of trade in services and trade-related intellectual property rights. Thus, the WTO charter was

signed as a 'mixed agreement' and both the EU and the member states became members of the new organisation.

While this could be interpreted as a step back in the light of the GATT practice whereby agreements were concluded as 'Community Agreements' (see supra), we argue for a different reading. Notwithstanding the difficult atmosphere in the years leading up to conclusion of the Uruguay Round (1994) and the establishment of the WTO (1995), both with regard to trade competences and with regard to European integration in general (the difficult ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty; see also Hilf 1995: 245), the EU became a full member of the WTO. And the continued membership of the member states did not alter the practice of the Commission acting as the single and exclusive voice for the EU on all issues, notwithstanding the internal formal division of competence. This happened also in spite of attempts by third countries to play EU member states off against each other, both before and after the end of the Uruguay Round. Moreover, this practice of exclusive supranational representation for all issues discussed at the WTO was also internally formalised with the Lisbon Treaty that entered into force on 1 December 2009. The EU is now also legally exclusively competent for all trade issues, including services, intellectual property rights and investment.

While the OECD is often considered to be a monolithic IO, it is better to consider it as a family composed of the OECD, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the International Energy Agency (Lesage and Van de Graaf 2013, Woodward 2009). In this chapter, we limit our attention to the OECD and the DAC. The EU's current status in the OECD can be qualified as full participant. This stems from the first supplementary protocol in the OECD Convention, which stipulates that the 'Commissions of the European Economic Community ... shall take part in the work of the Organization' (OECD 1960). This provision has been

interpreted very broadly as the EU takes part – alongside its member states – in all aspects of the OECD’s work and is even allowed to chair meetings of OECD committees. As a result, the EU is generally considered to be one of the most important and central actors in the OECD (Carroll and Kellow 2011, Comelli and Matarazzo 2011). Nonetheless, throughout the past 50 years the EU was unable to take the leap towards full membership. When the OECD was established in 1961, a compromise provided that the EU is not a member of the OECD, though a participant (*in casu* a *de facto* member; Esman and Cheever 1967, Verschaeve and Takacs 2013). Despite EU attempts to upgrade its membership in the following decades, and some minor successes such as its accession to the OECD’s Working Party 3, its membership status remained unchanged (Carroll 2009, Woodward 2009).

The EU’s membership status in the DAC poses a similar empirical puzzle. The DAC is a leading international development institution that offers its members a forum to reflect upon the volume and effectiveness of aid. While it operates within the OECD (*de jure* as a Committee), it is generally considered to be an IO in its own right given its quasi-autonomous standing within the OECD (Masujima 2004). The EU has been a full member of the DAC – alongside its member states – ever since the latter’s establishment in 1961 (Verschaeve and Takacs 2013). This full membership status (and its continuity) is remarkable both from a legal as well as a political perspective. Legally speaking, the EU should have been unable to join the DAC in 1961 as at that time the EU lacked development competences, and politically the role of the EU in development cooperation has been contested many times over the past decades (Holland and Doidge 2012). Nonetheless, the EU’s full membership in the DAC has remained unaltered ever since 1961.

In the G8, we consider the EU today as a participant. In 1977, the European Council decided that the President of the Commission and the rotating President of the Council would be

invited to take part in those sessions that deal with items that fall under EU competence, such as trade (Hainsworth 1990). The agreement to allow the EU in the G7 (which became the G8 in 1998, following Russia's accession) as a participant instead of a member has remained unaltered until now. But soon, the participation of the Commission was extended to cover all agenda items. Already in 1978, its presence at the summits had become uncontested. The Commission participated fully in all economic sessions and their preparation at the 1978 Bonn summit. In 1981, the Commission was allowed to take part in the political discussions and joined the preparations one year later (Putnam and Bayne 1984: 152). In 1987, the Commission drew up for the first time a detailed working paper dealing with the problem of sub-Saharan African debt, which served as the basis for summit discussions (Hainsworth 1990). A few years later, the G7/8 tasked the Commission to coordinate Western aid to the former Eastern Bloc Countries after the collapse of communism. The resulting PHARE programme illustrates the recognition of the Commission's role in the G7/8. But still, the EU has never acquired official G8 membership and remains a full participant of the G8.

For the G20, while the membership status of the EU remains officially unaltered, the sudden entrance of the European Commission at all G20 levels in 2008 is such a drastic change in the EU's representation that its membership status can hardly be described as continuous. Established by the G7 in September 1999, the G20 gathers the finance ministers and central bank governors of 20 systemically important economies. Contrary to the G8, the EU was granted official G20 membership from the start. The rotating Council Presidency and the President of the European Central Bank represented the EU, while the Commission only participated at a technical level. However, when the G20 was upgraded to the level of Heads of State and Government in 2008, the Commission was fully accepted as an integral part of the EU delegation

at all levels in the G20. Today, the Commission can thus be considered as a full member of the G20.

Formal relations between the ILO and the EU's predecessors were established in the 1950s. The European Coal and Steel Community in 1953 (ILO Office 1953: 290–91) and the European Economic Community in 1958 (ILO Office 1958: 65–6) were initially granted a status that can be placed in our attendant category. Since then, formal relations have been regularly renewed, notably with exchanges of letters in 1961 (ILO Office 1961: 532–3), 1989 (ILO Office 1990: 180–81) and 2001 (ILO Office 2001: 79–81). These exchanges reflected the internal expansion of the Union's social dimension. For example, the 1989 exchange of letters stated that the EU should play a greater role in the ILO due to this internal expansion (ILO Office 1990: 180). Moreover, these exchanges of letters have formed to backbone of the intensification of the inter-organizational cooperation between the Commission and the ILO Office (Orbie and Tortell 2009), while the EU institutions play an increasingly prominent role in the coordination and representation of the Union in ILO standard-setting (Delarue 2006, Kissack 2011). However, the increased importance of the EU has not led it to reach the threshold for becoming an observer, participant, or member in the ILO.

The FAO's constitution of 1945 only provided for the membership of states. Consequently, the EU could not become a member at the time of its establishment in 1957. Through an exchange of letters in 1962, a closer cooperation between the European Commission and the FAO was envisaged. The most important element was to grant observer status to the EU. Henceforth the EU could be invited to all meetings dealing with issues that are of common interest or where collaboration is deemed to be desirable. The letters also suggested that eventually membership could be considered (Hallstein and Sen 1962). This 'non-permanent

observer' status implied that the EU had the right to speak but not to vote. Legally speaking it could only intervene after the members of the FAO had spoken and upon approval of the chairperson. In practice, however, the EU became a 'privileged observer', stretching the limits of its observer status to a maximum (Frid 1993: 241, Frid 1995: 230, Tavares De Pinho 1993: 657, Van de Voorde 1992: 57–58). In 1971, following a Commission proposal for full membership of the FAO (European Commission 1971), the Council agreed that the observer status should be 'enhanced in a pragmatic way'. In community matters, the Commission should fully participate and act as the spokesperson of the member states (European Council 1972). Nevertheless, the EU remained a non-permanent observer, and it still depended on the chairperson to decide whether the EU had to wait until all members had spoken before it could intervene in the meetings (Frid 1995: 230).

In 1991 the FAO constitution was amended so as to allow for the accession of 'regional economic integration organizations' which meet a number of criteria such as the authority to make binding decisions over their member states on a range of matters within the purview of the FAO. In the same year the EU became a full member of the FAO, and, given the rigid membership criteria, it is unlikely that any other regional organisations would be allowed to follow the EU's example. Consequently, it also has the right to vote. The 'no plural voting' clause in the new constitution provides that if the EU votes on an issue then the member states will refrain from doing so, and vice versa, so that the EU's total voting weight within the FAO does not increase as a consequence of the EU's membership. Despite its legal and political recognition as a full member, there are still certain areas where the EU does not have the same prerogatives as other members. Specifically, it is excluded from budgetary and institutional discussions (Frid 1995: 266–7, Pedersen 2007: 64–5). Some argue that it is better to speak of a

‘parallel full membership’ with the member states since the EU’s voting power depends on whether the issue at stake is an exclusive or a shared competence (Emerson et al. 2011: 44). This still constitutes a qualitative leap compared with its previous observer status.

Making Long-term Participation Work: Initial Decision, Path Dependency and Critical Junctures

Initial Decision

The cases included in this chapter predominantly point to a marked and long-term continuity of the EU’s membership status in IOs (see Figure 2.1 for an illustration). Before looking for explanations, we turn to the starting point of this continuity, i.e. the ‘initial decision’ concerning the Union’s status. In doing so, we turn to the internal/external and legal/political factors that were mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. Which factors are behind the initial decisions on the EU’s membership status? External legal factors play a decisive role in the opportunity for the EU to participate in the identified international institutions. In the event that the IO is created after the establishment of the EU in 1957, the initial decision is situated around the decision to create the new institution. For example, at the time of the creation of the OECD, the DAC and the G8/G20, the question of EU membership came to the surface. Conversely, if the IO is older than the EU, as in the cases of the ILO and the FAO, it is very likely that its constitution only provides for observer status of non-state actors and not for full membership. The GATT is one exception: its constitution was less constraining since the GATT was not an international organisation but rather a multilateral treaty. Consequentially, it was easier for the EU to become a full participant of the GATT, even though the latter was already established in 1947. There was also broad political support for full membership inside the EU and from other GATT signatories.

However, although the external legal context might be important, it is not sufficient as an explanation. On the one hand, there is considerable variation in the EU's membership status in institutions that were created after 1957. External political factors often play a decisive role in these decisions. For example, the 1961 decision to grant the Community full membership in the DAC was driven by a favourable geopolitical context, which took precedence over the legal and political objections that existed at the time (Carroll and Kellow 2011). Also, the 1999 decision not to grant the Commission any status in the G20 was driven by the veto of the United States of America (US) against including the Commission in these institutions.

Moreover, there exists interplay between internal political factors (i.e. preference homo/heterogeneity among EU member states) and the external political context that is important during the initial decision. For example, this interplay comes to the fore when looking at the 1961 decision to make the Community a full participant in the OECD. While the geopolitical context was favourable, notably with the US in favour of full membership, the Community ultimately had to settle for full participation as the result of a compromise between its own member states. Countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands or Italy joined the US in favour of full membership, but this fell on deaf ears with France and the UK, who felt that this was a prerogative of sovereign states (Verschaeve and Takacs 2013). Similarly, once more against the background of a favourable geopolitical context, the 1977 decision to make the Community a full participant in the G8 was the result of a compromise between its member states. Another example comes from the Community's full participation in the GATT, where, without explicit possibilities foreseen in the Agreement, political practice to have the Community at the table as a full participant was accepted internally and externally.

On the other hand, the EU's observer status within older IOs also differs from attendant (ILO) to observer (FAO). In order to explain the variation between these two cases, it should be noted that internal legal factors also play a role, since the EU's competences in matters covered by the FAO were more substantial than competences in ILO-related issues at the time of the establishment of the EU. However, the distribution of competences does not always explain the EU's membership status. While it is true that the Union's competences are often used as an argument in favour of or against a specific membership status, they are a rather unreliable predictor for the initial decisions. For example, at the time of the 1961 decision to grant the Community full membership in the DAC, this was not supported by substantial competences in the field of development. Nevertheless, geopolitical factors brushed aside this objection, resulting in the Community taking a place at the table as a full member (Verschaeve and Takacs 2013).

Path Dependency and Critical Junctures

The general picture that emerges from our analysis hitherto is that, once the EU has embraced participation in an international institution, its initial membership status is unlikely to change over the following decades. The cases show that the effects of long-term participation of the EU in an IO tend to correspond to what historical institutionalism has defined as 'path dependency'. According to this theory, member states delegate power to the EU level at a certain point in time, prompted by their short-term interests. In the long run, however, their initial decisions can become increasingly irrational due to changing preferences or unforeseen consequences. Nonetheless, member states are generally unable to fix this discrepancy between their initial and newfound interest, since this is often too expensive (e.g. because of the costs already incurred) or even impossible (e.g. because of the veto power of one institutional actor; Meunier and McNamara 2007, Pierson 1996). As a result, member states are locked in a path, and adapt to the

new – sometimes suboptimal – situation. Only in moments of rapid change in internal and external conditions – critical junctures – is (radical) change possible. ‘As such, ... critical junctures constitute a situation that is qualitatively different from the “normal” historical development of the institutional setting of interests’ (Cappoccia and Kelemen 2007: 348).

The historical institutionalist dynamics described above clearly apply to our cases. Despite significant internal and external changes over time, the EU’s membership status has remained fairly constant (see Figure 2.1). For example, the upgrading of internal competences for the EU in certain areas such as social affairs and employment has not enhanced its attendant status in the ILO. One important factor here is the continuing reluctance of the EU member states to similarly delegate the external representation of these issues to the supranational level (Johnson 2005: 161). Despite the development of an extensive agricultural and fisheries policy at the EU level since the 1960s, and several calls by the Commission for full membership in the FAO, it took more than three decades before the EU became a member of this international institution. Similarly, while the economic integration of the EU had been significantly expanded since the end of the 1970s and even extended to monetary integration in the Euro zone, for a very long time (until the late 2000s) the European Commission was not represented in the G20 because of opposition from the US. Another example of the limited value of internal competences to explain continuity in the EU’s membership status concerns the EU’s membership in the OECD. Even though the EU obtained legal personality with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which overcomes the legal hurdle for obtaining full membership of the OECD, the EU’s membership status has not changed as this has been opposed by non-EU members of the OECD.

[Insert Figure 2.1 here]

Figure 2.1 EU membership evolution in a selection of IOs

Also, changing internal political factors have not always entailed a change in the EU's membership status. For example, despite EU member states' contestation of EU competences in development aid since the 1960s, the EU's membership status in the DAC has remained untouched over time. Also in the field of trade, the political context does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the EU's membership status. The EU became a member of the newly established WTO despite the changing political atmosphere in the early 1990s around the role of the EU in 'new' and 'deep' trade issues. Notwithstanding the contestation surrounding the EU's role in the new trade agenda, the *de facto* practice that had been established in the GATT was extended by providing mixed EU/member states formal membership of the WTO, whereas in political terms it is the supranational level that has full membership. Conversely, while the Commission's role in dealing with new trade issues was accepted by the member states and even legalised in the new Lisbon Treaty, this has not led to the withdrawal of EU member states' formal membership of the WTO. Again, continuity is remarkably strong.

However, our research also shows two important examples of change in membership status: the full membership of the FAO since 1991, and the participation of the European Commission in the G20 since 2008. These exceptions to the rule can be explained by looking at the broader political context, which was changing drastically at the time of the decision to upgrade the EU's membership status. While the Commission and some member states had been advocating full membership of the FAO for decades (e.g. European Commission 1971), and while nothing prevented the EU from negotiating membership of the FAO from the 1960s onwards when the agricultural provisions of the Rome Treaty had been fully implemented (Frid 1993: 239), it took until the end of the 1980s before a change of the FAO's constitution became

politically feasible inside and outside the EU. In spite of changing circumstances, the status quo created at the time of the FAO's establishment in 1945 was maintained for a long time. The Commission was not allowed to start negotiations with the FAO and its members, even though only France directly opposed this initiative. A large majority of member states, including Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, were even in favour of membership talks (COREPER 1972). The prospect of difficult and lengthy negotiations within the FAO lent further support to those favouring the status quo. Then again, how can we explain that the EU's membership status eventually changed?

Three specific characteristics of the end of the 1980s (e.g. Sandholz and Zysman 1989) provided the context within which the EU's membership status of the FAO could be readdressed. First, this was a period of 'eurooptimism' initiated by the 'Europe 1992' project under the auspices of the Delors Commission. During this 'brief, shining moment' (Dinan 2004: 206) the European project also received broad support from policy-makers and the public at large, who widely agreed that one lesson of the 1970s was that many issues cannot be adequately addressed at the national level. Within this context, the Commission skilfully advanced integrationist proposals that went even beyond purely internal market issues. Second, the context appeared favourable for concessions on the part of member states in the area of agriculture. Again, the Commission played an important role. EU external policies at the time were dominated by the GATT Uruguay Round, with agricultural concessions at the forefront. At the same time, the EU was preparing a far-reaching Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform under Agricultural Commissioner MacSharry. Against this background, national sovereignty in agricultural issues had become, more than ever, unthinkable. Moreover, compared to the agricultural policy reforms being introduced at the EU and global levels, the loss of sovereignty involved in the EU's membership

of the FAO seemed only negligible. Third, since the end of the Cold War, the former Eastern bloc countries, who were the most consistent opponents of EU membership, had become less reluctant than in the past (Frid 1993, Van de Voorde 1992: 54). This last factor cannot explain why the Council agreed to start talks on accession with the FAO in April 1989, but it facilitated their successful conclusion in November 1991.

Within this facilitating context, an immediate cause for the reconsideration of the EU's membership was the negotiations on the 'Indian Ocean Tuna Commission' in the FAO (Frid 1995: 270). This new IO would deal with an issue that belongs to the exclusive competences of the EU (i.e. fisheries). However, the EU could not become a member because it was not a member of the FAO.⁹¹ The alternative solution to this problem was that a new institution would be established, outside the context of the FAO and the UN, to which the EU could easily become a member (Agence Europe 1989). Thus, because of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission case and another related case (i.e. a similar agreement on fishing in the Mediterranean), the FAO had a distinct institutional interest in EU membership, which would allow its bureaucratic expansion towards more specific organisations. This tilting of interests on the side of the FAO is interesting because the FAO was generally reluctant concerning the accession of regional organisations.⁹² Yet, it realised that fully involving the actors who are responsible for the issues at stake (i.e. the

⁹¹ In 1978 the European Commission had already requested full membership in the FAO's Fisheries committee, arguing that its observer status did not allow it to work adequately in the committee. The FAO Council argued, though, that this would involve extremely complicated changes to the FAO constitution and that the EU could fully use its observer status (Tavares De Pinho 1993: 657–8).

⁹² Even when accepting the accession of the EU, the FAO, together with industrialised countries, aimed at a stringent definition of 'regional economic integration organizations' to which only the EU qualifies, in order to avoid 'an unhappy precedent' for other regional organisations (Van de Voorde 1992: 59).

EU in the area of fisheries) would also increase the leverage and legitimacy of the FAO's workings (Frid 1995: 238 and 270). It is probably no coincidence that the Council decided to start talks on membership in April 1989, two years after the Commission's proposal, but in the same month as the organisation of a conference on the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (Tavares de Pinho 1993: 658). When such a Commission was established in 1993, it explicitly provided for the membership of regional organisations to which states have transferred relevant competences, so that the EU could easily accede.

Also, the upgrade of the Commission's status in the G20 took place in a rapidly changing international context, namely the global financial crisis. When the G20 was upgraded to the level of Heads of State and Government in 2008, the Commission was suddenly fully accepted as an integral part of the EU delegation at all levels in the G20. This unexpected entrance of the Commission at the G20 is remarkable given the traditional reluctance of G7 members to involve the European Commission in the G7 and the G20. The global financial crisis expanded the range of choice possibilities for key G20 actors on possible Commission involvement. In other words, it made the inclusion of the European Commission in the G20 more likely because of at least two reasons. First, the EU member states acknowledged the potentially important role of the Commission in a European response to the crisis, as witnessed by its role as initiator and coordinator of the European Economic Recovery Plan. An illustrative response at the international level is the discussion in early 2008 on possible membership of the European Commission in the Financial Stability Forum, the executive arm of the G20 (US Embassy London cable 04/02/2008). Second, one of the main issues to be tackled by the G20 in 2008 and 2009 was the regulation of financial markets and services. The Commission is responsible for proposing and monitoring the legal framework in financial services and is conceived as an

influential actor in this matter (Quaglia 2010: 134). Involving the Commission in the G20 was thus not only necessary because of the distribution of competences within the EU, it would also add a considerable amount of expertise to the G20's work. Moreover, given its agenda-setting powers and the right to initiate and draft legislation, having the Commission at the table would increase the chances of swift implementation of G20 measures by the EU.

Additionally, the decision to convene an international summit at leaders level in 2008 was taken at a meeting of the French President Sarkozy and the Commission President Barroso with US President Bush at Camp David. Sarkozy and Barroso envisaged an enlarged G8 summit. In this format, Commission participation would have been secured, given its involvement in the G8. A few days after this meeting, the US announced that it would invite the G20 leaders to the crisis meeting. Even though the Commission was not involved in the G20, it would have been difficult for President Bush not to invite Barroso after their joint decision for a summit at Camp David.

The Effects of Long-term Participation

While the previous sections provide evidence of a strong consistency in the EU's membership status over time, this section takes a closer look at the long-term effects that stem from it. In doing so, we pay particular attention to the effects of the EU on an IO (uploading) as well as the effects the other way around (downloading). Starting with the latter, it seems that in a number of cases a strong membership status may eventually result in an expansion of the intra-EU competences in that particular policy area. For example, contrary to the preferences of several member states, the DAC helped the EU in establishing its role as a strong development actor. Before the EU took part in the work of the DAC, the Commission was unable to play an assertive development role vis-à-vis its member states as the EU lacked both legal competences and

analytical capacities in the field of development cooperation (Frisch 2008, Grilli 1994). DAC membership, however, reversed this situation because the EU became a member of an important network of aid agencies and development donors. As a result, the Commission rapidly became a fully informed development player increasingly assuming for itself a strong aid role (Carroll and Kellow 2011, Cosgrove-Twitchett 1978). This, among other factors, eventually resulted in the delegation of shared development competences to the EU level in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty (Arts and Dickson 2004, Verschaeve and Takacs 2013). Nonetheless, at that time, and even up to the time of writing, development cooperation remains a highly sensitive and contested EU policy. Also in the trade domain, the EU's competences were extended, to cover sensitive issues such as intellectual property rights, services and investment in order to bring the internal, formal rules in line with the established practice within the WTO.

The effects of long-term participation also go the other way round, referring to the effects of the EU on IOs. This can be illustrated with the case of the GATT/WTO. More specifically, at the time of the WTO's establishment in 1995, the decision on the EU's membership status was *de facto* a non-decision for both EU and non-EU members as the Union quasi-automatically obtained the full membership status. This stems from the fact that the EU had always taken part in the work of the GATT as if it was a contracting party (Hilf 1995, Billiet 2006). In other words, over time the EU had developed a reputation – or perhaps even identity – as a *de facto* member of the GATT, which was impossible to reverse at the time of the WTO's establishment talks. As a result, alternative options were not explored, even though they could have been – theoretically speaking – equally or perhaps more suitable.

The case of the FAO also shows that a critical juncture leading to a change in membership status, can, in the long-term, also involve a change in related organisations that were established

before the change of membership status. Such a membership spill-over has been witnessed by the EU's accession to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (the 'Codex'), created by the FAO and the World Health Organization in 1963. Expectations that EU membership to the FAO would quickly spill over into accession to the Codex did not materialise because of disagreements within the FAO and within the EU (Frid 1995: 275, Van Schaik 2013). Once again, it proved difficult to change the membership rules of an 'old' IO in the face of opposition from a number of member states, even if there seemed to be sound legal and political reasons to do so. However, proponents of EU accession to the Codex continued to use the example of the FAO in arguing for membership of the Codex. At the end of the 1990s the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis and the hormones case provided a window of opportunity that further legitimised a common EU approach to food issues. In July 2003 the EU eventually became a Codex member.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the evolution of the EU's membership status, in politico-legal terms, in eight IOs within the socio-economic sphere: the GATT/WTO, the OECD family (OECD and DAC), the Gx family (G8 and G20), the ILO and the FAO. We have found that, between the different IOs, the EU's status varied significantly, ranging from absent to a full member. For example, in 2014, the EU is a member of the WTO, but only an attendant in the ILO. Our second main finding is that the EU's membership status neither changes regularly, nor drastically. The EU's membership status has remained constant for decades in the ILO, OECD, DAC, G8 and GATT/WTO.

Both main findings confront the existing literature on the EU's role in IOs with problems. Common explanations, based on differences in internal/external and legal/political explanations

such as IO rules (external, legal), EU competences (internal, legal), external context (external, political) and internal preferences (internal, political), cannot fully explain our findings. To reiterate, while the EU has shared competence for social policy, agriculture and fisheries, economic cohesion and consumer protection – Art. 4.2 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) – and mixed competence in development cooperation (Art. 4.4 TFEU), its membership status in the concordant IOs currently varies from full member (DAC, FAO), through full participant (OECD) to attendant (ILO). Also, changes over time in the EU’s internal competences and the other three variables are not similarly reflected in the evolution of the EU’s membership status in these IOs.

Our research leads to three main conclusions. The first is that the EU’s membership status is ‘sticky’: it does not tend to change – neither often, nor radically. This thus gives great weight to the ‘initial decision’ on the EU’s membership status within an IO. This initial decision, we have shown, is dependent on its timing (when an IO precedes the establishment of the EU, its founding text generally does not foresee the full membership of non-states), and influenced by an interplay of internal and external political factors, where the big players internationally (the US) and internally (France, Germany and the UK) play a decisive role. Our second main finding is that the EU’s status is not completely rigid. It can change (in our cases: be upgraded), but only in a short time frame when the external and internal context is changing rapidly. We have identified two such critical junctures: the ‘eurooptimism’ and end of the Cold War era at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s (enabling full membership of the FAO) and the international financial crisis at the end of the 2000s (enabling Commission membership of the G20). Our third conclusion is that this path dependency of the EU’s status in IOs has important and often unintended consequences

beyond the EU's role in the IO. It has an impact on both the IO's workings and the EU's internal division of competences and policies.

These three conclusions offer interesting hypotheses to be tested on the EU's status in other socio-economic international organisations – such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – as well as in other IOs (for example in the security, environmental or human rights spheres). Our analysis indicates that historical institutionalism might be a good theoretical candidate to explain the variety in the EU's membership status in IOs. Whether this theory actually applies to the entire study of EU–IO relations is hard to tell. However, based on our inductive case studies and the – at first sight – strong explanatory value of historical institutionalism, we believe that additional deductive research on this topic is worthwhile exploring.

Further Reading

For an insightful review of the interactions between the EU and the FAO, ILO and Fisheries Organizations, written at a time when these seemed to be changing:

Frid, R. 1995. *The Relations between the EC and International Organizations: Legal Theory and Practice*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

For a thorough legal reading of the EU's membership status in IOs:

Hoffmeister, F. 2007. Outsider or frontrunner? Recent developments under international and European law on the status of the European Union in international organizations and treaty bodies. *Common Market Law Review*, 44(1), 41–68.

For a good overview of the literature on EU–IOs from both a legal and political science perspective:

Jørgensen, K.E. and Wessel, R.A. 2011. The position of the European Union in (other) international organizations: Confronting legal and political approaches, in *European Foreign Policy: Legal and Political Perspectives*, edited by P. Koutrakos. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

For a discussion, from both a political and legal perspective, about the potential of the EU to ‘play on the multilateral playing field’:

Wouters, J., Basu, S. and Schunz, S. 2008. Meeting the challenges of a multilateralized world? The ‘multilaterability’ of the European Union. Leuven: Centre for Global Governance Studies, Working Paper 13.

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