

# **EU Transgovernmental Cooperation through Twinning in the Eastern Neighbourhood: Democratic Substance, Role of Member States, and Effectiveness**

Dissertation submitted by

**Dmytro Panchuk**

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science”

Supervisor:  
Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie

Co-supervisor:  
Dr. Fabienne Bossuyt





Faculty of Political and Social Sciences  
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Centre for EU Studies

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This dissertation benefited from a 34-month PhD fellowship  
by the European Commission (Erasmus Mundus Action 2 EUROEAST)

and

a 7-month PhD finalisation grant  
by the Special Research Fund (BOF) of Ghent University

To the loving memory of my grandmothers Olha and Halyna,  
and my uncle Oleksandr, whom I have lost during this PhD journey

## **Abstract (English)**

This PhD dissertation seeks to deepen the current understanding of the European Union's (EU) transgovernmental (TG) cooperation with its Eastern neighbours under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Scholars of Europeanisation and EU external governance have already pointed out the potential of EU TG cooperation to advance EU democracy promotion goals and regulatory standards to the ENP countries under the absence of EU membership perspective. The major instrument of such cooperation is Twinning, which fosters peer-to-peer, cross-border networks between civil servants and experts from EU member states (MS) and their ENP counterparts. Nevertheless, the existing literature overlooks several important aspects of EU TG cooperation, which pertain to the democratic substance, the role of MS, and the effectiveness of Twinning projects under the ENP. By drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship from EU studies and public administration, this dissertation addresses those gaps in four thematic articles.

The first article provides the context for this study by presenting TG cooperation as a promising but little studied instrument, which may help the EU advance its democracy promotion agenda under the ENP. The second article introduces the concept of democratic governance substance and explores the presence and variation of democratic governance norms in Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. The third article discusses the added value that Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) and the older MS bring for Twinning cooperation in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. The fourth and last article explores to what extent Twinning projects in Ukraine have been effective and what conditions explain their (in)effectiveness. The overall geographical focus of this work are the countries of the EU's Eastern neighbourhood, which are covered by the ENP framework.

In such a way, this dissertation proposes a new concept of democratic governance substance, conceptualises the comparative advantages of EU MS for Twinning cooperation, and suggests an original way of understanding the effectiveness of Twinning projects. In contrast to the predominantly qualitative studies of EU TG cooperation under the ENP, it also seeks to make a methodological contribution by embracing mixed-method approaches to data analysis. Finally, it provides policy-relevant recommendations regarding Twinning implementation in the future. In doing so, it relies on an original analysis of 45 semi-structured interviews, conducted with Twinning participants and experts from the Eastern neighbourhood countries, EU member states, and the European Commission between November 2014 and May 2016. Additionally, it uses a wealth of supplementary data from official Twinning documents, sectoral watchdogs, international organisations, government sources in the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood, and existing policy research.

The findings reveal that, through its Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, the EU promotes democratic governance substance, which varies by configuration and magnitude across policy sectors and countries. This variation is best explained by domestic variables, such as the country's political liberalisation, sector politicisation, and sector technical complexity. In addition, the dissertation demonstrates that, during Twinning cooperation, CEECs manifest mostly country-specific comparative advantages, such as their recent transition and accession experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with the Eastern neighbourhood countries. In contrast, the older MS typically offer

sector-specific comparative advantages, owing to their institutional experience, sectoral fit, existing sectoral networks with the Eastern neighbourhood countries, and prior Twinning participation. Both types of comparative advantages are found to be complementary. Finally, a configurational analysis of the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine indicates that a policy fit is the only necessary condition behind the legal and institutional convergence of the country with the EU's policy recommendations. Thereby, institutional convergence occurs in parallel to or exceeds legal convergence in effective Twinning projects. This undermines the mainstream scholarly expectations of the wide gap between EU norm adoption and implementation (application) in EU TG cooperation under the ENP.

## **Abstract (Nederlands)**

Dit proefschrift heeft tot doel de huidige kennis van de Europese Unie's (EU) transgouvernementele (TG) samenwerking met de oostelijke buurlanden in het kader van het Europees Nabuurschapsbeleid (ENB) te verdiepen. Onderzoekers van Europeanisering en EU external governance hebben al gewezen op het potentieel van EU TG samenwerking voor de bevordering van de EU's democratische doelstellingen en regelgevende normen in ENB-landen in de afwezigheid van een EU-lidmaatschapperspectief. Het voornaamste instrument van een dergelijke samenwerking is Twinning, die peer-to-peer, grensoverschrijdende netwerken tussen ambtenaren en deskundigen uit de EU-lidstaten (LS) en hun tegenhangers in ENB-landen bevordert. Toch ziet de bestaande literatuur een aantal belangrijke aspecten van de EU TG samenwerking over het hoofd, die betrekking hebben op de democratische inhoud, de rol van de LS, en de effectiviteit van Twinning projecten in het kader van het ENB. Door te steunen op inzichten van EU-studies en openbaar bestuur richt dit proefschrift zich op deze hiaten in vier thematische artikelen.

Het eerste artikel vormt de context voor deze studie door TG samenwerking te presenteren als een veelbelovend, maar weinig bestudeerd instrument, dat de EU kan helpen bij het bevorderen van haar democratieagenda in het kader van het ENB. Het tweede artikel introduceert het concept van *democratic governance substance* en onderzoekt de aanwezigheid en variatie van normen van democratisch bestuur in Twinningprojecten in de oostelijke buurlanden. Het derde artikel bespreekt de toegevoegde waarde die Centraal- en Oost-Europese landen en de oudere LS brengen voor Twinningssamenwerking in Azerbeidzjan en Oekraïne. Het vierde en laatste artikel onderzoekt in hoeverre Twinningprojecten in Oekraïne effectief zijn geweest en welke voorwaarden de (in)effectiviteit verklaren. De algemene geografische focus van dit werk zijn de landen van de oostelijke buurlanden, die vallen onder het ENB-kader.

Bijgevolg stelt dit proefschrift een nieuw concept voor, meer bepaald *democratic governance substance*, conceptualiseert het de comparatieve voordelen van de EU-lidstaten voor Twinningssamenwerking, en stelt het een originele manier voor om de effectiviteit van Twinningprojecten te begrijpen. In tegenstelling tot de overwegend kwalitatieve studies over EU-TG samenwerking in het kader van het ENB, wil het proefschrift ook een

methodologische bijdrage te leveren door een mixed-method aanpak te gebruiken voor de data-analyse. Tot slot biedt het beleidsrelevante aanbevelingen in het licht van Twinningimplementatie in de toekomst. Het proefschrift baseert zich op een originele analyse van 45 semi-gestructureerde interviews, uitgevoerd met Twinningdeelnemers en experts uit de oostelijke buurlanden, EU-lidstaten en de Europese Commissie tussen november 2014 en mei 2016. Daarnaast werd er ook een grote hoeveelheid aanvullende gegevens geraadpleegd uit officiële Twinningdocumenten, internationale organisaties, officiële bronnen van de EU en de Oostelijke buurlanden, en bestaand beleidsonderzoek.

De bevindingen tonen aan dat de EU door middel van haar Twinningprojecten in de oostelijke buurlanden democratisch bestuur bevordert die inhoudelijk variëren qua configuratie en omvang naargelang de beleidssectoren en landen. Deze variatie kan het beste uitgelegd worden door de binnenlandse variabelen, zoals politieke liberalisering van het land, sectorpolitiserings en sectortechnische complexiteit. Daarnaast toont het proefschrift ook aan dat CEECs tijdens Twinningssamenwerking vooral landspecifieke comparatieve voordelen vertonen vanwege hun transitie- en toetredingservaring, socio-linguïstische nabijheid, en gedeelde verleden met de oostelijke buurlanden. Oudere LS hebben gewoonlijk sectorspecifieke comparatieve voordelen, vanwege hun institutionele ervaring, sectorale fit, bestaande sectorale netwerken met de oostelijke buurlanden, en voorafgaande Twinningparticipatie. Tot slot geeft de configuratieve analyse van de effectiviteit van de Twinning-projecten in Oekraïne aan dat *policy fit* de enige noodzakelijke voorwaarde is achter de wettelijke en institutionele convergentie van het land met de aanbevelingen van de EU. Daarbij treedt institutionele convergentie parallel op met of overtreft het wettelijke convergentie in effectieve Twinningprojecten. Deze bevinding gaat in tegen de mainstream wetenschappelijke verwachtingen dat er een brede kloof is tussen de goedkeuring en implementatie van EU-normen in de EU-TG samenwerking in het kader van het ENB.



**About the author**

Dmytro Panchuk is a PhD candidate at the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University. His research focuses on EU transgovernmental cooperation and institution-building instruments, such as Twinning, in the European Neighbourhood Policy. During 2009-2011, he pursued his Master's in Public Administration at Kansas State University (USA) and worked as a researcher with the Institute for Academic Alliances, an online education consortium. Upon return to his home country Ukraine, he worked for two years at the National University of Ostroh Academy (Ukraine), teaching courses in Economics, Political Science, and Legal English. He also interned with the Canadian Federal Government (2007) and the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation (2010). During his association with Ghent University, he has also given guest lectures about his research and the political situation in Ukraine for local community organisations and the media.

## Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation has by far been the most demanding and rewarding experience of my life. I owe this work to a great team of people, who have been an invaluable source of support throughout these challenging 40 months.

First of all, I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my promoters Dr. Fabienne Bossuyt and Prof. Dr. Jan Orbie for being at the frontlines of my research during all this time. Their remarkable patience, fine scholarly intuition, and caring attitude made this dissertation possible. Fabienne helped me perfect the nitty-gritty of the research design and provided helpful tips for fieldwork. Jan influenced the strategic direction of my work and always challenged me to look beyond what I wrote.

I am also indebted to the members of my Doctoral Guidance Committee. The astute advice by my compatriot Dr. Olga Burlyuk led to several “aha” moments in my research process, just when I needed them most. Dr. Anne Wetzel contributed with valuable methodological tips and useful feedback on the earlier drafts of this dissertation. Her research articles were also a major source of inspiration and ideas for my conceptual framework. On the methodological front, I also thank Dr. Bruno Vandecasteele and Dr. Tim Haesebrouck for their precious advice on my use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis in Article 4. Dr. Joren Verschaeve’s experience in quantitative methods was instrumental for my regression analysis and group differences statistics in Article 2.

My gratitude also goes to those 45 civil servants and experts from the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood countries, who introduced me to the breath-taking world of Twinning cooperation. I thank them all for their time and willingness to become part of this research endeavour.

It has also been my delight and pleasure to be part of a vibrant team at the Centre for EU Studies. I sincerely thank all my colleagues for their comments on my work and taking their time to proofread my manuscripts. I deeply cherish our moments spent together in the Bruno meetings, the Lore breaks, the Sarah “nerds” sessions, the Zillebeke weeks, and of course our evenings over Belgian beer out in the bars. My experience would never be the same without sharing the same office with Dr. Hang Yuan, Dr. Hrant Kostanyan, Yunhan Zhang, Deborah Martens, Lin Goethals, and Marie-Annick Musch, to whom I am grateful for enriching my daily routines with the stories of their weekends, methodological insights, and the stimulating sound of typing. In addition, a thank you to our librarians Tania de Vos and Luc de Keyser for the good books and our small talks in the library.

I also thank all of my international and Ukrainian friends for a listening ear and encouragement.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my parents Mykhailo and Larysa, my brothers Roman and Vladyslav, my extended family, and my beloved woman Maria for always being there for me.

Thank you, thank you all!

Дякую щиро!

Dmytro Panchuk,  
January 18, 2017  
Ghent, Belgium

## List of abbreviations

<b>AA</b>	Association Agreement
<b>AP</b>	Action Plan
<b>CEE</b>	Central and Eastern Europe(an)
<b>CEECs</b>	Central and Eastern European Countries
<b>CIB</b>	Comprehensive Institution Building Programme
<b>e.g.</b>	for example ( <i>exempli gratia</i> )
<b>EaP</b>	Eastern Partnership
<b>EEA</b>	European Economic Area
<b>ENP</b>	European Neighbourhood Policy
<b>ETC</b>	European Transition Compendium
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>i.e.</b>	that is ( <i>id est</i> )
<b>MS</b>	EU Member State(s)
<b>PAA</b>	Permanent Accession Advisor
<b>PHARE</b>	Pologne-Hongrie, Aide à la Reconstruction Economique [Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies]
<b>PCA</b>	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
<b>QCA</b>	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
<b>RTA</b>	Resident Twinning Advisor
<b>SIGMA</b>	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
<b>SPS</b>	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
<b>TACIS</b>	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>TAIEX</b>	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
<b>TG</b>	Transgovernmental (e.g., cooperation, networks)
<b>UfM</b>	Union for Mediterranean

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Research problem

Following a relatively successful integration experiment with the Central and East European Countries (CEECs), which became European Union (EU) members in 2004 and 2007, the EU carried on with a similar foreign policy towards its new Eastern and Southern neighbours, yet eschewing the prospect of further enlargement. The EU crystallised this format of relations through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), seeking to create around the EU's external borders a "ring of friends" with shared liberal values and commitment to economic and institutional reform.<sup>1</sup> What the EU promised the ENP countries in return was gradual access to EU's single market and visa liberalisation.<sup>2</sup> However, the lack of membership perspective, the EU's biggest carrot, has reportedly undermined the EU's attempts at fostering desired political and economic reforms in the neighbouring countries.<sup>3</sup> Under such circumstances, scholars advised that the EU might have better chances in promoting democracy and regulatory standards to the ENP countries when it does so at the sectoral level, as part of transgovernmental (TG) cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

TG or sectoral cooperation refers to the cross-border sharing of administrative experience and best practices between government agencies from different countries in pursuit of policy harmonisation or coordination.<sup>5</sup> EU TG cooperation programs such as Twinning were intensively used during the Eastern enlargement in order to transpose the relevant chapters of the *acquis communautaire* to the domestic systems of CEECs.<sup>6</sup> With an arrival of the ENP, most EU TG cooperation programs continued virtually unchanged, albeit no longer attached to the rigid framework of EU accession

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with Our Eastern Neighbours" (Brussels, 2003), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no. 1 (March 2006): 29–55; Karen E. Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy," *International Affairs*, no. May (2005); Esther Ademmer, "Interdependence and EU-Demanded Policy Change in a Shared Neighbourhood," *Journal of European Public Policy* 22, no. 5 (2015): 671–89; Emerson Gergana, Noutcheva Nicu, and Michael Emerson, "European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time Indeed for an 'ENP European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time Indeed for an 'ENP Plus,'" 2007; Katarzyna Wolczuk, "Implementation without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine under the European Neighbourhood Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 2 (March 2009): 187–211.

<sup>4</sup> Tina Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 1–25; Tina Freyburg, Tatiana Skripka, and Anne Wetzels, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation," 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations," *World Politics* 27, no. 1 (1974): 39–62; Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Lucie Königová, Elsa Tulmets, and Eliška Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic," 2006; Court of Auditors, "Special Report No 6/2003 Concerning Twinning as the Main Instrument to Support Institution-Building in Candidate Countries Together with the Commission's Replies," 2003; Elsa Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary," *European Law Journal* 11, no. 5 (2005): 657–74.

any longer. Amidst the general scepticism about the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion and norm transfer under the ENP, scholars of Europeanisation and EU external governance have emphasised the technical and “co-optive” nature of EU TG cooperation as a way to trigger incremental change from within the public administration of the neighbouring states.<sup>7</sup> They have already pointed out the potential of EU TG programmes to diffuse norms of democratic governance to the ENP countries, as well as trigger limited convergence with EU regulatory standards at the sectoral level.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the available studies on the functioning of EU TG cooperation in general, and within the ENP in particular, are rather scarce and selective.

Therefore, on a broader level, this dissertation seeks to improve the current understanding of EU TG cooperation with the EU’s neighbours in the post-accession context. In particular, by drawing on interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and methodologies, the present work fills several gaps in the current scholarship on EU TG cooperation under the ENP. First, it systematically evaluates the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation and explains its variation across the Eastern neighbourhood. Second, it takes on the role of EU member states (MS) by identifying the specific added value that CEECs and the older MS offer for EU TG cooperation in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. And third, it analyses to what extent the EU has been effective in accomplishing its goals in TG cooperation with Ukraine and what conditions account for the EU’s (in)effectiveness. The empirical focus of this dissertation is the EU’s institution- and capacity-building instrument Twinning in the EU’s Eastern neighbourhood (Table 1).

Compared to the other tools of EU TG cooperation, like TAIEX, SIGMA, or CIB, Twinning fosters a long-term institutionalised cooperation forum between civil servants and experts from MS public institutions and their counterparts from the ENP countries. It relies on a joint commitment of the parties to a set of so-called mandatory results, pertaining to political and economic reforms in line with EU *acquis communautaire* and effective EU-third country agreements.<sup>9</sup> The Twinning manual stipulates that the Twinning project result in “a new or adapted system”, functioning under the sole responsibility and ownership of the beneficiary country (BC).<sup>10</sup> Because of its strong emphasis on inputs by MS and a more comprehensive engagement with the BC than any other technical assistance program, Twinning is considered the EU’s main

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<sup>7</sup> Tina Freyburg, “The Two Sides of Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes: A Multi-Level Perspective on the Conflict of Objectives between Political Stability and Democratic Change,” *Democratization* 19, no. 3 (2012): 591; Sandra Lavenex, “The Power of Functionalist Extension: How EU Rules Travel,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 21, no. 6 (2014): 885–903; Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Julia Langbein and Kataryna Wolczuk, “Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 19, no. 6 (August 2012): 863–81; Laure Delcour, “Multiple External Influences, Policy Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Case of Food Safety,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57, no. 1 (2016): 43–65.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, “Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual,” 2012, 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

instrument for institution-building abroad and hence the most likely case of EU TG cooperation for the purposes of this study.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, despite the importance of Twinning for the EU's institution-building efforts abroad, the literature discussing the Twinning instrument is limited to the period of accession and to several singular policy-oriented accounts and official documents under the ENP.<sup>12</sup> My focus on the Eastern neighbourhood region has been mainly driven by a greater diversity in explanatory factors and better data access opportunities that it offers, as compared to the Southern neighbourhood of the ENP.

In response to the research gaps outlined above, the body of the dissertation is divided into three parts (Table 1). The first part presents an overview of the literature on the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion and contextualises TG cooperation therein (Article 1). After establishing the promising role of TG cooperation for EU democracy and democratic governance promotion, I explore the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in 117 Twinning projects fiches from all the Eastern neighbourhood countries (Article 2). The second part of the dissertation deals with the added value of CEECs and the older MS for Twinning implementation in Azerbaijan and Ukraine (Article 3). An analysis of 40 interviews with civil servants from the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood countries sheds more light on the sector- and country-specific comparative advantages that CEECs and older MS contribute to EU TG programs and paves the way for better coordination between different MS. Finally, in the third part, I investigate the effectiveness of 32 Twinning projects in Ukraine by exploring to what extent and under what conditions they lead to the legal and institutional convergence of Ukrainian public administration in line with EU standards (Article 4). The conclusions recap the main findings of this study and offer relevant policy recommendations on how Twinning projects may be improved for the future.

The following sections of the introduction discuss major theories, concepts, and methodologies driving this study. Section 2 offers a brief outline of the ENP and broadly formulates the research problem in the context of EU TG cooperation in the post-accession context. Section 3 proceeds with a historical discussion of TG cooperation and its location within EU studies, along with problematising of the relevant literature and specifying of my own inputs. Section 4 then zooms in on several specific concepts and theoretical debates of interest to this study, like democratic governance, politics-administration dichotomy, MS comparative advantages, and EU normative power and effectiveness. Section 5 explicates the ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues of relevance to this work. In the final section of the introduction,

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<sup>11</sup> Court of Auditors, "Special Report No 6/2003 Concerning Twinning as the Main Instrument to Support Institution-Building in Candidate Countries Together with the Commission's Replies," 23.

<sup>12</sup> Gérard Bouscharain and Jean-Bernard Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 2012; Tina Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance," *World Political Science Review* 8, no. 1 (2012): 1–45; Elsa Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?," *Eastern Partnership Review*, no. 6 (2011), [http://www.eceap.eu/ul/Review\\_No6.pdf](http://www.eceap.eu/ul/Review_No6.pdf).

I introduce the reader to the articles and provide some personal reflections on the research process.

**Table 1.** Structure and focus of the study

	<b>Part I. Democratic substance of EU TG cooperation</b>		<b>Part II. Role of MS for EU TG cooperation</b>	<b>Part III. Effectiveness of EU TG cooperation</b>
	Article 1. Effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood through the lens of foreign policy analysis (FPA)	Article 2. The Substance of EU Democratic Governance Promotion via TG Cooperation with the Eastern Neighbourhood	Article 3. The participation of CEECs in EU Twinning projects: offering specific added value for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood?	Article 4. Effectiveness of EU Transgovernmental Cooperation in the Neighbourhood: Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Twinning Projects in Ukraine
Conceptual	Democracy promotion	Democratic governance substance	MS comparative advantages & added value	Effectiveness: legal & institutional convergence
Theoretical	RQ1. What is the role of EU TG cooperation in the EU democracy promotion? <sup>13</sup> RQ2. What democratic governance substance is promoted by EU TG cooperation? RQ3. What determines the variation in democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation?		RQ4. What added value do CEECs and the older MS bring for EU TG cooperation?	RQ5. To what extent is EU TG cooperation effective? RQ6. What conditions determine the (in)effectiveness of EU TG cooperation?
Methodological	Foreign Policy Analysis	Multivariate regression analysis and t-tests	Alter-Ego-Researcher's analysis	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
Empirical	European Neighbourhood Policy	Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood	Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine	Twinning projects in Ukraine

<sup>13</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, research questions apply to the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), covering the period of 2006-2016.

## 2. The European Neighbourhood Policy

Since the signing of the Treaty of the European Union, policymakers and scholars have taken a growing interest in the EU's international role and impact beyond its borders. A particularly interesting development to watch in that regard was the fourth round of enlargement, which expanded the EU further to the East in 2004 and 2007. These events gave rise to the Europeanisation and EU external governance literatures, studying the impact of EU integration on the domestic politics, policies, and politics of member states and beyond.<sup>14</sup> This set of literature will be the main theoretical domain and area of contribution of this dissertation.

One of the most prominent assumptions of the Europeanisation and EU external governance scholars is that a credible offer of EU membership is capable of triggering political and economic reforms in would-be members, in line with the EU's demands.<sup>15</sup> Even more so, making domestic reforms conditional upon prospective membership in the EU has been considered the most successful instrument for the promotion of EU norms in post-communist CEECs.<sup>16</sup> As Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier put it, "The desire of most CEECs to join the EU, combined with the high volume and intrusiveness of the rules attached to its membership, have allowed the EU an unprecedented influence on the restructuring of domestic institutions and the entire range of public policies in these countries."<sup>17</sup> In addition, the promise of EU accession was regarded as a sufficient legitimising vehicle for the EU to get involved in the domestic affairs of non-members.<sup>18</sup> Finally, some works viewed growing EU membership as promoting stability and security of the EU and its external borders,<sup>19</sup> a sentiment increasingly

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<sup>14</sup> Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse, "When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change," *European Integration Online Papers* 4, no. 15 (2000): 1; Dimitris Papadimitriou and David Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 3 (2004): 619–39; Isa Camyar, "Europeanization, Domestic Legacies and Administrative Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Hungary and the Czech Republic," *Journal of European Integration* 32, no. 2 (2010): 137–55, doi:10.1080/07036330903274664.

<sup>15</sup> Camyar, "Europeanization, Domestic Legacies and Administrative Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Hungary and the Czech Republic"; Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>16</sup> Janine Reinhard, "EU Democracy Promotion through Conditionality in Its Neighbourhood: The Temptation of Membership Perspective or Flexible Integration?," no. May 2001 (2010): 196–213; Andrea Gawrich, Inna Melnykovska, and Rainer Schweickert, "Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP: The Case of Ukraine," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 5 (2010): 1209–35; Gwendolyn Sasse, "The European Neighbourhood Policy: Conditionality Revisited for the EU's Eastern Neighbours," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 2 (2008): 295–316; Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*, Oxford University Press on Demand, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy* 11, no. 4 (2004): 661.

<sup>18</sup> Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, *The Europeanisation of Central and Eastern Europe*.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Browning and George Christou, "The Constitutive Power of Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Dimension," *Political Geography* 29, no. 2 (2010): 112; Lykke Friis and Anna Murphy, "The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe: Governance and Boundaries," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 220.

shared by works looking at the domestic situation in some of the EU's current neighbours aspiring to join the EU.<sup>20</sup>

Once the expansion had taken place, the EU faced a so-called "enlargement fatigue", associated with the political and structural challenges of integrating CEECs.<sup>21</sup> The EU's previously powerful membership conditionality has lost its bite for the new MS. As a result, some of them stagnated or even backtracked in their democratic and institutional approximation with the EU.<sup>22</sup> While the question of acquiring new members was taken off the table, the EU was contemplating a suitable framework of relations with the new neighbouring countries in the East and the South. It was important for the EU to not only secure its external borders and pre-empt a potential surge in transnational crime but also foster liberal democratic and economic systems in neighbours.<sup>23</sup> In such a way, the EU wanted to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and foster "close, peaceful, and co-operative relations" with its new neighbours.<sup>24</sup>

The ENP represented the EU's attempt to address those challenges.<sup>25</sup> While excluding the possibility of a membership in a short- and medium-term perspective, the EU offered the neighbouring countries a stake in the EU's Internal Market and further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms).<sup>26</sup> Therefore, short of EU membership, the ENP framework offered the neighbours the possibility of a "privileged relationship" with the EU, as based on mutual commitment to the common values, such as human rights and democracy.<sup>27</sup> In 2008 and 2009, the ENP was complemented by two regional initiatives, Eastern Partnership (EaP) and Union for Mediterranean (UfM), covering the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods, respectively.

Despite its different strategic agenda, the ENP was predominantly modelled on enlargement conditionality.<sup>28</sup> The ENP country's progress in democracy and adaptation

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<sup>20</sup> Lyubov Zhyznomirska, "Security Concerns in the EU Neighbourhood: The Effects of EU Immigration and Asylum Policy for Ukraine," in *The Boundaries of EU Enlargement*, ed. Joan DeBardeleben (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 147–64; Anja Franke et al., "The European Union's Relations with Ukraine and Azerbaijan," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2010): 171.

<sup>21</sup> An Schrijvers and Eline De Ridder, "European Union Accession Policy," in *The European Union and Global Governance*, ed. Jens-Uwe Wunderlich and David Bailey (London: Routledge, 2011), 166–76.

<sup>22</sup> Antoaneta Dimitrova, "The New Member States of the EU in the Aftermath of Enlargement: Do New European Rules Remain Empty Shells?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 1 (2010): 137–48; Jan Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, "The Durability of EU Civil Service Policy in Central and Eastern Europe after Accession," *Governance* 24, no. 2 (2011): 254.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>24</sup> European Commission, "Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with Our Eastern Neighbours," 4.

<sup>25</sup> The ENP included Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia (Southern neighbourhood) and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine (Eastern neighbourhood).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

of the *acquis* was to be measured against the priorities for political and structural reforms, as listed in bilateral Action Plans (AP) between the EU and the country concerned.<sup>29</sup> Similarly to those with accession conditionality, the benefits for successful implementation of the Action Plans have followed a *quid pro quo* strategy, whereby access to the EU's market and visa liberalisation have been contingent upon the country's progress in relevant policy sectors.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, because of the main carrot of EU membership missing, the ENP has come under criticism among scholars and practitioners for failing to satisfy the membership aspirations of EU's neighbours and, for that matter, failing to motivate them for reforms in line with EU standards.<sup>31</sup> Apart from the lack of a membership perspective, another widespread reason behind the criticism of the ENP has been the inadequacy and insufficiency of the other rewards the EU has attached to the fulfilment of priorities from the APs. The ENP has produced no clear blueprint detailing which rewards follow which of the many reforms proposed, when and what happens in the case of non-compliance, as well as how the process of evaluation is to be conducted.<sup>32</sup> The launch of the EaP and UfM brought some clarity into these problems by introducing regional stratification of the ENP countries. The Association Agreements (AA) and the on-going bilateral dialogues on visa liberalisation with the Eastern neighbourhood countries produced even more measurable benchmarks in relevant policy sectors.<sup>33</sup> However, in many other sectors the EU has reportedly not made its rewards credible or strong enough for the neighbours to reform their systems.

In this context, it should be mentioned that the response to the ENP has not been identical across the EU's neighbours in question. For example, some Eastern neighbourhood countries, like Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, known as the most aspiring for EU membership and with the best record of EU integration so far, have criticised the multilateral approach of the ENP because they ended up in the same basket with the MENA states of the Southern neighbourhood, which were not even eligible for EU membership as they were not considered to be geographically part of the European continent.<sup>34</sup> Other Eastern neighbourhood countries, like Azerbaijan and Belarus, have mostly distanced themselves from the ENP because of political reasons

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>31</sup> Frank Schimmelfennig and H. Scholtz, "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange," *European Union Politics* 9, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 187–215; Karen Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Cambridge, 2014); Tanja Börzel and Bidzina Lebanidze, "European Neighbourhood Policy at the Crossroads Evaluating the Past to Shape the Future," *MAXCAP Working Paper No.12*, Berlin, no. 12 (2015): Freie Universität Berlin; Elena Korosteleva, *The European Union and Its Eastern Neighbours: Towards a More Ambitious Partnership?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Smith, "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>33</sup> Syuzanna Vasilyan, "The 'European' 'Neighbourhood' 'Policy' A Holistic Account," in *The European Union and Global Governance*, ed. Jens-Uwe Wunderlich and David Bailey (London: Routledge, 2011), 177–86.

<sup>34</sup> Marcin Łapczyński, "The European Union's Eastern Partnership: Chances and Perspectives," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2009): 141.



or the generally low interest in the EU.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Belarus was excluded from most ENP programmes due to its authoritarian system and political isolation from Europe.<sup>36</sup> Armenia was at first responsive to the EU's demands by demonstrating a commendable level of reform in line with the EU's requirements, but in 2013 it reneged on its commitment to signing an AA with the EU.<sup>37</sup>

Besides failing to account for diversity in political systems and preferences in the Eastern neighbourhood, the ENP has also largely ignored the influence of Russia. Several scholars have already pointed out complex interdependencies between the EU, Russia, and the Eastern neighbourhood countries as interfering with EU's foreign policy under the ENP.<sup>38</sup> In most cases, the Russian factor has been an inhibiting force to reforms in the Eastern neighbourhood countries; however, sometimes Russia has paradoxically pushed its neighbours into the EU's embraces, as the latter offered an alternative market and geopolitical project.<sup>39</sup> Recent wars in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as a network of Russian-orchestrated zones of frozen conflicts in the region, have put an additional strain on the EU as a normative power in general, and the ENP in particular.

Because of those problems, the relevant literature concurs that the transformative power of the EU under the ENP has been rather marginal and selective.<sup>40</sup> Even more so, some political actors in the neighbourhood, under the veil of advancing EU-driven reforms, may have used the EU's assistance to consolidate their grip on power.<sup>41</sup>

However, not all the EU studies have been so pessimistic. A group of EU external governance scholars have suggested that, by transferring the *acquis* to the neighbouring countries, the EU also has subtle democratisation tools at its disposal. By drawing on the concept of democratic governance, these authors revealed the EU's potential to diffuse democracy at the level of individual policy sectors by using the

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<sup>35</sup> Laure Delcour and Hrant Kostanyan, "Towards a Fragmented Neighbourhood: Policies of the EU and Russia and Their Consequences for the Area That Lies in between," 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Gergana, Nicu, and Emerson, "European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time Indeed for an 'ENP European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time Indeed for an 'ENP Plus,'" 25.

<sup>37</sup> Laure Delcour and Kataryna Wolczuk, "The EU's Unexpected 'Ideal Neighbour'? The Perplexing Case of Armenia's Europeanisation," *Journal of European Integration* 37, no. 4 (2015): 491–507.

<sup>38</sup> Antoaneta Dimitrova and Rilka Dragneva, "Constraining External Governance: Interdependence with Russia and the CIS as Limits to the EU's Rule Transfer in the Ukraine," *Journal of European Public Policy* 16, no. 6 (September 2009): 853–72; Ademmer, "Interdependence and EU-Demanded Policy Change in a Shared Neighbourhood"; Delcour and Wolczuk, "The EU's Unexpected 'Ideal Neighbour'? The Perplexing Case of Armenia's Europeanisation."

<sup>39</sup> Esther Ademmer, Laure Delcour, and Kataryna Wolczuk, "Beyond Geopolitics: An Introduction to the Impact of the EU and Russia in the 'contested Neighborhood,'" *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>40</sup> Börzel and Lebanidze, "European Neighbourhood Policy at the Crossroads Evaluating the Past to Shape the Future," 6; Tom Casier, "The EU's Two-Track Approach to Democracy Promotion: The Case of Ukraine," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 72–93.

<sup>41</sup> Esther Ademmer and Tanja A. Börzel, "Migration, Energy and Good Governance in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 4 (2013): 581–608; Freyburg, "The Two Sides of Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes: A Multi-Level Perspective on the Conflict of Objectives between Political Stability and Democratic Change."

mechanisms of norm transfer and socialisation.<sup>42</sup> Thus, they argued that the broader democratisation of a political system may be a long-term result of a shift towards a system of public administration that is more transparent, accountable, and inclusive.<sup>43</sup> In addition, some countries of the Eastern neighbourhood have shown moderate progress in *acquis*-related administrative and economic reforms, arguably as the result of the existing ENP carrots, such as the prospect of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) or a visa-free regime.<sup>44</sup> Several studies of Europeanisation beyond accession demonstrate that those incentives have been strong enough to trigger moderate levels of convergence with EU *acquis* in several sectors of the Eastern neighbourhood countries. Some examples include technical, sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), and environmental sectors in Ukraine;<sup>45</sup> SPS, migration, and competition sectors in Armenia;<sup>46</sup> and migration and border control areas in Georgia.<sup>47</sup>

The common thread running through those more optimistic strands of EU external governance and Europeanisation literature is the sectoral character of norm transfer from the EU to the ENP countries. Such sectoral transfer has usually occurred via TG networks between the EU and the ENP countries concerned. At the theoretical level, those studies have also made a shift from the explanations favouring the hierarchical effects of EU accession conditionality towards the network-based approaches, focusing on the cross-border links between specific public ministries and agencies from the EU and its neighbours. Thus, it was no longer fitting to evaluate the ENP by only looking at the macro-level factors, such as membership conditionality or pro-EU aspirations by the neighbours, while underestimating the micro-level dynamics of norm transfer at the sectoral level.<sup>48</sup> As Langbein and Wolczuk rightfully noted, "It is only at a sectoral level that the domestic configuration of actors and their preferences can be fully assessed in the context of non-accession."<sup>49</sup> Even though, in most cases, convergence with EU norms via sectoral cooperation has been selective,

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<sup>42</sup> Tina Freyburg et al., "Democracy Promotion through Functional Cooperation? The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 142–70.

<sup>43</sup> Anne Wetzel, "Governance Perspective: Democratic Governance Promotion Through Functional Cooperation," in *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 58–67.

<sup>44</sup> Börzel and Lebanidze, "European Neighbourhood Policy at the Crossroads Evaluating the Past to Shape the Future," 8.

<sup>45</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Aron Buzogány, "Selective Adoption of EU Environmental Norms in Ukraine. Convergence À La Carte," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 4 (2013): 609–30; Delcour, "Multiple External Influences, Policy Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Case of Food Safety."

<sup>46</sup> Delcour and Wolczuk, "The EU's Unexpected 'Ideal Neighbour'? The Perplexing Case of Armenia's Europeanisation."

<sup>47</sup> Laure Delcour, "Meandering Europeanisation. EU Policy Instruments and Policy Convergence in Georgia under the Eastern Partnership," *East European Politics* 29, no. 3 (2013): 344–57.

<sup>48</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine."

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 878.

partial, and somewhat random, I view this as a call for broader empirical investigation of EU TG cooperation across a wider swath of countries and policy areas in the Eastern neighbourhood.

### **3. History of EU TG cooperation**

The following sections offer a historical overview of the phenomenon of TG cooperation and fit it within recent debates in the Europeanisation and EU external governance literatures. Hereby, I also provide deeper grounding for the specific research questions pursued by the study.

#### ***3.1. TG cooperation in International Relations***

TG cooperation refers to peer-to-peer relationships and sharing of expertise between governments of different countries in the process of policymaking. The various forms of TG relations include both contacts between state leaders and, often as their result, a collaboration between the specific governmental agencies of two or more participating states. The idea of TG cooperation can be traced back to good neighbourly relations between states from the distant past. The Bible relates an account of Queen Sheba who came to visit the kingdom of Solomon and discover secrets of his wise governance, which was widely known among the contemporaries. In later epochs, TG partnerships were a manifestation of growing diplomatic and commercial ties, which naturally required a certain level of mutual regulation and coordination of trade among states. Medieval rulers, kings, and princes looked up to their more well-off neighbours for inspiration and guidance in governing their own kingdoms and empires. They also often used support from foreign governments to quench internal dissent or stand against a common enemy. In the times of industrialisation and birth of liberal economics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, TG collaboration was becoming a precursor to free trade and economic growth. In the modern times of globalisation, the internet, and a more affordable international travel, TG cooperation is reaching out to more countries and unveiling more opportunities for exchange of best practices.

In light of that, studying TG cooperation appears a worthwhile research subject from the development and historical point of view, as it helps states become more integrated economically, culturally, and politically in a diverse world. Nonetheless, while being widespread around the globe in one form or another for many centuries, TG cooperation has received relatively little coverage in scholarly literature.

The first scientific conceptualisation of TG cooperation belongs to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, who defined it as "sets of direct interactions among sub-units of different governments that are not controlled or closely guided by the policies of the

cabinets or chief executives of those governments".<sup>50</sup> These sub-units of governments may be represented by public ministries, specialised agencies, services, administrations, and affiliated bureaucratic personnel, who engage in working relationships with their counterparts from abroad. By introducing the term TG relations, the scholars pursued two purposes. First, they sought to relax the traditional realist approach to state as a homogenous unit of international relations by acknowledging the possibility of cross-border partnerships occurring directly between public bureaucracies in a specific policy area. And second, they intended to make a break with the existing concept of transnational cooperation, dealing primarily with support to non-governmental organisations and civil society actors in less developed countries.<sup>51</sup>

Keohane and Nye split TG cooperation into two major types: TG coordination and TG coalition-building. TG coordination, a more common phenomenon and the primary focus of this study, is concerned with a smooth process of policy making, adjustment, or implementation, which comes through sharing of expertise and solutions across borders. TG coalition building, which is less common for the Eastern neighbourhood countries, is a political tool that may be used by public institutions to rally support from counterpart institutions abroad in a bid to alter the balance of powers inside their own administrative system.<sup>52</sup>

The idea of TG relations seemed to be forgotten in over 20 years before Anne-Marie Slaughter picked it up and presented as a promising way to address pressing problems of international governance, such as spreading democracy, combatting transnational crime, or mitigating environmental pollution. In contrast to liberal institutionalists, who maintained that the state as a unit of international relations was losing ground to international organisations, Slaughter suggested that the state was not disappearing, but instead disaggregating into its separate, functionally distinct parts, such as regulatory agencies, courts, and legislatures, which engaged in a dense web of networks with their counterparts abroad.<sup>53</sup> These networks of bureaucrats, responding to global policy challenges, are more flexible than international institutions or states.<sup>54</sup> Owing to this, Slaughter argues, TG networks contribute to the creation of a new, TG order, and simultaneously offer an effective mode of international governance.<sup>55</sup>

Slaughter also puts forth a typology of TG cooperation by drawing on its source and function. Depending on their source, TG networks may arise either spontaneously, because of the need to solve a current policy problem, or officially, owing to formal

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<sup>50</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organisations," 43.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>53</sup> Anne-Marie Slaughter, "The Real New World Order," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 184.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

agreements concluded by heads of state.<sup>56</sup> Slaughter talks of information, enforcement, and harmonisation networks as depicting various functions of TG cooperation. As their name suggests, information networks refer to a cross-border exchange of information and advice in response to a particular policy problem. Enforcement networks are meant to facilitate the implementation of specific laws and norms of interest to the public sector in both sides of the border. Finally, harmonisation networks are created in a bid to approximate the legislation of partnering governments up to a jointly agreed standard.<sup>57</sup>

While making a valuable contribution to Keohane and Nye's understanding of TG cooperation, Slaughter also brings on some confusion to the concept by also adding non-state actors, businesspeople, and even transnational criminal networks as possible actors in TG cooperation. While those seem to belong to transnational cooperation, from which these writers seek to distinguish themselves, I will consider TG relations as only limited to peer-to-peer cooperation between government bureaucracies from different countries. Similarly, TG networks will be distinguished from the related concepts of epistemic communities and principled-issue networks, which function either within the state or at the transnational level and involve non-governmental actors. Epistemic communities, for example, refer to a network "of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area".<sup>58</sup> While also encompassing the cross-border dimension, epistemic communities, according to Peter Haas, are not the same as TG networks (which he coins bureaucratic networks) because of the absence in the latter of shared interests, beliefs, and knowledge base.<sup>59</sup> As regards principled-issue networks, they are also commonly found within the transnational and policy advocacy literature, involving international civil society, rather than public bureaucracies.<sup>60</sup>

Another strand of literature relevant for our understanding of TG cooperation focuses on the process of international policy and norms diffusion, which can be broadly defined "as one government's policy choices being influenced by other government's policy choices".<sup>61</sup> Several aspects of this literature relevant for the context of this study is social learning, socialisation, and lesson-drawing, which refer to various ways in which norms and policies may be borrowed from abroad.<sup>62</sup> While

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<sup>56</sup> Slaughter, *A New World Order*, 45.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-60.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1992): 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>60</sup> Kathryn Sikkink, "Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America" 47, no. 3 (1993): 411-41; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887-917.

<sup>61</sup> Charles R. Shipan and Craig Volden, "Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners," *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 6 (2012): 788-96.

<sup>62</sup> Kai Alderson, "Making Sense of State Socialization," *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 415-33; Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change"; Judith Kelley, "International Actors

not directly engaging the concept of TG cooperation, constructivists and institutionalists often allude to norm transfer mechanisms, which are applicable to TG cooperation.<sup>63</sup> For example, the voluntary nature of TG partnerships makes them compatible with the so called "logic of appropriateness", which stresses normative imperatives as a major explanation behind the behaviour of actors.<sup>64</sup> That is contrary to the "logic of consequences", which suggests that actors mostly rely on their power and strategic calculations in the process of decision making and which applies better to more hierarchical types of international cooperation (as in the EU accession talks).

The existing literature generally suggests a positive influence of TG cooperation on domestic policy making. Keohane and Nye claim, for example, that TG cooperation may be used by the bureaucracies of more powerful countries, like the US, as a means to influence the policy agenda of weaker governments.<sup>65</sup> In his study of international securities regulation, competition policy, and environmental law, Kal Raustiala shows that TG networks are capable of exporting rules and practices from stronger to weaker states, as well as building the capacity of the latter to comply with their international obligations.<sup>66</sup> Through reinforcing the bureaucratic (institutional) capacity of participating states, he writes, TG networks may also improve a domestic regulatory environment in various policy sectors.<sup>67</sup> Slaughter also suggests that, although TG cooperation between environmental officials, judges, or legislators "lacks the drama of high politics", it can improve domestic compliance with international rules, produce convergence and informed divergence, and foster exchange of information.<sup>68</sup> Using quantitative methodology, Bach and Newman also find that TG relations are associated with an increased domestic adoption and implementation of internationally recognised insider-trading regulations.<sup>69</sup>

One shared characteristic of most existing literature on TG cooperation, beyond the initial conceptualisation of TG networks and several attempts at their empirical evaluation, is its almost exclusive emphasis on the US and its relations with the outside world. Literature on EU TG cooperation is growing, but still in its infancy.

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on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions," *International Organization* 58, no. 3 (2004): 425–57; Trine Flockhart, "Complex Socialization: A Framework for the Study of State Socialization," *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2006): 89–118.

<sup>63</sup> Checkel, "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change"; Checkel, "International Institutions and Socialisation in Europe: Introduction and Framework."

<sup>64</sup> James March and Johan Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions* (Simon and Schuster, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations," 47.

<sup>66</sup> Kal Raustiala, "The Architecture of International Cooperation: Transgovernmental Networks and the Future of International Law" 43 (2002): 7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Slaughter, "The Real New World Order," 185; Slaughter, *A New World Order*.

<sup>69</sup> David Bach and Abraham Newman, "Transgovernmental Networks and Domestic Policy Convergence: Evidence from Insider Trading Regulation," *International Organization* 64, no. 3 (2010): 505–28.

### 3.2. TG Cooperation in EU Studies

The available EU literature, dealing with TG cooperation, is mostly grounded in the Europeanisation and EU external governance frameworks and boasts of a mix of theoretically informed and policy-oriented works. The Europeanisation literature has generally been more interested in the political, economic, and institutional aspects of countries' transformation in line with the EU's demands.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, the external governance literature, while being a subset of Europeanisation scholarship, focuses more narrowly on the extension of the regulatory scope of the *acquis communautaire* to the outsiders.<sup>71</sup> The concept of TG cooperation as such only entered the EU studies after the enlargement and has been associated with several synonymous concepts, such as sectoral, sector-specific, or functional cooperation, all of which denote a process of transfer of EU norms to policy sectors and institutions of the recipient country.<sup>72</sup> Because the minor differences between those concepts do not pose a major problem in the context of this study, they will be used interchangeably with the concept of TG cooperation in a discussion that follows. The literature focusing on EU TG cooperation and the relevant concepts can be roughly divided along two dimensions: timeframe of analysis (accession vs. the ENP) and object of analysis (democracy promotion vs. transfer of the *acquis*).

The EU accession literature mostly engages concepts like capacity- and institution-building in reference to the integration of new members from CEECs into the EU.<sup>73</sup> Some of those works treat institution-building as a dependent variable, as related to the character and measure of change in CEECs as the result of the EU's influence.<sup>74</sup> However, in most cases, institution-building refers to the specific instruments the EU used to help its would-be members with the transposition of the *acquis* into their domestic systems.<sup>75</sup> A majority of the literature on EU TG tools during the Eastern enlargement tended to be policy-oriented and empirical, with a stronger

<sup>70</sup> Heather Grabbe, "How Does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity," *Journal of European Public Policy* 8, no. 6 (January 2001): 1013–31; Reuben Wong and Christopher Hill, "Introduction," in *National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanization*, ed. Reuben Wong and Christopher Hill, Routledge Advances in European Politics (London: Routledge, 2011), 1–19; Johan Olsen, "The Many Faces of Europeanization" 40, no. 5 (2002): 921–52; Dimitris Papadimitriou and David Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 3, no. 2 (May 2003): 1–22.

<sup>71</sup> Sandra Lavenex, "EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe,'" *Journal of European Public Policy* 11, no. 4 (2004): 680–700; Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics," *Journal of European Public Policy* 16, no. 6 (2009): 791–812; Friis and Murphy, "The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe: Governance and Boundaries."

<sup>72</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*.

<sup>73</sup> Antoaneta Dimitrova, "Enlargement, Institution-Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity Requirement," *West European Politics* 25, no. 4 (2002): 171–90; Elsa Tulmets, "The Introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in the European Enlargement Policy: Analysing the Impact of the New PHARE/Twinning Instrument" 3, no. 1 (2005): 54–90; David Bailey and Lisa De Propriis, "A Bridge Too Phare? Eu Pre-Accession Aid and Capacity-Building in the Candidate Countries," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42, no. 1 (2004): 77–98.

<sup>74</sup> Dimitrova, "Enlargement, Institution-Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity Requirement."

<sup>75</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond"; Grabbe, "How Does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity."

focus on the transfer of the *acquis* and best practices from the EU, rather than on democracy promotion.<sup>76</sup> Unlike the enlargement literature, works on EU TG cooperation under the ENP touch on both EU democracy promotion and transfer of the *acquis* in the neighbourhood. In a discussion that follows, I will go over major debates in the accession and the ENP literature regarding the democratic substance, the MS dimension, and the effectiveness of EU TG cooperation.

### **3.2.1. TG cooperation and EU democracy promotion**

EU TG cooperation under the ENP has increasingly been linked to democracy and democratic governance promotion. The first conceptualisation of TG cooperation belongs to EU external governance scholars, who hail it as a horizontal channel through which the EU could advance its democratisation goals to the neighbouring countries without a membership perspective.<sup>77</sup> These scholars claim that the previous theoretical approaches, viewing the success of EU democracy promotion as a function of leverage (via accession conditionality) and linkage (via empowerment of domestic actors and civil society), should yield to the alternative approaches exploring democratisation in the functional and technical areas of EU-ENP cooperation.<sup>78</sup> This sector-specific model of democracy promotion via TG cooperation is referred to as the governance model of democracy promotion.<sup>79</sup>

At the heart of this model lies the democratisation of public decision-making practices and institutions in specific policy sectors, rather than the democratisation of the entire polity.<sup>80</sup> In conceptualising EU democracy promotion via TG cooperation, scholars allude to the notion of democratic governance, consisting of three dimensions, or norms: transparency, accountability, and participation.<sup>81</sup> An immediate benefit for the EU from promoting the norms of democratic governance via TG cooperation consists in greater subtlety when it comes to engaging the mainly authoritarian ENP countries in political reform.<sup>82</sup> This innovation in the understanding of EU TG cooperation has found its way in several empirical contributions by the scholars of EU democracy promotion and external governance. For example, Freyburg et al. find that the EU has generally succeeded in having the ENP countries formally adopt norms of

<sup>76</sup> Kepa Sodupe and Eduardo Benito, "The Evolution of the European Union's Tacis Programme, 1991–96," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14, no. 4 (1998): 51–68; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"

<sup>77</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?"

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzel, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation," 6; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?"

<sup>80</sup> Wetzel, "Governance Perspective: Democratic Governance Promotion Through Functional Cooperation."

<sup>81</sup> Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzel, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation," 14.

<sup>82</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations," 73; Wetzel, "Governance Perspective: Democratic Governance Promotion Through Functional Cooperation."



democratic governance via TG cooperation, but had limited impact when it came to the translation of the adopted norms into practice.<sup>83</sup>

Apart from the formal transfer of democratic governance, the intangible mechanisms of socialisation within EU TG cooperation have also been a subject of academic inquiry. In two of her stand-alone articles, Tina Freyburg examines the socialisation of Moroccan government officials into the EU's norms of democratic governance as the result of Twinning cooperation.<sup>84</sup> Using a mix of qualitative techniques and regression analysis, she finds that EU Twinning projects lead to more favourable views on democratic governance among participating public officials, especially in less politicised sectors, like the environment. In such a way, she concludes, the democratic governance norms could penetrate the authoritarian governments from within and lead to invisible processes of democratisation.

At the same time, other scholars have been somewhat sceptical over the effectiveness of the governance model of democracy promotion. First, according to Youngs, even the formal transfer of transparency, accountability, and participation to another country may require a prior degree of political liberalisation, civil society development, and autonomous public institutions, which is not the case in most ENP countries.<sup>85</sup> Second, he suggests that such "democracy" projects (meaning functional cooperation – *DP*) usually pursue rather technical and specialised objectives, e.g., improving the efficiency of a court statistics system, and may have little to do with the independence of the judiciary.<sup>86</sup> Third, Youngs avers with the other scholars in that the philosophy behind TG cooperation is first of all enhancing the administrative capacity (read: stabilisation) of public institutions, rather than decentralising political power.

In that spirit, Casier makes a case for traditional intergovernmental tools of democracy promotion, which are *de facto* more effective in promoting formal democracy to Ukraine than are TG programs, which promulgate substantive democracy at the level of specific policy sectors.<sup>87</sup> He concludes that, while Ukraine is overall willing to legislate according to the EU's principles of liberal (formal) democracy, the country preserves some havens of power for its bureaucrats when it comes to adopting substantive, sector-level democracy. In addition, he claims, the EU could mainstream more democratic principles into its TG programmes in order to boost their democratisation potential.

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<sup>83</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*.

<sup>84</sup> Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance"; Tina Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 117–41.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Youngs, "Democracy Promotion as External Governance?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 16, no. 6 (September 2009): 902.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Casier, "The EU's Two-Track Approach to Democracy Promotion: The Case of Ukraine."

Anne Wetzel also argues that the EU's promotion of democratic governance via sectoral channels is vulnerable to the same patterns of inconsistency as the conventional methods of democracy promotion, relying on leverage and linkage.<sup>88</sup> For example, she explores the EU's provisions for participatory governance in the regulations on genetically modified organisms, water governance, and fisheries in the Eastern neighbourhood countries. She concludes that the EU promotes participatory governance only after it makes sure that no economic interests will be hurt, as is the case only with water management policy. In the case of genetically modified organisms and fisheries, the EU includes fewer provisions for participatory governance due to the overriding influences from lobby groups or other relevant actors inside the EU. In such a way, Wetzel suggests, EU sectoral cooperation does not always make use of its democratising potential.<sup>89</sup>

Thus far, my survey of the literature suggests that the EU has reflexively or, more often, non-reflexively promoted democratic governance through its current TG programmes in the neighbourhood. Scholars have also identified some scope conditions, under which the EU's promotion of democratic governance is more likely to happen, as well as discussed the inconsistencies that plague it. What is still missing in the literature is an analysis of substance, or the extent to which the norms of democratic governance are actually present in EU TG programmes. In other words, to what extent does the EU include democratic governance norms in its TG cooperation?<sup>90</sup> What determines the variation of those norms? While the existing studies indicate that EU TG cooperation contains references to democratic governance, its actual substance has been taken for granted. It is also known that this substance varies depending on the project and policy area concerned,<sup>91</sup> but the sources of this variation remain obscure. Identifying those would allow for more nuanced understanding of EU democracy promotion via TG cooperation, as well as reinforce the image of EU TG cooperation as a channel of democracy promotion to the neighbouring countries at the sectoral level.

In response to this gap, Article 2 examines to what extent the norms of democratic governance are explicitly present in EU TG projects in the neighbourhood and what factors account for variation in democratic governance substance across cases (Table 1, RQ2, RQ3). While being theoretically grounded in the current works on EU democratic governance promotion via TG cooperation<sup>92</sup>, this article goes a step

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<sup>88</sup> Anne Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 94–116.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 990.

<sup>90</sup> See also: European Commission, "Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a Harmonized Approach within the European Union," 2006, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>92</sup> The traditional explanations (variables) for EU democratic governance promotion are political liberalization, sector politicization, and EU sectoral conditionality.

further by also including the variable of technical complexity in the overall explanation of democratic governance substance. This variable, inspired by the public administration literature, deals with the question of the extent to which bureaucrats and technocrats should exercise immunity from voter preferences and from the laws of democratic accountability. I will elaborate further on this debate in the section detailing the theoretical tools and concepts of the dissertation.

### **3.2.2. *Role of MS in EU TG cooperation***

Besides revealing a gap in the understanding of the democratic substance of EU TG cooperation, the review of the literature also turned my attention to EU MS as important but hitherto overlooked agents of EU TG cooperation in the neighbourhood. While being sponsored and supervised by the EU, TG programmes like Twinning rely almost exclusively on MS' policy experts and their experience implementing EU directives and regulations. For example, during a bidding process for Twinning projects, the beneficiary country picks among several competing proposals by MS, predominantly on the basis of the comparative advantages of their administrative systems.<sup>93</sup> However, the nature of these comparative advantages remains a blind spot in the existing literature. Several policy-oriented works focusing on the EU's Eastern enlargement and the ENP have passingly touched on possible comparative advantages by MS during Twinning cooperation, such as the quality of expertise, country's reputation, financial and administrative resources, knowledge of local socio-political contexts, and the lobbying activities by MS in partner countries.<sup>94</sup> According to Elsa Tulmets, the comparative advantages of a MS could also be determined through the influence it had wielded on the making of EU directives and regulations at the supranational EU level.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, Tulmets highlights the personal qualities of MS experts and pre-existing bilateral cooperation and personal links between public administrations of the countries concerned as possible comparative advantages by respective MS.<sup>96</sup>

While these bits and pieces of data provide valuable guidance on MS' comparative advantages during the EU's recent enlargement, they tell us little of the MS' comparative advantages for EU TG cooperation under the ENP, especially as perceived by the ENP beneficiaries. This lack of studies is surprising, since the role of MS in such cases of EU TG cooperation as Twinning seems pivotal. According to Königová et al, one of the strategic lessons learned by Czech Republic during its

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<sup>93</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 44.

<sup>94</sup> Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic," 37–44.

<sup>95</sup> Tulmets, "The Introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in the European Enlargement Policy: Analysing the Impact of the New PHARE/Twinning Instrument," 74.

<sup>96</sup> Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary," 665.

Twinning projects with the EU is defining and communicating the country's comparative advantage and the unique area of expertise, as well as identifying and marketing the value that the country can offer for partner governments.<sup>97</sup> One of my interviewees went as far as suggesting that, for MS, convincingly spelling out their comparative advantage is key to a successful Twinning proposal.<sup>98</sup>

Identifying MS' comparative advantages appears particularly relevant after CEECs joined the EU and began to funnel expertise and resources to EU TG programmes under the ENP, in tandem with the older MS. Owing to their recent transition and market reform experience and close geopolitical and cultural ties with the Eastern neighbours, the CEECs have arguably gained an upper hand in working with some Eastern neighbourhood countries, as compared to the older MS, the US, or other players in the region.<sup>99</sup> In addition, most CEECs have been recipients of EU TG programmes and assistance by other donors in the past and still bear institutional blueprints of their reform paths. On the other hand, the actual ability of CEECs to take advantage of their transition experience and closer cultural and political links with the Eastern neighbourhood countries has been questioned by scholars.<sup>100</sup> Possible reasons include the ambiguity of their transition experience and lack of resources for its promotion to the Eastern neighbours.<sup>101</sup>

In this regard, very little has also been written about the older MS and what they can bring on the board for EU TG programmes in the ENP. It is not clear, for example, if their institutional reputation, leverage in bilateral cooperation, or former experience in transposing EU directives and regulations in their own systems actually matter for EU TG programmes in the neighbourhood. The subject has also been treated rather superficially by development scholars and EU official documents, looking into issues of aid coordination and cross-sector complementarity.<sup>102</sup> While the EU development literature has often blamed the lack of aid coordination and complementarity on organisational, financial, or national interests among the MS at the supranational level, identifying and acknowledging the comparative advantages of

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<sup>97</sup> Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic," 57.

<sup>98</sup> Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015.

<sup>99</sup> Paulina Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*, Pitt Russian East European (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014); Tsveta Petrova, "The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support," 2011.

<sup>100</sup> Balázs Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States," *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 7 (August 2014): 1102–21; Ondřej Horký, "The Transfer of the Central and Eastern European 'Transition Experience' to the South: Myth or Reality?," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 13, no. 1 (April 2012): 17–32.

<sup>101</sup> Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States."

<sup>102</sup> Maurizio Carbone, "Volume of Aid: Reversing Trends in International Development," in *The European Union and International Development: The Politics of Foreign Aid* (Routledge, 2007), 60–80; European Commission, "Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy," 2007; Maurizio Carbone, "Development Policy: The European Union as a Multilateral and Bilateral Donor," in *The European Union and Global Governance*, ed. Jens-Uwe Wunderlich and David Bailey (London: Routledge, 2011), 157–65.

MS may be pivotal to the alleviation of those problems not only for the EU's engagement with the Eastern neighbourhood but also internationally.

In response, I take a closer look at the comparative advantages (added value) of CEECs and the older MS for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood (Table 1, RQ4). By drawing on extensive interview data supplied by Twinning participants from Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and the EU MS, Article 3 identifies the stakeholders' perceptions of the comparative advantages by different MS in their respective Twinning projects. Thereby, in the course of analysis, I distinguish between CEECs and the older MS, as well as offer a novel typology of MS comparative advantages, based on the country- and sector-based characteristics of MS concerned.

### **3.2.3. Effectiveness of EU TG cooperation**

There would be no rationale in declaring TG cooperation as a promising EU democracy promotion tool or a platform for MS to promulgate their sector- and country-specific comparative advantages if we had little idea of how effective EU TG programmes were in the first place. In addition, most TG cooperation programmes pursue policy-specific goals, related to the efficiency of the partner country's regulatory environment. Therefore, it would be unfair to ask questions about the less obvious aspects of EU TG cooperation, like democratic governance substance or MS comparative advantages, and leaving out what is on the tip of an iceberg – the actual performance of EU TG programmes against their declared goals.

The accession literature analysed EU TG tools as part of the Europeanisation scholarship or in stand-alone studies, mostly dealing with institution-building and transfer of the *acquis* to EU would-be members. During that period, the Twinning instrument was considered a major tool to reinforce the domestic institutions of CEECs in preparation for accession.<sup>103</sup> On analysing this topic, Bailey and De Propriis pointed out the absorption capacity of CEECs and their ability to maintain sustainability of results after project completion as two main hindrances to Twinning effectiveness at the time.<sup>104</sup> They also testified to the low financial commitment of the country's leadership to reform and the inadequate starting expertise of civil servants from CEECs, often making Twinning activities fall short of their ambitious agenda.<sup>105</sup> Other authors, like Tulmets, attributed mixed results in the EU's institution-building efforts in CEECs to the phenomena of "muddling through and institutional hybridisation", which revealed itself in the institutional adaptation of EU *acquis* to the needs and preferences

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<sup>103</sup> Bailey and De Propriis, "A Bridge Too Phare? Eu Pre-Accession Aid and Capacity-Building in the Candidate Countries."

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–89.

of the beneficiary on the ground.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Tulmets questioned the relevance of Twinning in the context of other similar tools at EU's disposal.<sup>107</sup>

Several other accession studies drew on the theoretical premises of the Europeanisation literature by evaluating the impact of specific EU TG tools on the approximation of CEECs to EU legal standards. For example, in her other article, Tulmets employed a sociological institutionalist perspective on Europeanisation and socialisation by discussing to what extent Twinning projects affected policies and institutions of CEECs during enlargement.<sup>108</sup> In line with Bailey and De Propriis' and relevant Commission's reports, Tulmets suggested that Twinning was weaker in reforming organisations in CEEC according to an almost non-existing European model of public administration than in transferring know-how to these countries.<sup>109</sup> In conceptually linking the Twinning instrument to the processes of Europeanisation in the "wider Europe", Papadimitriou and Phinnemore discussed Twinning as a tool to export Europeanisation through reforming the administrative machinery of accession countries.<sup>110</sup> In the context of Romania and Bulgaria, their case study, the authors pointed to the need for rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of Twinning, as well as some of its perceived weaknesses, such as the politicised process of selection of Twinning partners or a lack of experienced PAAs (pre-accession advisers).<sup>111</sup> In addition, they blamed the inadequate design of the Twinning programme, high institutional fluidity, politicisation, and lacking commitment of the Twinning beneficiaries for the insufficient level of domestic change in Romania.<sup>112</sup> In a similar vein to Phinnemore and Papadimitriou, Grabbe discussed Twinning as a policy advice tool the EU used to affect governance in CEECs, apart from other tools like gate-keeping in negotiations, provision of legislative and institutional templates, benchmarking, and financial aid.<sup>113</sup> She blamed the diversity between current EU MS and the interaction of Europeanisation with other confounding explanations for the diverse impacts of the EU in the region.<sup>114</sup>

Following the Eastern enlargement, the scholarly interest in institution-building as a primary vehicle of Europeanisation has subsided. However, TG instruments made a comeback as part of the new theoretical understanding of the EU's normative power and role in the near abroad. There has been a growing body of literature discussing

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<sup>106</sup> Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary," 673.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Tulmets, "The Introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in the European Enlargement Policy: Analysing the Impact of the New PHARE/Twinning Instrument."

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>110</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond."

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania."

<sup>113</sup> Grabbe, "How Does Europeanization Affect CEE Governance? Conditionality, Diffusion and Diversity," 1020.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 1028.

EU external governance, which draws on functional cooperation channels between the EU and the neighbouring countries as a medium of EU regulatory transfer. With an arrival of the ENP and the Wider Europe Initiative, the EU could use external governance to manage relations with its new neighbours as it did during the recent enlargement.<sup>115</sup> Sandra Lavenex points out two rationales behind the EU extending its norms to the neighbouring countries. First, the EU seeks to improve the efficiency and problem-solving capacity of the recipient governments.<sup>116</sup> And second, by extending its internal regulations to the neighbourhood, the EU may contribute to its major external policy objective for a stable and prosperous neighbourhood.<sup>117</sup>

In that context, TG cooperation was associated with a shift from traditional membership conditionality tools towards so called network governance, drawing on horizontal, voluntarist, and inclusive approaches to rule transfer via sectoral channels.<sup>118</sup> Under the ENP, studies on a hierarchical policy transfer by the EU have still been common due to the power asymmetries and interdependencies between the EU and its neighbours. At the same time, TG cooperation has been hailed as an alternative, network-based form of EU external governance that came to replace the hierarchical policy transfer, peculiar for the accession negotiations.<sup>119</sup> Inspired by the neo-functional ideas, Lavenex argued that the effectiveness of EU external governance would be higher in more technical and less politicised areas of functional cooperation.<sup>120</sup> Contrary to that, functional cooperation proceeding in highly politicised areas would resort to some form of hierarchical means or, as Delcour called it, the "shadow of hierarchy".<sup>121</sup> Subsequent contributions to the EU external governance scholarship have specified more conditions for an effective rule transfer via sectoral channels by conceptualising the effectiveness of TG networks through their ability to promote norms of democratic governance to the countries of the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods.<sup>122</sup> They view rule adoption and application as a function of codification of rules, sector politicisation, costs of domestic rule adoption, and internationalisation.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to the external governance scholarship, several studies in Europeanisation under the ENP have mentioned EU sectoral cooperation as a vehicle

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<sup>115</sup> Lavenex, "EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe'"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"

<sup>116</sup> Lavenex, "EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe,'" 681.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Sandra Lavenex, "A Governance Perspective on the European Neighbourhood Policy: Integration beyond Conditionality?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 15, no. 6 (September 2008): 943.

<sup>119</sup> Sandra Lavenex and Nicole Wichmann, "The External Governance of EU Internal Security," *Journal of European Integration* 31, no. February 2015 (2009): 85.

<sup>120</sup> Lavenex, "A Governance Perspective on the European Neighbourhood Policy: Integration beyond Conditionality?," 938.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> See also Section 3.2.1. Freyburg et al., "Democracy Promotion through Functional Cooperation? The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>123</sup> Lavenex and Wichmann, "The External Governance of EU Internal Security," 85.

of policy transfer to the non-candidate countries.<sup>124</sup> For example, Börzel addresses the potential of the TACIS programme<sup>125</sup> for good governance promotion in the areas of limited statehood.<sup>126</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk also express reserved optimism over the EU's ability to foster convergence of technical regulations in Ukraine via sectoral channels.<sup>127</sup> Works by Delcour and Ademmer uncover examples of adoption and limited application of EU norms in the Eastern neighbourhood countries in response to the EU's sectoral incentives. Several Commission's reports and policy-related analytics have also evaluated the performance of Twinning, TAIEX, and SIGMA programmes in the EU's neighbourhood. They have identified a variety of issues plaguing such programs, for example, low levels of political commitment of the beneficiary country, inflexibility of some TG instruments, and mismatch between expectations on the ground and what EU TG tools have to offer.<sup>128</sup> Interestingly, those issues seem common for both TG programmes in the accession period and under the ENP. That generally supports the proposition that an EU membership perspective may not necessarily be decisive in the effectiveness of EU norm transfer via TG cooperation.

While the extant research has to a degree addressed general problems and shortcoming with EU TG programmes, studies of their effectiveness are few. Such lack of coverage stems in part from the methodological and empirical constraints accessing people and data related to EU TG cooperation, which are often unavailable or confidential. However, more importantly, the Europeanisation and external governance literature have failed to provide an adequate theoretical lens to approach the performance of specific TG programmes. First of all, the majority of the theoretically informed accounts on the issue have operated on the macro-level of analysis. While discussing EU TG cooperation with the ENP countries, they have usually positioned themselves within the entirety of EU foreign policy tools (like conditionality, diplomatic persuasion, budget support, and transnational involvement of civil society). Such an approach, while having a theoretical value for exploring the overall EU's impact in the region, has little applicability to specific TG programs, such as Twinning. On the other hand, those few policy-oriented analyses that directly target Twinning and other TG tools have also not addressed the question "To what extent have EU TG programmes been effective?" (Table 1, RQ5). While delineating at some depth the most common shortcomings of those programs, those policy-oriented works are still lacking a viable

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<sup>124</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Delcour, "Multiple External Influences, Policy Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Case of Food Safety."

<sup>125</sup> Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)

<sup>126</sup> Tanja Börzel, "Transformative Power Europe? The EU Promotion of Good Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood" 49 (2009).

<sup>127</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine."

<sup>128</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"



analytical tool, capable of determining whether a particular project has been effective or not.

Secondly, the available literature has generated a comprehensive list of variables, which may facilitate or hinder the achievement of objectives and goals of EU TG cooperation in partner countries. Such works give us some initial understanding of how EU TG programmes are or should be performing. Yet, what conditions lead to effective and ineffective TG projects? What conditions result in the success or failure of a particular TG project? What should be considered a success or failure (effectiveness or ineffectiveness)? It is hard to answer those definitively only after reviewing the state of the art and the data that have so far been collected by researchers (Table 1, RQ6). Since EU TG programmes like Twinning operate at the level of specific public administrations, mainstream Europeanisation and external governance paradigms do not appear adequate to glean the full depth of factors at play in such cooperation. It makes it necessary then to look for insights in the public administration and management literatures in order to complete the existing theoretical frameworks dealing with the democratic governance substance and effectiveness of EU TG cooperation. Moreover, what should be questioned is the predominant view of TG cooperation as a mechanism of EU soft power via learning and socialisation.<sup>129</sup> The priorities in EU TG cooperation projects like Twinning are clearly linked to the terms of APs, PCAs, and more recently the DCFTAs, which bring some EU conditionality back into the equation. I believe EU TG instruments should be considered in the most recent context of EU-Eastern neighbourhood relations, including the available incentives and costs of complying with EU norms, and not only as channels of intangible rule transfer.

Those issues are not trivial, as they may and should constitute the policy-relevant and academic evaluations of ongoing EU TG programs under the ENP or elsewhere. Methodologically sound and reliable answers to those questions will help the EU customise individual TG projects in the Eastern neighbourhood and spot recurring issues with its TG cooperation in other geographical regions. As of yet, empirical data are too patchy to make satisfactory conclusions about the performance of EU TG instruments in general or in specific regions under the ENP. I begin engaging those issues with the premise that, owing to the standardised, contractual nature of EU TG programmes, it should be possible to devise a replicable conceptual and methodological approach to analysing the effectiveness of current and future EU TG programmes.

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<sup>129</sup> Lavenex, "The Power of Functionalist Extension: How EU Rules Travel."

## 4. Theoretical tools and concepts

In order to address the research questions, discussed in the previous section, I draw on interdisciplinary insights from democracy promotion, development cooperation, and public administration literatures. This outward-looking approach will refine and complete the theoretical frameworks found in the Europeanisation and EU external governance scholarship, as well as contribute to a better dialogue among scholarly works pertaining to TG cooperation.<sup>130</sup> The following sections review briefly several useful concepts and theories dealing with EU TG cooperation. First, I start with clarifying the various uses of the term “governance” and introducing the new concept of “democratic governance substance”, which will be used in the analysis of EU TG programs in the Eastern neighbourhood (RQ2 and RQ3). Second, one of the hypothesised determinants of democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation – technical complexity – is positioned within the politics-administration debate in the literature on public administration and EU politics (RQ3). Third, the notions and typologies of MS comparative advantages and added value are clarified with reference to the EU democracy promotion and development cooperation literature (RQ4). Finally, I take on the concept of the EU’s effectiveness, as used in Article 4, and link that concept with the on-going debate on Normative Power Europe and other approaches to viewing the EU’s role abroad (RQ5 and 6).

### 4.1. From Governance to Democratic Governance Substance

One puzzling, perhaps confusing, aspect that the reader may have found reading the formulation of the research problem is the multiple uses of the term governance. Democratic governance, good governance, external governance, network governance, and simply governance (to cite a few) are all the terms that are so frequently used and abused in the literature. The word “governance” comes from the Greek word “kybenan” and “kybernetes”, meaning “to steer” (cybernetics also come from it).<sup>131</sup> According to Rosenau, governance refers to governments’ activities in framing goals, issuing directives, and pursuing policies.<sup>132</sup> Kooiman expands this definition to “all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage societies”.<sup>133</sup> Just like TG cooperation, the concept of governance has come on a scholarly and policymaking arena to break up or revisit the idea of a government and nation-state by including into the equation a variety of non-state actors, domestic and international. It was also

<sup>130</sup> Marilyn Stember, “Advancing the Social Sciences through the Interdisciplinary Enterprise,” *The Social Science Journal* 28, no. 1 (1991): 1–14.

<sup>131</sup> James Rosenau, “Governance in the Twenty-First Century,” *Global Governance* 1 (1995): 14.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Jan Kooiman, *Modern Governance: New Government-Society Interactions* (SAGE Publications, 1993), 2.

called to revisit the existing boundaries of government-society interactions through developing new models of partnership like co-management, co-steering, and co-guidance.<sup>134</sup> In their development assistance programmes, however, the Bretton Woods institutions and, later, the European Commission have generally continued placing the government in the core of governance.

In order to foster market reform and fight corruption and inefficiency in the governments of less developed countries, the World Bank first introduced the concept of good governance to its structural adjustment policies in the late 1980s.<sup>135</sup> In 2000, the EU included its first binding clause relating to good governance into the Cotonou Agreement with the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This document defined "good governance" as "the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purposes of equitable and sustainable development".<sup>136</sup> Consequent to that, poor or bad governance stood for a lack of good governance.

Following the "big bang" enlargement and the necessity to re-think its relations with the new neighbours under the ENP, the EU adopted an explicitly political meaning of governance by introducing the concept of "democratic governance" in its official communications.<sup>137</sup> This represented a further shift from the World Bank's technocratic approach to policy reforms towards those associated with democratic legitimacy and public accountability. Although the EU did not make an effort to clarify the resulting confusion between good and democratic governance in terms of conceptual boundaries, the *democratic* governance in the EU's usage does seem, beyond the traditional focus on more effective public management, to imply a stronger emphasis on the transparency and accountability of the country's authorities before the general public.<sup>138</sup>

At about the same time, some scholars described EU relations with the new neighbours under the ENP as an extension of the EU's internal governance beyond its borders and coined such an extension EU external governance.<sup>139</sup> Those authors designated three institutional forms or modes in which the EU extended its governance abroad: hierarchy, markets, and networks.<sup>140</sup> *Hierarchical governance* refers to the patterns of domination-subordination between the EU and the ENP countries, as seen

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>135</sup> Wil Hout, "Governance and Development: Changing EU Policies," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (February 2010): 2; World Bank, "From Crisis to Sustainable Growth - Sub Saharan Africa: A Long-Term Perspective Study," 1989.

<sup>136</sup> Nikki Slocum-Bradley and Andrew Bradley, "Is the EU's Governance 'Good'? An Assessment of EU Governance in Its Partnership with ACP States," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2010): 34.

<sup>137</sup> Maurizio Carbone, "The European Union, Good Governance and Aid Co-Ordination," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (February 2010): 21; Jan Orbie et al., "The Normative Distinctiveness of the European Union in International Development Stepping out of the Shadow of the World Bank?," 2014, 11.

<sup>138</sup> Hout, "Governance and Development: Changing EU Policies."

<sup>139</sup> Lavenex, "EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe.'"

<sup>140</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics," 800.

in the existence of precise rules, procedures, monitoring, and even sanctioning for non-compliance.<sup>141</sup> Hierarchical governance was more common under the rigid framework of accession; however, even under the ENP, some forms of hierarchical governance have prevailed, e.g., sectoral or policy conditionality.<sup>142</sup> The *market* governance relies on the market forces of competition among autonomous actors, which operate under the regulatory framework of the European Single Market.<sup>143</sup> Market governance is common among the countries of the European Economic Area and has little relevance for the ENP countries yet. Finally, the *network* governance is based on a relationship between two formally equal actors and refer to “a strongly institutionalised and unified system of ongoing horizontal co-ordination” between the EU and its neighbours.<sup>144</sup> The network-type of EU external governance best describes EU TG cooperation programmes under the ENP.<sup>145</sup> In sum, TG cooperation in the ENP is considered a tool of network governance, through which the EU may promote democratic governance and regulatory standards to the neighbours concerned.

As for democratic governance, the ambiguity over its precise meaning still prevails among scholars, who have offered multiple definitions of the concept in order to match their analytical tools and theoretical approaches.<sup>146</sup> According to Brinkerhoff, for example, “democratic governance combines features of a political regime in which citizens hold the right to govern themselves (democracy) with structures and mechanisms that are used to manage public affairs according to accepted rules and procedures (governance).”<sup>147</sup> This definition resonates with the broad understanding of democratic governance by the EU and some authors.<sup>148</sup> However, by including a bit of everything, such formulation breeds more conceptual vagueness than it eliminates. Börzel et al. adopt a clearer and narrower view on democratic governance by presenting it as an integral part of EU good governance promotion. It pursues input-oriented objectives, such as inclusion of citizen preferences into public decision-

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 797.

<sup>142</sup> Delcour, “Meandering Europeanisation. EU Policy Instruments and Policy Convergence in Georgia under the Eastern Partnership.”

<sup>143</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, “EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics,” 799.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 798.

<sup>145</sup> Lavenex, “A Governance Perspective on the European Neighbourhood Policy: Integration beyond Conditionality?,” 942. Another resonating concept – democratic network governance – has more to do with intrastate relations, e.g., public-private partnerships or EU internal governance, than with EU relations with the ENP countries.

<sup>146</sup> Derick W Brinkerhoff, “Democratic Governance and Sectoral Policy Reform: Tracing Linkages and Exploring Synergies,” *World Development* 28, no. 4 (April 2000): 601–15; Tanja Börzel, Yasemin Pamuk, and Andreas Stahn, “The European Union and the Promotion of Good Governance in Its Near Abroad. One Size Fits All?,” SFB-Governance Working Paper Series, 2008; Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzal, “Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation”; Jessica Schmidt, “Constructing New Environments versus Attitude Adjustment: Contrasting the Substance of Democracy in UN and EU Democracy Promotion Discourses,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, August 8, 2014, 1–20.

<sup>147</sup> Brinkerhoff, “Democratic Governance and Sectoral Policy Reform: Tracing Linkages and Exploring Synergies,” 602.

<sup>148</sup> Szent-Iványi, “The EU’s Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States.”

making, and operates at the transnational level of relations between the EU and the partner country.<sup>149</sup> While deserving some praise for its succinctness, this conceptualisation of democratic governance has found little resonance among scholarly circles.

My understanding of democratic governance has been inspired by EU external governance scholars, who view it as a tri-dimensional construct of transparency, accountability, and participation.<sup>150</sup> In other words, the governance of a public institution is considered democratic if it operates on the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation in its everyday decision-making, dealings with the general public, and the state. As mentioned earlier, the available literature provides a relatively good discussion of EU democratic governance promotion, its most common issues, typologies, and impacts.<sup>151</sup> However, what seems to be missing is the comprehensive analysis of the “what” or substance of EU democratic governance promotion in the neighbourhood. Democracy promotion scholars have already categorised and explored the substance of EU democracy promotion in the ENP countries.<sup>152</sup> Börzel et al have also looked at the substance of EU good governance promotion and how it varied in response to domestic conditions in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.<sup>153</sup> In line with those works, I decided to introduce a new concept pertaining to the substance of EU democratic governance promotion, or democratic governance substance.

Democratic governance substance refers to the presence of democratic governance norms in a specific instance of EU foreign policy. According to its configuration (domination of specific norms), democratic governance substance may be transparency-oriented, accountability-oriented, participation-oriented, and mixed. According to its magnitude (overall degree of presence), democratic governance substance may be low, medium, and high.<sup>154</sup> In explaining the variation of democratic governance substance across various EU TG projects, I mostly rely on variables commonly found in the EU external governance and Europeanisation literature, like sector politicisation and country’s political liberalisation. However, the third variable, sector technical complexity, hypothesised to be inversely related to the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, has been inspired by a debate over the

<sup>149</sup> Börzel, Pamuk, and Stahn, “The European Union and the Promotion of Good Governance in Its Near Abroad. One Size Fits All?”

<sup>150</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, “EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?”

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.; Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Siocum-Bradley and Bradley, “Is the EU’s Governance ‘Good’? An Assessment of EU Governance in Its Partnership with ACP States.”

<sup>152</sup> Anne Wetzel, Jan Orbie, and Fabienne Bossuyt, “One of What Kind? Comparative Perspectives on the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28, no. 1 (2015): 21–34; Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie, “Promoting Embedded Democracy? Researching the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16, no. 5 (2011): 565–88.

<sup>153</sup> Börzel, Pamuk, and Stahn, “The European Union and the Promotion of Good Governance in Its Near Abroad. One Size Fits All?”

<sup>154</sup> Those ideal types are discussed in detail in Article 3, where they were applied in analysing EU Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood.

politics-administration dichotomy. The next subsection briefly introduces the reader to this debate.

#### **4.2. Professionalism vs. democratic accountability**

The tension between expert rule and democracy goes back to the times of Woodrow Wilson and his seminal work "Study of Administration", which deals with a fine balance between bureaucrats and politicians. Politics, Wilson wrote, are "the special province of the statesman, while administration [is] of the technical official."<sup>155</sup> Johann Bluntschli, a Swiss lawyer and politician, also argued that politics were state activity "in things great and universal", while administration was "the activity of the state in individual and small things."<sup>156</sup> The politics-administration dichotomy implies there should be a way to separate politics and administration, in particular to single out administration and study it as a technical skill without getting bogged down with political complexities. Wilson illustrated this point by encouraging adoption of best practices in administration from other countries, while not necessarily embracing the political aspects thereof:

If I see a murderous fellow sharpening a knife cleverly, I can borrow his way of sharpening the knife without borrowing his probable intention to commit murder with it; and so, if I see a monarchist dyed in the wool managing a public bureau well, I can learn his business methods without changing one of my republican spots. He may serve his king; I will continue to serve the people; but I should like to serve my sovereign as well as he serves his.<sup>157</sup>

The idea of politics-administration dichotomy has had a number of important implications for scientists and policymakers. First, it has introduced public administration as a distinct from political science field, concerned with the day-to-day running of the government. Second, it has pushed for civil service reforms across the globe in a bid to foster neutral, merit-based, and professional bureaucracies, which would serve the citizenry in an efficient and even business-like manner. However, as the discipline of public administration has evolved and various areas of governmental work have become more specialised and technocratic, the process of policymaking in certain policy sectors has grown increasingly isolated not only from political interference but also from the voter's preferences. It is not clear anymore to what extent the activities of bureaucrats should be insulated not only from the undesired partisan influences but also from the citizenry, which those bureaucrats are expected to serve.

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<sup>155</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science* 2, no. 2 (1887): 10.

<sup>156</sup> Cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

On the one hand, there are prominent examples of independent public institutions run by professionals, like central banks (including European Central Bank) or accreditation bodies, working with extremely specialised knowledge and precise technical regulations. There is a widespread view that the success and stability of those institutions lies precisely in their autonomy from the political perturbations, meaning in many cases exemption from accountability to the voter.<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, the nature and degree of bureaucratic independence has been a bone of contention among public administration theorists and political scientists.<sup>159</sup> For example, this debate has dominated a series of works on the EU's democratic deficit and increasing independence of EU institutions from the electoral preferences of citizens.<sup>160</sup> While generally concurring that the magnitude of the EU's democratic deficit is a matter of the specific conceptual lenses employed, those works seem to also imply that such areas as market regulation, monetary and welfare policy, and other policy-specific domains should be the preserve of experts.<sup>161</sup>

While recognising the importance of democratic legitimacy and accountability inside the EU or elsewhere, I rather side with Wilson in that some public institutions are and should be independent from political leadership and citizenry. If administration is a skill, like a doctor's profession, it cannot be allowed to be meddled with by laymen. Based on this assumption, one of the hypotheses in Article 3 says that, with a rising technical complexity of a policy sector, we will see fewer democratic governance norms, as that policy sector will be less open to the outsiders. That is not to say that such technically complex sectors will be more prone to authoritarian tendencies, if only the political system in general has sufficient checks and balances in place. Everyday voters may simply not be interested in contributing to something they do not delight in or understand. Although somewhat commonsensical, the factor of technical complexity, to my best knowledge, has never been conceptualised by the studies of Europeanisation or EU external governance both in the period of enlargement and under the ENP. More importantly, introduction of the variable of technical complexity fine-tunes my theoretical expectations of the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation.

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<sup>158</sup> David Levy, "Does an Independent Central Bank Violate Democracy?," *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 18, no. 2 (1995): 189–210; Delia Boylan, *Defusing Democracy: Central Bank Autonomy and the Transition from Authoritarian Rule* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Judith Petts and Catherine Brooks, "Expert Conceptualisations of the Role of Lay Knowledge in Environmental Decisionmaking: Challenges for Deliberative Democracy," *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 6 (2006): 1045–59.

<sup>159</sup> Judith Gruber, *Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>160</sup> Giandomenico Majone, "Europe's 'Democratic Deficit': The Question of Standards," *European Law Journal* 4, no. 1 (March 1998): 5–28; Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix, "Why There Is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no. 3 (September 2006): 533–62; Andrew Moravcsik, "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 4 (2002): 603–24.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

### 4.3. Comparative advantages of EU member states

First introduced in writings by classical economists, the basic concept of comparative advantage refers to the country's ability to manufacture a product or render a service at a lower rate than another country.<sup>162</sup> In later writings, the concept of comparative advantage also included such factors as the varying efficiency of production by different players in the international economy.<sup>163</sup> In the context of this work, a *comparative advantage* refers to the specific sectoral expertise offered by a MS or a group thereof to an ENP partner. An *added value* is then a composite of all comparative advantages of a MS or a group thereof. The European Commission, in its communication on development, has stressed the importance of understanding the comparative advantages by different MS in order to improve the efficiency and coordination of its foreign aid in less developed countries.<sup>164</sup> EU development scholars have also argued for the consolidation of strengths and efforts by different MS in EU development cooperation abroad.<sup>165</sup>

Therefore, Article 3 focuses on the comparative advantages of EU MS for EU TG programmes in the Eastern neighbourhood. There should be a small disclaimer here that TG programs are not development programs in a strict sense, though they bear some resemblance in that they help partner countries in building up public institutions. Nonetheless, because EU TG programmes like Twinning rely heavily on experts and best practices from EU MS, they present a salient case for the analysis of MS comparative advantages outside the EU development literature. To narrow it down even further, the comparative advantages of old MS and CEECs will be contrasted. The CEECs, who had themselves been recipients of Western development and democracy aid, including EU TG programmes during enlargement, have increasingly turned eastwards in a bid to pay it forward.<sup>166</sup> Because of their recent democratisation and market reform experience, close geopolitical and cultural ties with the Eastern neighbours, and unique regional foreign policy priorities, CEECs have reportedly gained an upper hand in working with the Eastern neighbourhood countries, as compared to the old MS, the US, or other donors.<sup>167</sup> In addition, most CEECs have developed substantial credibility in the eyes of their Eastern neighbours, something most other donors wish to have.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Wayne E. Nafziger, *Economic Development*, Economic Development (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 572.

<sup>163</sup> David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy, and Taxation* (New York: J. Murray, 1817).

<sup>164</sup> European Commission, "Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy."

<sup>165</sup> Carbone, "Volume of Aid: Reversing Trends in International Development"; Carbone, "Development Policy: The European Union as a Multilateral and Bilateral Donor."

<sup>166</sup> Tsveta Petrova, "How Poland Promotes Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 133–47.

<sup>167</sup> Laurynas Jonavicius, "The Democracy Promotion Policies of Central and Eastern European States," 2008; Jacek Kucharczyk and Jeff Lovitt, eds., *Democracy's New Champions: European Democracy Assistance after EU Enlargement* (Prague: PASOS, 2008), <http://cps.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/publications/cps-joint-publication-eu-enlargement-2008.pdf>.

<sup>168</sup> Tsveta Petrova, *From Solidarity to Geopolitics: Support for Democracy among Postcommunist States* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus*



However, the most contentious comparative advantage of CEECs is their recent transition experience. According to the European Transition Compendium (ETC), the process of transition involves a two-folded path from autocracy and centrally planned economy to democratic and market-based institutions.<sup>169</sup> In addition to democratisation and marketisation, some academicians also underscore the importance of building up a strong state.<sup>170</sup> The ETC provides a list of self-reported areas of public policy and administration where CEECs have attained some success and can serve a useful starting point for understanding the comparative advantages of those countries. However, in their study of the Visegrad Four countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Czech Republic), Szent-Iványi and Tétényi report that none of the Visegrad countries have thus far factored in perceived comparative advantages in their foreign assistance policies.<sup>171</sup> To add insult to injury, some of these self-reported comparative advantages display a significant degree of overlap among the different CEECs and ambiguity in definitions. Another conceptual problem with transition experience is that the process of democratisation and economic development is still well underway in most CEECs, and it would be unfair to consider it a finite destination, which the Eastern neighbourhood countries are scrambling to reach. Because of those problems, I was also originally sceptical over the significance of CEECs' transition experience for EU TG cooperation. However, as the analysis in Article 3 will demonstrate, I was wrong.

Although there is no document like ETC listing the comparative advantages of the older MS, the latter also contribute to EU TG projects in meaningful ways. Their contribution is largely seen in their more active participation in Twinning projects as compared to CEECs.<sup>172</sup> For example, Königová writes, the older MS have accumulated considerable experience of both facilitating administrative reform in accession candidates and leading institution-building activities in the ENP countries with no membership perspective.<sup>173</sup> The older MS with their relatively well-developed bureaucracies may thus present a role model for the less developed administrations of the Eastern neighbourhood countries. There are also accounts that some older MS, especially the larger ones in terms of territory, may be in a better position to assist similar-sized neighbours in reforming their administrative systems.<sup>174</sup> However, what the older MS seem to lack is the recent institutional memory of sectoral reforms, which

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and Ukraine; Jacek Kucharczyk and Jeff Lovitt, "New Kids on the Block. Can the Visegrad Four Emerge as Effective Players in International Democracy Assistance," 2008.

<sup>169</sup> European Commission, "European Transition Compendium," 2010.

<sup>170</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Transition in Post-Communist States: Triple or Quadruple?," *Politics* 21, no. 3 (2001): 168–77.

<sup>171</sup> Balázs Szent-Iványi and András Tétényi, "Transition and Foreign Aid Policies in the Visegrád Countries: A Path Dependant Approach," *Transition Studies Review* 15, no. 3 (October 9, 2008): 580.

<sup>172</sup> Elsa Tulmets, *East Central European Foreign Policy Identity in Perspective: Back to Europe and the EU's Neighbourhood* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>173</sup> Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic."

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

makes it more difficult for them to embrace the strikingly different administrative reality of many post-Soviet countries.

Hence, in addressing RQ4 (Article 3), I assume that the older MS will mostly boast of sector-specific comparative advantages, related to their administrative reform experience, existing sectoral networks and sectoral fit with the ENP countries, and prior Twinning experience. In contrast, CEECs are hypothesised to mostly offer country-specific comparative advantages, which present as recent transition and accession experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with the Eastern neighbourhood partners.

#### **4.4. EU Power and Effectiveness**

This manuscript directly or indirectly deploys the concept of “effectiveness” as referring to the EU’s normative power (Article 1) and as a micro-level structural characteristic of EU TG cooperation programmes (Articles 2, 3, 4). Any discussion of the effectiveness of EU TG cooperation links to the question of the EU’s actorness and international identity. One of the most prominent scholarly debates engaging the meaning of the EU’s identity on the global arena is one of Normative Power Europe (NPE).<sup>175</sup> This debate focuses on what kind of power Europe is, both as a self-image and in the perception of others. Thus far, scholars converge on the point that the EU cannot be considered a typical nation state of the post-Westphalian order.<sup>176</sup> In order to differentiate the EU from the idea of a traditional power in the state-centric system of coordinates, commentators have attached various conceptual labels to the EU’s actorness. For example, Duchêne viewed the European Community as a “civilian”, not military, power in international relations, especially as regards the preservation of peace.<sup>177</sup> The fact that, since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, the EU has managed to keep peaceful relations between its member states imparts a degree of validity to that claim.<sup>178</sup>

Other scholars criticised the notion of “civilian power” for its overlooking the importance of military capabilities and coercive means, particularly in the context of the Cold War.<sup>179</sup> Bull and Hill, for example, were sceptical about the EU’s civilian power without a solid nuclear deterrence program and conventional armed forces.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 235–58.

<sup>176</sup> Toby King, “Human Rights in European Foreign Policy: Success or Failure for Post-Modern Diplomacy?,” *European Journal of International Law* 10, no. 2 (1999): 313–37.

<sup>177</sup> Francois Duchene, “Europe’s Role in World Peace,” in *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead.*, 1972, 32–47.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, “The ‘difference Engine’: Constructing and Representing the International Identity of the European Union,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 10, no. 3 (January 2003): 380–404.

<sup>179</sup> Hedley Bull, “Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 21, no. 2 (1982): 149–70; Christopher Hill, “European Foreign Policy: Power Bloc, Civilian Model—or Flop?,” *The Evolution of an International Actor: Western Europe’s New Assertiveness*, 1990, 31–55.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

However, with the dissolution of the USSR, this view lost its relevance and the debate shifted from what kind of power the EU was towards the power of EU norms. For example, Whitman argued that, even if the EU acquired military capabilities, it would not necessarily invalidate its image as a civilian power.<sup>181</sup> Manners regarded the EU as a unique international actor with its specific historical path, hybrid polity, and constitutional configuration, which inform its normative behaviour on the international arena.<sup>182</sup> Ever since Manners' publication on Normative Power Europe, the EU literature has speculated over whether the EU has lived up to its self-imposed image.<sup>183</sup>

These studies have concentrated, for example, on the extent to which EU norms are viewed as legitimate in other countries and how effective the EU power is. The normative power of the EU has mostly been found to depend on the EU's ability to properly construct its normative image, practise consistency, factor in domestic contexts, and have the neighbourhood countries not only formally adopt the democratic norms but also institutionalise them in everyday government practices.<sup>184</sup> Empirical scholarship has demonstrated that the idea of normative power has proved inconsistent and lacking strength in cases where the EU used normative rhetoric to mask its own security interests.<sup>185</sup> A way to summarise this debate would be to say that the EU's power in spreading its norms depends on both the validity of those norms in view of the beneficiary and the EU's tools in making such norm diffusion occur despite possible setbacks. Thus, in defining and analysing the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood (Article 1), I draw on the normative understanding of the EU's power. I examine to what extent the EU's power to advance its democratisation agenda in the neighbourhood has manifested itself in the policy contexts, agency, and instruments of EU democracy promotion in the ENP.

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<sup>181</sup> Manners and Whitman, "The 'difference Engine': Constructing and Representing the International Identity of the European Union."

<sup>182</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," 240.

<sup>183</sup> Michelle Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 45, no. 5 (2007): 1041–64; Helene Sjursen, "The EU as a 'normative' Power: How Can This Be?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (March 2006): 235–51; Rosa Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Klaus Brummer, "Imposing Sanctions: The Not So 'Normative' Power Europe," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 14 (2009): 191–207; Adrian Hyde-Price, "'Normative' Power Europe: A Realist Critique," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (March 2006): 217–34; Orbie et al., "The Normative Distinctiveness of the European Union in International Development Stepping out of the Shadow of the World Bank?"

<sup>184</sup> Casier, "The EU's Two-Track Approach to Democracy Promotion: The Case of Ukraine"; Eline De Ridder and Dimitry Kochenov, "Democratic Conditionality in the Eastern Enlargement: Ambitious Window Dressing," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16, no. 5 (2011): 589–605; Ann-Kristin Jonasson, *The EU's Democracy Promotion and the Mediterranean Neighbours: Orientation, Ownership and Dialogue in Jordan and Turkey* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"; Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*; Susan Stewart, *Democracy Promotion and the 'Colour Revolutions'* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power."

<sup>185</sup> Michelle Pace, "Paradoxes and Contradictions in EU Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: The Limits of EU Normative Power," *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (February 2009): 39–58; Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*; Federica Bicchì, "Dilemmas of Implementation: EU Democracy Assistance in the Mediterranean," *Democratization* 17, no. 5 (October 2010): 976–96; Hyde-Price, "'Normative' Power Europe: A Realist Critique."

Another common way in EU studies to conceptualise the EU's effectiveness is by evaluating several consecutive stages of EU norm transfer to the target country. Under the norm (rule) transfer, scholars have implied three consecutive stages: norm selection, norm adoption, and norm implementation.<sup>186</sup> Norm selection determines whether and to what extent EU norms are viewed as "the normative reference point" in EU-third country relations.<sup>187</sup> Norm adoption indicates whether and to what extent the selected norms are transposed into the domestic legislation of a country. Finally, norm application refers to the extent to which the adopted norms are effectively acted upon in political and administrative settings.<sup>188</sup> Some observers also add the fourth stage – norm internalisation – which defines the acceptance of new rules among all stakeholders involved.<sup>189</sup> These concepts can often be found in the available scholarly analyses of EU democracy and democratic governance promotion and transfer of the *acquis*.

While not directly engaging the concept of effectiveness, Articles 2 and 3 shed more light on all the three stages of EU norm transfer. For example, Article 2, by exploring the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, deals with the first stage – norm selection. It finds that Twinning projects in politically liberalised countries, politicised and non-complex policy sectors tend to include more norms of transparency, accountability, and participation. As indicated in the concluding chapter, the EU may use these dynamics to make democratic governance promotion through TG cooperation more explicit and, perhaps, more effective as a consequence. Article 3 implicitly engages both norm adoption and implementation by examining the perceived effectiveness, or added value, of different groups of MS for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood. This perceived effectiveness is derived from a number of country-and sector-specific comparative advantages, which CEECs and the older MS bring on the table.

In contrast to Articles 2 and 3, Article 4 attends to the concept of the EU's effectiveness in a more direct and structural manner by evaluating specific cases of EU TG cooperation, i.e., Twinning projects. It conceptualises effectiveness as a fact of legal or institutional convergence occurring in the beneficiary institution and country as the result of specific instances of EU TG cooperation and in accordance with its declared objectives. The concepts of legal and institutional convergence have mostly been inspired by the existing Europeanisation literature.<sup>190</sup> Legal convergence refers

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<sup>186</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics," 800.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 801.

<sup>189</sup> Leonardo Morlino and Amichai Magen, "Methods of Influence, Layers of Impact, Cycles of Change: A Framework for Analysis," in *International Actors, Democratization and the Rule of Law: Anchoring Democracy*, ed. Amichai Magen and Leonardo Morlino (Routledge, 2009), 26–52.

<sup>190</sup> Julia Langbein and Tanja Börzel, "Introduction: Explaining Policy Change in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 4 (2013): 571–80; Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine."

to the passage by the beneficiary country of a new law, secondary legislation, relevant amendments, or decrees, which draw on the EU *acquis* and bilateral agreements between the EU and the country in question. Institutional convergence stands for the organisational and policy changes in the beneficiary institution or policy sector in line with the EU's policy recommendations. Interestingly, since EU TG cooperation encourages reforms at different levels of government, legal and institutional convergence normally present as two independent outcomes. That goes against a common view in the Europeanisation and EU external governance studies, suggesting that norm adoption precedes norm application (implementation). Indeed, findings from Article 4 confirm that the institutional convergence of the beneficiary institution occurs independently or in parallel to the legal convergence.

Elsewhere throughout this work, when speaking about EU foreign policy in the ENP, I also resort to concepts such as influence, impact, effect, and their synonyms in reference to the EU and its norms. While presenting a pronounced variation in the semantic sense (Table 2), these concepts and their variation bear no analytical value in the context of this work and are mostly used interchangeably.

**Table 2.** Semantic usage of power, effectiveness, and the related concepts<sup>191</sup>

Concept	Definition	# uses
effectiveness	1. Power to be effective; the quality of being able to bring about an effect; 2. [derived from adjective "effective"] productive or capable of producing a result.	97
impact	1. The act of one body, object, etc., striking another; collision; 2. The impression made by an idea, cultural movement, social group, etc.	61
power	1. Ability or capacity to do something; 2. Political, financial, social, etc., force or influence; 3. A prerogative, privilege, or liberty.	51
influence	1. An effect of one person or thing on another; 2. The power of a person or thing to have such an effect; 3. Power or sway resulting from ability, wealth, position, etc.	20
ability	1. possession of the qualities required to do something; necessary skill, competence, or power; 2. considerable proficiency; natural capability.	11
effect	1. Something that is produced by a cause or agent; result; 2. power or ability to influence or produce a result; efficacy; 3. the condition of being operative (esp. in the phrases in or into effect).	6

<sup>191</sup> *Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged*, 12th ed. (HarperCollins Publishers, 2014), <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>. Each concept features two-three most common definitions, as reflected in the usage of those concepts in this manuscript.

## 5. Philosophical background

In reading about the philosophy of science and its importance for the social sciences in particular, I came across an interesting opinion by sociologist John Hughes, who likened the relationship between philosophy and the social sciences to the parable of the prodigal son.

Like petulant adolescents, the social sciences, having been born and nurtured within the familial fold of philosophy, reject their parentage, squander their inheritance, only to return for refuge and succour when “the going gets tough”. Since developing as relatively autonomous disciplines, the social sciences have tended to re-examine, and seek support from, their philosophical foundations only during periods of crisis; when tried and hitherto trusted methods no longer seem to justify the faith originally invested in them, when researchers lose confidence in the significance of their findings, and when obvious and taken-for-granted principles no longer seem quite so clear and obvious.<sup>192</sup>

Both in contrast and in addition to Hughes, I believe it ought to be possible to mitigate such scientific “crises” by acknowledging and staying close to “the familial fold of philosophy” in the process of social research. Normally, doing so requires some discussion of the philosophical aspects of ontology and epistemology. Ontology is concerned with the notion of reality and asks a question: “What kinds of things are out there?” Epistemology then inquires: “What is the character of your knowledge about the world?” These two facets of philosophy are interrelated, because the questions about reality almost automatically lead to questions on how to gain the knowledge about it. I position myself within the positivist approach to ontology, which argues that empirical knowledge can never penetrate to the “essence” of phenomena, but deal only with their surface appearances or indications.<sup>193</sup> Positivists also believe that there is an independent reality out there, which is resistant to analysis and will never be fully understood.<sup>194</sup> Epistemologically, however, I share in the view of the constructivist tradition, claiming that knowledge, in particular about social phenomena, is constructed by the researcher, his/her respondents, or the sources of data he/she uses.<sup>195</sup> While acknowledging this subjective normative and ideational component in my epistemology, my aspiration and focus has been on neutral and objective observation, identifying causality, and producing limited generalisations.

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<sup>192</sup> John Hughes, *The Philosophy of Social Research* (New York: Longman, 1990), 1.

<sup>193</sup> Immanuel Kant, Paul Guyer, and Allen Wood, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Oeuvre (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>194</sup> David Crowther and Geoff Lancaster, *Research Methods* (Routledge, 2012); Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry, Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, 1994.

<sup>195</sup> Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, 2002; Jeffrey Checkel, “Social Construction and Integration,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 6, no. 4 (January 1999): 545–60; Michael Zürn and Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Getting Socialized to Build Bridges: Constructivism and Rationalism, Europe and the Nation-State, International Organization*, vol. 59, 2005; Michelle Pace, Peter Seeberg, and Francesco Cavatorta, “The EU’s Democratization Agenda in the Mediterranean: A Critical inside-out Approach,” *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (February 2009): 3–19.

## 6. Research design & methods

Most of the articles comprising this dissertation follow a mixed-methods research design, accommodating both qualitative and quantitative forms of scientific inquiry.<sup>196</sup> Those choices are the result of my specific research questions and the philosophical assumptions described above. Mixed-method research “involves the use of both approaches in tandem” so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research.<sup>197</sup> In bringing this research together I followed an iterative process, which involved multiple false starts, stepping back, re-evaluations, and readjustments in response to new empirical information and theoretical insights.<sup>198</sup> The following sections review such aspects of my research design as case selection, data collection, and analytical methods.

### 6.1. Case selection

Any case-based research confronts often uneasy choices about cases, what they are, and how to select them. As the result, any attempt to demarcate them follows an artificial process of drawing boundaries and making difficult choices of inclusion or exclusion.<sup>199</sup> The selection of cases for my articles was tailor-made to the research questions being asked, along with the theoretical, empirical, and methodological challenges surrounding the research process. On a broader level, after the literature review on the effectiveness of democracy promotion, I decided to continue studying EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood and Twinning instrument as its most prominent case. I did not refer to Twinning as the most likely, most crucial, or the most typical case<sup>200</sup> (though such formulation may often be true), because different research questions that I pursued would require a fresh perspective on what my cases were. Nevertheless, I had compelling reasons for considering Twinning as a case of high empirical salience for studying EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood.

The Twinning instrument was introduced in 1998, in order to create a platform for MS ministries to give advice and assistance to CEECs in preparation for their EU membership.<sup>201</sup> A typical Twinning project entails a long-term, full-time secondment of MS ministry officials and experts with a purpose of creating or reinforcing the administrative institutions of CEECs. The end goal is transposition and implementation

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<sup>196</sup> John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 4.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

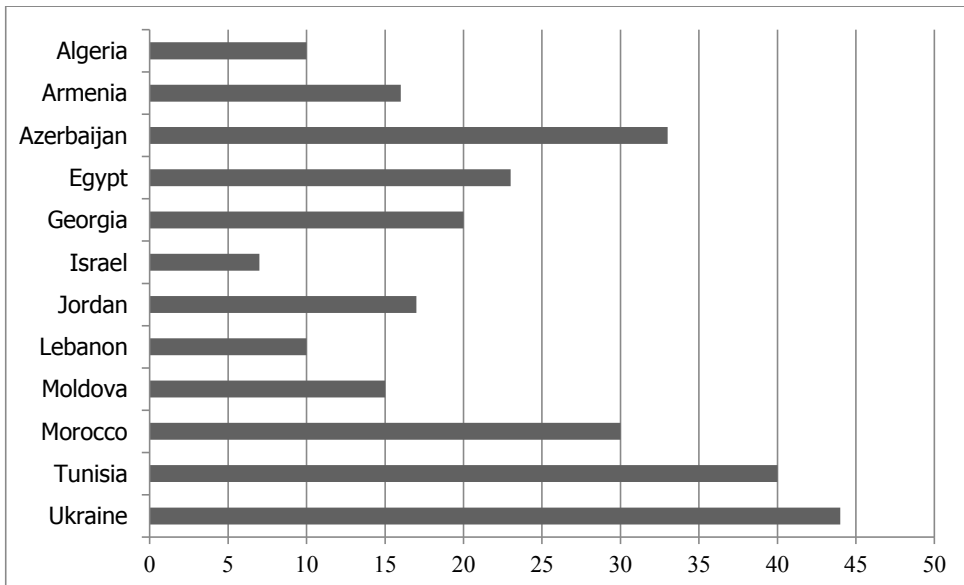
<sup>198</sup> Peter Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 53.

<sup>199</sup> Lasse Gerrits and Stefan Verweij, “Critical Realism as a Meta-Framework for Understanding the Relationships between Complexity and Qualitative Comparative Analysis,” *Journal of Critical Realism* 12, no. November 2015 (2013): 166–82.

<sup>200</sup> Jason Seawright and John Gerring, “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options,” *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 294–308.

<sup>201</sup> Int. 16 with EU Commission official, 02 June 2015.

of the *acquis communautaire* in line with the EU accession criteria.<sup>202</sup> After the Twinning instrument was introduced to the non-candidate countries under the ENP, the European Commission attached its priorities to the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), Action Plans (APs), and the prospects of a DCFTA between the EU and the respective countries.<sup>203</sup> While at the core of a Twinning project is a Permanent Accession Advisor (or Resident Twinning Advisor under the ENP), who manages the project for its entire duration, Twinning also attracts medium- and short-term experts from EU MS, who contribute to various project components.<sup>204</sup> The Twinning instrument emphasises the demand-driven approach and domestic ownership by the beneficiary. Since 1998, there have been close to 2,500 Twinning projects, with an average budget of one million euros each. Out of that number, approximately 250 projects have been implemented under the European Neighbourhood Policy (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Twinning projects in the ENP region, by country, 2004-2016 <sup>205</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Court of Auditors, "Special Report No 6/2003 Concerning Twinning as the Main Instrument to Support Institution-Building in Candidate Countries Together with the Commission's Replies," 23.

<sup>203</sup> Twinning was also extended to 10 countries under the Instrument of Pre-accession (IPA) such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. However, this research only focuses on the EU's Eastern neighborhood under the ENP.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> Estimated on the basis of European Commission, "Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report," 2013. and publicly available data on Twinning exercise under the ENPI and ENI financial instruments.



Compared to the other, more expensive institution-building tools at the EU's disposal, such as Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB), Twinning costs less, but it also provides no direct budget support or grants, as is the case with the CIB. The main focus of Twinning on joint problem-solving through a cross-border partnership between public agencies also makes it the most typical case of TG cooperation, according to the original conceptualisation by Keohane and Nye.<sup>206</sup> In addition, Twinning has a number of important distinctions from EU classical technical assistance (e.g., TACIS and TAIEX), like demand-driven approach and emphasis on public, rather than private, expertise in the process of cooperation (Table 3). However, the most important distinction of Twinning from similar tools by the EU lies in the peer-to-peer character of TG cooperation between civil servants, with the duration long enough to build meaningful interpersonal ties and effect a lasting change in the beneficiary administration.

**Table 3.** Twinning versus classic technical assistance programs by the EU<sup>207</sup>

<b>Twinning</b>	<b>Classic Technical Assistance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer-to-peer cooperation and direct EU MS public sector expertise</li> <li>• Twinning contracts with EU MS (originally called "covenants")</li> <li>• "Mandatory results" jointly agreed upon</li> <li>• Approximation with the EU <i>Acquis</i> and best practices related to EU legislation and institutional capacity building</li> <li>• Political commitment highly desirable</li> <li>• EU MS selected upon quality of proposal with special focus on the RTA</li> <li>• Direct and active involvement of the beneficiaries required</li> <li>• High sustainability level due to prior capacity of beneficiary administration</li> <li>• Demand-driven approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private expertise</li> <li>• Service contracts with external consultants</li> <li>• Provision of outputs and deliverables</li> <li>• Any cooperation-related subject</li> <li>• Political commitment desirable, but not always necessary</li> <li>• Bid selected on the basis of quality and budget</li> <li>• Direct involvement of the beneficiaries less required in project implementation</li> <li>• Justified by beneficiary institution's insufficient level of development</li> </ul>

The Twinning instrument also makes a good case for the research questions asked in this dissertation. Regarding MS comparative advantages (Article 3, RQ 4), for example, Twinning cooperation creates an "administrative market", where beneficiaries can cherry pick the MS system that fits them best.<sup>208</sup> For bidding, a MS institution shall specify clearly the comparative advantages it brings for the

<sup>206</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations."

<sup>207</sup> Source: Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 34.

<sup>208</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond," 13.

beneficiary.<sup>209</sup> This comparative advantage may come at several levels, for example: the sectoral experience of a MS in specific areas of policy making, the hands-on knowledge of EU *acquis*, the personal demeanour, expertise, and management skills of RTAs and other MS experts. According to my interviewee, communicating this comparative advantage clearly and convincingly may be key to winning a Twinning project.<sup>210</sup> Therefore, Twinning projects may be the most likely case to reveal the comparative advantages of participating MS. No other EU instrument allows such a lengthy, institutionalised, and competitive process of MS selection and participation as Twinning does. In addition, the fact that MS often join in a consortium makes it extremely interesting to compare the comparative advantages that different MS contribute to Twinning projects (Article 3). Establishing the comparative advantages (added value) of CEECs and the older MS would also allow for some generalisation to other instances of MS participation in EU foreign and development policy, as well as to Twinning projects in other EU foreign policy frameworks.

Another differentiating characteristic of Twinning from other EU TG tools is its emphasis on a jointly agreed set of objectives, or mandatory results. Every Twinning project is obliged to foster a new or adapted system, a process or a procedure in policymaking that will continue functioning under the sole responsibility and ownership of the beneficiary country.<sup>211</sup> Since the mandatory results are jointly agreed upon with the beneficiary, they are expected to reflect the current needs and priorities of the ENP country. This fact, combined with the detailed contractual specifications of mandatory results and accompanying activities in a project fiche and other documents, makes Twinning an excellent case for analysing legal and institutional convergence in relevant policy areas and over an extended period of time (Article 4). The TG nature of Twinning cooperation also implies certain autonomy of project activities from central political leadership,<sup>212</sup> thus making Twinning projects more likely cases of successful policy convergence, as compared to other more “politicised” EU’s instruments.

The relatively low political risks that such instruments pose to the incumbent regime also make them the most likely case for the promotion of democracy and democratic governance at the sectoral level. Although the Twinning manual does not make any explicit references to democratic governance promotion, the Twinning instrument poses an interesting case for studying democratic governance for two reasons. First, the European Commission has committed to democratic governance norms in its sectoral cooperation and Twinning is an integral part of such cooperation.<sup>213</sup> Second, Twinning projects have already been in the centre of a lively

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<sup>209</sup> European Commission, “Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual.”

<sup>210</sup> For example, Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015; Int. 15 with Danish civil servant, 05 May 2015.

<sup>211</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, “Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report,” 8.

<sup>212</sup> Slaughter, “The Real New World Order.”

<sup>213</sup> European Commission, “Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a Harmonized Approach within the European Union,” 6.

academic debate, viewing them as a potent site of socialisation and transfer of democratic governance norms to the EU's neighbours.<sup>214</sup> Finally, an analysis of Twinning has a clear empirical advantage over other EU TG tools, as each Twinning project fiche follows a strict formalised structure, which makes the projects easier to compare systematically across countries and policy sectors.

Geographically, the present study focuses on the Eastern neighbourhood countries covered by the ENP. The differences in responses to the ENP by the Eastern neighbourhood countries and the varied nature of their political systems make the entire region a very interesting case for empirical analysis. The Eastern neighbourhood countries roughly split into two camps in accordance with their level and quality of engagement with the EU. The first camp is the "integration trio" of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.<sup>215</sup> Those countries have recently signed AAs and DCFTAs with the EU and generally displayed higher levels of convergence with EU standards in the region.<sup>216</sup> The second camp, or a "balancers trio", consisting of more authoritarian Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus have generally had a lower interest or poor records in EU integration.<sup>217</sup> While coming from the former USSR and sharing many of its political, cultural, and administrative legacies, these countries display a noticeable variation in their attitude and proximity to the letter and spirit of the EU law.

Each of the articles, while referring to the ENP region more generally, has a specific geographical focus, dictated by empirical and methodological considerations. Throughout this manuscript, this focus gradually narrows down from the whole ENP region to the Eastern neighbourhood and single-country studies.

For example, Article 1 surveys scholarly works on the context, actors, and tools of EU democracy promotion in the entire ENP region. Since the literature review only required desk research, undertaking analysis of a larger area such as the ENP region seemed feasible and sufficiently inclusive to me. In contrast, Article 2, dealing with the democratic governance substance of Twinning fiches, develops a more narrow focus on the Eastern neighbourhood countries. The methodological tools it uses controls for variation across the different countries involved and allows for a modest degree of generalisation towards the Southern Mediterranean region of the ENP. This kind of generalisation was not an ambition in my analysis of the added value of CEECs versus the older MS in Article 3. It brings forth thick empirical evidence of Twinning implementation in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, two largest beneficiaries of Twinning cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood. While I did not find significant differences between those two countries (owing to their shared Soviet past) within the conceptual

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<sup>214</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>215</sup> Jana Kobzova, "Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience," *ECFR Riga Series*, 2015, 5, [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga\\_Series\\_Jana\\_change.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_Series_Jana_change.pdf).

<sup>216</sup> Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, *European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, ed. Jeff Lovitt, 2015, [http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP\\_Index\\_2014.pdf](http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP_Index_2014.pdf).

<sup>217</sup> Kobzova, "Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience," 5.

framework of analysis, I should not assume that such differences would not manifest in the process of generalisation to other EU's Eastern neighbours. All the same, most findings from Article 3 can be extrapolated to the other Eastern neighbourhood countries rather safely, owing to numerous similarities in their post-communist political and administrative needs.

Finally, while presenting a multiple case study on Twinning effectiveness, Article 4 develops an exclusive geographical focus on Twinning projects in one country – Ukraine. Drawing on a significant number of interviews (40), such a narrow empirical focus enabled me to tap into the micro level of Twinning implementation in Ukraine and observe the dynamics omitted by more inclusive research designs with more extensive case selection. Because the Ukrainian political environment has a number of distinct features (e.g., high institutional fluidity) setting it apart from not only the EU's Southern neighbourhood countries but also other countries of the Eastern neighbourhood, my results should be generalised with more caution than those from Articles 2 and 3. However, solid background evidence from interviews and secondary data suggest that, in many important respects, Twinning implementation experience and common issues in Ukraine may well apply to other ENP countries, in the East and the South.

## **6.2. Data collection**

There were several sources of data informing this research, such as expert interviews, official documents on Twinning and EU TG cooperation, and government sources in the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood countries.

This study mainly relies on 45 semi-structured interviews, conducted between November 2014 and May 2016 with civil servants, experts, and public officials, who were involved in Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. The semi-structured interviews featured a mix of pre-determined and open-ended follow-up questions.<sup>218</sup> In order to locate interviewees, I relied on available reports and press-releases on Twinning, which publish contact information on people who were involved in the design, implementation, or evaluation of specific Twinning projects. Once the first interviews had taken place, it was convenient to use the "snowball" approach,<sup>219</sup> whereby I asked my respondents to refer me to their colleagues or friends, who worked in the same or other projects. The major criterion behind a selection of particular individuals was their hands-on involvement in one of the stages of a Twinning project or secondary expertise in the subject matter.

The geographical distribution of respondents is fairly wide, spanning 13 EU member states (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Poland,

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<sup>218</sup> Elizabeth O'Sullivan, Gary Raymond Rassel, and Maureen Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), 192. See also Table 27 in the appendix.

<sup>219</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*.

Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands) and two Eastern neighbourhood countries (Azerbaijan and Ukraine).<sup>220</sup> According to their relation to Twinning projects, the respondents can be split into three major groups. The first and most numerous group are people who have been directly involved in the implementation of Twinning projects, that is, Project Leaders, RTAs, RTA counterparts, RTA assistants, and framework contract experts. The second group consisted of high-ranking officials from the European Commission and the European Delegations, who assumed a supervisory role in the process of implementation of one or more Twinning projects in the countries concerned. Finally, the third group included experts and scholars who were not directly involved in Twinning but who developed significant expertise in the architecture and performance of the instrument.

Data from interviews have been anonymised. In order to complicate the recognition, as was the concern with some interviewees, only the respondents' nationality, general specialty (civil servant, official, or expert), and organisation are reported in the appendix (p. 168). Most interviews have been audio-recorded, except in cases where respondents chose to speak off the record or refused being recorded altogether. In that event, I relied on my notes. Sometimes, in order to get an interviewee acquainted with the content of the questions to be asked, I had them fill out a brief survey. Such a pilot survey was very useful for fine-tuning my questions during an actual interview and later with the operationalisation and coding of variables. The primary languages of the interviews were English (43%), Ukrainian (44%), and Russian (13%). It should also be noted that my familiarity with the socio-linguistic and political contexts in Eastern Europe, particularly in my home country Ukraine, was of great assistance in planning and conducting interviews.

Each of my articles draws on distinct interview themes and sets of questions. Article 3, for example, mainly deals with the interviewees' perceptions of the contribution by different groups of MS to Twinning cooperation. The interview questions pertaining to Article 4 had to do with the internal organisation of a Twinning project and the conditions that were identified behind its effectiveness. Sometimes, interview data from one article helped in the choice of conditions for another, like it happened with the potential added value of CEECs, which was later analysed as one of the conditions of the ultimate effectiveness of Twinning. A template with the typical questions that were asked is provided in the appendix (Table 27, p. 203). Article 1 relies solely on the analysis of scholarly literature and relevant documents.

In analysing the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood (Article 2), I mainly rely on the content analysis of Twinning fiches. A Twinning project fiche is a contractually binding document, created in the process of complex collaboration between the European Commission and the

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<sup>220</sup> Interview data from Azerbaijani civil servants and their Twinning partners from EU MS were kindly contributed by Dr. Fabienne Bossuyt and were not counted toward the total number of interviews, as indicated here (more in Section 6.2 of this Introduction and in Article 3).

beneficiary institution and detailing, among other things, the project's expected outputs and related activities. I could access online 117 Twinning fiches, covering all projects completed or being implemented in the Eastern neighbourhood countries between 2006 and 2015. A content analysis refers to a "systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories" and is particularly useful for examining documents for trends and patterns.<sup>221</sup> In my case, the purpose of content analysis was to investigate the references to transparency, accountability, and participation in the text of each Twinning fiche, as well as to compute the values for democratic governance substance. I operationalised the categories of democratic governance substance in a deductive manner by staying in close association with the underlying theoretical premises.<sup>222</sup>

In order to triangulate data on Twinning projects, refine my theoretical expectations about conditions and variables, and to facilitate measurement and operationalisation, I also used the European Commission's reports and statistics on Twinning, official evaluations, press-releases, and the EU delegations' websites. I also widely drew on information on Ukrainian governmental websites, like that of the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine), Centre for Adaptation of the Civil Service, and relevant works by Ukrainian scholars.

### **6.3. Methods of data analysis**

This study brings together both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analysis, depending on a particular research question and the specifics of data. While appreciating the profound complexity of different methodological schools and approaches, I view a scientific method as a mere tool for pursuing a specific type of research goal. Some methods may be more universal and applicable to several types of research objectives, while others have applications that are more narrowly defined. For an illustration, if we want to drive a nail into a wall, we may use a hammer, a large brick, or a frying pan – depending on which particular tool we have an access to or are capable of operating. Yet, if we want to extract the same nail from the wall, none of those tools will do, because in that case we will have to use pliers only. Similarly, our choice of method is first of all determined by the problem at hand and, second, by considerations of the accessibility and versatility of a particular method. The factor of time also plays a role. Whereas we may consider using a hammer as the most versatile or commonsensical tool in that particular nail-wall situation, a frying pan may do sufficiently fine if we cannot afford to invest any time in searching for the hammer or learning how to use it.

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<sup>221</sup> Steve Stemler, "An Overview of Content Analysis," *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 7, no. 17 (2001): 137. More details on content analysis are provided in the appendix under Article 2 Supplement, p. 174.

<sup>222</sup> Philipp Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis," in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2000, 5.

In this close link with the research questions, I allowed myself to be a little explorative when it came to selecting the methods. Because of a rather narrow empirical focus on EU TG cooperation and Twinning instrument in particular, I wanted to cover not only as many underexplored conceptual areas as possible but also introduce multiple methodological perspectives and discover what kind of answers they will lead to. I decided to derive those various methodological approaches from the existing debates over the idea of causality. According to the assumptions about causality, the articles collected in this dissertation encompass deterministic and probabilistic approaches.

### **6.3.1. Deterministic methods**

The deterministic causality implies that a cause can be considered a cause if its presence produces the identical effect every time that cause is present in one way or another.<sup>223</sup> Works using the deterministic notion of causality are normally small-N qualitative studies, hypothesising only one cause and eschewing the ideas of a measurement error or interaction factors.<sup>224</sup> For that reason, perhaps, determinism has earned some negative reputation in the world of social sciences and EU studies in particular, as it risks producing sweeping generalisations and omitted variable bias.<sup>225</sup> At the same time, Lieberson notes, a small-n case study design must embrace the deterministic rather than probabilistic notion of causality, simply by way of logical necessity.<sup>226</sup> In such a way, he continues, the small number of cases, which defines deterministic research, simply makes it impossible to examine probabilities.<sup>227</sup> Hence, the deterministic approach, shadowing all qualitative methods, is not necessarily inappropriate or inferior, as each scientific method means to arrive at some sort of generalisation of reality, reflected in a new or updated theory. What matters, however, is the rigidity with which data are collected and the quality of analytical inferences based on those data. Therefore, I use the deterministic understanding of causality to charter areas of scientific inquiry where probabilistic explanations are simply not feasible due to constraints with data and their operationalisation.

Such deterministic approach to causality shows in my qualitative analysis of an added value of CEECs and the older MS for EU TG projects in the Eastern neighbourhood (Article 3, RQ4). Article 3 applies a qualitative tool, called Ego-Alter-Researcher's Analysis (EAR), originally used by Arts & Verschuuren for measuring

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<sup>223</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*, 90.

<sup>224</sup> Stanley Lieberson, "More on the Uneasy Case for Using Mill-Type Methods in Small-N Comparative Studies," *Social Forces* 74, no. 4 (1994).

<sup>225</sup> Etel Solingen, "Of Dominoes and Firewalls: The Domestic, Regional, and Global Politics of International Diffusion," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2012): 631–644; Seawright and Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options"; Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*.

<sup>226</sup> Lieberson, "More on the Uneasy Case for Using Mill-Type Methods in Small-N Comparative Studies."

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 1227.

political influence in complex instances of public decision-making.<sup>228</sup> This method rests on three pillars, or dimensions, which I have slightly modified from the original to fit my research questions. The first dimension, Ego-perception, denotes the view on a subject matter by one group of key stakeholders, whereas the second dimension, Alter-perception, captures the views by another group of stakeholders in relevance for the same subject matter. In my case, Ego-perception refers to the perceptions of MS added value for Twinning by representatives of MS themselves, e.g., RTAs, whereas Alter-perception has been derived from the views by Azeri and Ukrainian Twinning officials and experts. The third dimension, Researcher's analysis, presumes a validity check of Ego- and Alter-perceptions on the basis of pre-established criteria,<sup>229</sup> such as (using my own example) the dominant theoretical expectations of the nature of the added value by CEECs and the older MS in the EU's Twinning and other cooperation with the Eastern neighbourhood countries.

This methodological tool is particularly suitable for the qualitative nature of my data, mostly consisting of semi-structured expert interviews (Article 3), because of its strong emphasis on triangulation. By interviewing two or more respondents per Twinning project from the EU and its Eastern neighbourhood, who could comment on the comparative advantages of the MS concerned and by synthesising rather scarce literature on the subject, I arrive at several deterministic statements about the added value of CEECs compared to the older MS. The validity of those statements, or hypotheses, reflects the degree of consensus over them among the interviewees and in the existing literature.

A special case of deterministic methodology are configurational, or set-theoretic methods, which are considered most suitable for intermediate-N studies.<sup>230</sup> The methods associated with the configurational approach to causality seek to identify specific conditions or combinations of conditions under which an outcome occurs.<sup>231</sup> The configurational methods of analysis are close to the deterministic philosophy in that they concentrate on fixed causal paths leading to specific outcomes, unlike the probabilistic methods concentrating on the likelihood of different variables to influence one another. Configurational methods are usually portrayed as describing set relations between conditions and outcomes: each case is either a member or a non-member of various sets related to conditions and outcomes. The most known method dealing with configurational causality is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), applied in Article 4 to evaluate the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine.

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<sup>228</sup> Bas Arts and Piet Verschuren, "Assessing Political Influence in Complex Decision-Making: An Instrument Based on Triangulation," *International Political Science Review* 20, no. 4 (1999): 411–24.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 417.

<sup>230</sup> Benoît Rihoux and Charles Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, Applied Social Research Methods (SAGE Publications, 2009), xviii.

<sup>231</sup> Carsten Schneider and Claudius Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, Strategies for Social Inquiry (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.



To illustrate how QCA works, let me use an empirical example of the Twinning project on the competitiveness of rail transport in Ukraine.<sup>232</sup> That project sought to harmonise Ukrainian rail transportation authorities with relevant EU regulations in regards to competition and efficiency. Because the project participants prepared and had a new law passed, I considered this project effective in reference to its outcome, i.e., legal convergence. The four conditions, identified in Article 4 and that may lead to legal convergence, are composed of their own sub-sets. For example, each condition (set) in my analysis, like sector politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and communication quality consists of two sub-sets – low (0) and high (1). Our project on rail transport, for example, belongs to sub-set 0 in politicisation, sub-set 1 in sectoral conditionality, sub-set 1 in policy fit, and sub-set 1 in the quality of communication. Therefore, in this particular case, legal convergence and, by extension, overall project effectiveness is a super-set of low politicisation, high sectoral conditionality, high policy fit, and good quality of communication.

An interesting part about this causal mechanism is that, first of all, it is asymmetric. While that particular combination of conditions accounts for the positive outcome, its absence is not automatically assumed to lead to the negative outcome. Instead, the logic of QCA urges a separate analysis of cases with the negative outcome. Secondly, QCA allows the existence of multiple causality, or *equifinality*, whereby several (sufficient) combinations of conditions may lead to the outcome.<sup>233</sup> Such possibility is excluded in most probabilistic methods, where equifinality may introduce serious bias to the purported associations between variables. And last but not least, the configurational analysis abandons the idea of each condition having its own independent effect on the outcome in favour of the joint causal combinations of conditions.<sup>234</sup>

In that regard, QCA makes a distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions. A condition, or combination, is considered *necessary* if it is always present when the outcome is present; otherwise, the outcome cannot occur. In contrast, a condition or configuration is considered *sufficient* if the outcome always occurs when the condition is present. However, the same outcome may also be a result of other (sufficient) conditions, which is consistent with the idea of multiple causality, described above.<sup>235</sup> For example, if ALL effective Twinning projects were characterised by low politicisation, high sectoral conditionality, high policy fit, and the good quality of communication, that path would be considered *necessary* for Twinning effectiveness.

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<sup>232</sup> "Institutional support to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine on increasing the operation performance and the competitiveness of Rail transport in Ukraine", implemented by a consortium of Spain and Poland in 2013-2015 (see also appendix).

<sup>233</sup> Dirk Berg-Schlusser et al., "Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach," *Configurational Comparative Methods*, 2009, 8; Schneider and Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, 5.

<sup>234</sup> Berg-Schlusser et al., "Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach," 9.

<sup>235</sup> Rihoux and Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, xix.

On the contrary, if only SOME effective Twinning projects contained that combination, but the others were characterised by high politicisation, high sectoral conditionality, high fit, and low quality of communication (for example) – then both combinations would be deemed as *sufficient* for a Twinning project to be effective.

Once the number of cases in QCA increases, it is important to arrive at a parsimonious formula, or solution,<sup>236</sup> tersely describing all sufficient and necessary combinations that lead to a given outcome. After all membership values associated with conditions and outcomes are listed in a “truth table”, a logical minimisation procedure summarises cases with the identical outcome and related conditions. This procedure results in one or more solutions listing configurations, which lead to the given outcome in the sample. For example, I find in Article 4 that policy fit with the needs and capacities of the beneficiary is the necessary condition for Twinning projects to be effective. Conversely, all Twinning projects that failed to produce either legal or institutional convergence lacked such policy fit. However, policy fit, while being the necessary condition, proved by itself not sufficient to result in the legal convergence of the beneficiary institution. Instead, it needed to be combined with either strong EU sectoral conditionality or low sector politicisation, which formed two alternative (sufficient) paths to legal convergence. In the cases of institutional convergence, policy fit was both the necessary and sufficient condition.

Article 4 utilises the crisp-set variant of QCA (csQCA), which deals either with membership or non-membership in a set, or values 1 or 0 (true or false).<sup>237</sup> csQCA is the original Boolean version of QCA, when the method was first introduced to the social sciences by Charles Ragin in 1987. At its core, it draws on the conventions of Boolean algebra, developed by a 19<sup>th</sup> century British mathematician George Boole and operating on two possible values – true or false.<sup>238</sup> Boolean algebra was instrumental for the development of electronic circuits and computer engineering in 1950s, which in turn inspired the first proponents of QCA in late 1980s.<sup>239</sup> One of the central procedures of csQCA is the dichotomisation of conditions, which implies their operationalisation on theoretical or case-oriented grounds along two dimensions only. This process involves setting a threshold, beyond which all conditions acquire values 1, and below which – values 0. For example, in dichotomising communication quality in Twinning projects (Article 4), I checked to see if there existed serious communication problems among project participants in each particular case. The fact of presence or absence of such problems in interviewees’ reports determined the values for communication quality in respective projects.

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<sup>236</sup> Parsimonious solution is synonymous to a “model” in probabilistic methodologies.

<sup>237</sup> Fuzzy-set QCA operates with a broader understanding of membership, including categories such as partial membership. Because my conditions could be best described with dichotomous sets, I opted for csQCA.

<sup>238</sup> George Boole, *Calculus of Finite Differences* (Chelsea Publishing Company, 1958).

<sup>239</sup> Benoît Rihoux and Gisele De Meur, “Crisp-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA),” in *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, ed. Benoît Rihoux and Charles Ragin, 2009, 34.

However, for many phenomena in the social sciences, the process of dichotomisation is not so straightforward. Setting thresholds unavoidably runs into arbitrary decisions and often fails to account for complexity in messy real-world data.<sup>240</sup> That has become one of the most widespread criticisms of csQCA. In response, researchers developed a fuzzy-set QCA (fsQCA), which supported more nuanced gradation of conditions by allowing inclusion of three or more categories during operationalisation. From a mathematical point of view, fsQCA was no longer based on Boolean algebra, but rather on fuzzy algebra, and used a more complex logical algorithm.<sup>241</sup> For that reason, fsQCA is currently gaining more ground in political science scholarship and elsewhere; however, csQCA still remains a favoured choice of many scholars for its relative simplicity and intuitive approach.<sup>242</sup> Moreover, as Schneider and Wagemann note, if conditions and outcomes may, owing to the character of empirical data, better be represented by dichotomous values, csQCA would still be more appropriate.<sup>243</sup> For example, Article 4 uses the crisp-set variant of QCA, because my conditions and outcomes could be represented more intuitively as binary values. In that case, and also with fsQCA, the authors warn, it is important that the researcher be transparent about the procedures and thresholds involved in dichotomisation.<sup>244</sup> The justification of thresholds for my process of dichotomisation is described in the appendix (Table 24, p. 194) and in-text tables inside Article 4 (Table 10, p. 127).

### **6.3.2. Probabilistic methods**

In contrast to the deterministic understanding of a cause, a probabilistic cause is one that usually but not necessarily produces an effect.<sup>245</sup> The probabilistic view on causality, as its name suggests, derives from the probability theory, maintaining that an event occurs with a certain probability, not as a pre-ordained fact. Under the probabilistic philosophy, a factor (independent variable) can be considered a cause if its presence increases the odds of a change in the outcome (dependent variable). Probabilistic approaches are most widely associated with the statistical methods of analysis, normally operating with variables on a continuous scale and a large number of cases. A typical probabilistic (statistical) analysis computes the degree to which values on the independent variables explain or predict change in values on the dependent variable. And more importantly, statistical tests let us estimate to what

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<sup>240</sup> Carsten Schneider and Claudius Wagemann, "Standards of Good Practice in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Fuzzy-Sets," *Comparative Sociology* 9 (2010): 8.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Rihoux and De Meur, "Crisp-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA)," 34.

<sup>243</sup> Schneider and Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, 277.

<sup>244</sup> Schneider and Wagemann, "Standards of Good Practice in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Fuzzy-Sets," 23.

<sup>245</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*, 174.

extent that degree of relationship is non-random by also computing the significance or p-values attached to the coefficient of relationship.

In my article on the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, I utilise two different statistical approaches: regression analysis and t-statistics. Both of these parametric tests focus on the measures of central tendency, rather than dispersion. Hence, they suit well my data on democratic governance substance, which have no significant outliers and may be represented more intuitively by the means, rather than the medians.<sup>246</sup> The multivariate linear regression, relying on the principle of correlation between variables, predicts a dependent variable from multiple independent ones, measured on a continuous level.<sup>247</sup> Regression analysis also enables one to determine the overall fit of the model by computing the relative contribution of each of the independent variables to the respective variance on the dependent variable.<sup>248</sup> The regression equation basically models an optimal straight line in an XY coordinate system, plotting data points for the dependent and independent variables. In the example with four independent variables  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and  $X_4$  (as is the case in Article 2), a multiple regression equation looks as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon,$$

where  $\beta_0$  represents the intercept (also known as the constant),  $\beta_1$  is the slope parameter or the partial regression coefficient for  $X_1$ , and so forth, and  $\varepsilon$  represents the errors.<sup>249</sup> Each  $\beta$ , a partial regression coefficient, indicates the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while controlling for all other variables in the model.<sup>250</sup> In such a way, for example, if a partial regression coefficient  $\beta_3$  equals zero, the independent variable  $X_3$  does not explain the dependent variable, as hypothesised. Alternatively, if  $\beta_3$  is not a zero, it shows the percentage of the variance explained in  $Y$  with a one-unit change in  $X$ , as well as signals the direction of relationship (depending on whether it is positive or negative). In order to estimate the prediction power of an entire equation (model), statisticians also use  $R^2$  (R Squared), or the coefficient of multiple determination, which returns the value for the total variance explained in  $Y$  by  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and  $X_4$  combined.<sup>251</sup> The regression analysis also produces a  $p$ -value or significance level, indicating whether the derived coefficients are not different from zero merely by chance.

While the multivariate regression analysis controls well for the combined effects of multiple continuous variables on the dependent variable, it does not always factor in the differences between the specific categories of independent variables, especially

<sup>246</sup> Non-parametric statistics are less robust and are more commonly used for non-normally distributed data. Non-parametric tests also use the median as a point of reference rather than the mean.

<sup>247</sup> Michael Kutner et al., *Applied Linear Statistical Models*, 5th ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2005); Adam Lund and Mark Lund, "Laerd Statistics," 2016, <https://statistics.laerd.com/>.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.; O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*.

<sup>249</sup> Lund and Lund, "Laerd Statistics."

<sup>250</sup> O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 439.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 441.

if those categories are measured on a nominal scale.<sup>252</sup> While it is interesting to know whether a level of country's political liberalisation generally predicts the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects, it is even more insightful to glean how Armenia and Ukraine, for example, differ in terms of the democratic governance substance and whether that difference is statistically significant (i.e., greater than zero). To accomplish that research objectives, I complemented the multivariate regression analysis with independent-sample t-tests, which determined whether and how much the means of democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in Ukraine differed from those in Armenia, and other pairs of countries. Similarly, t-tests were used in each of the countries in order to confirm the differences in democratic governance substance in politicised and regular projects, those with EU sectoral conditionality and those without, technically complex and regular.

An alternative approach to gauging the country- and sector-based dynamics in the sample of Twinning fiches would be to introduce a series of dummy variables for different countries and policy sectors. That would enable me to capture the unaccounted effects of those variables on the democratic governance substance of Twinning and its indicators. Upon closer inspection, however, I realised that the effects of countries and policy sectors on the dependent variables strongly correlated with the effects of political liberalisation and sector politicisation and technical complexity, respectively. That mainly manifested through a high degree of multicollinearity (VIF value) when all the above variables were tested together with the dummy variables within one model.<sup>253</sup> That led me to conclude that some of those variables simply duplicated one another and hence were redundant in the model. For that reason, variables such as sector and country were excluded from the actual regression analysis, and used instead for describing the data sample and clustering data during t-testing. However, political liberalisation, sector politicisation, and sector technical complexity, because of their deeper theoretical grounding, remained in the model. Finally, with the help of the dummy variables, I tested the time-series dimension of democratic governance substance in order to capture any effects occurring during the years when different Twinning fiches were created.

To sum up, combining various methodological approaches allows me to look at the subject matter from unusual angles and produce specific types of inferences not accessible to any single approach. Moreover, the real-world data are often messy and do not readily lend themselves to a specific type of causal inference. In selecting the method for analysis, I was mainly guided by the specific research questions, the nature of my data, the hypothesised character of causality, and the type of results my reader would be interested in knowing. On a more pragmatic level, my methodological choices were determined by the sample size. Where the sample size was small (Article 3), I

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<sup>252</sup> Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 153; O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 378; Lund and Lund, "Laerd Statistics."

<sup>253</sup> Lund and Lund, "Laerd Statistics."

resorted to deterministic methods, which depended epistemologically on the quality rather than the quantity of data collected. In the medium-size dataset of Twinning projects in Ukraine (Article 4), configurational approaches carried greater value, insofar as they offered a good level of parsimony and idiosyncrasy at the same time. Finally, in a large-N study of democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, quantitative methods, relying on probabilistic causality, were the most suitable to address my research questions (Article 2).

## **7. Presentation of articles**

In response to the research questions, this dissertation includes four articles, addressing different aspects of EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood (Table 1, Table 4). While introducing the contents of the articles, the following paragraphs shed more light on the research process behind, as well as underlying motivations and setbacks.

Upon beginning of my PhD programme in August 2013 and pondering the focus of my future research, I was significantly influenced by the political developments in my home country Ukraine. Since the then President Yanukovych came to power in 2010, the country showed a great deal of democratic backsliding in basic freedoms. Nonetheless, the hopes were high that his government would eventually sign a long-awaited AA with the EU during an EaP summit in Vilnius in November 2013. That decision would open a new chapter in EU-Ukraine relations and hopefully prevent the further slipping of the country into the semi-authoritarian Kuchma-style regime from a decade before. Therefore, I was very interested in what the EU was doing all those years for advancing democracy in Ukraine and in other countries. Was it effective and why? What instruments did it use and how did it compare with other international players promoting democracy in the region?

To satisfy my curiosity, I decided to review the literature on the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood. By deploying the foreign policy analysis (FPA) as an heuristic filter, I evaluate the policy context, actors, and instruments involved in EU democracy promotion in the ENP countries. With the help of this article, I identified several gaps, which were addressed in the subsequent parts of the dissertation in the context of EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood. For example, I provided some context behind democratic governance promotion via TG cooperation, which later continued in an analysis of the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation (Article 2). Second, I found the gap in studies on the MS dimension of EU democracy promotion and hence steered into a discussion of MS added value for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood (Article 3). Third, Article 1 determined my eventual focus on the concept of the EU's effectiveness, which

surfaced later in an analysis of the effectiveness of EU TG cooperation in Ukraine (Article 4).

However, the major consequence of the literature review from Article 1 was my shifting focus towards EU TG cooperation and the Twinning instrument in particular. That decision also coincided with the tumultuous events of the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine. In late 2013, people took to the streets against the government's last-minute decision to renege on the AA with the EU. The protests grew into a full-scale revolution, after the special police forces brutally dispersed the peaceful gathering of students. Despite the thousands of protesters pouring in the main squares of Kyiv in December 2014, the Yanukovich government seemed to be standing firm and uncompromising in its resolve to hold on to power. In January, the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament), controlled by the pro-presidential Party of Regions, voted on a series of draconian measures aiming to curb the rights of assembly and free speech in the country. The future of democracy in Ukraine was even less certain than before.

Under those circumstances, I decided to switch my emphasis to TG cooperation between the EU and Ukraine, as such cooperation seemed less susceptible to the political storm unfolding in front of my eyes at home. Because TG cooperation proceeded at the middle-link of bureaucratic apparatus, I reasoned, it would become the last beacon of hope for the pro-European course of the country, should the revolution fail. In my decision, I was also very much influenced by the work of EU external governance scholars, who viewed EU TG cooperation as an alternative method of EU democracy promotion at the sectoral level.<sup>254</sup> The rest was history. After an almost three months of bloody standoff, Yanukovich fled the country and was replaced by a more pro-democratic and pro-EU establishment. The new leadership had to deal with Russia's annexation of the Crimea and military aggression in the East. However, it also signed the AA with the EU and adopted an explicitly pro-EU vector of development.

In pursuit of my research interest in EU TG cooperation, I initially confronted a problem with a lack of data, as there was not so much written on the subject of Twinning in the EU literature and elsewhere. The available research also offered a very patchy theoretical understanding of the functioning of EU TG cooperation. At one point, I even began thinking that such empirical focus was perhaps too narrow. Thinking of how narrow or wide an empirical focus should be, I came across a book by Umberto Eco "How to Write a Thesis".<sup>255</sup> "The more you narrow the field", he wrote, "the better and more safely you will work".<sup>256</sup> That motivation drove my love at first sight with Twinning projects. While taking a relatively small share of the EU's institution-building

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<sup>254</sup> Wetzel, "Governance Perspective: Democratic Governance Promotion Through Functional Cooperation"; Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzel, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation."

<sup>255</sup> Umberto Eco, *How to Write a Thesis?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015).

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

assistance, this specific instrument interests me mainly because it fosters a long-term exchange between civil servants from different countries. As an undergraduate student, I also completed a three-month volunteer exchange programme with a Canadian youth organisation and learned from my own experience just how exciting and fulfilling such interactions may be. While the network and communication component of Twinning is no doubt important for the functioning of Twinning projects, observing how EU norms travelled across different sectors fascinated me the most. As I received the first glimpses about Twinning projects from people who spent years of their life on them, often away from their families and friends, I knew I would spend the remainder of my dissertation investigating these particular EU projects.

As I delved deeper in related studies on EU TG cooperation, I did identify several areas of theoretical interest, like the democratic substance, the MS dimension, and the effectiveness of TG programmes, which inspired the subsequent articles of this dissertation.

Indeed, analysing the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation seemed to me a good starting point (Article 2). My focus on Twinning, besides the reasons above, was also inspired by the works of Tina Freyburg, who analysed the potential of Twinning projects to socialise the Arab civil servants into the norms of democratic governance.<sup>257</sup> Thus, I became particularly interested in the extent to which the norms of transparency, accountability, and participation were actually part of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. It was also not clear what factors accounted for possible differences across projects, countries, and policy sectors. These research questions form the core of my Article 2. In explaining the democratic governance substance of Twinning cooperation, I perform the statistical analysis of several domestic and EU-related explanations, i.e., the level of a target country's political liberalisation, sector politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, and sector technical complexity. I also provide some foundation to the concept of democratic governance substance and elaborate on its typology. My Master's research on comparative administrative systems at Kansas State University in 2009-2011 provided valuable interdisciplinary insights, reflected in the variable of sector technical complexity.

Article 2 mostly relied on the analysis of Twinning fiches and other documents, along with a couple of exploratory interviews. However, what I found even more fascinating while working on Articles 3 and 4, were the stories of people who knew about Twinning not from academic articles and policy reports, but from their own participation experience.

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<sup>257</sup> Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance"; Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."



With an accession of CEECs to the EU, the fabric of EU cooperation with the Eastern neighbourhood changed, but has not been sufficiently studied with respect to the contribution of CEECs and the older MS to EU TG cooperation in the neighbourhood. In response, Article 3 qualitatively explores and compares the added value of CEECs and the older MS for EU TG programmes in the Eastern neighbourhood. Focusing on EU Twinning projects in Ukraine and Azerbaijan, I hypothesise that civil servants from CEECs are perceived to offer specific added value thanks to their country-specific comparative advantages, such as recent transition experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with countries of the Eastern neighbourhood. While seeking evidence for that hypothesis, I also investigate the added value of the older MS, which are hypothesised to offer the sector-specific comparative advantages, that is, institutional experience, existing sectoral networks and sectoral fit with the beneficiary, and prior Twinning cooperation experience.

Having looked at the democratic governance substance of Twinning cooperation and the added value of CEECs and the older MS, I proceed with an evaluation of the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine. In such a way, I seek to provide greater legitimacy and empirical backing to my articles dealing with EU TG cooperation. For example, there would be no point in pronouncing the Twinning instrument a promising channel of EU democracy or democratic governance promotion or a platform for MS to advance their comparative advantages, if we knew little about the actual effectiveness of Twinning projects in accomplishing their objectives in the ENP countries. Viewing the EU's effectiveness as a function of legal and institutional convergence of the beneficiary administration with EU regulatory standards, Article 4 not only determines to what extent Twinning projects have been effective in Ukraine but also explores the sets of conditions under which the Twinning projects may or may not be effective in accomplishing their objectives. Article 4 performs the QCA of a series of domestic and EU-related conditions, accounting for the effectiveness of Twinning projects. Those conditions are sector politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and quality of communication.

**Table 4.** Authorship and publication status of articles

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author's contribution</b>	<b>Co-authors' contribution</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood through the lens of foreign policy analysis (FPA)	Dmytro Panchuk (80%): analysis of sources, literature review, writing up the narrative	Fabienne Bossuyt (20%): substantial feedback, research framing	Published in <i>Democratization</i> , 2014, 21(7), pp. 1341-1348. IF 0.779
2. The Substance of EU Democratic Governance Promotion via TG Cooperation with the Eastern Neighbourhood	Dmytro Panchuk (70%): literature review, conceptual framework, data collection and analysis, methodology & operationalisation	Fabienne Bossuyt (20%), Jan Orbie (10%): substantial feedback, research framing	Published (online) in <i>Democratization</i> , 2017. IF 0.779
3. The participation of CEECs in EU Twinning projects: offering specific added value for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood?	Dmytro Panchuk (50%): literature review, conceptual framework, formulation of research questions & hypotheses, data collection & analysis	Fabienne Bossuyt (50%): conceptual framework, formulation of research questions & hypotheses, data collection & analysis	Accepted for publication in <i>East European Politics and Societies</i> . IF 0.437
4. Effectiveness of EU TG Cooperation in the Neighbourhood: Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Twinning Projects in Ukraine	Dmytro Panchuk (80%): literature review, conceptual framework, formulation of research questions & hypotheses, data collection & analysis, methodology & operationalisation	Fabienne Bossuyt (10%), Jan Orbie (10%): substantial feedback, research framing	Currently under review in <i>Europe-Asia Studies</i> . IF 0.671

# **PART I**

## **Article 1. Effectiveness of EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood through the Lens of Foreign Policy Analysis**

### **Abstract**

The present review article takes stock of the scholarly literature on EU democracy promotion in the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbourhood. By deploying the criteria of foreign policy analysis (FPA), the article evaluates the policy context, actor identity, and the policy instruments of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood. It argues that the literature still lacks a proper understanding of the role of other actors in the EU's democracy promotion policy, pays insufficient attention to democracy promotion programmes by individual member states, and has the potential for expansion towards good governance promotion studies.

**KEYWORDS:** EU democracy promotion, foreign policy analysis, democratic governance, foreign policies by member states, EU effectiveness, EU neighbourhood

## 1. Introduction

Since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, scholars have been vigorously studying the European Union (EU)'s effectiveness in advancing democratic values to other countries. Existing literature on EU democracy promotion offers a full variety of approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of the EU in spreading democratic norms, mainly to the countries of the EU's immediate neighbourhood, the analytical focus of this review article. Methodologically, these works range from purely qualitative accounts,<sup>1</sup> which make up the majority of the literature, to mixed methods analysis.<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in its neighbourhood is mostly found to depend on the EU's ability to properly construct its normative image,<sup>3</sup> learn lessons from the past,<sup>4</sup> practise consistency,<sup>5</sup> factor in domestic contexts,<sup>6</sup> and have the neighbourhood countries not only formally adopt the democratic norms but also institutionalise them in everyday government practices.<sup>7</sup>

In reviewing those and other factors at play in the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood, the present article borrows insights from foreign policy analysis (FPA), which offers a heuristic filter to classify the literature on the subject. In contrast to prevailing realist and institutionalist applications of FPA for state-centred analyses, we take on the call by Brian White to adopt and revisit FPA for exploring mixed actor systems like the EU.<sup>8</sup> According to White, European foreign policy is the function of (i) policy context (internal and external), (ii) actors and the decision-making process, and (iii) policy instruments.<sup>9</sup> For the purposes of this article, we relate the "policy context" of EU democracy promotion to the constitutive impact of other geopolitical actors on the EU's effectiveness, as well as to the role of recent revolutionary transitions in the EU's neighbourhood.<sup>10</sup> The "actors and the decision-making process" pertains to the "who" of EU democracy promotion, both on the donor side (the EU or its individual member states) and the target side (stakeholders in the neighbourhood countries). By "policy instruments", we imply all foreign policy tools and modes of democracy promotion that the EU has deployed in the neighbourhood. By extrapolating those

<sup>1</sup> Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*.

<sup>2</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>3</sup> Pace, "The Construction of EU Normative Power."

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, *Democracy Promotion and the "Colour Revolutions"*.

<sup>5</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>6</sup> Jonasson, *The EU's Democracy Promotion and the Mediterranean Neighbours: Orientation, Ownership and Dialogue in Jordan and Turkey*.

<sup>7</sup> Casier, "The EU's Two-Track Approach to Democracy Promotion: The Case of Ukraine."

<sup>8</sup> Brian White, *Understanding European Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> Due to the size constraints, we do not consider the internal context of EU democracy promotion policy.

variables of a foreign policy to EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood, we uncover existing gaps in the literature and suggest areas for improvement. With the help of the FPA framework, we also intend to bridge a divide between EU foreign policy and European foreign policy in accentuating the lacunas in research on member states' foreign policies on democracy.

As a departure point for reviewing the literature on the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood, we start from three recent books on the subject. In the first book, Rosa Balfour constructs a solid theoretical rationale behind EU actorness and draws on the "logic of diversity" in order to empirically show inconsistencies in the EU's democracy and human rights performance in Egypt and Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> Concentrated more on the domestic context of democratisation, Ann-Kristin Jonasson identifies prerequisites for success of EU policy by exploring the notions of local ownership, orientation, and dialogue in current EU democracy programmes in Jordan and Turkey.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the edited volume by Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig debates the effectiveness of linkage, leverage, and governance as the primary instruments the EU uses to advance its democratic values in the neighbourhood.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. External Policy Context

The literature only passingly touches on the impact of other geopolitical actors and recent revolutionary transitions on the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood. Although some works discuss the different approaches the EU and the US have adopted in their democracy promotion policies, there has been no systematic attempt to assess the potential influences of the US and other major players on the EU's effectiveness.<sup>14</sup> However, as Balfour suggests, despite its claim for responsibility towards the neighbourhood, the EU has tended to be reactive and to follow the lead of the US in responding to major political events in Eastern Europe and the South Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup> Several other experts in EU democracy promotion similarly make references to the US-led war on terror in the Middle East that contributed to inconsistencies and "double standards" in the EU's democracy policy towards countries there.<sup>16</sup> However, as Jonasson argues, the EU

<sup>11</sup> Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*.

<sup>12</sup> Jonasson, *The EU's Democracy Promotion and the Mediterranean Neighbours: Orientation, Ownership and Dialogue in Jordan and Turkey*.

<sup>13</sup> Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, eds., *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Kopstein, "The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2010): 85–98.

<sup>15</sup> Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Pace, Seeborg, and Cavatorta, "The EU's Democratization Agenda in the Mediterranean: A Critical inside-out Approach."

has remained more trusted in the region than the US.<sup>17</sup> As regards EU democracy promotion in its Eastern neighbourhood, the EU's effectiveness has been considerably stifled by Russian geopolitical interests and imperialist policy in the region.<sup>18</sup> The EU's interests in Russia also adversely affect its democracy promotion policy towards Soviet successor states.<sup>19</sup>

Popular revolutions in the EU's neighbourhood have sparked an interesting debate on the two-way relationship between these events and the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion. Overall, the literature suggests that the EU's impact on major domestic preconditions leading to the Colour Revolutions, the Arab Spring, and, most recently, the Euromaidan uprising in Ukraine has been negligent or non-existent.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, after each revolution the EU continued "doing business as usual" with the actors it had closest connections with for the sake of stability and preserving the status quo, which often had little to do with democracy.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Actors and Decision-Making

In examining the effectiveness of democracy promotion through the lens of EU actorness, scholars have provoked a wide gap between the EU as an international identity, individual member states, and various, often conflicting, agents in the target countries. One of the most prominent conceptual debates of the 2000s theorised the EU as a unique international actor, which acts and should act as a "force for good" by diffusing its own democratic values among other countries.<sup>22</sup> However, very soon, the normative image of the EU as a democracy promoter was severely challenged by Realist scholars and empirical data on the ground.<sup>23</sup> In trying to explain the stark contrast between what the EU says and what it does, Balfour argues that the EU's reactive and inconsistent response to democratic setbacks in Ukraine and Egypt stems from the necessity of full consensus among individual member states, who generally have different visions of how the EU should respond to democracy and human rights violations.<sup>24</sup> Similarly to Balfour, other authors also suggest that the last say in EU democracy promotion policy belongs with individual member states, who may water down democracy promotion

<sup>17</sup> Jonasson, *The EU's Democracy Promotion and the Mediterranean Neighbours: Orientation, Ownership and Dialogue in Jordan and Turkey*, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Iryna Solonenko, "External Democracy Promotion in Ukraine: The Role of the European Union," *Democratization* 16, no. 4 (August 2009): 709–31; Dimitrova and Dragneva, "Constraining External Governance: Interdependence with Russia and the CIS as Limits to the EU's Rule Transfer in the Ukraine."

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Stewart, *Democracy Promotion and the "Colour Revolutions."*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>22</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?"

<sup>23</sup> Hyde-Price, "'Normative' Power Europe: A Realist Critique"; Federica Bicchì, "'Our Size Fits All': Normative Power Europe and the Mediterranean," *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (March 2006): 286–303.

<sup>24</sup> Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*, 141.

and other foreign policy initiatives to the lowest common denominator.<sup>25</sup> Due to those and other predicaments with EU's normative capacity, it is becoming increasingly relevant to look at the democracy agenda of individual member states.

The literature has so far paid little attention to inputs by individual member states and other important stakeholders involved in EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, nearly each EU member state has developed and run their own democracy promotion programmes, which they have administered either independently from or jointly with the European Commission. Thereby, the funds that the member states have committed to advancing democracy in certain countries of the EU neighbourhood have varied considerably,<sup>26</sup> which hints at the different priorities on democracy that member states pursue in the EU neighbourhood. Those priorities, often based on closer historical, political, and cultural ties, lack systematic theoretical and empirical evaluation, which makes it more difficult to assess the overall EU's effectiveness in the neighbourhood. Of especial interest here are the Central and East European countries (CEECs) that joined the EU only recently and that already initiated their own democracy promotion projects in their immediate Eastern neighbourhood and beyond.<sup>27</sup> And again, only a limited number of studies analyse the democracy promotion policy by new member states,<sup>28</sup> and almost none draw comparisons between old and new member states in their foreign policy on democracy towards neighbourhood.

On the recipient side of the democracy promotion debate stands the literature which accords a prominent role to domestic actors in the democratisation process. For example, Jonasson finds that the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean could be enhanced by putting the domestic actors "in the driver seat" and allowing them more say in implementing EU democracy programmes and monitoring progress.<sup>29</sup> Despite many conceptual benefits, Jonasson's criteria of ownership, orientation, and dialogue seem to carry little optimism for the EU in terms of democracy promotion through domestic NGOs and other policy entrepreneurs in authoritarian systems like Jordan and Turkey. Other studies of bottom-up democracy promotion point to daunting difficulties (like fraud, governmental interference, and red-tape) surrounding cooperation with NGOs and other civil society actors in third countries.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, it would still be worthwhile to check the explanatory potential of Jonasson's framework in EU

<sup>25</sup> Karen Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Richard Youngs, "Is European Democracy Promotion on the Wane?," 2008, 3, <http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1653.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Nathaniel Copsey and Tim Haughton, "The Choices for Europe: National Preferences in New and Old Member States," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 47, no. 2 (2009): 263–86.

<sup>28</sup> Petrova, "How Poland Promotes Democracy"; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond."

<sup>29</sup> Jonasson, *The EU's Democracy Promotion and the Mediterranean Neighbours: Orientation, Ownership and Dialogue in Jordan and Turkey*.

<sup>30</sup> Bicchi, "Dilemmas of Implementation: EU Democracy Assistance in the Mediterranean."

democracy promotion in other neighbourhood countries with less restrictive political regimes and more vibrant civil societies, e.g., Georgia and Ukraine.

#### 4. Policy Instruments

The literature indulges in all sorts of classifications and approaches to the EU democracy promotion tools, such as examining democracy clauses in bilateral agreements, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, policy of enlargement, socialisation, etc.<sup>31</sup> For example, Balfour provides a visual table with democracy promotion tools which, in her view, the EU is using inconsistently.<sup>32</sup> She puts forth a comprehensive analysis of whether or not the EU has deployed certain tools in response to democratic violations in Ukraine and Egypt. However, she could have enhanced her argument by also commenting on the effectiveness of the specific tools the EU did use in each country. The relative success of accession conditionality in democratising the CEECs prompted the EU to include this tool in its foreign policy towards other countries in the neighbourhood, albeit without a membership prospective. For this very reason, the effectiveness of conditionality to induce change without a prospect of accession has been continuously challenged by scholars in the field.<sup>33</sup> In cases where it worked, conditionality required a set of other supporting factors beyond the accession prospect that intensified its impact, e.g., low costs of domestic change, credibility of rewards, domestic resonance, etc.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, an increasingly important body of literature asserts that the EU could have some marginal powers in democratising the neighbourhood even in view of a lacking membership prospective.<sup>35</sup> For example, several contributors to the edited volume by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig discuss the potential of three main modes of democracy promotion for non-candidate countries: bottom-up (linkage), top-down (leverage), and democratic governance through socialisation. The contributions remain sceptical about the propensity of linkage and leverage to induce change, but accord increased attention to democratic governance promotion through socialisation. Processes of socialisation influence basic cognitive perceptions of democratic governance and democracy among elites and the public, thereby carrying some democratising potential even in circumstances of a closed political

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; Korosteleva, *The European Union and Its Eastern Neighbours: Towards a More Ambitious Partnership?*

<sup>32</sup> Balfour, *Human Rights and Democracy in EU Foreign Policy: The Cases of Ukraine and Egypt*, 39.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Kubicek, "Political Conditionality and European Union's Cultivation of Democracy in Turkey," in *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, ed. Sandra Lavenex and Frank Schimmelfennig, vol. 18 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 26–47.

<sup>34</sup> Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*; Fabienne Bossuyt and Paul Kubicek, "Advancing Democracy on Difficult Terrain: EU Democracy Promotion in Central Asia," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16, no. 5 (2011): 639–58.

<sup>35</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine."



regime or an absent membership offer.<sup>36</sup> Proponents of democratic governance promotion through socialisation focus on accountability, transparency, and participation as less intrusive alternatives, which can democratise certain parts within the system while ignoring the wishful ambition of democratising the whole system.<sup>37</sup> However, democratic governance, like leverage and linkage, is also susceptible to formal institutionalisation, conflicts of interest, or high costs of implementation.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, increasing administrative capacity does not necessarily result in more democratic government – it may be just the contrary.<sup>39</sup> In sum, the problem of democratic governance promotion in the neighbourhood is worth exploring further, since certain forms of sectoral cooperation are capable of inducing desired change, at least at the level of attitudes. For that reason, the respective contributions to the edited volume by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig could be strengthened by a more interdisciplinary approach elaborating on why a change in attitudes may trigger change of behaviour.

## 5. Conclusions

The burgeoning literature on EU democracy promotion, although profound and multi-dimensional, has still a lot to accomplish in analysing the EU's effectiveness in the neighbourhood. Drawing on insights from foreign policy analysis, this review article has taken stock of the literature on three dimensions of European foreign policy – external context, actors and decision-making, and policy tools – all of which contribute to the variation in the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood. First of all, more studies should clarify the complex interdependencies between the EU and other major players, especially in light of recent popular revolutions in the neighbourhood. Second, although the EU's unique normative identity has remained a subject of lively theoretical debate, numerous studies tend to ignore the "multiple realities" of the EU's actorness and decision-making, especially when it comes to democracy promotion initiatives by individual member states. And third, scholars are cautiously moving towards debating more subtle means of fostering democratisation, like socialisation and democratic governance, which bypass traditional pitfalls with top-down and bottom-up

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<sup>36</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>37</sup> Freyburg et al., "Democracy Promotion through Functional Cooperation? The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy."

<sup>38</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, *Democracy Promotion in the EU's Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?*, 12–13.

<sup>39</sup> Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance."

approaches to democracy promotion and are capable of inducing change even within closed political regimes.

## **Article 2. The Substance of EU Democratic Governance Promotion via Transgovernmental Cooperation with the Eastern Neighbourhood**

### **Abstract**

Existing studies of the European Union's (EU) democratic governance promotion via transgovernmental cooperation in the EU's neighbourhood seem to take the substance of what is being promoted by the EU for granted. In filling this gap, this article examines the substance of EU democratic governance promotion by assessing (1) to what extent norms of democratic governance appear in EU Twinning projects implemented in the Eastern neighbourhood, and (2) what factors account for differences in the presence of democratic governance norms across those projects. To explain possible variation, the article hypothesises that the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects will vary with the country's political liberalisation, sector politicisation, sector technical complexity, and EU conditionality attached to reform progress in a given policy sector. Data are retrieved from a content analysis of 117 Twinning project fiches from the Eastern neighbourhood and analysed via standard multiple regression. The article finds that the EU mostly promotes moderate, mixed democratic governance substance, which varies across different projects. This variation may be best explained by the level of political liberalisation of the beneficiary country and the politicisation and technical complexity of the policy sectors and institutions involved in respective Twinning projects.

**KEYWORDS:** democratic governance, European Union, Eastern neighbourhood, transgovernmental cooperation, Twinning, transparency, accountability, participation

## 1. Introduction

Sectoral or transgovernmental (TG) cooperation refers to a cross-border peer-to-peer partnership between public institutions in specific policy sectors in pursuit of policy coordination, coalition building, and other functional goals.<sup>1</sup> In the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), various EU TG programmes have assisted the ENP countries in institutional reform and approximation of their legislation with EU *acquis communautaire* and relevant bilateral treaties. The scholarly literature has already pointed out the potential of EU TG cooperation to diffuse the norms of *democratic governance* to the public administrations of ENP countries.<sup>2</sup> In its communication on a harmonised approach to development aid, the European Commission called on the integration of the concept of democratic governance “into each and every sectoral programme” in the neighbourhood countries and beyond.<sup>3</sup>

While offering a good overview of how and how effectively the EU promotes the norms of democratic governance through TG cooperation,<sup>4</sup> scholars seem to take for granted the democratic governance substance of such cooperation. In particular, existing research has neglected the extent to which the norms of participation, accountability, and transparency are actually being promoted through EU TG projects in the neighbourhood. For instance, the socialisation of ENP civil servants into norms of democratic governance has been examined without previously knowing the actual degree of presence of these norms in EU TG projects.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the literature on democratic governance also ignores the variation in the promotion of democratic governance norms across different projects and what causes it. Therefore, this article examines the substance of EU democratic governance promotion by assessing (1) to what extent norms of democratic governance are present in EU TG projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, and (2) what factors account for their variation. In filling that gap, it also seeks to contribute

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<sup>1</sup> Slaughter, *A New World Order*; Keohane and Nye, “Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations.”

<sup>2</sup> Freyburg, “Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance”; Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Szent-Iványi, “The EU’s Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States.”

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, “Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a Harmonized Approach within the European Union,” 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; Wetzels, “The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU’s External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?”; Freyburg, “Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance.”

<sup>5</sup> Freyburg, “Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance”; Freyburg, “Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance.”

to a greater appreciation of EU TG cooperation as a site and tool of democratisation of neighbourhood countries.

We distinguish between several ideal types of democratic governance substance by configuration (transparency-oriented, accountability-oriented, participation-oriented, mixed) and magnitude (low, medium, high). In order to explain the variation in democratic governance substance, we test a series of country- and sector-based explanations, drawn from studies in public administration and EU external governance. In particular, we hypothesise that the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in the region will vary with the beneficiary country's level of political liberalisation, sector politicisation, sector technical complexity, and EU sectoral conditionality in a policy area where such cooperation occurs.

The most relevant and empirically salient case of EU TG cooperation for the purposes of this study is the Twinning instrument. Initiated in 1998 as a major institution-building tool to facilitate the accession to the EU of the Central and East European countries (CEECs), Twinning was later extended to the ENP countries to promote political and economic reforms in the region.<sup>6</sup> Twinning fosters a two- to three-year partnership between public administrations of EU member states (MS) and their counterpart institutions from the ENP in pursuit of a set of objectives, jointly agreed upon by the partners.<sup>7</sup> As a rule, Twinning project objectives draw on EU policy orientations, as set out in the *acquis* and EU bilateral agreements with the beneficiary countries. Since those documents likely embrace the EU's norms of democratic governance, Twinning projects are also expected to contain democratic governance substance in their objectives and planned results.

Our sample includes 117 Twinning projects implemented in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine between 2006 and 2015. Each Twinning project fiche was analysed and coded according to the presence of clauses relating to transparency, accountability, and participation. This allowed us to provide an overview of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood according to the configuration and magnitude of democratic governance substance. A multiple regression analysis, along with t-statistics across the different countries, uncovered statistically significant differences in democratic governance substance according to the degree of political liberalisation, sector politicisation, and sector technical complexity. The effects of these relationships varied across different categories of democratic governance substance and the beneficiary countries. We found no conclusive evidence for the impact of EU sectoral conditionality on the presence of democratic governance norms in Twinning cooperation.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

The next section offers a brief theoretical introduction to the concept of democratic governance and its substance, along with our research questions. The hypothesis section presents the variables potentially affecting the democratic governance substance of EU TG partnerships with the neighbourhood. Subsequently, we specify the parameters of data, case selection and methodology, along with the operationalisation of the dependent and independent variables of the study. The discussion section presents findings and their implications for our research questions. The conclusion recaps the contribution of the article and outlines limitations to be addressed in future research.

## 2. Democratic governance in EU TG cooperation

The literature focusing on EU democratic governance promotion defines democratic governance as a function of three interrelated, but analytically separate norms of transparency, accountability and participation, which refer to the administrative and institutional standards of a functioning liberal democracy.<sup>8</sup> The resulting democratic governance model implies that the intensifying TG (sectoral) links between the EU public institutions and their counterparts in the neighbourhood comprise a new form of democracy promotion, whereby the ENP country embraces democratic governance via the legislative transfer or the socialisation of public personnel into the EU's way of doing things.<sup>9</sup> For example, in their study of EU democratic governance promotion to Moldova, Ukraine, and Morocco, Freyburg et al. conclude that the EU is capable of inducing the beneficiary countries to adopt provisions of democratic governance as a result of TG cooperation.<sup>10</sup> In another study, EU TG programmes showed moderate socialising potential in having the Arab civil servants embrace more positive attitudes towards democratic governance.<sup>11</sup>

In such a way, promotion of democratic governance norms through TG cooperation targets the middle level of public administration, for example, ministries, agencies, and relevant regulatory bodies, rather than the entire polity.<sup>12</sup> It is expected that the democratisation of decision-making in a specific policy sector

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<sup>8</sup> Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzel, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation"; Tatiana Zaharchenko and Gretta Goldenman, "Accountability in Governance: The Challenge of Implementing the Aarhus Convention in Eastern Europe and Central Asia," *International Environmental Agreements* 4, no. 3 (2004): 229–51; Wetzel, "Governance Perspective: Democratic Governance Promotion Through Functional Cooperation"; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?"

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>12</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations"; Slaughter, *A New World Order*.

or institution may in the long term trigger the overall democratisation of a political system from within.<sup>13</sup> Thanks to that potential, democratic governance promotion through sectoral cooperation has been perceived as a new “backdoor” alternative to traditional linkage (support of civil society) and top-down (accession conditionality) methods of EU democracy promotion.<sup>14</sup> Since the mid-2000s, the EU has also adopted the idea of democratic governance in its development cooperation by emphasising the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of governance in order “to improve management and encourage the authorities to account for their decisions to those they administer”.<sup>15</sup>

While the democratic governance norms of transparency, accountability, and participation have been conceptualised rather clearly and demonstrated by the literature to penetrate the neighbouring countries’ institutions at the sectoral level, very little is known about the democratic governance substance or the input side of EU TG cooperation. In particular, we are interested in the “what” of democratic governance promotion and ask which democratic governance norms are being promoted and to what extent they are present in EU TG cooperation. Understanding the democratic governance substance and its explanations will allow for a more nuanced understanding of EU democratic governance promotion via sectoral means, as well as reinforce the image of EU TG cooperation as a channel of EU democracy promotion at the sectoral level.

The literature on EU democracy promotion has already devoted some attention to the “what” aspect of the EU’s external democratisation efforts by conceptualising the substance of EU democracy promotion and its major factors.<sup>16</sup> These authors postulate that the substance of EU democracy promotion matters and that it varies with the EU’s emphasis on liberal democracy (electoral regime, civil and political rights, horizontal accountability, and effective power to govern) or its context conditions (socioeconomic requisites, civil society, and stateness).<sup>17</sup> The EU’s differential focus on those aspects is derived from a range of domestic and power-based explanations pertaining to the EU’s cooperation with the third countries.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Freyburg, “Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, “Governance in the European Consensus on Development” 16; Carbone, “The European Union, Good Governance and Aid Co-Ordination,” 22.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie, *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Concepts and Cases (Governance and Limited Statehood)* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Wetzel, Orbie, and Bossuyt, “One of What Kind? Comparative Perspectives on the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion,” 23; Wetzel and Orbie, “Promoting Embedded Democracy? Researching the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion,” 574.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 582–83.

The notion of substance can also be found in relevant studies on the EU's promotion of good governance and the rule of law.<sup>19</sup>

Some of the literature on EU democratic governance promotion, in turn, suggests that the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation varies according to the policy sector.<sup>20</sup> For example, Freyburg argues that Twinning projects in the area of consumer policy will emphasise participation, those in competition and state aid, accountability, and those in the field of environment, transparency, and so on.<sup>21</sup> Inspired by those works, we saw the need for a more systematic evaluation of the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation and of the sources behind its variation. Anne Wetzel has already undertaken a first attempt in filling this gap by exploring the impact of adverse economic interests on the extent to which the norm of participation (or participatory governance) is being promoted by the EU in several sectors of EU TG cooperation with the Eastern neighbourhood countries.<sup>22</sup> The present article goes a step further in offering the first systematic analysis of the democratic governance substance of EU TG projects in the Eastern neighbourhood across multiple countries and an extended range of policy sectors.

### 3. Hypotheses

In explaining the variation of democratic governance substance of EU TG projects, we use a set of domestic and EU-related variables, based on insights from EU external governance and Europeanisation literatures, debates in public administration, and our knowledge of EU TG cooperation from documents and five personal interviews with Twinning practitioners.<sup>23</sup>

The normative substance of EU TG cooperation with the ENP countries is a result of a complex process of negotiation between the EU and the beneficiary country and institution, as well as a set of official documents and bilateral commitments. For example, a typical Twinning project outline (fiche), that is, the empirical focus of this article, emerges from a collaboration of up to 20 various actors, including but not limited to officials from the beneficiary institution, the EU

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<sup>19</sup> Börzel, Pamuk, and Stahn, "The European Union and the Promotion of Good Governance in Its Near Abroad. One Size Fits All?"; Olga Burlyuk, "Variation in EU External Policies as a Virtue: EU Rule of Law," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 53, no. 3 (2015): 1–15.

<sup>20</sup> Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance," 19.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>23</sup> Interviews were conducted in the EU and the Eastern neighbourhood countries between November 2013 and May 2016.



delegation in the country, European Commission, and external consultants.<sup>24</sup> On the substance side, the Twinning objectives link with existing bilateral frameworks of cooperation between the EU and the respective country, for example, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA), Action Plans (AP), Country Strategy Papers (CSP), National Indicative Programs (NIP), and, more recently, Association Agreements (AA).<sup>25</sup> Those jointly negotiated documents incorporate the specific administrative needs, priorities, and capacities of each ENP country and link them with the *acquis communautaire*.<sup>26</sup> In line with the EU's commitment to democratic governance in sectoral cooperation, those documents and agreements are expected to streamline norms of democratic governance, which eventually end up in the Twinning fiche. Because the EU in its TG programmes often emphasises the needs and preferences of the beneficiary as well as domestic ownership of subsequent reforms,<sup>27</sup> we expect that the domestic factors will play a significant role in shaping the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation.

Following this logic, we explore three domestic variables, namely political liberalisation, sector politicisation, and sector technical complexity, which seem theoretically related to the presence of democratic governance norms in EU TG cooperation. We also factor in one EU-related variable – EU sectoral conditionality – which has to do with the EU's greater bargaining power over the beneficiary country in a particular policy sector and hence the EU's ability to streamline more democratic governance norms in that sector. In such a way, we seek to factor in the domestic ownership of EU TG cooperation and acknowledge the EU as a promoter of democratic governance norms.

### **3.1. Domestic explanations**

First of all, the existing literature has noted that for a country to positively respond to democracy promotion by external actors, it already has to possess a certain base level of democratic freedoms or *political liberalisation*.<sup>28</sup> The greater political liberalisation of the country makes its policymaking and public institutions more susceptible to the democratising influences by the EU. Even though TG cooperation proceeds in some autonomy from the incumbent leadership, inclusion of democratic governance norms on the agenda may compromise the hold on power

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<sup>24</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual"; Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report."

<sup>25</sup> Int. 14 with Dutch expert (fiche development), 08 April 2015.

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 539–59.

by the current regime. For that reason, we expect that less politically liberalised countries will be more averse to seeing democratic governance norms in their TG cooperation with the EU. Likewise, more politically liberalised countries will likely commit to more democratic governance substance in their TG cooperation with the EU. In other words:

H1. With an increase in the level of a country's political liberalisation, the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in that country will be higher.

*Sector politicisation*, defined as the susceptibility of a policy sector or an institution to political interference, conflicts of interest, or corruption, has also been mentioned by the literature as a factor potentially inhibiting cooperation and EU norm transfer to third states.<sup>29</sup> Sector politicisation may intersect with such concepts as policy area securitisation,<sup>30</sup> domestic costs of policy adoption,<sup>31</sup> and presence of powerful veto players.<sup>32</sup> Similarly to the level of political liberalisation, the high politicisation of a policy sector is expected to hinder relevant domestic institutions from committing to principles of transparency, accountability, and participation in their TG partnerships with the EU due to the perceived threat to existing corrupt schemes and adverse sectoral interests of the major players. On the contrary, TG cooperation in non-politicised settings will likely see more democratic governance norms on its agenda. Therefore, we also hypothesise that:

H2. With an increase in the level of politicisation of the policy sector, the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in that sector will be lower.

*Technical complexity* of the policy sector refers to the degree of knowledge and skills required to be able to contribute meaningfully to a given policy field. This variable feeds into a long-standing debate in public administration concerning the dichotomy between politics and administration and arguing that certain policy areas of public administration should remain the exclusive preserve of technocratic bureaucrats and be exempted from certain norms of democratic accountability and participation.<sup>33</sup> Possible reasons include the highly specialised nature of

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<sup>29</sup> Langbein and Börzel, "Introduction: Explaining Policy Change in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood"; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania"; Pieter De Wilde, "No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration," *Journal of European Integration* 33, no. 5 (2011): 559–75; Wetzels, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>30</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Ernst Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964).

<sup>31</sup> Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe."

<sup>32</sup> Dimitrova, "The New Member States of the EU in the Aftermath of Enlargement: Do New European Rules Remain Empty Shells?"

<sup>33</sup> Charles Goodsell, *The New Case for Bureaucracy* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014); Gruber, *Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance*; Frank Goodnow, *Politics and Administration: A Study in*

competencies required to contribute to the policy field in a meaningful, efficient, and safe way.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, certain policy sectors, like phytosanitary regulation or statistics, requiring advanced levels of qualification from civil servants, may simply be uninteresting for most of civil society.<sup>35</sup> Based on these premises, it should be expected that EU TG cooperation will have less democratic governance substance in technically complex policy sectors. For that reason, it is hypothesised that:

H3. With an increase in the level of technical complexity of the policy sector, the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in that sector will be lower.

### **3.2. EU-related explanations**

Studies in Europeanisation and EU external governance have already noted the importance of *EU sectoral (policy-specific) conditionality* in the process of EU norm transfer in the Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>36</sup> Such conditionality requires that the EU exploit power asymmetries in the neighbourhood and demand domestic reforms in exchange for policy-specific incentives, for example, access to segments of the Single Market or prospect of visa liberalisation. Besides the desirability of those rewards in the eyes of the ENP country, those asymmetries may also ensue from the greater dependence of the ENP country on the EU for energy, development aid, and/or security.

Therefore, we assume that the presence of democratic governance norms in TG cooperation will rest with EU sectoral conditionality in the particular policy sector. Because the tasks and objectives of TG cooperation are normally the result of a complex process of reconciliation between the EU and the ENP country's needs and demands, a clear set of sectoral rewards and incentives is likely to give the EU leverage in pushing for more democratic governance substance in TG cooperation. Conversely, if such sectoral rewards are missing, the beneficiary administration may afford to be pickier about often sensitive commitments to transparency, accountability, and participation in relevant TG projects. Alternatively, the EU, being aware of its lower bargaining power in a particular country, may shy away from

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*Government*, Library of Liberal Thought (London: Transaction Publishers, 1914); Wilson, "The Study of Administration."

<sup>34</sup> Robert Dahl, "A Democratic Dilemma: System Effectiveness versus Citizen Participation," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 109, No. 1 (Spring, 1994) 109, no. 1 (1994): 23–34.

<sup>35</sup> Gruber, *Controlling Bureaucracies: Dilemmas in Democratic Governance*.

<sup>36</sup> Ademmer and Börzel, "Migration, Energy and Good Governance in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood"; Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Delcour, "Meandering Europeanisation. EU Policy Instruments and Policy Convergence in Georgia under the Eastern Partnership."

insisting on more democratic governance substance, as suggested in studies of EU democracy and good governance promotion.<sup>37</sup> Hence,

H4. With an increase in the EU's bargaining power over an ENP country, the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in that country will be higher.

#### 4. Data and methods

The Twinning Instrument, or simply Twinning, is used in the present study as a case of EU TG cooperation under the ENP. Twinning was originally designed to facilitate the Eastern enlargement by boosting the administrative capacity of the EU's would-be members to transpose and implement required chapters of the EU *acquis*. Without further intention at enlargement, the EU continued its Twinning support for new neighbours in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood under the umbrella of the ENP.<sup>38</sup> A typical Twinning project fosters a long-term partnership (up to 36 months) between public officials from EU MS and their counterparts from the ENP country, working to reform a specific sector of policymaking of the ENP country in line with EU *acquis*, the MS' best practices in a given policy sector, and applicable bilateral agreements. Each Twinning project features a set of components relating to the institutional reform, legislative changes, and training of public servants and is expected to generate a measurable outcome upon completion.

Because of its primary emphasis on technical approximation with EU law and MS best administrative practices, the Twinning instrument as such does not aim to diffuse democratic governance norms.<sup>39</sup> However, as mentioned before, the EU *acquis communautaire* and the bilateral treaties between the EU and the ENP countries, on which the Twinning programme dwells, do contain provisions for better transparency, accountability, and participation. In addition, scholars have already explored the Twinning instrument as a channel of diffusion of democratic governance norms to the neighbouring countries, both by way of socialisation and policy transfer.<sup>40</sup> In light of that, Twinning projects are expected to explicitly embed democratic governance norms as part of their declared objectives. Given its depth of intervention, time scope, and budgets, Twinning clearly stands out among the

<sup>37</sup> Wetzel, Orbie, and Bossuyt, "One of What Kind? Comparative Perspectives on the Substance of EU Democracy Promotion"; Börzel, "Transformative Power Europe? The EU Promotion of Good Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood."

<sup>38</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual"; Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report."

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> For example, Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance"; Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

EU TG tools, like TAIEX or SIGMA, which normally offer short-term technical assistance with a much less ambitious scope of activity and expected outputs. A standardised in-depth nature of Twinning project fiches, usually providing an extensive background and justification behind each component on a project's agenda, also makes it superior to the other short-term TG tools, which are narrowly targeted and highly technocratic in nature. In light of that, the Twinning instrument is considered the most likely case of EU TG cooperation to carry democratic governance substance.

**Table 5.** Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, by country and policy sector, 2006-2015

	<b>AM</b>	<b>AZ</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>MD</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Employment and social affairs	1	6	1	0	4	12
Energy	0	1	2	0	4	7
Environment	1	0	2	0	2	5
Finance	4	5	6	6	6	27
Health & consumer protection	2	3	0	0	2	7
Justice and home affairs	4	4	3	3	5	19
Statistics	1	1	0	0	3	5
Tourism	0	0	3	0	0	3
Trade and industry	2	3	2	6	8	21
Transport	1	1	1	0	8	11
<i>Totals</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>117</b>

In order to test the hypotheses, we examine data on 117 Twinning projects, implemented in Armenia (AM), Azerbaijan (AZ), Georgia (GE), Moldova (MD), and Ukraine (UA) between 2006 and 2015 (Table 5). These projects, with budgets of approximately one million euros each, cover policy sectors as diverse as justice and home affairs, trade and industry, finance, energy, and others.<sup>41</sup> Selecting the full spectrum of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, spanning both consolidating democracies and outright authoritarian regimes and boasting of different levels of sector politicisation, technical complexity, and the EU's sectoral conditionality provides rich variation on our variables of interest. The Eastern neighbourhood also presents the most likely case for the analysis of democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation because it stands on average higher than the Southern neighbourhood in terms of democratic freedoms and civil liberties, as well as the importance for the EU. In such a way, for example, if the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood countries is low, it will likely be even lower in the Southern neighbourhood. In addition, such geographical selection offered better data access opportunities for the authors.

<sup>41</sup> European Commission, "Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI."

Data for the variables mainly come from Twinning fiches. These legally binding documents supply the policy background, management details, and expected outputs and activities of each project. The Twinning fiches are used in the tendering process among the MS, who submit their proposals in accordance with the objectives, or so called mandatory results, listed in the fiche. These mandatory results and related activities later become part of a Twinning contract (covenant) between the MS institutions on one side and the beneficiary institution on the other. The Twinning contract, which is confidential, expands the Twinning fiche with the procedural details of Twinning implementation, while leaving the original mandatory results and priorities of the Twinning fiche virtually unchanged.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Twinning is often criticised for its rigidity when it comes to changing the priorities and mandatory results agreed upon in the project fiche.<sup>43</sup> That is why we use these Twinning fiches, which are also available on the web, as the primary source of data informing the analysis.

#### **4.1. *Dependent variables***

The *democratic governance substance* of Twinning projects consists of explicit references to transparency, accountability, and participation in the project fiche.<sup>44</sup> For the purposes of operationalisation, these norms are interchangeably referred to as norms, categories, or indicators of democratic governance substance. In the process of empirical analysis, they are also treated as dependent variables in their own right.

*Transparency* denotes free access to and sharing of issue-specific information related to the beneficiary institution or policy sector for domestic civil society, media, the EU, or other international stakeholders.<sup>45</sup> Twinning projects may include anti-corruption initiatives, which are also considered instances of transparency. *Accountability* concerns public officials' obligation to justify their decisions and actions before both public authorities and everyday citizens, including the possibility of appealing and sanctioning over misconduct.<sup>46</sup> In the context of Twinning cooperation, accountability is related to changes in organisational structure and patterns of subordination within the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector as envisaged by the project. Those changes should create avenues for redress of

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<sup>42</sup> Int. 14 with Dutch expert (fiche development), 08 April 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Int. 29 with Swedish civil servant (former RTA), 24 March 2016; Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 149.

<sup>44</sup> Full details of operationalization in Table 15 in the appendix, p. 173.

<sup>45</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*.

<sup>46</sup> Janet Denhardt and Robert Denhardt, *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011); Zaharchenko and Goldenman, "Accountability in Governance: The Challenge of Implementing the Aarhus Convention in Eastern Europe and Central Asia."

grievances and monitoring by civil society, authorised public entities, the EU, or other international stakeholders. Finally, if a Twinning project encourages participation of and feedback from civil society and media in the everyday activity of the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector, such a project is considered to promote *participation*.

Depending on how explicitly the norms of democratic governance feature among the mandatory results of a Twinning fiche, each project has been assigned corresponding codes ranging from Low (0), Medium (1), to High (2) for transparency, accountability, and participation. An average of the codes for separate indicators comprised the *democratic governance substance*, which could be of low (0.0 – 0.6), medium (0.7 – 1.3), or high (1.4 – 2.0) magnitude. In terms of configuration, if any specific norm of democratic governance dominated in the Twinning fiche, we considered such a project as promoting transparency-, accountability-, or participation-oriented substance respectively. If no single norm dominated, such a project is said to promote mixed substance.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.2. Independent variables**

In line with the hypotheses, this study considers four independent variables: political liberalisation, sector politicisation, sector technical complexity, and EU sectoral conditionality.

In operationalising the country's level of political liberalisation, we adopt the "Voice and Accountability" (VA) estimates, published annually as part of the Worldwide Governance Indicators by the World Bank.<sup>48</sup> The VA estimates, running from -2.5 to +2.5, capture the "perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media".<sup>49</sup> For pairwise comparisons via t-statistics, the Eastern neighbourhood countries were ranked in the following order according to their average VA estimate between 2006 and 2015: 0 → Azerbaijan (-1.28); 1 → Armenia (-0.71); 2 → Moldova (-0.17); 3 → Georgia (-0.12); and 4 → Ukraine (-0.08). However, in the course of regression analysis, we adjusted those values according to the country's VA estimate for the year when a particular project fiche was drafted.

In measuring sector politicisation, we relied on the content analysis of Twinning fiches, existing scholarly studies, and policy reports dealing with particular policy areas. In order to get a better glimpse into some policy sectors, we also held several interviews with civil servants and experts involved in respective Twinning

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<sup>47</sup> Table 15 in appendix.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues," 2010, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports>.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

projects. If a majority of policy objectives listed in the project fiche were likely to expose political or commercial conflict of interest (including corruption) in the beneficiary institution or policy sector, such Twinning project would be considered “politicised” and ranked 1. Conversely, if most of the policy objectives on the project fiche did not seem to expose any political or commercial conflict of interest (including corruption), such a project would be considered “non-politicised”, or 0. Most politicised projects originate in sectors such as energy, finance, trade and industry, and justice and home affairs. Non-politicised projects normally come from sectors such as environment, employment, statistics, and transport.<sup>50</sup>

As for technical complexity, a Twinning project is considered “technically complex” (1) if the respective policy sector requires an advanced knowledge of calculus, econometric models, and laboratory testing skills for proper daily functioning.<sup>51</sup> Most technically complex projects belong to policy sectors such as finance, health and consumer protection, statistics, trade and industry, and transport. Twinning projects, viewed as “regular” (0), generally not requiring those particular scientific skills, come from sectors such as justice and home affairs, employment, social affairs, and environment.<sup>52</sup> Just as with sector politicisation, this variable was mainly derived from the content analysis of Twinning fiches in respective policy sectors and several personal interviews.

Finally, EU sectoral conditionality is considered “high” (1) if policy reforms that the project refers to deal with the facilitation of trade or visa liberalisation with the EU.<sup>53</sup> For example, for countries like Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, such sectoral reforms may be part of the DCFTA or visa liberalisation plans with the EU. For others, like Armenia and Azerbaijan, EU sectoral conditionality would be considered high if the project generally sought to facilitate trade or a visa regime with the EU. In the case of Armenia, we also assume that, while the prospect of signing a DCFTA was still there, it served as a strong source of the EU’s bargaining power in related policy sectors in the country. Most projects with high EU sectoral conditionality belong to sectors such as finance, energy, trade and industry, and health and consumer protection. If the project objectives did not concern the DCFTA, visa liberalisation, or other trade-related frameworks with the EU, such a project was rated “low” (0) for EU sectoral conditionality.

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<sup>50</sup> Full details of operationalization of sector politicization are in Table 16 in the appendix, p. 174.

<sup>51</sup> Full details of operationalization of sector technical complexity are in Table 17 in the appendix, p. 174.

<sup>52</sup> Of course, this is a generalization to some extent. Some areas of the judiciary like forensic medicine are highly specialized and do deal with models or lab testing. However, in the process of operationalization, we assess whether the objectives of a particular project have to do with any of those advanced scientific skills.

<sup>53</sup> Full details of operationalization of EU sectoral conditionality are in Table 18 in the appendix, p. 174.



### 4.3. Control variables

Because our sample of Twinning fiches involves a time-series dimension, spanning 10 years between 2006 and 2015, we also introduce nine dummy variables for each year, excluding a reference category of 2015. In such a way, we seek to control for the influence of unaccounted events that may have affected the democratic governance substance of Twinning fiches in those years.

### 4.4. Methods

This article adopts a mixed-method design, incorporating elements of quantitative research (statistical analysis) and qualitative study (content analysis of Twinning fiches and qualitative interpretation of results).<sup>54</sup> The content analysis of Twinning fiches helped to compute the scores of democratic governance substance and its indicators for each Twinning project in the Eastern neighbourhood, as well as to obtain values for the independent variables (except political liberalisation). Then, in order to evaluate the hypotheses, we test four multiple linear regression models for democratic governance substance and also, separately, for the categories of transparency, accountability, and participation. Regression analysis is particularly suitable for our research objectives, as it enables us to quantify the relative impact of our independent variables on the dependent, determine the direction of the relationship, and evaluate the general fit of those four models with our data.<sup>55</sup> In order to fine-tune the results and trace the dynamics between the variables in each country, the regression analysis is supplemented by multiple independent sample t-tests. The t-statistic determines to what extent the differences in the means between two groups (e.g., Ukraine vs Armenia) on a continuous dependent variable (e.g., democratic governance substance) are statistically significant.<sup>56</sup>

## 5. Empirical Analysis

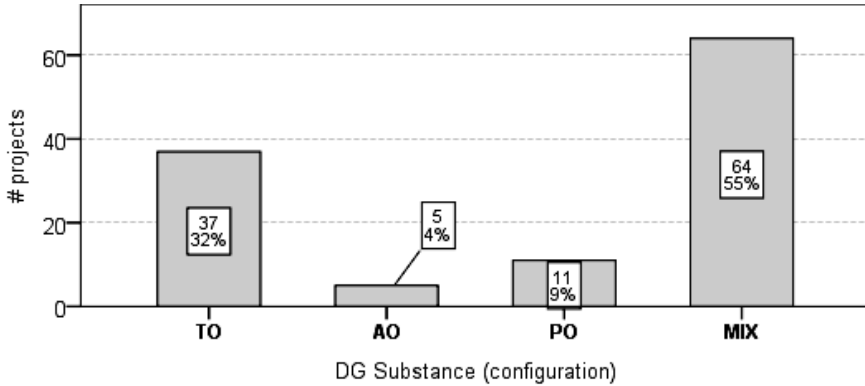
The content analysis of Twinning fiches from the Eastern neighbourhood demonstrates that they do contain democratic governance substance, which varies according to both the configuration and magnitude. As for the configuration (Figure 2), the largest fraction of the Twinning sample is represented by mixed-substance (MIX) projects, with transparency-oriented (TO) projects closely following behind.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori, "Overview of Contemporary Issues in Mixed Methods Research," in *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*, ed. Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 1–42.

<sup>55</sup> Kutner et al., *Applied Linear Statistical Models*; O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 440.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 378; Lund and Lund, "Laerd Statistics."

Twinning projects with the accountability-(AO) and participation-oriented (PO) substance take up a lower fraction of the sample.

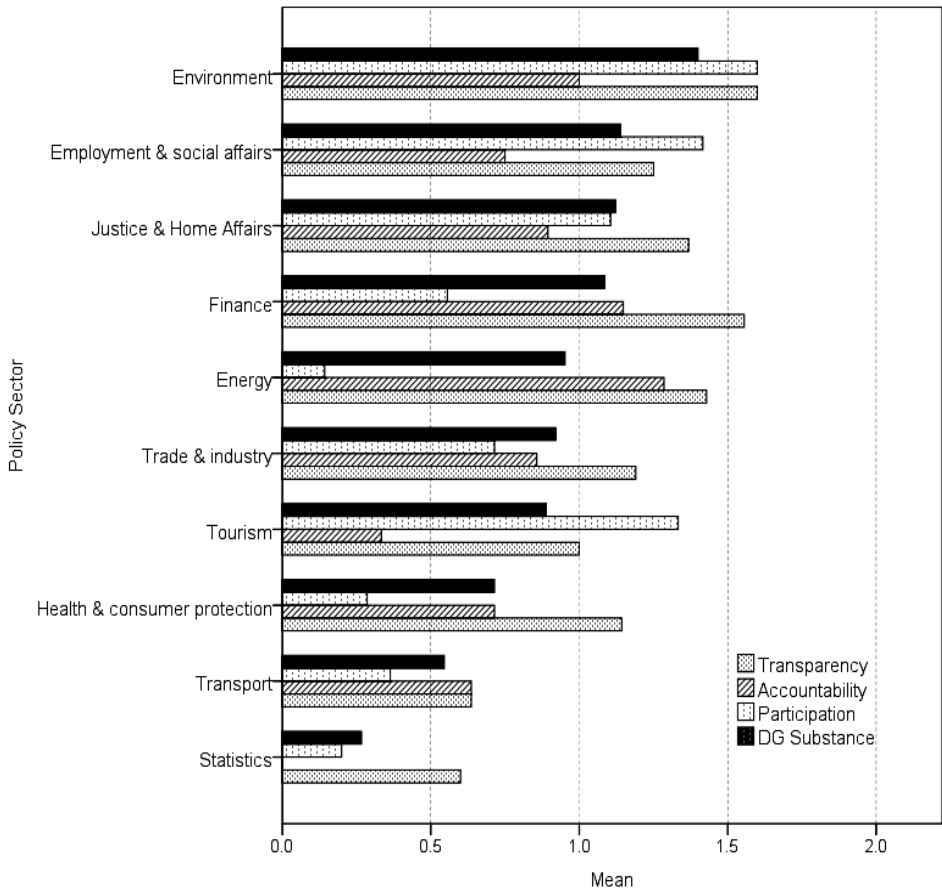


**Figure 2.** Configuration of democratic governance substance of Twinning projects, n = 117

In terms of the magnitude (Figure 3), Twinning projects mostly promote medium levels of democratic governance substance, with the average values approaching 1.0. As in the analysis of configuration, transparency on average also ranks higher on Twinning fiches than accountability or participation (also Figure 4).<sup>57</sup> Looking at the sectoral dynamics, we may note that policy sectors also vary by democratic governance substance and its categories. For example, projects in sectors such as environment, employment and social affairs, and justice and home affairs promote the highest substance, while those in transport and statistics are clearly lagging behind. As regards the magnitude of transparency, accountability, and participation, it also differs considerably across sectors. Transparency is highest in projects in the sectors of environment and finance, accountability is more prominent in the energy and finance sectors, and Twinning projects in tourism put a strong emphasis on participation.

The following sections present the results of the statistical analysis testing the hypotheses behind variation in the means of democratic governance substance.

<sup>57</sup> Mean value of transparency across all Twinning fiches is 1.3, accountability – 0.9, and participation – 0.8.



**Figure 3.** Magnitude of democratic governance substance of Twinning projects, by sector, n = 117

The regression analysis (Table 6) provides confirmatory evidence for the hypotheses related to the level of political liberalisation (H1) and technical complexity (H3), which show relationships of varying strength with the democratic governance substance and its separate indicators. The variable “sector politicisation” is inversely related to the dependent variables, which is opposite to our claim in H2. Finally, EU sectoral conditionality (H4) does not seem to explain the variation in either democratic governance substance or its separate indicators. All the four regression models are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) and fit the data moderately well, explaining around one-third of the total variance in the dependent variables, as based on the *Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>* values. The time-series dimension was not statistically significant.

**Table 6.** Regression results, n = 117

	Transparency	Accountability	Participation	Democratic Gov. Substance
Political liberalisation	0.168 (0.126)	0.382*** (0.100)	0.342** (0.130)	0.297*** (0.082)
Sector politicisation	0.641*** (0.141)	0.454*** (0.112)	0.045 (0.145)	0.380*** (0.091)
Sector technical complexity	-0.129 (0.126)	-0.070 (0.100)	-0.715*** (0.130)	-0.304*** (0.082)
EU sectoral conditionality	-0.006 (0.149)	-0.007 (0.118)	-0.299* (0.153)	-0.100 (0.096)
<i>Constant</i>	0.987 (0.477)	1.134 (0.377)	1.479 (0.491)	1.200 (0.308)
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	0.238	0.301	0.302	0.350
<i>F (13, 103)</i>	3.780	4.838	4.855	5.795
<i>p-value</i>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Note: Model includes nine dummy variables (not shown in the table), controlling for the time-series aspect of the Twinning sample. None of the dummies differed statistically significantly from one another. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* p-value between 0.1 and 0.05.

\*\* p-value between 0.05 and 0.001.

\*\*\* p-value < 0.001.

### 5.1. Political liberalisation

The beneficiary country's level of political liberalisation shows a statistically robust, positive relationship with the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects. The model with transparency as the dependent variable displays no apparent relationship (Table 6). This fact, along with the transparency-oriented substance of many projects, suggests that all the Eastern neighbourhood countries, regardless of their level of political liberalisation, commit themselves to a relatively high level of transparency provisions in their Twinning cooperation with the EU. Separate t-tests on pairs of countries reveal that democratic governance substance is statistically different between Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine on the one side and Azerbaijan and Armenia on the other (Figure 4, Table 7). The dynamics roughly correspond to these countries' labels as "frontrunners" and "laggards" of political liberalisation in the Eastern neighbourhood. Most of statistically significant differences among the countries were uncovered in the category "accountability", and fewer were in the categories of "transparency" and "participation".

**Table 7.** Summary of *t*-tests on separate countries, n = 117

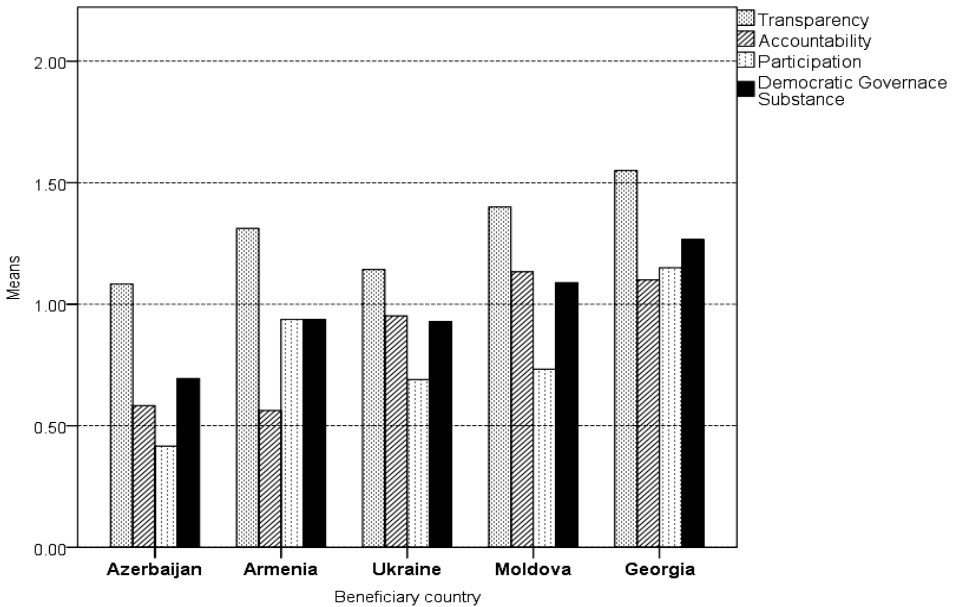
	<b>Transparency</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Dem. Subst.</b>	<b>Gov.</b>
<b>Cross-country comparisons</b>	<b>AZ-GE**</b>	<b>AM-UA**</b>	<b>AZ-GE***</b>	<b>GE-UA**</b>	
	<b>GE-UA**</b>	<b>AM-MD***</b>	<b>GE-UA**</b>	<b>AZ-UA*</b>	
		<b>AM-GE**</b>		<b>AZ-GE***</b>	
		<b>AZ-GE***</b>		<b>AM-GE**</b>	
		<b>AZ-MD***</b>		<b>AZ-MD**</b>	
		<b>AZ-UA**</b>			
<b>Sector politicisation</b>	<b>GE**</b>	<b>AM**</b>	---	<b>AM**</b>	
	<b>UA***</b>	<b>GE**</b>		<b>UA**</b>	
		<b>UA**</b>			
<b>Sector technical complexity</b>	---	---	<b>AM**</b>	<b>AZ*</b>	
			<b>AZ***</b>	<b>UA*</b>	
			<b>GE**</b>		
			<b>MD**</b>		
			<b>UA**</b>		
<b>EU sectoral conditionality</b>	<b>GR*</b>		<b>AZ*</b>		
			<b>UA**</b>		
			<b>GE*</b>		

Note: summary of t-tests for cross-country comparisons indicate how significant differences between democratic governance substance between pairs of countries are. Countries with higher democratic governance substance are in bold. Countries and pairs of countries with insignificant values are not included in the table.

\* p-value between 0.1 and 0.05.

\*\* p-value between 0.05 and 0.001.

\*\*\* p-value < 0.001.



**Figure 4.** Average democratic governance substance of Twining projects in the Eastern neighbourhood (sorted by democratic governance substance), N = 117

A somewhat surprising finding is that Twinning projects in Ukraine promote rather modest democratic governance substance, roughly in line with Armenia's level (Figure 4). This puts Ukraine in some contrast to Georgia and Moldova, especially because Ukraine scores higher on the VA estimate than those two countries. Such a discrepancy may have to do with the overall level of administrative openness of the country, which was reported to be low in Ukraine, irrespective of its relatively high level of political liberalisation.<sup>58</sup> The current results for our case countries seem to be explained more accurately by the European Integration Index, which measures levels of EU integration for each Eastern Partnership (EaP) country. A close proxy of political liberalisation in the EaP Index 2014 – Deep and Sustainable Democracy – places Ukraine and Armenia at about the same level, with an average score of 0.61, while Moldova and Georgia are ahead.<sup>59</sup> However, it will take further comparative case studies to ascertain what the matter may be.

## **5.2. Sector politicisation**

Although we find a robust relationship between the democratic governance substance of Twinning and sector politicisation, the direction of the relationship is positive, in contrast to the hypothesised negative one (Table 6). For example, politicised Twinning projects contain on average 0.5 points more of democratic governance substance (including transparency and accountability) than the non-politicised do. When controlling for separate countries, the relationship between sector politicisation and democratic governance substance did not hold so well, especially in the cases of Azerbaijan and Moldova, where we did not find any significant differences between politicised and non-politicised Twinning projects. The variation in the mean scores for transparency in response to sector politicisation remained statistically significant only in the cases of Ukraine and Georgia. The lack of a relationship between participation and politicisation was confirmed in all the countries analysed, meaning that politicised projects are just as likely to include participation norms as non-politicised ones (Table 7).

The positive direction of the relationship may suggest that policy sectors prone to political or commercial conflicts of interest are typically in a more pressing need for democratic governance than fields with low politicisation levels are. More importantly, that also implies that the EU's role in shaping the democratic governance substance of a Twinning fiche may be stronger vis-à-vis the beneficiary

<sup>58</sup> Int. with Danish civil servant, 23 March 2016; Int. 31 with French civil servants, 06 April 2016; Int. with Danish civil servant, 23 March 2016

<sup>59</sup> The concept of Deep and Sustainable Democracy encompasses elections, media freedom, association and assembly rights, human rights, independence of the judiciary, quality of public administration, the fight against corruption, accountability, and democratic control over security and law enforcement institutions. Source: Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, *European Integration Index 2014 for Eastern Partnership Countries*, 22–23, 73.

countries, despite the EU's declared support of ownership by the beneficiary. The weakening significance of this tendency in Moldova is due to the generally low variability of politicisation in this country, whereby 15 out of 18 projects in the country belong to politicised sectors. As for Azerbaijan, the lack of a relationship between democratic governance substance and sector politicisation may have to do with the general lack of interest by Azeri authorities in democratic reforms or EU integration,<sup>60</sup> which lowers the EU's leverage as a result. Then, the EU seems to enjoy more power in having Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia accept more democratic governance norms for Twinning cooperation in politicised policy fields. Nevertheless, we must reject Hypothesis 2 because it is not supported by our analysis.

### **5.3. Sector technical complexity**

In line with H3, the analysis shows a statistically significant difference between regular and technically complex Twinning projects in terms of democratic governance substance, especially in the category of participation (Table 6). An average difference of 0.7 points in the mean scores for participation between technically complex and regular projects is also the largest among the other independent variables analysed. This difference remains statistically significant in each country analysed, which also speaks for the uniform nature of the impact of this variable on participation substance (Table 7). Accountability substance also did not vary with sector technical complexity in the overall model and across the countries. Therefore, data provide sufficient support for H3, yet again with some reservations.

These data generally corroborate our assumption that policy sectors requiring advanced scientific expertise are not normally open to inputs from the general public.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the other categories of democratic governance substance are relatively unaffected by sector technical complexity. What this seems to suggest is that Twinning projects in technically complex policy fields may still focus on transparency and accountability, even though they tend to overlook the participation substance. This finding seems to support both parties in the debate on the politics-administration dichotomy in that, on the one hand, the public sector should seek democratic legitimacy and, on the other, certain specialised policy sectors may not be open to inputs by unqualified or uninterested outsiders.

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<sup>60</sup> Franke et al., "The European Union's Relations with Ukraine and Azerbaijan," 156.

<sup>61</sup> Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014.

#### **5.4. *EU sectoral conditionality***

Tests of all the four models produced no conclusive evidence to suggest that EU sectoral conditionality predicted the democratic governance substance in relevant sectors (Table 6). Additional t-tests, however, hinted at a possible relationship between EU sectoral conditionality and participation substance in the cases of Georgia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan (Table 7). However, most of those correlations are below the commonly accepted significance level and thus too inconclusive to argue that Twinning projects in sectors related to trade with the EU will include more references to participation. H4 is thus rejected.

### **6. Conclusions**

EU TG, or sectoral, cooperation has been considered by the literature as a vehicle to diffuse norms of democratic governance, such as transparency, accountability, and participation in public institutions in the ENP countries. The EU, on its part, has also committed to promoting democratic governance in its sectoral cooperation abroad. Using 117 Twinning project fiches from the Eastern neighbourhood countries as cases, this article explored the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in those countries and contemplated possible reasons behind its variation. We found that Twinning projects in the region mostly promote medium levels of democratic governance substance, which displays mixed configuration (with general domination of transparency) and varies across policy sectors. Twinning projects in the area of environment have the highest democratic governance substance, while those in transport and statistics have the lowest.

In testing the hypotheses that the democratic governance substance of Twinning varies with political liberalisation, sector politicisation, sector technical complexity, and EU sectoral conditionality, the multivariate regression analysis produced mixed results. We found that the level of political liberalisation is positively related to the democratic governance substance of Twinning fiches. Indeed, Twinning projects in the front-runners of political liberalisation in the Eastern neighbourhood, namely Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, tend to include more democratic governance substance than democratic laggards, namely Armenia and Azerbaijan. Such a conclusion points to the greater openness of more liberalised countries to embracing democratic governance in their Twinning cooperation with the EU. A somewhat low democratic substance of Twinning projects for Ukraine, and high for Georgia and Moldova, suggests that the current level of EU integration of the country (which is lower for Ukraine), and not the level of its political liberalisation, may better explain its willingness to see more democratic governance substance in their TG cooperation with the EU. It may also indicate that Ukraine,



while being generally more liberalised at the political level, remains relatively closed to change at the level of public administration.

Contrary to our initial expectations, Twinning projects in politicised policy sectors demonstrate higher democratic governance substance of Twinning than the projects in non-politicised settings. This finding also suggests that the EU has some leverage over most Eastern neighbourhood countries when it comes to inclusion of democratic governance norms in TG cooperation. An unusual case is Azerbaijan, where no statistically significant relationship was found, which corroborates previous studies admitting low interest of this country in EU integration and, by extension, indicating the EU's reduced leverage in Azerbaijan.

The analysis offered some empirical backing for the claim found in the public administration literature, suggesting that more technically complex policy sectors are less likely to embrace norms of democratic governance. This inverse relationship was especially strong in the category "participation". For example, Twinning projects in policy sectors requiring specialised knowledge of calculus and lab skills hardly ever encouraged input from civil society. While being at odds with the concept of democratic legitimacy, this finding reverberates with Woodrow Wilson's belief in the specialised and somewhat isolated nature of public administration.<sup>62</sup> No such dynamics were present in the categories of "transparency" and "accountability", however.

We found no hard evidence to establish a relationship between EU sectoral conditionality and democratic governance substance of Twinning. Such conditionality may be related tentatively to the higher presence of transparency and participation in Twinning projects in Georgia, Ukraine, and also Azerbaijan. At the theoretical level, this article contributes to a better understanding of the normative substance of EU TG cooperation under the ENP. The methodological approach used here may also be replicated in analysing Twinning projects in other ENP countries. If we were right in pinpointing that, in less liberalised countries, the relationship between sector politicisation and democratic governance substance does not hold as well as in the more liberalised countries, we should only be expecting political liberalisation and technical complexity to play a significant role in countries like Jordan and Egypt. Although, in our model, the EU-related variable was not significant, it may be different in other countries and cases of EU TG cooperation. Also, it would be stimulating to delve deeper into the micro-level decision-making during project fiche formulation and try to uncover other possible factors of democratic governance substance in particular projects or policy sectors.

In the process of selecting variables and formulating hypotheses, we also came across several competing explanations, which may be of relevance to our

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<sup>62</sup> Wilson, "The Study of Administration."

phenomenon of interest. One of them is codification (also called density of rules)<sup>63</sup> or the degree to which norms of democratic governance are specified in EU *acquis* or other international codes of law.<sup>64</sup> Owing to the EU's overall commitment to democratic governance in sectoral cooperation abroad and the large number of documents involved in Twinning preparation, it will take further research to produce the uniform and precise measurement of codification at the level of individual Twinning projects. Other variables such as the pro-Europeanness of administrative and political elites<sup>65</sup> should already be captured within the existing factors of political liberalisation and sector politicisation. Finally, it may be worthwhile for future studies to examine the prior adoption of democratic governance norms by the ENP countries before they began Twinning cooperation with the EU.

This article also offers several policy-relevant points. Although the Twinning instrument was originally not conceived and exercised as a tool to advance democracy or democratic governance to the neighbouring countries, a starting point would be a greater awareness in the EU's policy circles of the democratising potential of Twinning. Drawing on the EU's current commitment to democratic governance in sectoral cooperation, the European Commission may consider promoting norms of democratic governance as an explicit objective for each Twinning project. A typical Twinning fiche already features a section on cross-cutting issues, including democracy, environmental sustainability, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS. This list could be expanded with inclusion of transparency, accountability, and participation as requirements to the beneficiary institution in the process of Twinning implementation. Last but not least, the EU could try to capitalise on its greater bargaining power vis-à-vis some Eastern neighbourhood countries in the sectors pertaining to EU visa liberalisation and the DCFTA by streamlining more provisions for transparent and participatory governance in respective Twinning projects. Those considerations may be particularly relevant in light of the recent ENP review rollout, proposals for a new European Consensus on Development, and the implementation of the EU Global Strategy.

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<sup>63</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine," 875.

<sup>64</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*, 55.

<sup>65</sup> Isa Camyar, "On Domestic Determinants and Empirical Relevance of Government Preference for Implementing European Union Rules," *Journal of Politics and Law* 4, no. 2 (2011): 13–24.

## **PART II**

### **Article 3. The participation of CEECs in EU Twinning projects: offering specific added value for EU transgovernmental cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood?**

#### **Abstract**

Focusing on European Union (EU) Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, this article explores whether EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) offer specific added value for the implementation of EU Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood compared to the older member states. An added value refers to the combined comparative advantages of a group of member states for the implementation of a Twinning project, as perceived by project stakeholders. The findings largely confirm our hypothesis that CEECs mostly offer country-specific comparative advantages, rooted in their recent transition and accession experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with the Eastern neighbourhood. In turn, the older member states are perceived to offer mainly sector-specific comparative advantages owing to their institutional experience, sectoral fit, existing sectoral networks in the Eastern neighbourhood, and prior Twinning experience in other countries.

**KEYWORDS:** EU member states, CEECs, Twinning, EU transgovernmental cooperation, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Eastern neighbourhood, comparative advantages, added value

## 1. Introduction

European Union (EU) transgovernmental cooperation in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is widely seen as a channel through which the EU can diffuse its regulatory standards and norms to neighbouring countries via sectoral transfer of the *acquis* and the subtle processes of socialisation.<sup>1</sup> EU member states (MS) play a crucial role in EU transgovernmental cooperation, as they usually serve as immediate suppliers of expert knowledge and policy advice during the implementation of EU transgovernmental projects. However, the MS involvement in EU transgovernmental cooperation remains largely neglected in existing studies. Those few works that have touched on this issue are mainly policy-oriented or lack a solid theoretical lens.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, there is a growing body of literature on the new MS, or Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs), as emerging agents of change in the EU's neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> Their recent transition experience to democracy and market economy, as well as close historical, geopolitical, and cultural ties with their Eastern neighbours have, according to some authors, endowed CEECs with a specific added value for EU foreign policy in the Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>4</sup>

However, so far, this added value has not been examined systematically, and there is only patchy evidence about the particular relevance of the CEECs' experience for the countries in the Eastern neighbourhood. Moreover, existing studies focus mostly on the area of democracy promotion. Hardly any research has delved into the area of EU transgovernmental cooperation, especially institution-building instruments like Twinning, which explicitly encourage MS to share their institutional experience and best practices in implementing EU directives and regulations. This article seeks to narrow this gap by examining whether EU MS from Central and Eastern Europe offer specific added value compared to the older EU MS for the Twinning instrument in the Eastern neighbourhood, which is used as a case

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<sup>1</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance"; Papadimitriou and Pinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania"; Tulmets, "The Introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in the European Enlargement Policy: Analysing the Impact of the New PHARE/Twinning Instrument"; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"

<sup>3</sup> Horký, "The Transfer of the Central and Eastern European 'Transition Experience' to the South: Myth or Reality?"; Petrova, *From Solidarity to Geopolitics: Support for Democracy among Postcommunist States*; Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States"; Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Petrova, *From Solidarity to Geopolitics: Support for Democracy among Postcommunist States*; Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States"; Katerina Kesa, "Le Partage de L'expérience Balte Envers Les Pays Du Voisinage Oriental de l'Union Européenne," *Politique Européenne*, no. 4 (2014): 86–116.

of EU transgovernmental cooperation. To do so, it draws on the notion of “comparative advantage”, as used by the EU to refer to the specific strengths of MS in international development cooperation.<sup>5</sup> Added value then refers to the perceived comparative advantages of a MS for the implementation of a Twinning project, as perceived by project stakeholders. Because of the nature and focus of our data, we do not seek to examine to which extent the involvement of CEECs increases the chances of successful implementation of Twinning projects or whether it positively affects – what is referred to in the external governance literature as – “rule adoption” in domestic legislation and “rule implementation” in domestic political and administrative practice.<sup>6</sup>

In line with scholars viewing CEECs as emerging agents of change in the Eastern neighbourhood and based on insights from studies of Twinning in accession countries, we hypothesise that, in the Eastern neighbourhood, CEECs will be mostly perceived to offer country-specific comparative advantages, while the older MS will be perceived to have mainly sector-specific comparative advantages. In particular, we hypothesise that the involvement of CEECs in EU transgovernmental projects in the Eastern neighbourhood will be valued because of their recent transition experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared communist past with the beneficiary countries. In turn, the older MS – and to some extent also the CEECs – will be valued for their institutional experience, sectoral fit, existing sectoral networks with the beneficiary, and prior Twinning experience in other countries.

To assess the hypotheses, we focus on Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, which have so far been the major beneficiaries of Twinning cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>7</sup> Our empirical analysis is based on data gathered through 40 semi-structured interviews with Twinning participants from Azerbaijan, Ukraine, CEECs, the older MS and the EU Delegations in Ukraine and Azerbaijan between September 2013 and July 2016. The data were gathered and processed using the EAR technique (Ego/Alter perception, Researcher’s analysis), a qualitative method of analysis and triangulation, developed by Arts and Verschuuren to determine the perceived influence of agents in decision-making processes.<sup>8</sup>

The article is structured as follows. First, we briefly present the EU’s Twinning instrument as used in the ENP and explain ways in which Twinning engages inputs by MS. Second, we outline the country-specific and sector-specific comparative advantages that different MS are hypothesised to have for the implementation of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. Third, we explain the methods for

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<sup>5</sup> European Commission, “Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy.”

<sup>6</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, “EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics.”

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, “Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report.”

<sup>8</sup> Arts and Verschuuren, “Assessing Political Influence in Complex Decision-Making: An Instrument Based on Triangulation.”

analysis and provide some background information on Twinning projects implemented in Azerbaijan and Ukraine to date and MS participation therein. The fourth part presents the empirical findings. The concluding section recaps the main points of the study, summarises the findings, and suggests areas for further research.

## 2. Twinning in the ENP and the role of EU MS

Originally designed to help the EU candidate countries acquire the necessary know-how and expertise to adopt, implement, and enforce norms of *acquis communautaire*, Twinning has also been used since 2005 to modernise the public administrations of the ENP partner countries in line with EU law and best administrative practices of MS.<sup>9</sup> The Twinning instrument fosters a socialisation forum between MS bureaucrats and their counterparts from the beneficiary country, who work side-by-side on a daily basis for up to 36 months on a jointly agreed upon set of policy priorities, or mandatory results.<sup>10</sup> Those priorities usually entail sectoral reforms in line with Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), Action Plan (APs), or Association Agreements (AAs) in force between the EU and the ENP countries. A MS institution, after being selected by the beneficiary country, delegates an experienced civil servant, called Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA), to the beneficiary institution for an entire duration of the project. In turn, the RTA invites and coordinates other civil servants and experts from EU MS, who contribute on a short-term basis to training sessions, workshops, and awareness-raising events over the course of the project. Additionally, the civil servants from the ENP country go on study visits to the counterpart MS institution.<sup>11</sup> In such a way, MS play a crucial role in EU transgovernmental cooperation, as they serve as immediate suppliers of expert knowledge and policy advice during such cooperation.

While discussing at some length the direct and indirect impacts of EU transgovernmental cooperation on the neighbouring countries,<sup>12</sup> the existing literature has overlooked the crucial role of MS in this process. Those few works that have touched on the involvement of MS in Twinning are mainly policy-oriented and lack a theoretical lens.<sup>13</sup> Some of these studies have passingly touched on the

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Freyburg, "Planting the Seeds of Change Inside? Functional Cooperation with Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization into Democratic Governance"; Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>13</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern

possible sources of added value of different MS for Twinning projects, and in particular on the reasons why specific MS get selected over the others. For example, in their work on Twinning in the Czech Republic, Königová et al. found that some MS had better chances to participate in Twinning owing to the larger financial and administrative resources, knowledge of local contexts, language, or lobbying activities in potential partner countries.<sup>14</sup> In her case study of Twinning in Hungary and Estonia, Tulmets also found that the public expertise and personal qualities of MS experts, as well as previously existing bilateral cooperation and personal links were pre-conditions for the selection of specific MS for Twinning.<sup>15</sup> While these bits and pieces of data provide valuable insights on possible reasons behind the selection of MS by the beneficiary, they tell us little about the actual comparative advantages or added value that these MS can offer for the implementation of Twinning projects. This is even more so given that the selection process is not always based on objective criteria and may be driven by personal preferences or interests of the evaluation committee members from the beneficiary institution.<sup>16</sup> In the Eastern neighbourhood countries, where the EU Delegations jointly decide with the beneficiary administrations,<sup>17</sup> the outcome of the selection process can even be the result of bargaining between EU officials and the beneficiary administration.<sup>18</sup>

The question of the nature and quality of the comparative advantages of different MS has become even more relevant after CEECs joined the EU and began to participate in EU transgovernmental cooperation programmes. Because of their recent democratisation and market reform experience, as well as their close geopolitical and cultural ties with the Eastern neighbours, CEECs have arguably gained an upper hand in the region, as compared to the older MS, the US, or other international actors.<sup>19</sup> However, most of the scholarly literature on CEECs focuses on democracy promotion in the Eastern neighbourhood, while very few works have touched on CEECs' role for EU transgovernmental programmes in the region.<sup>20</sup>

In further advancing these debates, this article examines whether CEECs offer specific added value for EU transgovernmental cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood compared to the older MS. Added value in our analysis refers to the

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Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic."

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 37–44.

<sup>15</sup> Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary," 665.

<sup>16</sup> Int. 32 with German civil servant, 11 April 2016; Int. 40 with Ukrainian expert, 21 April 2016.

<sup>17</sup> In the other countries where the Twinning instrument operates, e.g., the Southern Neighbourhood, the selection process is fully run by the beneficiary administration. See European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 114.

<sup>18</sup> Int. 31 with French civil servant, 06 April 2016; Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*; Petrova, "The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support."

<sup>20</sup> Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States."

comparative advantages of an EU MS for the implementation of an EU Twinning project, as perceived by the stakeholders involved in the project implementation. A comparative advantage in this regard can be defined as a sphere of specialisation in which a MS is perceived – by both itself and the beneficiary countries, as well as by other MS – to be capable of cooperating more effectively and in a manner that is more useful to the beneficiary country than other MS.<sup>21</sup> According to the nature of the comparative advantages, we distinguish between country- and sector-specific ones. Country-specific comparative advantages derive from general properties inherent to the country or public administration as a whole. Sector-specific comparative advantages are characteristics pertaining to specific sectors of policy-making or public administration.

### 3. Hypotheses

Drawing on existing studies on Twinning cooperation in EU candidate countries<sup>22</sup> and the works viewing CEECs as emergent agents of change in the Eastern neighbourhood,<sup>23</sup> we hypothesise that CEECs will have mostly country-specific comparative advantages for Twinning in the Eastern neighbourhood, while the older MS will mainly display sector-specific comparative advantages (Table 8). In particular, it is hypothesised that CEECs will offer country-specific added value for EU Twinning in the Eastern neighbourhood because of their recent transition experience, cultural-linguistic proximity, and shared communist and/or Soviet past with the beneficiary countries. In turn, the older MS will normally offer sector-specific comparative advantages, such institutional experience in specific policy sectors, similarity of sectoral governance, prior Twinning experience, and density of sectoral networks with the beneficiary institutions in the Eastern neighbourhood. However, given their longer membership in the EU and long-standing (and well-resourced) public administration, the older MS will have more sector-specific comparative advantages than CEECs.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g., Nils-Sjard Schulz, "Division of Labour among European Donors: Allotting the Pie or Committing to Effectiveness?," *Development in Context* (Madrid, 2007), 7, [http://fride.org/descarga/BGR\\_Donors\\_Division\\_Labour\\_ENG\\_may07.pdf](http://fride.org/descarga/BGR_Donors_Division_Labour_ENG_may07.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Lovorka Jonic Kapnias, "Institutional Twinning: Undiscovered Effects of Administrative 'Trinity,'" *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* 13, no. 2 (2013): 434–66; Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary"; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania."

<sup>23</sup> Petrova, *From Solidarity to Geopolitics: Support for Democracy among Postcommunist States*; Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*; Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States"; Kesa, "Le Partage de L'expérience Balte Envers Les Pays Du Voisinage Oriental de l'Union Européenne."



**Table 8.** Comparative advantages of MS for Twinning in the Eastern neighbourhood

Sector-specific comparative advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional experience</li> <li>• Sectoral fit</li> <li>• Existing sectoral networks</li> <li>• Prior Twinning experience</li> </ul>
Country-specific comparative advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent transition and accession experience</li> <li>• Socio-linguistic proximity</li> <li>• Shared historical legacies</li> </ul>

### 3.1. Country-specific comparative advantages

One of the most obvious comparative advantages that CEECs may offer for EU transgovernmental cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood is their transition experience, or rather, *recent transition experience*.<sup>24</sup> The process of transition typically involves a two-folded path from autocracy and centrally planned economy to democratic and market-based institutions.<sup>25</sup> The transition experience within the EU context refers to the institutional memory of democratic change and economic transformation of post-communist states of Eastern and Central Europe, most of which became members of the EU in the 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds.<sup>26</sup> After having themselves been the beneficiaries of EU democracy promotion and transgovernmental programmes in the recent past, these new MS have acquired a baggage of experience related to their political and institutional reforms, as well as the related history of cooperation with the older EU MS and the United States.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the CEECs, most of the older MS cannot boast of their transition experience, because they underwent their transitions a very long time ago and their institutional memory carries no implementation blueprints anymore.

The fact that the CEECs were themselves beneficiaries of the EU Twinning instrument, and thus have an intimate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of this instrument as a channel to help induce reforms, adds further weight to the expectation that civil servants from CEECs will be perceived to be particularly well-placed to implement such projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. In this regard, the experience of civil servants from CEECs who were themselves involved in the implementation of Twinning projects in the pre-accession period and now operate

<sup>24</sup> For concrete examples of CEECs' transition experiences, see European Commission, "European Transition Compendium."

<sup>25</sup> David Stark, "Path Dependence and Privatization Strategies in East Central Europe," *Transition to Capitalism*, 1994, 63–101; Kuzio, "Transition in Post-Communist States: Triple or Quadruple?"

<sup>26</sup> Jonavicius, "The Democracy Promotion Policies of Central and Eastern European States"; Petrova, *From Solidarity to Geopolitics: Support for Democracy among Postcommunist States*.

<sup>27</sup> Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*; Szent-Iványi, "The EU's Support for Democratic Governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Role of Transition Experience from the New Member States"; Petrova, "The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support"; Kucharczyk and Lovitt, *Democracy's New Champions: European Democracy Assistance after EU Enlargement*; Horký, "The Transfer of the Central and Eastern European 'Transition Experience' to the South: Myth or Reality?"

in Twinning projects on behalf of the “sending partner” might appear especially valuable. As Königová et al. point out based on their assessment of the participation of EU MS in pre-accession Twinning projects in the Czech Republic, it is critical to “explain the philosophy of any aid programme to the beneficiaries in a comprehensive and clear way, being fully aware of cultural sensitivities and seeking the acceptance and commitment from the recipient country and its institutions first”.<sup>28</sup> This brings us to the comparative advantages of socio-linguistic proximity and common historical legacies.

As highlighted above, Twinning establishes a socialisation forum through the long-term secondment of bureaucrats and continuous direct contact between the respective bureaucracies and fosters interpersonal linkages across peer institutions. Under such circumstances, interpersonal communication plays an important role. Therefore, the *socio-linguistic* proximity and common historical legacies between civil servants from CEECs and their counterparts in the Eastern neighbourhood may help to build a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding, and, as a result, familiarise counterpart state officials with EU regulations and practices. Also the fact that civil servants in some of CEECs, and in particular the Baltic countries, are fluent in Russian is expected to offer an added value to their participation in the Twinning exercise in the Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>29</sup>

As indicated by Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, in the case of Twinning, “the ability of the dispatched civil servants to develop good working relationships with local staff has a significant bearing on the full realisation of objectives”.<sup>30</sup> Existing studies on Twinning projects in the former EU candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe have shown that the implementation process, at a day-to-day level of cooperation, has often been hampered by communication problems due to the language barrier, as well as by difficulties experienced by MS civil servants in adjusting to the local administrative culture.<sup>31</sup> Tulmets, for instance, indicates that “CEEC officials had difficulties to trust their future EU colleagues, who – they considered – had little knowledge of the candidate countries and were not always open to learning on the CEECs’ culture and past”.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it seems plausible to expect that the socio-linguistic proximity and common historical legacies between

<sup>28</sup> Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, “Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of ‘Old’ EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic,” 12.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, “Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania,” 623.

<sup>31</sup> Kapnias, “Institutional Twinning: Undiscovered Effects of Administrative ‘Trinity’”; Tulmets, “The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary”; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, “Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of ‘Old’ EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic”; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, “Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania.”

<sup>32</sup> Tulmets, “The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary,” 671.

the CEECs and the Eastern neighbouring countries should make it easier for civil servants from CEECs to find common ground with their counterparts in the Eastern neighbourhood countries and build a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding.

Indeed, decades of communist rule in the Eastern neighbourhood countries created a “Soviet identity” in those countries alongside their own national identities. It consists of certain habits, practices, social institutions, and socio-linguistic formulas, which linger on in the collective memory of all those who lived in the Soviet Union, and, by extension, the Soviet bloc.<sup>33</sup> Such commonalities may contribute to better mutual understanding and trust between CEECs and post-Soviet countries east of the EU. Related to this, and even more importantly perhaps, a specific public service culture and administrative tradition emerged throughout the former Soviet Union and the former Soviet bloc, which to varying degrees still persists across the region.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, even in the new public administration practices of CEECs, influences from the communist heritage can still be seen.<sup>35</sup> This is not to suggest that all CEECs had the same communist regimes and administrative systems and all followed identical patterns in reforming their public administration. The point is rather that compared to civil servants from other EU MS, civil servants from CEECs will find it easier to understand the local administrative culture of the post-communist countries in the Eastern neighbourhood. Given the specific goals and context of the Twinning instrument, understanding the local administrative culture may play an important role in facilitating the implementation process at the level of day-to-day cooperation.

### **3.2. Sector-specific comparative advantages**

Unlike the country-specific, sector-specific comparative advantages reflect strengths of MS institutions and civil servants in particular sectors of public policy-making that are of relevance to the beneficiary. We look at four kinds of sector-specific comparative advantages – institutional experience, sectoral policy fit, prior

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<sup>33</sup> Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly, *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities* (Cambridge University Press, 2012); Mark Beissinger and Stephen Kotkin, *Historical Legacies of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Saltanat Liebert, Stephen Condrey, and Dmitry Goncharov, *Public Administration in Post-Communist Countries*, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Painter and Guy Peters, “Administrative Traditions in Comparative Perspective: Families, Groups and Hybrids,” in *Tradition and Public Administration*, ed. Martin Painter and Guy Peters (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 19–30; Petr Kopecký and Maria Spirova, “Jobs for the Boys? Patterns of Party Patronage in Post-Communist Europe,” *West European Politics* 34, no. 5 (2011): 897–921; Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling and Kutsal Yesilkagit, “Differential Legacy Effects: Three Propositions on the Impact of Administrative Traditions on Public Administration Reform in Europe East and West,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 18, no. 2 (2011): 311–22.

<sup>35</sup> Tony Verheijen, “The New Member States of the European Union: Constructed and Historical Traditions and Reform Trajectories,” in *Tradition and Public Administration*, ed. Martin Painter and Guy Peters (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 217–33; Liebert, Condrey, and Goncharov, *Public Administration in Post-Communist Countries*.

sectoral cooperation and Twinning experience, which are hypothesised to be mostly – but not exclusively – a prerogative of the older MS.

To begin with, institutional experience is understood here as a notable record of administrative or institutional accomplishment gained by a MS in a specific area of public policy or administration. In other words, this concerns a reputational feature, held by MS which are considered to demonstrate a “good example at home” in terms of their governance of a particular sector.<sup>36</sup> Given that the older MS have been EU members for a longer time and, in many cases, have a more established administrative system, it is obvious to expect that this comparative advantage will apply more to the older MS than to CEECs. Indeed, the latter are in some cases still struggling themselves to overcome their communist legacies and consolidate their transition.

Secondly, MS may be considered as valuable partners when their administrative system at the sectoral level displays a certain degree of *sectoral fit* or compatibility with the administrative structures of the beneficiary side.<sup>37</sup> As indicated by the Europeanisation literature, whereas some amount of misfit is important for policy diffusion to occur in the first place,<sup>38</sup> it is important that the nature or magnitude of such incompatibilities do not clash with the organisational specifics of the beneficiary institution. In the context of Twinning, this comparative advantage implies that for projects in specific sectors (e.g., statistics, land ownership, or education), MS with a similar size or ministerial capacity as the counterpart organization in the BC may be preferred.

A third comparative advantage is the prior existence of *sectoral networks* between the MS and beneficiary administration in a given policy area. Such sectoral networks may be part of established bilateral cooperation between the MS and the ENP country. In her study of Twinning in Estonia and Hungary, Tulmets notes that these two countries preferred working with the MS that had been their cooperation partners for several years.<sup>39</sup> In such a way, the financial, administrative and personal connections emerging from the previous cooperation programmes in specific policy sectors are expected to create a conducive environment for Twinning.<sup>40</sup>

A final sector-specific comparative advantage is prior Twinning experience. Certain MS have gained extensive Twinning experience in a particular policy sector

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<sup>36</sup> Bruno Vandecasteele, “The Influence of the Rotating Council Presidency on the European Union’s External Policies” 2015, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Hille and Christoph Knill, “‘It’s the Bureaucracy, Stupid’: The Implementation of the Acquis Communautaire in EU Candidate Countries, 1999–2003,” *European Union Politics* 7, no. 4 (2006): 540.

<sup>38</sup> Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse, “From Europeanisation to Diffusion: Introduction,” *West European Politics* 35, no. 1 (2012): 1–19.

<sup>39</sup> Tulmets, “The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary,” 665.

<sup>40</sup> BMUB, “Germany and the EU Twinning Instrument,” 2015, 4, [www.bmub.bund.de/P840-1/](http://www.bmub.bund.de/P840-1/).

by participating in multiple Twinning projects in several countries. This may provide them with a “competitive edge” in EU transgovernmental cooperation in that particular sector, as compared to other MS with no such experience. Through prior Twinning experience, they may be better equipped to avoid common pitfalls and setbacks in the management and organisation of these projects in a given policy sector than the less experienced MS would.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. Data collection and methods

Owing to the strong emphasis of Twinning projects on policy contributions by MS, we selected Twinning as the most likely case for studying the added value of CEECs compared to the older MS for EU transgovernmental cooperation. In contrast to Twinning, other EU transgovernmental instruments, like TAIEX and SIGMA, provide less room for individual MS to promulgate their comparative advantages, as these instruments mostly draw on EU-level expertise or private consultancies.<sup>42</sup>

The empirical focus is on EU Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, which are the two front-runners in the Eastern neighbourhood in terms of the number of EU Twinning projects that have been implemented to date. Due to time constraints and difficulties locating all relevant stakeholders, we did not examine all Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, but selected a sample for analysis,<sup>43</sup> which would allow us to sufficiently assess the added value of civil servants from CEECs in Twinning projects in Ukraine and Azerbaijan based on the characteristics that distinguish them from other EU MS: recent transition experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

Empirical data were gathered through 40 semi-structured interviews, conducted with civil servants from CEECs, other MS, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine, who have been closely involved in the implementation of the selected Twinning projects. Interview questions gauged the interviewees’ perceptions of the particular strengths and comparative advantages of the MS involved in the respective projects as manifested during the implementation of the projects. The process of data collection was driven by a snowball sampling procedure,<sup>44</sup> which enabled us to get in touch with most Twinning officials through a network of relationships that we developed during our fieldtrips to Azerbaijan and Ukraine. While the majority of the

<sup>41</sup> Tulmets, “The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary”; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, “Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of ‘Old’ EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic.”

<sup>42</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, “Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report”; European Commission, “Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report.”

<sup>43</sup> For more info on project sample see appendix Table 19, p. 177.

<sup>44</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*, 107–8.

respondents could comment on only one project, around one third of our interviewees could comment on two or more projects, which allowed us to cross-check evidence on each project from the sample. The overall number of interviews and, by extension, the size of the project sample were mainly driven by the considerations of data accessibility and sufficiency. From the outset, we intended to maximise the variation of our data by policy sector, MS partner involved (CEECs versus older MS), and respondent's origin (the EU versus the Eastern neighbourhood country). Once we were approaching the mark of 40 interviews, we arrived at a point of "saturation", whereby we were not getting additional useful data to test our hypotheses. Because the total number of Twinning projects implemented in Ukraine (42) was slightly higher than that in Azerbaijan (33) in the period concerned, we kept this proportion in mind while selecting a sample of projects from each country (Table 9 below).<sup>45</sup>

In order to control for preference bias in the interviewees' assessments, we have triangulated our data using the EAR method (Ego/Alter perception, Researcher's analysis).<sup>46</sup> This qualitative tool combines the perceptions of agents in decision-making with an analysis of an external observer (researcher). Information on Ego and Alter perceptions, typically gathered during elite interviews, refers to an assessment by key agents of their own (Ego) or the other's (Alter) influence in decision-making. The Researcher's analysis is then a validity check of those perceptions. Using this method to assess whether civil servants from CEECs and the older MS are considered to offer specific added value during the implementation of EU Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, information on Ego perceptions refers here to an assessment by the civil servants from MS of their added value in the project. Information on Alter perceptions regards an assessment of the added value of the MS involvement in the project by their counterparts from Ukraine or Azerbaijan and by their project partners from other EU MS (in case the MS was not the only one involved in the Twinning project), as well as by officials from the EU Delegations in Ukraine and Azerbaijan who oversee the projects.

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<sup>45</sup> See also Table 19 in the appendix, p. 177.

<sup>46</sup> Arts and Verschuren, "Assessing Political Influence in Complex Decision-Making: An Instrument Based on Triangulation."

## 5. Empirical analysis

### 5.1. MS participation in Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine

Between 2004 and 2016, about 33 Twinning projects were launched in Azerbaijan and 42 in Ukraine, which makes these countries frontrunners in the Eastern neighbourhood by the number of on-going and concluded Twinning projects.<sup>47</sup> An overview of the participation of EU MS in these projects is illustrated numerically in Table 9 and Figure 5 below. The Twinning instrument in Azerbaijan is based upon the priority areas stipulated in the Country Strategy Paper, which include democratic development and good governance, socio-economic reform with an emphasis on regulatory approximation with the EU *acquis*, legislative and economic reforms in the energy sector, the transport sector, and the environment sector.<sup>48</sup> The sectoral spectrum of the Twinning instrument in Ukraine covers a similarly diverse range of policy fields (Table 9) in line with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1998, the Action Plan of 2005, and most recently, the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine.<sup>49</sup>

**Table 9.** MS participation in Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, by policy sector (2007-2016)

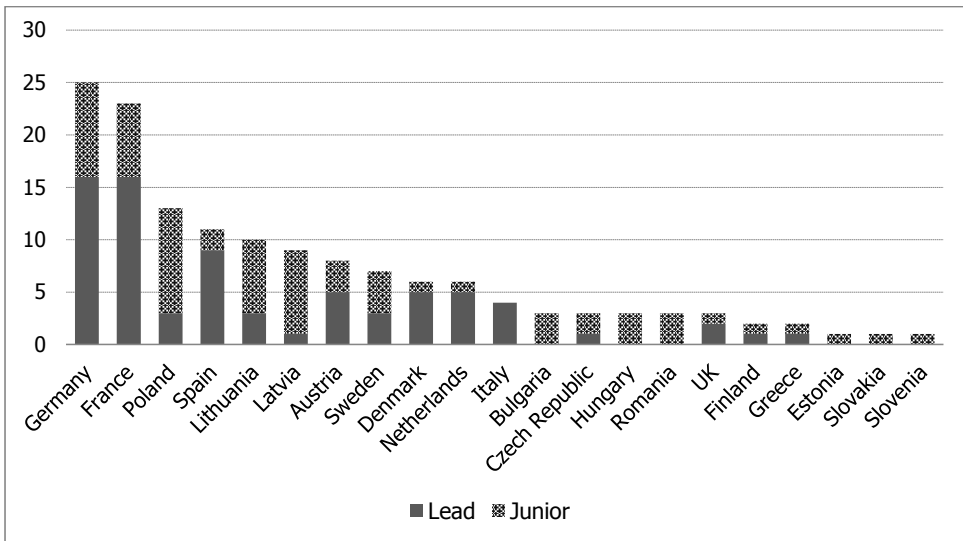
Policy Sector	Azerbaijan	Ukraine	CEECs*	Older MS*
<b>Agriculture</b>	1	2	2	4
<b>Employment &amp; social affairs</b>	7	4	3	14
<b>Energy</b>	2	4	5	8
<b>Environment</b>	0	2	2	2
<b>Finance</b>	4	6	6	9
<b>Health &amp; consumer protection</b>	2	1	2	4
<b>Justice &amp; home affairs</b>	5	5	8	8
<b>Education</b>	1	0	1	1
<b>Statistics</b>	2	3	3	7
<b>Telecommunications</b>	0	1	1	2
<b>Trade &amp; industry</b>	7	5	2	16
<b>Transport</b>	2	8	5	15
<b>Totals</b>	33	42	40	90

\* This column indicates the total number of projects in which these MS participated in Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

<sup>47</sup> European Commission, "Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report."

<sup>48</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 26.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 20–21.



**Figure 5.** MS participation as lead and junior partners in Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine (2007-2016, n = 75)

## ***5.2. Country-specific comparative advantages of MS for Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine***

### ***5.2.1. Recent transition and accession experience***

Most interviewees to this study concur that the recent transition and accession experience of MS partners from Central and Eastern Europe contributes to their added value during the implementation of Twinning projects.<sup>50</sup> For instance, in discussing the benefits of Poland's transition experience for Twinning programme in Ukraine, a Polish official noted that "it is their understanding [by Ukrainians] that we [Poland] have gone through a certain period and achieved stability and now we are moving forward."<sup>51</sup>

Evidence from several interviews shows that civil servants from CEECs are valued for Twinning in Azerbaijan and Ukraine because they have a recent memory of how their country has undergone certain reforms.<sup>52</sup> As illustrated by a Swedish

<sup>50</sup> Int. with EU Delegation official in Azerbaijan, 03 October 2013; Int. with Polish civil servant, 07 October 2013; Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. 2 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 November 2014; Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014; Int. 8 with Ukrainian expert, 09 December 2014; Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Int. with Polish civil servant, 07 October 2013; Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 11 October 2013; Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 7 with



civil servant who operated as RTA in a project in Azerbaijan in which Latvia was the junior partner, the Latvian team members were indispensable as they could “share their experiences, the steps of transformation, mistakes and recommendations on how to avoid them”.<sup>53</sup> The fact that most CEECs can boast of a *recent* transition experience has two important implications for their added value in Twinning. First, Twinning officials from CEECs still carry their own professional experience and blueprints of recent reforms that they witnessed or spearheaded in their home administrations about a decade ago.<sup>54</sup> As a Danish civil servant who was involved in a statistics project in Ukraine suggested,

Officials from the new member states [CEECs] can relate well to how that decade has passed for them in statistics. The Danes do not remember that situation because there are already different generations. They do not know how it was 50-60 years ago when a certain [statistical] register was being created. It was just too long ago... Initially, we wanted to only cooperate with Germany and France; however, the experience of the new member states is simply invaluable. Their experts are around 50 years old. 10-15 years ago they were implementing new technologies [in their country systems] and they perfectly remember what they did.<sup>55</sup>

And second, because a majority of CEECs are still in the process of reforming their administrations and have not yet reached the level of the older MS, the gap in the institutional development between these CEECs, on the one hand, and Azerbaijan and Ukraine, on the other, is still within reach. As a Ukrainian respondent explained, “something that gets reformed in Germany or France is in fact not reformed, but adjusted. In our Ukrainian case, we need to build from scratch and therefore their experience is generally interesting, but not realistic.”<sup>56</sup> For that reason, Azerbaijani and Ukrainian officials simply find it easier to relate with the MS that have not gone too far off from their common starting point of institutional reform. In this respect, a Polish official noted that CEECs have a better understanding of “what is happening in the civil service system of Ukraine”.<sup>57</sup> For example, he added, “the English have a better experience; however, it is so remote [from the Ukrainian conditions] that without a “translator” it is very difficult to implement something”.<sup>58</sup>

For that reason, while often themselves being role models for CEECs, the older MS often struggle to get their message across because their administrative systems

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Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014; Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015; Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014; Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014; Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

or best practices in a given policy sector are too advanced and hard to stomach from the point of view of their partners from the Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>59</sup> A Dutch civil servant highlighted that this is exactly why the Netherlands always tries to partner with CEECs in EU Twinning projects, because “they sense the counterpart better since they were beneficiaries of Twinning themselves only recently”.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, a British civil servant explained that his department wanted to team up specifically with a CEEC for the Twinning project in Azerbaijan on technical barriers to trade, because – like Azerbaijan – they moved from a planned economy system.<sup>61</sup>

Thereby, the transition experience of the Baltic countries is perceived as offering an even greater added value than the other CEECs from the former Eastern bloc, because the Baltics were a part of the Soviet Union and thus changed from the Soviet system to the EU’s system.<sup>62</sup> According to one Ukrainian official, “they [Baltic states] come from the same political system and have similar issues, and the approaches they used are more suited for us as well.”<sup>63</sup> In this respect, it is also interesting to note that, particularly in Azerbaijan, the Baltic countries tend to be seen as a best practice of de-Sovietisation and modernisation, at least in the perception of civil servants and technocrats – as opposed to senior government officials.<sup>64</sup> However, beyond attesting to the value of transition experience, this appreciation also speaks to the relevance of socio-linguistic proximity and common historical legacies.

### **5.2.2. Socio-linguistic proximity and common historical legacies**

Historical, cultural, and linguistic affinity of (some of) the CEECs with Azerbaijan and Ukraine are seen as an important factor facilitating the implementation of Twinning projects in those countries.<sup>65</sup> After the collapse of the USSR, former communist societies found themselves in a state of institutional, social, and cultural homogeneity,<sup>66</sup> which allowed those societies, despite the different evolutionary paths adopted in the post-Soviet period, to have a more

<sup>59</sup> Int. with EU Delegation official in Azerbaijan, 03 October 2013; Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 11 October 2013; Int. 2 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 November 2014; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Int. with EU Delegation official in Azerbaijan, 03 October 2013; Int. with Polish civil servant, 07 October 2013; Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 11 October 2013; Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015; Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016; Int. with French civil servant, 06 July 2016; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Liebert, Condrey, and Goncharov, *Public Administration in Post-Communist Countries*, 5.

intimate understanding of political and administrative predicaments facing each other and thus enjoy more legitimacy in dealing with each other's issues, as compared to outsiders, that is, the older MS. Respondents from both Ukraine and Azerbaijan expressed the view that civil servants from CEECs have a much better understanding of typical political problems and cultural context in the Eastern neighbourhood after having shared part of history together, both under the Soviet Union and before. As a Ukrainian civil servant notes, "countries of the former Soviet bloc are particularly effective, because we have in common some issues, shared history, and understanding of the current processes."<sup>67</sup>

Just like with transition experience, this is especially the case for the Baltic states who were formerly part of the USSR and have a unique understanding of the post-Soviet realities.<sup>68</sup> The Swedish RTA of a Twinning project in Azerbaijan, which involved Latvia as junior partner, said that she "noticed that dialogues and discussions between the Latvian and Azerbaijani team members sometimes were more constructive [than between the Swedish and Azerbaijani team members]. For instance, when they discussed a new law based on a law from Soviet time, the Latvian and Azerbaijani team members easily understood each other".<sup>69</sup> This also indicates that recent transition experience and shared history are often seen as two sides of the same coin.<sup>70</sup>

In terms of cultural proximity, respondents implied that affinity with the administrative culture rather than with the national culture of the beneficiary country contributed to the added value of CEECs.<sup>71</sup> For example, Dutch civil servants mentioned that the Netherlands prefers to work in a consortium with CEECs like Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia for Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood not only because of their recent transition experience but also because of their closer affinity with the local administrative culture.<sup>72</sup>

Besides historical and socio-cultural legacies, command of local languages, *in casu* Russian (and/or Ukrainian in the case of Ukraine), was very often cited as a factor facilitating the Twinning implementation process.<sup>73</sup> This relates to the

<sup>67</sup> Int. 2 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 November 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 17 with EU official, 11 June 2015; Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016; Int. with French civil servant, 06 July 2016; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>70</sup> See e.g. Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 11 October 2013; and Int. with Polish civil servant, 07 October 2013.

<sup>71</sup> See e.g. Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015; Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015.

<sup>73</sup> Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 8 October 2013; Int. with Dutch civil servant, 9 October 2013; Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 9 October 2013; Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 11 October 2013; Int. with EU official from EU Delegation in Azerbaijan, 3 October 2013; Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 8 October 2013; Int. with Azerbaijani civil servant, 14 October 2013; Int. with Ukrainian civil servant, 11 November 2014; Int. with Polish civil servant, 2 April 2015; Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016; Int. with French civil servant, 6 July 2016; Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

importance in Twinning of interpersonal communication between the beneficiary country and the MS officials, whereby direct interaction without interpreters contributes to a better rapport between the sides. The high importance of demonstrating hard, measurable results in aftermath of each project makes the quality of communication (both in terms of language familiarity and interpersonal relations) between different members of project team a crucial component of Twinning success. For example, the French RTA of the Twinning project on competition policy in Ukraine was recalled and replaced because of the mounting communication difficulties with the beneficiary country's officials.<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, in the case of Twinning in Azerbaijan, a command of Russian only appears to be an asset with older civil servants. Since many of the younger civil servants in the country were educated in the EU or the US, communication in projects involving younger civil servants tends to be in English.

### ***5.3. Sector-specific comparative advantages of MS for Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine***

#### ***5.3.1. Institutional experience***

The interview data generally confirm our hypothesis that institutional and administrative experience constitutes mostly – but not exclusively – a comparative advantage for the older MS owing to their generally well-established governance of particular policy sectors. Several interviews have indicated that the division of objectives and tasks within Twinning consortia during project implementation occurs on the basis of institutional experience of each MS partner in the given policy sector.<sup>75</sup> And that experience is often judged against the quality of reforms undertaken and general reputation of the MS in that policy sector.<sup>76</sup>

For example, in the Twinning project in Azerbaijan on standardisation and technical regulations, the long established experience of the UK and France in this area, in combination with the transition experience of Slovenia, was seen as the main strength of the consortium.<sup>77</sup> In a project on metrology and consumer policy in Ukraine, the French and German systems were considered the most competitive in Europe, partly because of their strong role in such EU-wide standardisation institutes as AENOR.<sup>78</sup> Also, our interviewee added, “they [France and Germany] are powerful and reputable players in the sphere of standardisation and lead many

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<sup>74</sup> Lyubov Akulenko, “Initial Results of the Twinning Instrument Implementation in Ukraine: Problems and Solutions,” 2010, 6.

<sup>75</sup> Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016; Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014.

<sup>76</sup> Int. 22 with Austrian civil servant, 11 March 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Int. 34 with Ukrainian civil servant, 19 April 2016.

technical committees in Europe, in addition to a well-functioning system at home".<sup>79</sup> Similarly, France and Germany's long and relevant experience in the field of disability care and social services was considered an important asset in Twinning projects in these areas in both Azerbaijan and Ukraine.<sup>80</sup>

In a project on land sales and land cadastre in Ukraine, the Netherlands was valued for its long-time expertise in this field.<sup>81</sup> Germany, a junior partner to that project, brought a more recent reform experience in that policy area, because Germans "experienced unification between Eastern and Western Germany and they are still in the process of selling state-owned land. And after 35 years the land market of Eastern Germany is still not complete. So they bring this tremendous value of how it is to sell public land and how you set up the cadastre of that area and what difficulties you encounter."<sup>82</sup> In a related Twinning project in Azerbaijan, both Sweden and Latvia were considered to have great experience in the field of land evaluation and cadastre.<sup>83</sup>

In projects in Ukraine's transport sector, France, Spain, Germany, and Poland were viewed to have strong administrative and institutional experience in multimodal, rail, road, and aviation transport, respectively.<sup>84</sup> Estonia and Finland were perceived to have a good reputation in the field of higher education, and therefore the Azerbaijanis wanted to learn from their administrative and institutional experience in this field.<sup>85</sup> During Twinning cooperation on police forces in Ukraine, the French gendarmes were viewed to carry a valuable home-based experience in that policy area.<sup>86</sup> In the sector of budgetary forecasting in Ukraine, Sweden was perceived by Ukrainians to have a sophisticated, well-staffed debt management system.<sup>87</sup> The German Federal Bank (Deutsche Bundesbank), a senior project partner to a Twinning project with the Central Bank of Ukraine was viewed as "one of the most respectful central banks all over the earth."<sup>88</sup> The Netherlands, in turn, presents a role model in civil service reform and public personnel management,<sup>89</sup> while Poland's financial and banking sector serves as a model thanks to Poland's successes in building a stable currency and liberalising capital flows.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016; Int. with French civil servant, 14 May 2016.

<sup>81</sup> Int. 25 with Dutch civil servant, 21 March 2016

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Int. 3 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 November 2014; Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014; Int. 26 with Ukrainian civil servant, 22 March 2016; Int. 31 with French civil servants, 06 April 2016; Int. 43 with Spanish expert, 10 May 2016;

<sup>85</sup> Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016

<sup>86</sup> Int. 16 with European Commission official, 02 June 2015; Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Int. with Swedish civil servant, 27 June 2016.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Int. 14 with Dutch expert, 08 April 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Int. 24 with Polish civil servant, 20 March 2016.

### 5.3.2. Sectoral fit

Besides institutional experience, it is also important that the MS administrative system and practices fit with those of the beneficiary's during Twinning implementation. In the abovementioned project on standardisation in Azerbaijan, an additional advantage of the consortium was that Slovenia (unlike France or the UK) was a small country with a limited administrative capacity, like Azerbaijan. In the field of technical barriers to trade, the size of the country and especially the administrative capacity of the ministerial organisation matters. The Azeri side saw strong parallels with Slovenia in this regard.<sup>91</sup> The participation of Austria in a project on tourism in Azerbaijan was also considered beneficial not only because Austria has a very good reputation in terms of managing and promoting tourism (cf. administrative and institutional experience), but also because it is comparable in terms of size and – like Azerbaijan – it has mountains with a significant touristic potential.<sup>92</sup>

In a project on phytosanitary issues in Ukraine, Germany's involvement was considered very relevant because of the similar size of the countries and their comparable regional division (Germany has *Länder* and Ukraine – *Oblasts*).<sup>93</sup> A Danish official involved in a project in the field of statistics confirmed this point by suggesting that France enjoyed a comparative advantage working with Ukraine because of the comparable regional structure of the statistical systems in both countries, whereby data are collected from below, processed locally, and then passed on to the centre.<sup>94</sup> In a follow-up interview, our respondent emphasised a great importance of general sectoral fit between MS and beneficiaries' system from the Danish point of view:

Ukrainian statisticians think that the French system is very similar. For us, Northern member states, Denmark and Finland, we find this strange because we think that the French system is very old-fashioned and 20 years behind from ours. However, it turns out to be closer to the Ukrainian system.<sup>95</sup>

In that respect, our interviewee also mentioned Poland as having the similar comparative advantage to France's, as "it is a large country with regions", which works very well for Ukraine in this and other policy fields.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 08 October 2013.

<sup>93</sup> Int. 20 with Latvian civil servant, 08 March 2016.

<sup>94</sup> Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014.

<sup>95</sup> Int. 11 with Danish civil servant, 26 March 2015.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

### **5.3.3. Existing sectoral networks with the beneficiary**

Only in a couple of projects, sectoral networks involving the MS and their counterparts from the beneficiary institution in Azerbaijan and Ukraine existed prior to the Twinning project. For example, the Estonian and Azerbaijani team leaders of the Twinning project on higher education in Azerbaijan already knew each other because they were the respective leaders of the Quality Assurance Agency of their countries.<sup>97</sup> Ukraine hosted France with two Twinning projects in the field of law enforcement owing to an existing bilateral collaboration between the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior and French gendarmerie.<sup>98</sup> There was a considerable density of such bilateral networks with the French in the early stages of Twinning in Ukraine (between 2007 and 2010), which was likely the reason why the French were selected for every second project during that period.<sup>99</sup> While the existence of such sectoral networks contributes to building thrust and creates a conducive environment for Twinning,<sup>100</sup> overall, we did not find enough evidence based on our sample to make robust claims about sectoral networks as a comparative advantage.

### **5.3.4. Prior Twinning experience**

We found more evidence in support of prior Twinning experience as a sector-specific comparative advantage. Given that CEECs generally participate less in EU Twinning projects than the older MS, it is not surprising that it is mostly the older MS that were mentioned to have this comparative advantage. For example, in the Twinning project in the Ministry of Taxes of Azerbaijan, Spanish and French participant organisations were valued for their extensive experience with previous Twinning projects dealing with human resources.<sup>101</sup> It was also considered an asset that most of the French and German experts involved in the implementation of a project on disability care in Azerbaijan had international experience in post-communist countries, including in EU Twinning projects.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, for a project on standardisation, the Azeri Twinning partners found it valuable that the French experts had previous experience with Twinning in the Balkans in the area of standardisation and technical regulations.<sup>103</sup>

In the case of projects in Ukrainian statistics, Denmark had a comparative advantage because of its multiple involvement in similar Twinning projects in places as diverse as Turkey, Israel, and Armenia.<sup>104</sup> Ahead of the EU's Eastern

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<sup>97</sup> Int. with Finnish civil servant, 24 June 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Int. 15 with Danish civil servant, 05 May 2015.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Int. with Spanish civil servant, 05 July 2016.

<sup>102</sup> Int. with French civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Int. with British civil servant, 06 July 2016.

<sup>104</sup> Int. 11 with Danish civil servant, 26 March 2015.

enlargement, Denmark was also a great advocate of the CEECs and organised many PHARE projects in the region. As a result, this MS participates in almost every EU Twinning project in statistics, with 80% of cases as a leading partner.<sup>105</sup> Our Danish interviewee also noted that “even if another country wins a project (like Germany did in Macedonia), it still invites Statistics Denmark as a junior partner”.<sup>106</sup> An EU official involved with several projects at the National Electricity Regulatory Commission of Ukraine suggested that Italy, the lead partner in the project, has always been at the forefront of EU Twinning cooperation in this field in Turkey, Lithuania, and other countries.<sup>107</sup>

#### ***5.4. Consortiums of CEECs and the older MS as “perfect match”***

Although not hypothesised, it appears that the greatest added value for Twinning projects in Ukraine and Azerbaijan is offered when CEECs and the older MS operate together in a consortium, as suggested by a large number of our interviewees.<sup>108</sup> As a result, the older MS are increasingly found to team up with CEECs and form consortiums because of the complementarity of their comparative advantages. Indeed, given that the older MS generally lack country-specific comparative advantages for Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood and CEECs tend to have fewer sector-specific comparative advantages, the older MS and CEECs collaborate in order to maximise the added value that the consortium can offer to implement the project. Therefore, this finding could be seen as an additional confirmation of our initial hypothesis concerning the specific nature of the added value that CEECs may offer for Twinning in the Eastern neighbourhood.

For the project at the State Migration Service in Azerbaijan, for instance, the three consortium partners – the Netherlands, Latvia and Romania – agreed on a division of labour that neatly reflects each partners’ excellence and competence not only in terms of skills and experience but also in terms of familiarity with the local language and context.<sup>109</sup> As such, the Dutch were responsible for providing training sessions, whereas the Latvians had a leading role in the practical implementation, helping the Azerbaijani civil servants to amend existing legislation and draft new legislation. Both the Latvian and Romanian civil servants shared their experience of harmonisation of national migration legislation with EU legislation and explained

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Int. 23 with European Commission official, 16 March 2016.

<sup>108</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013; Int. with Lithuanian civil servant, 08 October 2013; Int. 2 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 November 2014; Int. 3 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 November 2014; Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014; Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014; Int. 17 with EU official in Brussels, 11 June 2015.

<sup>109</sup> Int. with Dutch civil servant, 09 October 2013.



how their organisations were reformed on the basis of European standards. Another example is the Twinning project in Ukraine's civil service, implemented by a consortium of the UK and Poland. A Polish official associated with that project explained that the UK undertook all matters related to public service competencies and public relations, because the British had significant expertise in those areas, whereas Poland mainly handled the problems of implementation because of the proximity of political systems.<sup>110</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

While EU MS play an essential role in EU transgovernmental cooperation, and in Twinning in particular, their involvement remains largely understudied in the literature. Being aware of the added value that different EU MS can offer for the implementation of Twinning will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the strengths of different MS and make room for better programming of Twinning.

Focusing on Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, the article explored whether CEECs offer specific added value for the implementation of EU Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood compared to the older MS. Added value in our analysis referred to the perceived comparative advantages of a MS for the implementation of an EU Twinning project, as perceived by the project stakeholders. The article hypothesised that CEECs would mostly boast of country-specific comparative advantages, rooted in their recent transition experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical legacies with the Eastern neighbourhood. In turn, the older MS were mainly expected to have sector-specific comparative advantages owing to their institutional experience, sectoral fit and existing networks with the beneficiary, and prior Twinning experience.

The findings largely confirm the hypothesis that the participation of CEECs in Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood does offer a specific added value to the implementation of the projects, as compared to the participation by the older MS. And this added value is manifested predominantly in the country-specific comparative advantages, which CEECs bring for Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine. According to most respondents, recent transition and accession experience and personal participation in democratic and market transformations in their home countries make civil servants from CEECs better equipped to induce similar changes in other post-Soviet systems. In addition, they have a better understanding of the local situation and can relate more to the cultural and administrative parameters of the Eastern neighbourhood countries. The Baltic countries are perceived to be best placed in this respect since they were once part of the Soviet Union. Because of the

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<sup>110</sup> Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015.

centrality of interpersonal communication in the context of Twinning, the command of Slavic languages, especially Russian, is also seen as a strong comparative advantage of CEECs.

In contrast to CEECs, the older MS mostly bring sector-specific comparative advantages on the board. Many of the older MS, including the Netherlands, Germany, or the UK could demonstrate exemplary administrative systems, as well as excellent international reputation in their areas of sectoral expertise. Compatibility with the administrative structures of the beneficiary side also appears to be an important asset of the older MS, in particular having a similar size, geography, or regional system. In addition, the prior Twinning experience of the older MS in the respective sectors was seen as valuable. For example, Denmark and Italy have been known for a substantial experience across Europe and beyond through participating in EU Twinning projects in specific sectors, such as statistics and electricity market. Some MS, like France or Finland, are tightly linked with beneficiary organisations in bilateral sectoral cooperation outside of Twinning, but we found too little evidence in our sample to fully support this comparative advantage. Although in several Twinning projects CEECs also boasted of sector-specific comparative advantages, in particular institutional experience in relevant sectors and sectoral fit, these advantages were far more common for the older MS.

Interestingly, although not hypothesised, our analysis also finds that the older MS increasingly tend to team up with CEECs and form consortiums because of the complementarity of their comparative advantages, which only further corroborates our results. Indeed, given that the older MS generally lack country-specific comparative advantages and CEECs tend to have fewer sector-specific comparative advantages, the older MS and CEECs often join hands in order to maximise the added value that the consortium can offer for EU Twinning in the Eastern neighbourhood.

Despite the variation that Azerbaijan and Ukraine display on a number of factors, including attitude towards European integration, sectoral variation, and ethno-cultural differences between those two countries, we did not find any evidence of these factors playing a significant role. This suggests that our findings on the added value of CEECs and the older MS may possibly hold in other countries in the Eastern neighbourhood, such as Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia.

By raising the awareness of MS' strengths, our research may contribute to better coordination and complementarity in EU Twinning and other programmes under the ENP. The understanding of MS comparative advantages also holds new avenues for research on the effectiveness of EU Twinning in the neighbourhood. Further research will have to determine whether the participation of MS based on their comparative advantages effectively increases the likelihood of successful implementation.

## **PART III**

### **Article 4. Effectiveness of EU Transgovernmental Cooperation in the Neighbourhood: Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Twinning Projects in Ukraine**

#### **Abstract**

EU transgovernmental cooperation with the neighbouring countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has triggered a growing academic interest among the Europeanisation and EU external governance scholars. A key instrument for such cooperation is Twinning, aiming to bring the public institutions of ENP countries in line with EU *acquis communautaire* and best practices of EU member states. While the existing literature has already touched on the functioning of the Twinning instrument during accession, it is still unclear to what extent Twinning projects are effective under the ENP and also what conditions lead to their effectiveness. Using a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of 32 Twinning projects in Ukraine as cases, the article identifies the necessary and sufficient conditions leading to either legal or institutional convergence in respective policy sectors. The article finds that a majority of effective Twinning projects in the country fit well with the needs and capacities of the beneficiary administration, with EU sectoral conditionality being more important for legal convergence, while the quality of communication and low politicisation – for institutional. Empirical analysis rests on interview data supplied by 45 civil servants and experts from the European Commission, the member states, and Ukraine, who have been involved in Twinning projects between 2007 and 2016.

**KEYWORDS:** EU, transgovernmental cooperation, Twinning, effectiveness, legal convergence, institutional convergence, Ukraine

## 1. Introduction

As a foreign policy actor and a “normative” power, the EU has used a wide variety of policy instruments in relation to the neighbouring countries. One of such instruments has been transgovernmental (TG) cooperation, which refers to horizontal partnerships between public experts and officials from two or more countries in a specific policy area, who share their professional expertise or work towards a specific policy goal.<sup>1</sup> A notable example of EU TG cooperation has been the Twinning programme, which brings together officials from EU member states (MS) and the partner country to jointly reform specific areas of public policy and administration in line with EU *acquis communautaire* and best MS practices. Originally used to facilitate the EU’s Eastern enlargement, Twinning was extended to support the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in line with existing bilateral agreements with the EU. Twinning participants on both the EU and ENP sides commit themselves to the achievement of the so called mandatory results, which usually presume legislative and policy changes in the target country and institution, eventually resulting in the country’s access to segments of the EU Single Market or membership in EU regulatory bodies.<sup>2</sup> Between 2007 and 2016, more than 300 projects have been implemented in the countries of the EU’s Eastern and Southern neighbourhood under the ENP.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the ambitious agenda and a great importance during the Eastern enlargement, Twinning projects received only modest attention in academic and policy-related studies, even less so under the ENP. A limited number of Europeanisation studies and EU official documents produced selective evaluations of Twinning projects during the period of enlargement.<sup>4</sup> Under the ENP, several aspects of TG cooperation have also been addressed. For example, it has been shown that EU TG cooperation is capable of promoting norms of democratic governance to the countries of the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>5</sup> It has

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<sup>1</sup> Keohane and Nye, “Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations”; Slaughter, *A New World Order*.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, “Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual.”

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, “Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report.”

<sup>4</sup> Court of Auditors, “Special Report No 6/2003 Concerning Twinning as the Main Instrument to Support Institution-Building in Candidate Countries Together with the Commission’s Replies”; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, “Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond”; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, “Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania”; Tulmets, “The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary”; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, “Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of ‘Old’ EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic.”

<sup>5</sup> Tina Freyburg et al., “EU Promotion of Democratic Governance in the Neighbourhood,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 16, no. 6 (September 2009): 916–34; Freyburg, “Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance.”

also been found that, in many respects, EU TG cooperation was vulnerable to the same patterns of inconsistency stemming from adverse sectoral interests, like other types of EU cooperation in the neighbourhood.<sup>6</sup> However, very few works have so far conceptualised the effectiveness of specific EU TG cooperation instruments under the ENP. In particular, with the main carrot of EU membership missing, it is not clear to what extent EU TG instruments like Twinning succeed in fostering legal and institutional convergence of the ENP countries in line with EU requirements. Even more importantly, we do not know under what conditions Twinning projects are successful or unsuccessful in triggering such convergence.

In order to address those two aspects, this article examines data on 32 Twinning projects implemented in Ukraine between 2007 and 2016 and covering sectors as diverse as justice and home affairs, trade, energy, social services, phytosanitary regulation, statistics, and finance. Data come from interviews with 45 civil servants and experts from Ukraine, EU member states, and EU institutions, who were involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the selected Twinning projects. Narratives from the interviews were triangulated with a variety of secondary sources. Ukraine was selected for the study as the frontrunner under the ENP by the total number of completed Twinning projects and for offering rich variation across policy sectors and conditions behind Twinning effectiveness. Ukraine also presents a most likely case of legal and institutional convergence because of its relatively liberalised political regime and pro-EU aspirations. That means that the conditions hampering Twinning projects in Ukraine will also jeopardise EU TG cooperation in the other ENP countries that are less democratic or aspiring to join the EU.

In explaining Twinning effectiveness, the article performs a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of four major conditions uncovered in the literature and during interviews, i.e., sector politicisation, sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and quality of communication. The emphasis of QCA on standardised computation procedures makes the process of comparison more rigorous, while at the same time preserving focus on individual cases. This methodology, along with the nature and depth of our data, allows for the most comprehensive evaluation of Twinning projects in a single country to date, as well as offers some room for replication and generalisation to other EU's neighbours.

In addition to providing an analytical and methodological tool for analysing the effectiveness of EU TG cooperation, this article challenges the mainstream theoretical accounts of the EU having a limited impact in the neighbourhood under the absence of membership conditionality. In particular, we find that norm application as the result of sectoral transfer of EU norms to the ENP countries occurs

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<sup>6</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

to a greater degree than previously assumed.<sup>7</sup> While addressing a dearth of studies on Twinning as the main EU's TG instrument in general, we also seek to enrich the Europeanisation and external governance frameworks with a better understanding of EU norm transfer under the ENP via specific tools of EU TG cooperation. At the methodological level, we respond to the call by Papadimitriou and Phinnemore for more empirical research, which is "better placed to help us understand the differing meaning of Europeanisation across different sectors and countries as well as to locate the different mechanisms of its advocacy and the diverse domestic settings that mediate its success."<sup>8</sup>

The following section explains the theoretical underpinnings behind our research questions and conceptualises the effectiveness of Twinning cooperation. Using the available literature and interviews, we then identify a possible set of conditions of the (in)effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine. The data and methods section describes data collection strategies, operationalises outcomes and conditions, and introduces the method of QCA. The first part of the Discussion and Findings section reviews the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine in terms of legal and institutional convergence. The second part discusses necessary and sufficient conditions of the (in)effectiveness of Twinning projects in the country. Conclusions recap the main points of the article, provide policy recommendations, and explore avenues for further research. Appendices provide additional data on QCA and other aspects of the analysis.

## 2. Theoretical considerations

The literature studying the transfer of EU norms to other countries under the European neighbourhood policy (ENP) came forth with a set of explanations facilitating or inhibiting such transfer, while leaving membership perspective out of the equation.<sup>9</sup> The formerly dominant top-down explanations of countries' compliance with EU norms and regulations, attached to the condition of membership,<sup>10</sup> yielded to more horizontal types of engagement, such as governance networks. These networks are capable of operating under the conditions of

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<sup>7</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Börzel and Lebanidze, "European Neighbourhood Policy at the Crossroads Evaluating the Past to Shape the Future"; Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*.

<sup>8</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond," 17.

<sup>9</sup> Kelley, "International Actors on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions"; Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe."

symmetrical interdependence between the EU and ENP countries and a less ambitious set of rewards.<sup>11</sup> One of such EU tools intending to harmonise the legal and regulatory environment of neighbours with the letter and spirit of EU law has been EU TG, or sectoral cooperation.

In the post-accession period, several aspects of this network type of cooperation have already been addressed. For example, it was shown that EU TG cooperation is capable of promoting norms of democratic governance to the countries of the Southern and Eastern neighbourhood.<sup>12</sup> While these and other works were generally optimistic about the potential of TG cooperation to result in legislative adoption of EU norms by the ENP countries, actual norm application or implementation clearly lagged behind.<sup>13</sup> It was also shown that EU TG cooperation was in many respects vulnerable to the same patterns of inconsistency stemming from adverse sectoral interests, like other types of EU cooperation in the neighbourhood.<sup>14</sup> However, very few works have so far conceptualised the effectiveness of specific EU TG cooperation programs in the ENP. Those studies that did mainly originated in the pre-accession literature<sup>15</sup> or lacked a solid theoretical lens by virtue of being policy-oriented.<sup>16</sup>

The mentioned academic works in Europeanisation and EU external governance have also faced tough empirical and methodological choices between taking a broad perspective at the level of polity or politics and hence failing to evaluate the performance of specific types of TG cooperation, or studying a very narrow level of specific institutions while risking to omit broader important contexts and cross-sectional impacts. In addition, the great number of actors involved in a specific country and policy area often makes it difficult to disentangle the EU's impact from that by other stakeholders, which is the case with studies looking at EU

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<sup>11</sup> Lavenex, "EU External Governance in 'Wider Europe'"; Freyburg, Skripka, and Wetzel, "Democracy between the Lines? EU Promotion of Democratic Governance via Sector-Specific Co-Operation"; Sasse, "The European Neighbourhood Policy: Conditionality Revisited for the EU's Eastern Neighbours."

<sup>12</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>13</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Buzogány, "Selective Adoption of EU Environmental Norms in Ukraine. Convergence À La Carte."

<sup>14</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>15</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania"; Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic"; Tulmets, "The Management of New Forms of Governance by Former Accession Countries of the European Union: Institutional Twinning in Estonia and Hungary."

<sup>16</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report"; Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"

TG cooperation in other countries from a wide, all-inclusive perspective. In investigating the effectiveness of EU TG projects in Ukraine, we perform a balancing act in that we focus on a single, albeit one of the most important, case of EU TG cooperation – Twinning – and trace its contribution to a wide variety of policy sectors within the country. In such a way, we can more readily establish the EU's ownership behind a specific improvement if it has facilitated by the project. Therefore, analysing Twinning programs offers a fresh look at predominantly pessimistic theoretical expectations concerning norm adoption and application under the ENP.

Twinning has been selected amongst other current EU TG tools and instruments like TAIEX, Sigma, or Comprehensive Institution-Building (CIB) because it stands the closest to the classic definition of TG cooperation<sup>17</sup> owing to its emphasis on cross-border links between public servants and a relatively long duration (up to 36 months). Twinning exercise is also governed by strict contractual documents committing both sides to the achievement of so called mandatory results, which usually involve legal and institutional reforms in the target country and policy sector. The relatively long duration and emphasis of the Twinning projects on institutionalised peer-to-peer partnerships make Twinning more likely to be effective than other EU TG tools under the ENP.

### **3. Effectiveness of Twinning cooperation**

Twinning effectiveness is conceptualised as either legal *or* institutional convergence with EU policy recommendations that happened in the beneficiary institution or policy sector as the result of a Twinning project.

Legal convergence refers to the passage by the beneficiary country of a new law, secondary legislation, relevant amendments or decrees that draw on EU *acquis* and bilateral agreements between the EU and the ENP country (Action Plans, DCFTA). Legal convergence is often an explicit objective of the legal component in a typical Twinning project, which generally involves recommendations from MS experts on the current state of domestic legislation in the area of project interest, including legal research, presentation of proposed amendments to laws, draft laws, or sometimes limited lobbying activities in support of proposed legislative innovations. Although adoption of a new law is rarely an explicit target of cooperation (because of a voluntary nature of Twinning cooperation under the ENP), such an outcome is normally encouraged by a majority of Twinning projects and may testify to the project's overall performance. In some cases, the legal component was not part of the Twinning project and such cases were noted during the analysis of legal convergence.

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<sup>17</sup> See Keohane and Nye, "Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations."



Institutional convergence stands for organisational or policy changes in the beneficiary institution or policy sector in line with EU policy recommendations, as incorporated in a given Twinning project. Sometimes, institutional convergence happens as the result of legal convergence, that is, the adoption and then the implementation of a new law or regulation. However, in most cases, Twinning projects contain a designated institutional component, which seeks to make the beneficiary institution more efficient, transparent, and aligned with EU best administrative practices. For example, it enhances the organisational structure of the beneficiary institution, optimises distribution of responsibility and authority, or introduces innovations such as e-governance, improved accounting methods, databases, and better HRM techniques. In many cases, these organisational changes do not require a separate law but may be initiated through internal organisational statutes or relevant decrees by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. An indicator of institutional convergence would also be the country's membership in a related EU professional association, like Eurostat, or certain segments of the Single Market, following project completion.

Our conceptualisation of legal and institutional convergence appears related to the existing notions of norm (rule) adoption and application, as conceived by the EU external governance literature.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, it challenges the traditional approaches to norm application<sup>19</sup> as a stage that follows norm adoption and, according to some observers, precedes norm internalisation.<sup>20</sup> Because legal and institutional convergence in the case of Twinning are usually not part of a sequence or a cycle, as is the case with norm adoption and application, we will stick with our own usage of the terms.

### **3.1. Conditions of Twinning effectiveness**

With the help of the scholarly literature, EU official documents, and interviews, we identified four potential conditions behind the (in)effectiveness of Twinning projects: sector politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and quality of communication. While most of these conditions have been mentioned in the relevant literature on EU TG cooperation or Twinning, there have been no systematic studies of their conjunctural causation in relation to the Twinning effectiveness. The conjunctural, or configurational causation implies that the causal path consists of a

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<sup>18</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.; Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine."

<sup>20</sup> Morlino and Magen, "Methods of Influence, Layers of Impact, Cycles of Change: A Framework for Analysis."

combination of conditions, in contrast to the probabilistic causation, where normally one most probable condition, or variable, takes precedence over the others.<sup>21</sup>

### **3.1.1. Sector politicisation**

Scholars of European integration have argued that convergence with EU policies would be more encompassing in non-politicised areas of "low politics", such as metrology or statistics, rather than in the politicised areas of "high politics", such as the judiciary or civil service.<sup>22</sup> In that vein, we define sector politicisation as the degree of vulnerability of a particular policy sector to a political or commercial conflict of interest. Our understanding is also in line with de Wilde's concept of politicisation of decision-making, referring to the elevated influence of elected or appointed politicians in sectoral decision-making at the expense of bureaucrats, experts, and other specialised personnel.<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere in the literature, sector politicisation intersects with such concepts as policy area securitisation,<sup>24</sup> domestic costs of policy adoption,<sup>25</sup> presence of powerful veto players,<sup>26</sup> presence of adverse sectoral interests,<sup>27</sup> or sensitivity of the policy area.<sup>28</sup>

In the context of Twinning cooperation, a high politicisation of the policy sector would mean that specific objectives of Twinning cooperation are perceived to threaten the power base of the incumbent government or cause interference with existing informal arrangements, including rent-seeking loopholes. Moreover, politicised sectors often witness a relatively high number of veto players powerful enough to block project recommendations from materialising into a law or administrative practice. Therefore, we would expect the legal and institutional convergence to dwindle with high sector politicisation. In contrast, the low politicisation of a policy sector should make a consensus over the need for legal and institutional changes promulgated by a Twinning project more likely and easier to achieve.

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<sup>21</sup> Rihoux and Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Langbein and Börzel, "Introduction: Explaining Policy Change in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood"; Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"; Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization*.

<sup>23</sup> De Wilde, "No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration," 561.

<sup>24</sup> Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*; Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State: Functionalism and International Organization*.

<sup>25</sup> Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, "Governance by Conditionality: EU Rule Transfer to the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe."

<sup>26</sup> Dimitrova, "The New Member States of the EU in the Aftermath of Enlargement: Do New European Rules Remain Empty Shells?"

<sup>27</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>28</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*.

### **3.1.2. EU sectoral conditionality**

As recent Europeanisation studies have shown, adoption of EU laws and technical standards in the absence of membership perspective is not uniform across different policy sectors and may be conditional upon a set of rewards or sanctions that the EU attaches to reform progress in a given policy area.<sup>29</sup> Under the ENP, these rewards may entail cheaper or easier access of the partner country's exports to the EU single market, visa liberalisation, or membership in EU technical regulation bodies. Uniform measurement of the degree and credibility of the rewards the EU attaches to each policy area seems near impossible given the wide span of Twinning projects analysed (which are stretched in time and across a multitude of policy sectors). For that reason, we understand conditionality as the salience of reform in a specific policy area for the EU, as judged by references in relevant EU-Ukraine agreements, such as the DCFTA and visa liberalisation roadmaps.

### **3.1.3. Policy fit**

Studies of EU external governance and Europeanisation also pointed out the importance of fit or compatibility of EU recommendations with the administrative traditions, technical capacities, and current needs of the recipient.<sup>30</sup> Whereas some amount of misfit is important for a policy diffusion to occur in the first place,<sup>31</sup> sometimes the nature or magnitude of proposed changes makes them not feasible given the cultural or organisational specifics of domestic administrative structures.<sup>32</sup> In the context of Twinning, the operationalisation of policy fit stems from the quality and relevance of a project design for the current needs and capacities of the beneficiary institution.

Despite the heavy presence of the beneficiary institution during most stages of Twinning project design,<sup>33</sup> which is generally meant to ensure a high policy fit, reasons for a low policy fit may still take place. First, it normally takes up to two years (sometimes longer) between the time the project is conceived and the actual start of the project. In the meantime, objectives and priorities that were deemed

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<sup>29</sup> Langbein and Wolczuk, "Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine"; Delcour, "Multiple External Influences, Policy Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Case of Food Safety"; Langbein and Börzel, "Introduction: Explaining Policy Change in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood"; Julia Langbein, "European Union Governance towards the Eastern Neighbourhood: Transcending or Redrawing Europe's East-West Divide?," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, no. 1 (2014): 157–74.

<sup>30</sup> Hille and Knill, "'It's the Bureaucracy, Stupid': The Implementation of the Acquis Communautaire in EU Candidate Countries, 1999-2003"; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics."

<sup>31</sup> Börzel and Risse, "From Europeanisation to Diffusion: Introduction."

<sup>32</sup> Hille and Knill, "'It's the Bureaucracy, Stupid': The Implementation of the Acquis Communautaire in EU Candidate Countries, 1999-2003."

<sup>33</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 11.

relevant by the beneficiary country two years ago may not be so anymore. Given an extremely cumbersome process of amending the Twinning project contract, the Twins risk being stuck with an outdated agenda and objectives that do not fit the needs of the beneficiary country any longer.<sup>34</sup> Second, a low fit may ensue from a poor quality of project design. In order to draft the Terms of References and a Twinning fiche, baseline documents for a future Twinning project, the European Commission often hires external experts with sometimes little knowledge of the domestic environment and peculiarities in a specific beneficiary institution.<sup>35</sup> Alternatively, the fiche may have been poorly written by the representatives of the beneficiary institution, who turned out to be not well versed with the state of the art and the strategic requirements of a given policy area.<sup>36</sup> Under such circumstances, a favourable project outcome may be in doubt, save for its long-term effectiveness.

#### **3.1.4. Quality of communication**

The quality of communication among Twinning participants has been considered by the existing literature as one of the vital factors during project implementation.<sup>37</sup> The length of a typical Twinning project may be up to 36 months, which involves daily interaction and coordination between Resident Twinning Advisor and short-term experts from EU member states on the one side and the civil servants and experts from the beneficiary institution on the other side. Therefore, for the project to trigger a lasting change, it appears very important for participating civil servants to be able to reach consensus regarding the project's activities and tasks on a daily basis. This also means that the contacts built among project participants will continue into the future, which makes sustainable change more likely.

Possible sources of communication difficulties vary. They include personalities of project participants, local cultural contexts, and language barriers. However, major communication difficulties happened due to the personalities of the RTA<sup>38</sup> and beneficiary civil servants.<sup>39</sup> In certain instances, as it happened to a Twinning project in Ukraine on competition policy, the project was suspended due to

<sup>34</sup> Int. 28 with French civil servant, 23 March 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Int. 21 with Ukrainian civil servant, 10 March 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Königová, Tulmets, and Tomalová, "Twinning Projects: Analysing the Experience of 'Old' EU Member States and Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic"; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania"; Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report"; BMUB, "Germany and the EU Twinning Instrument."

<sup>38</sup> Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016; Int. 40 with Ukrainian expert, 21 April 2016.

<sup>39</sup> Int. 31 with French civil servants, 06 April 2016; Int. 41 with Ukrainian civil servants, 22 April, 2016.

mounting difficulties in communication between the parties and the RTA had to be replaced.<sup>40</sup> In a project in the telecommunications sector, five RTAs and several project coordinators have changed because of irreconcilable difficulties in communication with their Ukrainian RTA counterpart and Project Leader.<sup>41</sup> In most projects with severe communication difficulties, however, like the one in multimodal transport and administrative justice, participants still managed to carry the project through, yet not without detrimental consequences for project quality.<sup>42</sup>

### **3.1.5. *Alternative conditions***

After analysing interview data and relevant documents, we decided to exclude *participation of new member states* as a condition of effectiveness of the Twinning instrument in Ukraine from further analysis. This was done due to a lack of any apparent relationships either with legal or institutional convergence in respective projects. That showed that, contrary to some scholarly expectations,<sup>43</sup> the recent transition experience and the closer cultural ties of some new member states with Ukraine apparently did not materialise in a TG cooperation that is more effective. In a similar fashion, the year of project implementation did not seem to be related with effectiveness and hence also dropped from the empirical analysis.

## **4. Data and methods**

For the empirical analysis, we managed to pool sufficient information on 32 out of 40 Twinning projects implemented in Ukraine between 2007 and 2016. The bulk of primary data came from 45 semi-structured interviews with Twinning participants and experts from Ukraine, the European Commission, and EU member states. We located our respondents through relevant Twinning documentation, open web sources, and a “snowball sampling approach”, using existing connections.<sup>44</sup> Interviews were conducted in several rounds of fieldwork in Ukraine and the EU between November 2014 and May 2016. For each project, we triangulated the interview data against relevant literature, official documents from EU and Ukrainian governmental websites, Twinning reports and press releases. The eight Twinning projects we could not find data on did not seem to display systematic differences with the Twinning projects for which we had sufficient data.

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<sup>40</sup> Akulenko, “Initial Results of the Twinning Instrument Implementation in Ukraine: Problems and Solutions.”

<sup>41</sup> Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016; Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Petrova, “The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support”; Pospieszna, *Democracy Assistance from the Third Wave: Polish Engagement in Belarus and Ukraine*.

<sup>44</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics*.

In the process of the empirical analysis, legal and institutional convergence are coded as two independent outcomes of Twinning effectiveness. In assessing the effectiveness of each Twinning project, we take into consideration all project components and their subsequent impact on the beneficiary country and administration until up to two years after project completion. This period was arbitrarily selected in order to capture the procedural or other delays associated with adoption and implementation of specific policy solutions of Twinning. We assume that project-relevant changes that took place after the period of two years cannot be traced back to the project or are not relevant anymore. Therefore, a Twinning project is considered effective (1), or successful, if it has succeeded in triggering either legal or institutional convergence in the beneficiary institution or policy sector within the given period of time. If no such legal or institutional convergence occurred, the project is considered ineffective (0). With this time-span, we also included more recent projects (which have not passed the two-year threshold yet), as they may also show interesting dynamics, though some of them may necessitate more time to trigger legal or institutional convergence.

As it was nearly impossible to trace all Twinning project components (which may be five or more) several years down the line, we picked out only the most important ones as seen from original Twinning documents and interviewees' opinions. That task was made easier, because usually only a limited number of initial project intentions ended up making an impact and *that* the interviewees could readily recollect. It is also important to note here that we do not claim that Twinning projects will be exclusively responsible for a particular change that we will find in the legal or institutional landscape of Ukraine and that happens to relate to a particular Twinning project. Instead, legal and institutional convergence should be understood as a product of broader political and administrative processes in a specific policy area, of which Twinning is only a part, albeit an important one.

As regards the conditions behind legal and institutional convergence, they were also coded on a dichotomous scale as 0 (no, mostly no, or low) and 1 (yes, high, or mostly high). The process of operationalisation and dichotomisation proceeded with close reference to the scholarly literature, interview data, and relevant official documents for each project analysed (Table 10, sources behind the operationalisation of outcomes and conditions are listed in Table 24 in the appendix, p. 194). In order to mitigate possible measurement error and preference bias, we also triangulated our measurements with several sources.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Simon Hug, "Qualitative Comparative Analysis: How Inductive Use and Measurement Error Lead to Problematic Inference," *Political Analysis* 21, no. 2 (2013): 252–65.

**Table 10.** Operationalisation of conditions behind Twinning effectiveness

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
Sector politicisation	0 {polit} – Policy area or institution involved in the project was relatively isolated from political and commercial conflict of interest 1 {POLIT} – Policy area or institution involved in the project was susceptible to political or commercial conflict of interest
EU sectoral conditionality	0 {cond} – EU placed limited emphasis on the country’s approximation in a given policy area, as judged by respective references in EU-Ukraine Association Agreement or visa liberalisation roadmap 1 {COND} – EU placed strong emphasis on the country’s approximation in a given policy area, as judged by respective references in EU-Ukraine Association Agreement or visa liberalisation roadmap
Policy fit	0 {fit} – project goals and objectives did not match the current needs and capacities of the beneficiary institution 1 {FIT} – project goals and objectives matched the current needs and capacities of the beneficiary institution
Communication quality	0 {comun} – Twinning participants reported major interpersonal communication problems throughout the project 1 {COMUN} – Twinning participants reported no major interpersonal communication problems throughout the project

In order to explore which conditions or their combinations lead to effective Twinning projects, we use a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Because QCA assumes multiple conjunctural causation, it successfully mitigates problems peculiar for statistical methods, such as assumptions of multicollinearity and causal symmetry.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the proponents of QCA over traditional quantitative methods emphasise its capacity to deal with a larger number of factors while staying in close connection with individual cases. Since QCA seeks to maintain an analytical rigour of comparison, its results are more likely to be replicated and generalised for other related phenomena of interest.<sup>47</sup>

The QCA analysis distinguishes between sufficient and necessary conditions or configurations for an outcome to occur. A condition or configuration is considered *necessary* if it is always present when the outcome is present; otherwise, the outcome cannot occur. In contrast, a condition or configuration is considered *sufficient* if the outcome always occurs when the condition is present. However, the same outcome may also be a result of other (sufficient) conditions.<sup>48</sup> Because legal and institutional convergence present as dichotomous outcomes, we are using the

<sup>46</sup> Berg-Schlosser et al., “Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach,” 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>48</sup> Rihoux and Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*, xix.

crisp-set variant of QCA, or csQCA.<sup>49</sup> The csQCA generates so-called “truth-tables”, listing configurations of conditions and outcomes, which may be either True (1) or False (0). After the coding of the outcome and conditions was complete, we performed a QCA of our data for necessity and sufficiency with the help of the “Kirq” application.<sup>50</sup>

## 5. Discussion and findings

### 5.1. How effective are Twinning projects in Ukraine?

Following the process of data collection and preliminary analysis, we found that 16 out of 32 (or 50%) Twinning projects in Ukraine to date have succeeded in facilitating a degree of legal or institutional convergence in their respective institutions and policy areas.<sup>51</sup> Out of that number, 10 projects (31%) have resulted in legal convergence, 12 projects (38%) – in institutional, and seven projects (22%) resulted in both legal and institutional convergence in the respective policy sectors in Ukraine. The remaining 16 (50%) projects have not yet triggered any legal or institutional changes in Ukraine.

In addition to data in Table 24 in the appendix, it should be noted that the timeline of legal convergence varied for different projects. For example, project Rail managed to have relevant revisions to the law on rail transport passed by the parliament before the official closing ceremony for the project.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, projects Bank, Space, Accred, NERC1, and NERC2 were also quick to facilitate legal convergence in their respective policy sectors.<sup>53</sup> Other Twinning projects, like ServDev, FoodSafety, and Standardiz took somewhat longer to result in news law and regulations.<sup>54</sup> That means lawmakers requested the recommendations produced by those projects only later or, alternatively, they solicited follow-up assistance from former Twinning experts, as was the case with ServDev and the now functioning Law on Civil Service in Ukraine.<sup>55</sup> In some cases, the project resulted in legal convergence in the policy area beyond its contractual scope, like it

<sup>49</sup> Schneider and Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, 277.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Reichert and Claude Rubinson, “Kirq [Computer Program]” (Houston, TX: University of Houston-Downtown, 2014), <http://grundrisse.org/qca/download/>.

<sup>51</sup> See Table 24 in the appendix.

<sup>52</sup> Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016; Int. 42 with Ukrainian expert, 07 May 2016.

<sup>53</sup> Int. 23 with European Commission official, 16 March 2016; Int. 24 with Polish civil servant, 20 March 2016; Int. 28 with French civil servant, 23 March 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015; Int. 27 with Danish civil servant, 23 March 2016; Int. 33 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 April 2016; Int. 34 with Ukrainian civil servant, 19 April 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Int. 12 with Polish civil servant, 02 April 2015.



happened with projects Troops and Accred, which produced amendments to the laws that were not part of these projects' original intentions.<sup>56</sup>

Interestingly, most cases of institutional convergence were not linked to legal convergence. For example, in projects AdmCourts, Bank, Rail, FoodSafety, and Satellite, Ukrainian civil servants adopted new skills and organisational procedures in line with EU best practices without needing a separate law.<sup>57</sup> The Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine, thanks to the AdmCourts project, introduced innovative methods of case management and reporting in its daily work.<sup>58</sup> The three other Twinning projects – Statistics1, Statistics2, and Statistics3 – allowed the State Statistical Service of Ukraine to jump start to the latest registers and methodologies practiced by Denmark, France, and other EU member states.<sup>59</sup> In some other cases, institutional convergence resulted in the recognition of Ukrainian institutions by EU public bodies. For example, several years after the FoodSafety project, Ukraine was allowed to export poultry to the EU<sup>60</sup> and, similarly, the National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine was recognised by the European Cooperation for Accreditation after the Accred project.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately, however, the beneficiary institution could often not embrace major policy or organisational changes without relevant legislative amendments in the Parliament.<sup>62</sup> In other cases, the newly adopted laws were not adequately implemented.<sup>63</sup>

Overall, these data indicate that that Twinning projects in Ukraine have a moderate degree of effectiveness. Nevertheless, the line between effective and ineffective projects may be rather thin. For example, most of the Twinning projects we classified as ineffective have still propelled useful policy recommendations and skills base, which could potentially be used by the beneficiary at some point in the future, although their impact seems limited or unclear at the moment. Some interviewees backed this point by expressing the confidence that, once the demand arises in the political system, Ukrainian policymakers may go back to Twinning recommendations and reports for inspiration.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, most Twinning projects that have been regarded as effective have capitalised on a limited number of their

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<sup>56</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report."; Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>57</sup> Int. 24 with Polish civil servant, 20 March 2016; 27, Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016; Int. 42 with Ukrainian expert, 07 May 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Int. 7 with Danish civil servant, 01 December 2014; Int. 11 with Danish civil servant, 26 March 2015; Int. 15 with Danish civil servant, 05 May 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Int. 27 with Danish civil servant, 23 March 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report."

<sup>62</sup> Int. 25 with Dutch civil servant, 21 March 2016; Int. 38 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016; Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Int. 33 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 April 2016.

<sup>64</sup> Int. 25 with Dutch civil servant, 21 March 2016; Int. 26 with Ukrainian civil servant, 22 March 2016; Int. 33 with Ukrainian civil servant, 18 April 2016.

original intentions (one or two components out of five or more). There has been no Twinning project to date in Ukraine that has reached all of its objectives and made all the planned changes in the beneficiary administration.

**Table 11.** Analysis of sufficiency (parsimonious solutions, incl. logical remainders)

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Cons.</b>	<b>Raw cov.</b>	<b>Uniq cov.</b>	<b>Case IDs</b>
<b><i>Effectiveness</i></b>				
<b>FIT</b>	0.93	0.78	0.56	Accred, AdmCourts, Bank, FoodSafety, NERC2, Police, Rail, RoadSafety, Satellite, ServDev, Standardiz, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a
<b><i>NO effectiveness</i></b>				
<b>fit</b>	1.00	0.17	0.11	Audit, Aviation, Competition, Copyright, Debt, Efficiency, FDI, Judges, KRU, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, ServTrain, Social, Telecomms
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a
<b><i>Legal convergence</i></b>				
<b>COND*FIT</b>	1.00	0.78	0.56	Accred, NERC2, Standardiz, Bank, Rail, FoodSafety, ServDev
<b>polit*FIT</b>	1.00	0.44	0.22	Bank, Rail, RoadSafety, Troops
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a
<b><i>NO legal convergence</i></b>				
<b>fit</b>	1.00	0.81	0.56	Audit, Aviation, Competition, Copyright, Debt, Efficiency, FDI, Judges, KRU, Land, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, Police, Social, Telecomms
<b>POLIT*cond</b>	1.00	0.44	0.19	AdmCourts, Audit, Copyright, Judges, KRU, Land, Police
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a
<b><i>Institutional convergence</i></b>				
<b>FIT</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	Accred, AdmCourts, Bank, FoodSafety, Police, Rail, RoadSafety, Satellite, Standardiz, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a
<b><i>NO institutional convergence</i></b>				
<b>fit</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	Audit, Aviation, Competition, Debt, Efficiency, FDI, Judges, KRU, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, ServTrain, Social, Space, Telecomms
<i>Solution total</i>	1.00	1.00	n/a	n/a

NOTE: In presenting the results of QCA, we use the standard notation and Boolean expressions according to Ragin and Rihoux (2009). Capitalised labels (POLIT) refer to true (1) values and the low-case labels (polit) refer to false (0) values on respective conditions. Boolean expressions AND and OR are represented by signs \* and +, respectively. Consistency and coverage measure the degree of fit of the formula (solution) to the data. *Consistency* measures the degree to which the cases sharing a given combination of conditions agree in displaying the outcome. *Coverage* indicates how much of the outcome is explained by the solution. Thereby, "raw coverage" shows which share of the outcome is explained by a certain alternative path and "unique coverage" indicates which share of the outcome is exclusively explained by a certain alternative path.<sup>1</sup> Solution coverage summarises coverage values for all alternative paths in an analysis of sufficiency.

### **5.1. What determines effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine?**

Because legal and institutional convergence, as well as effectiveness, are treated as analytically distinct categories, we performed separate QCAs on each of them and on their negations. The following paragraphs present the results of the necessity and sufficiency analyses of our data, including parsimonious solution formulae, which maximally reflect causal mechanisms at play.<sup>65</sup>

The analysis of necessity (Table 23 in the appendix, p. 193), returned one necessary condition behind Twinning effectiveness – policy fit. The separate analyses of necessity for legal and institutional convergence produced similar results, with an exception of legal convergence, which occurred in 75% of projects with a good policy fit. That still suggests that nearly every single Twinning project in Ukraine that resulted in either legal or institutional convergence boasted of a good project design and compatibility with the needs and technical capacities of the beneficiary institution. The analysis of sufficiency mainly confirms those results in that condition FIT is present in every alternative path (Table 11). That finding resonates with one of our respondents, who said:

The effectiveness of Twinning projects depends on how technical objectives have been spelled out. If they have been formulated correctly, especially as regards our needs, desired results, and necessary experts, then the project will be successful. If you approach a project in a sort of general way, it will not be successful.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, policy fit is the necessary but not sufficient condition for legal convergence. In a clear majority of cases, a good policy fit needs to be reinforced by EU sectoral conditionality to result in legal convergence. An alternative causal path, where such conditionality is absent, requires instead a combination of good policy fit with low sector politicisation for the project to lead to legal convergence. In contrast to legal convergence, institutional convergence ensued solely because of a good policy fit of the project, notwithstanding politicisation or communication problems, especially as was the case with AdmCourts. An interviewee from that project corroborated this finding:

We asked Twinning experts to specify clearly their intended contributions prior to coming to Ukraine. I think this clarity of objectives in project design and the understanding by Twinning experts of the administrative justice system in Ukraine was the main reason for project effectiveness.<sup>67</sup>

That also brings us to the conclusion that institutional convergence still happens in sectors considered politicised and bypassed by EU sectoral conditionality.

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<sup>65</sup> Michael Baumgartner, "Parsimony and Causality," *Quality and Quantity* 49, no. 2 (2014): 839.

<sup>66</sup> Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016.

After learning what sets of conditions lead to Twinning projects being effective, it would be worthwhile to discover more about Twinning projects that resulted in neither legal nor institutional convergence. The analysis of necessity for negation outcomes almost mirrored that for the positive outcomes. It revealed that the low fit of project objectives with the administrative needs and capacities of the beneficiary institution was the main culprit behind all ineffective Twinning projects in Ukraine.<sup>68</sup> The analysis of sufficiency, while confirming those results, also pointed to some variety in causal paths leading to no legal convergence (Table 22 in the appendix). For example, several “politicised” projects, overlooked by EU sectoral conditionality, failed to result in legislative change in spite of the good policy fit.

## 6. Conclusions

This article offered the first theoretically informed evaluation of EU TG cooperation under the ENP by using Twinning projects in Ukraine as cases. Under effectiveness we understood the fact of legal or institutional convergence that occurred in aftermath of a Twinning project in a respective policy sector or institution in Ukraine. Upon analysis of 45 interviews and official documents, we found that around half of all Twinning projects analysed in Ukraine have facilitated some degree of legal or institutional convergence to date. On the one hand, that speaks of a rather modest degree of Twinning effectiveness in the country. On the other hand, because most of effective Twinning projects resulted in institutional convergence of the beneficiary administration, we cannot agree with the existing scholarly accounts suggesting the limited implementation of EU norms in the ENP countries.<sup>69</sup> Our findings in the case of Ukraine reveal that the rates of legal convergence (norm adoption) roughly correspond to those of institutional convergence (norm application). In that sense, we do not agree with the scholars of Europeanisation who point to a large gap between norm adoption and application in the ENP countries as the result of EU TG cooperation.<sup>70</sup>

By applying insights of configurational (conjunctural) causality, we also performed a QCA on four major conditions, which could possibly make or break a Twinning project – sectoral politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and quality of communication. We found policy fit to be the only necessary condition of Twinning effectiveness. That basically means that Twinning projects in politicised policy sectors, with low conditionality through visa or trade-related agreements with

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<sup>68</sup> See Table 23 in the appendix, p. 182.

<sup>69</sup> Freyburg et al., *Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation: The European Union and Its Neighbourhood*; Langbein and Wolczuk, “Convergence without Membership? The Impact of the European Union in the Neighbourhood: Evidence from Ukraine.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

the EU, and experiencing communication difficulties may still be effective. They only need to be properly customised to the administrative realities of the beneficiary in the project inception stage.

The analysis of legal convergence shows that a good policy fit of the project is necessary, but not in itself sufficient to produce legislative change. Instead, it has to be combined either with EU sectoral conditionality or with low sectoral politicisation. In cases of successful institutional convergence, it is only a good policy fit that mattered. Lower dependence on EU sectoral conditionality in the cases of institutional convergence may be explained by the very nature of sectoral change via Twinning, whereby Ukrainian civil servants could embrace best EU practices in their daily work without necessarily having to pass a law. Twinning projects resulting in neither legal nor institutional convergence most frequently suffered from a poor fit of objectives with the current needs and technical capacities of the beneficiary institution. In a few other cases, the lack of EU conditionality and politicisation may have become a stumbling block.

To sum up, the success of Twinning projects in Ukraine seems to be a result of complex interactions between various conditions, both domestic and EU-related. The likely favourite in the explanatory power of Twinning effectiveness – policy fit – also has multiple facets to it. On the one hand, the EU should pay more attention to how it designs its Twinning projects, making sure there is an intimate understanding of the administrative traditions and needs on the ground.<sup>71</sup> For that reason, the choice of experts, both those drafting the project fiche and those actually delivering expertise, is of pivotal importance. Because the ENP country assumes a leading role in the design of the project fiche, part of the responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and relevance of Twinning objectives lies on the beneficiary. Unfortunately, an excellent project design does not make it immune to unexpected organisational shifts and changes of policy priorities or even disappearance of a would-be beneficiary, as it is often the case in Ukraine.<sup>72</sup> Under those circumstances, it also is essential that the EU cut back on project preparation times (which currently may run up to two years), thus mitigating to a degree the deleterious effects of an unstable political and institutional environment.<sup>73</sup> The EU must also provide more room for last-minute changes to project objectives, should

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<sup>71</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 6 with Ukrainian civil servant, 28 November 2014; Int. 18 with Twinning experts, 11 August 2015; Int. 21 with Ukrainian civil servant, 10 March 2016; Int. 24 with Polish civil servant, 20 March 2016; Int. 29 with Swedish civil servant, 24 March 2016; Int. 30 with French expert, 05 April 2016; Int. 37 with Ukrainian civil servant, 20 April 2016.

<sup>72</sup> Int. 1 with Ukrainian expert, 15 November 2014; Int. 22 with Austrian civil servant, 11 March 2016; Int. 30 with French expert, 05 April 2016; Int. 32 with German civil servant, 11 April 2016; Int. 40 with Ukrainian civil servant, 21 April 2016.

<sup>73</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 11 with Danish civil servant, 26 March 2015, Int. 42 with Ukrainian expert, 07 May 2016.

the need arise.<sup>74</sup> Finally, before considering a Twinning project in Ukraine, the EU needs to make sure it attaches a right amount of stick and carrots to reform in that policy area in the EU's bilateral agreements with the country.<sup>75</sup>

Another factor possibly affecting the odds of success of EU Twinning in some sectors in Ukraine is a Russian aggressive foreign policy in the region. For example, in some projects and policy areas, like Space and FoodSafety, the Russian factor may arguably have pushed Ukraine towards the EU's market.<sup>76</sup> In earlier Twinning projects, like NERC1 and NERC2 in the field of energy and gas regulation, the Russian pressure may have prevented Ukrainian authorities from implementing the EU's Second Energy Package, as promulgated by these projects.<sup>77</sup> Nowadays, with Ukraine desperately securing alternative sources of energy supplies, mainly from the EU, the situation may see an about-turn. That will take more time and research to gain better understanding of Ukraine-EU-Russia interdependencies in those particular sectors. Yet in all other Twinning projects analysed in Ukraine, the Russian factor did not seem significant.

Although the methodology of this study allows for replication and modest levels of generalisation, domestic conditions in Ukraine appear quite different from those in other ENP or even Eastern neighbourhood countries. For example, the institutional environment in Ukraine is rigid, characterised by the hierarchical structures of decision-making, and at the same time very fluid, experiencing frequent rotations of staff and political perturbations. As the European Commission reported, Twinning in Ukraine has never been high on the political agenda, unlike in most other ENP countries.<sup>78</sup> For example, from the outset, we discovered that virtually all Twinning projects in the country suffered from a lack of political commitment and high public personnel turnovers in the beneficiary institution, which undermined institutional memory and, by extension, project sustainability in the long term.<sup>79</sup> Nonetheless, the good news is that many Twinning projects in Ukraine were effective despite those daunting background problems. It gives us some optimism about the performance of Twinning cooperation in other ENP countries with relatively more stable political and institutional environments than

<sup>74</sup> Int. 4 with Ukrainian civil servant, 25 November 2014; Int. 18 with Twinning experts, 11 August 2015; Int. 22 with Austrian civil servant, 11 March 2016; Int. 26 with Ukrainian civil servant, 22 March 2016; Int. 28 with French civil servant, 23 March 2016; Int. 35 with Swedish civil servant, 19 April 2016; Int. 41 with Ukrainian civil servants, 22 April, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Int. 15 with Danish civil servant, 05 May 2015; Int. 21 with Ukrainian civil servant, 10 March 2016; Int. 30 with French expert, 05 April 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Int. 28 with French civil servant, 23 March 2016; Julia Langbein, "Unpacking the Russian and EU Impact on Policy Change in the Eastern Neighbourhood: The Case of Ukraine's Telecommunications and Food Safety," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 4 (2013): 652.

<sup>77</sup> Ademmer, Delcour, and Wolczuk, "Beyond Geopolitics: An Introduction to the Impact of the EU and Russia in the 'contested Neighborhood.'"

<sup>78</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 42.

<sup>79</sup> Those conditions were excluded from the QCA due to an almost zero variation.

Ukraine's.

Comparative studies of Twinning and other EU TG projects in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods, as well as in accession candidates, may provide additional clues about the conditions we examined here, and perhaps be able to reflect more on the importance of EU membership prospects and aspirations for convergence with EU norms in the case of Twinning and EU TG cooperation overall.





## **CONCLUSIONS**

The following sections summarise the main findings of the study, embed them in a broader discussion of the relevant literature, explain the limitations, provide avenues for further research, and offer policy-relevant recommendations.

## **1. Main findings**

Following the big-bang enlargement in early 2000s, the EU found itself searching for more effective tools of engagement with a dozen of new neighbours in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhood without committing to further enlargement. As a result, the EU launched the ENP in 2004 in order to encourage its new neighbours to undertake political and institutional reforms in line with the EU's standards. In response, the EU promised those countries a more humble than during accession set of incentives, such as prospects of visa liberalisation and greater access to the EU Single Market. For that reason, the EU's ability to exert influence on the ENP countries has come across a barrage of criticism from observers, mainly because of the lack of membership perspective and also because the existing rewards have been too modest, vague, or undefined.

Under such circumstances, scholars of Europeanisation and EU external governance have pointed out the horizontal nature of EU TG cooperation as being capable of facilitating the transfer of EU democratic and regulatory standards to the ENP countries. In this way, those authors seek to deviate from the hierarchical governance of the accession conditionality in explaining EU relations with other countries. Despite a currently growing interest in TG cooperation among EU scholars and practitioners, its functioning under the ENP still has many uncharted areas, some of which I aimed to be address with this dissertation.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the four articles included here shed more light on the democratic substance, the MS dimension, and the overall effectiveness of EU TG cooperation under the ENP, while using the Twinning instrument in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood countries as an empirical case (Table 12).

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<sup>1</sup> More info in Sections 1-3 of the introduction.

**Table 12.** Overview of findings<sup>1</sup>

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Main findings</b>
RQ1. What is the role of EU TG cooperation in the EU democracy promotion literature?	Promotion of democratic governance via TG cooperation seems a more viable alternative of EU democracy promotion under the ENP, as compared to the more conventional methods, such as leverage (based on accession conditionality) and linkage (support of grassroots organisations).
RQ2. What democratic governance substance is promoted by EU TG cooperation?	Twinning cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood countries is characterised by the medium levels of democratic governance substance, mostly of the mixed and transparency-oriented types.
RQ3. What determines the variation in democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation?	The democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood countries varies with the beneficiary country's level of political liberalisation, sectoral politicisation, and most significantly, sectoral technical complexity. It is not, however, correlated with the presence of EU sectoral conditionality in the given policy sector.
RQ4. What added value do CEECs and the older MS bring for EU TG cooperation?	CEECs have a specific added value for Twinning projects in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, because of their country-specific comparative advantages, such as recent transition and accession experience, socio-linguistic proximity, and shared historical past. In contrast, the older MS mostly boast of sector-specific comparative advantages, such as institutional experience, existing sectoral networks and sectoral fit with the beneficiary administration, and prior history of Twinning cooperation. Both types of comparative advantages are complementary to each other.
RQ5. To what extent is EU TG cooperation effective?	Twinning projects in Ukraine have a moderate level of effectiveness, since they have achieved a degree of legal or institutional convergence in 50% of cases. Thereby, Twinning projects resulting in institutional convergence are slightly more than those resulting in legal convergence, which speaks of a simultaneous character of these two types of effectiveness.
RQ6. What conditions determine (in)effectiveness of EU TG cooperation?	One necessary condition behind the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine is the fit of the project's objectives with the current needs and capacities of the beneficiary administration. However, in the cases of legal convergence, policy fit needs to be combined with low sector politicisation or EU sectoral conditionality to produce such convergence. As for institutional convergence, policy fit is both the necessary and sufficient condition. Quality of communication or CEECs' participation does not seem to influence the overall effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, research questions apply to the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), covering the period of 2006-2016.

### ***1.1. Democratic substance of EU TG cooperation: The buck stops home***

Before scrutinising the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, I provided a general overview of the literature on EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood (Article 1). In such a way, I presented EU TG cooperation as a promising tool of EU democracy promotion in the absence of a membership perspective.<sup>1</sup> On surveying a range of relevant research, I found that EU democracy promotion policy under the ENP was often inconsistent and reactive towards democratic violations in the neighbourhood. Oftentimes, the EU followed suit of other players, for example the U.S., in framing its democracy promotion policy. In other cases, EU democracy promotion was not successful because of Russia's geopolitical interests in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. One of the most oft-cited sources of inconsistency in EU democracy promotion is a conflict between the normative ideals of democracy, on the one side, and strategic, commercial or geopolitical interests, on the other. Perhaps, a more vivid manifestation of the limited role of the EU is a relative consensus in the literature that the recent democratic uprisings in the neighbourhood, like the Colour Revolutions, the Arab Spring, and more recently the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine, have mainly been the result of domestic factors in countries concerned. Even though the pro-EU aspirations may have exceptionally triggered the Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine, domestic forces inside the country actually led to a change of leadership. Therefore, despite the EU's claim for responsibility in the neighbourhood, it should be noted that one needs to be cautious while establishing the EU's effectiveness versus that by other domestic and international actors.

The EU has adopted a variety of instruments in its democracy promotion policy in the neighbourhood, some of which are more successful, some less. One of the most debated and reportedly successful instruments in the context of the EU's Eastern enlargement was accession conditionality, whereby an EU membership was contingent upon a set of pre-agreed democratic and legislative reform targets, which aspiring candidates had to meet. After the enlargement, the EU became reluctant to expand further East, and hence the EU's leverage over the ENP countries diminished. The tools of the EU's linkage, referring to the support of grassroots organisations in other countries, have also reportedly brought little bang for the buck. Scholars suggested that the governance model of democracy promotion might be an answer to the absence of the main carrot of membership. By diffusing the norms of democratic governance at the sectoral level via TG

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<sup>1</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?"

cooperation, they argued, the EU could get another chance to succeed in democracy promotion in the ENP countries.

After contextualising TG cooperation in the broader literature on EU democracy promotion, I took a closer look at the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood (Article 2). The available literature did not produce systematic evaluations of the democratic governance substance of EU TG cooperation, having limited itself to its general impacts and the underlying processes of socialisation as concerns promotion of democratic governance. It was not clear, for example, to what extent democratic governance norms of transparency, accountability, and participation were present in the specific instances of EU TG cooperation under the ENP and what factors could explain the variation of those norms across different projects, policy sectors, and countries.

Using a sample of 117 Twinning project fiches from the Eastern neighbourhood between 2006 and 2015, I classify the democratic governance substance of EU TG programmes according to its configuration and magnitude. Thus, a majority of Twinning projects in the region displays mixed democratic governance substance, whereby no single democratic governance norm prevails. Transparency-oriented projects are runner-ups, followed by accountability- and participation-oriented projects, which are somewhat lagging behind. As for the magnitude, most Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood display a medium level of democratic governance substance, which generally stays the same among the different countries analysed. As regards the specific sectors, Twinning projects in the environmental sector show the highest average values for the democratic governance substance and its three categories, whereas those in transport and statistics – the lowest. In further exploring this variation, I tested several EU-related and domestic structure explanations. I hypothesised that the democratic governance substance of EU TG projects would vary with the level of the beneficiary country's political liberalisation, sectoral politicisation, sector technical complexity, and the EU's sectoral conditionality.

Statistical analysis reveals that, first, Twinning projects in more politically liberalised countries like Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine tend to include more democratic governance substance than Twinning projects in democratic laggards like Armenia and Azerbaijan. That is especially so for the average values for accountability and participation, whereas the average for transparency did not vary considerably across the countries. According to my operationalisation, the Twinning objectives pertaining to accountability and participation presumed concrete obligations on the part of the beneficiary institution, for example, to involve non-state actors and reformat its organisational structure in order to strengthen vertical and horizontal accountability. For that reason, perhaps, embracing transparency as a normative point of reference in TG cooperation with the EU is easier for the less

democratic Eastern neighbourhood countries than embracing the other, apparently more demanding dimensions of democratic governance substance. The unexpectedly lower democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in Ukraine suggests, in line with some of my interviewees' opinions, that this country, while being more liberalised at the political level, remains relatively closed to change at the sectoral level of public administration.

Second, opposite to my original hypothesis, with an increase in the level of sector politicisation, I actually observed an increase in the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects. Besides hinting at the common sense that it is the politicised sectors that need to be democratised most, this finding also suggests that the EU may enjoy a greater leverage versus the beneficiary country in deciding whether or not to include provisions for democratic governance in Twinning cooperation. That goes somewhat against the hypothesis, found for example in Anne Wetzel's study of EU sectoral governance in the Eastern neighbourhood,<sup>2</sup> that the EU will water down its emphasis on participatory governance in policy sectors susceptible to a conflict of political or commercial interest. Nevertheless, I should admit, this relationship between politicisation and democratic governance substance does not seem to hold in Azerbaijan. That may be explained by the generally low interest of Azerbaijan in EU integration and, as the result, reduced EU's leverage in promoting democratic governance in "politicised" Twinning projects in the country.

Third, I provide evidence for the claim in the public administration literature that policy fields requiring an advanced level of scientific expertise (calculus skills, economic models, or lab testing in natural sciences) are less likely to embrace the norms of democratic governance. The analysis of Twinning fiches on the individual dimensions of democratic governance substance reveals that it is especially so in the case of participation, whereby contributions by non-state actors are hardly ever encouraged in technically complex policy areas.

Lastly, I uncover no conclusive empirical support for the hypothesis that the EU's sectoral conditionality (bargaining power) is related to a change in the democratic governance substance and its indicators in the sample of Twinning projects analysed.<sup>3</sup> That points us in two directions. First, the EU's "carrots" of visa liberalisation or facilitation of trade (which influence the EU's bargaining power) play a decisive role neither in the EU's capacity/willingness to include more democratic governance substance in EU TG cooperation, nor in the beneficiary's institution propensity to make such substance a contractual obligation for Twinning. Alternatively, clauses relating to trade or visa liberalisation in the context of EU

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<sup>2</sup> Wetzel, "The Promotion of Participatory Governance in the EU's External Policies: Compromised by Sectoral Economic Interests?"

<sup>3</sup> The t-tests on separate countries, however, supplied inconclusive evidence of such relationship in the category "participation", which may be positively related to the presence of EU sectoral conditionality in respective Twinning projects.

relations with the ENP region may be less about the promoting of democratic governance and more about the removing of technical barriers and the implementation of the trade-related *acquis*.

In sum, the regression analysis tipped the scales towards the country's political liberalisation, sector technical complexity, and sector politicisation as explaining the greatest variation in the dependent variable. It can be concluded then with some caution (see Section 2 below for limitations) that the domestic variables in the Eastern neighbourhood are mainly responsible for variation of democratic governance substance in EU TG cooperation in the countries concerned. That conclusion is roughly in line with the EU's commitment to the domestic ownership of Twinning projects by the beneficiary administration.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.2. CEECs and old MS: Comparing apples and oranges?**

Whilst the promotion of democracy and democratic governance through EU TG cooperation had some theoretical background, available academic studies almost completely overlooked the role of MS in EU TG cooperation. Based on 40 semi-structured interviews with Twinning officials and experts, I investigated the added value that CEECs and the older MS brought for EU Twinning projects in the cases of Azerbaijan and Ukraine (Article 3). An added value was conceptualised as the combined comparative advantages of a group of MS, as perceived by Twinning stakeholders.

I find that the participation of CEECs does offer a specific added value for Twinning cooperation, mainly because of their country-specific comparative advantages. Those are the recent transition and accession experience, socio-linguistic similarities, and shared historical legacies with the EU's Eastern neighbours. The transition and accession experience of CEECs seems very important for Twinning partners from the Eastern neighbourhood. It is believed to provide more legitimacy and credibility for civil servants from CEECs, most of whom can personally relate to the thorny path of reforms in their home countries before EU accession. Their comparative advantage is also reinforced by the fact of CEECs' participation in Twinning projects as beneficiaries during their EU accession. Furthermore, many CEECs have been preferred partners owing to their geopolitical, cultural, and historical proximity with Azerbaijan and Ukraine. In that respect, the Baltic states proved to be best placed since they were also part of the Soviet Union. My interviewees also concur that the cultural and linguistic similarities (e.g.,

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission, "Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies: Common Twinning Manual," 11.

command of the Russian language) make partners from CEECs preferable to those from the older MS.

As for the older MS, they are also found to offer an added value for EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood, yet mostly at the sectoral level rather than at the country level. The sector-specific comparative advantages of the older MS consist in their institutional experience, existing sectoral networks, sectoral fit with the beneficiary, and prior history of Twinning cooperation. First, their institutional experience is rooted in their long history of trial-and-error in public administration reforms and solid international reputation in particular sectors. Second, older MS often have an advantage of sectoral compatibility with the administrative styles and structures in the Eastern neighbourhood countries. For instance, Ukraine prefers to work with France in the area of statistics owing to the similar regional structure of collecting and processing of statistical information in the two countries. Third, some older MS are already engaged in bilateral cooperation at the sectoral level with the Eastern neighbourhood countries. As the result, beneficiary administrations in Azerbaijan and Ukraine have often preferred Twinning partners from the older MS so as to carry on existing cooperation or acquire useful connections for the future. That is usually not the case with CEECs. Finally, both the older MS and CEECs boast of a significant track record of Twinning cooperation in the past, which enables them to avoid common pitfalls during project implementation. However, in the case of the older MS, this comparative advantage comes from a prior Twinning experience in different countries on the sending side, whereas CEECs mostly were Twinning recipients during their accession negotiations.

My analysis also confirms the hypothesis that the country-specific comparative advantages by CEECs and the sector-specific comparative advantages by the older MS will be complementary. For that reason, perhaps, most Twinning projects analysed in Azerbaijan and Ukraine have included a consortium of partners from both CEECs and the older MS. A vast majority of interviewees also regard the joint participation of civil servants and experts from those groups of MS as "a perfect match".

### ***1.3. Effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine: To fit or not to fit***

Although Twinning has been the most important EU TG instrument for institution-building during the accession and then in the ENP, its effectiveness has received scarce coverage among the EU scholars. In a bid to alleviate this gap, I sought to identify to what extent Twinning projects in Ukraine have been effective in fostering legal or institutional convergence in corresponding policy sectors. I singled out a set of conditions potentially leading to the (in)effectiveness of Twinning projects. My analysis of 45 interviews, triangulated through official



documents, demonstrates that 50% of all Twinning projects in Ukraine have induced a degree of legal or institutional convergence in the beneficiary institution and policy sector. That speaks of a moderate degree of Twinning effectiveness in the country. Interestingly, due to the sectoral character of TG cooperation, instances of legal and institutional convergence have occurred in parallel, not consecutive to each other. In addition, institutional convergence has been more prevalent than legal.

In order to explain which conditions lead to the (in)effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine, I applied the configurational logic of a QCA to four major conditions, identified through the available literature and interviews: sectoral politicisation, EU sectoral conditionality, policy fit, and quality of communication. The QCA showed that policy fit was the single necessary condition of Twinning effectiveness. That means that all effective Twinning projects in Ukraine must fit well with the administrative traditions, current needs, and capacities of the respective beneficiary institution. The QCA of conditions behind the Twinning ineffectiveness points to a lack of such fit as a culprit behind the failure of Twinning projects to result in legal or institutional convergence.

The subsequent analysis of sufficiency shows that policy fit is also the sufficient condition in all cases of institutional convergence and Twinning effectiveness overall. However, in a separate QCA of conditions behind legal convergence, policy fit was found to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the outcome to occur. Indeed, legal convergence presents only in Twinning projects where policy fit combines either with EU sectoral conditionality or low sector politicisation. Therefore, along with the policy fit, attaching Twinning policy objectives to a stake in the EU Single Market (e.g., through the DCFTA) or launching Twinning projects in non-politicised policy fields makes a good recipe for a successful legal convergence. On the other hand, the reduced importance of EU sectoral conditionality for institutional convergence may be explained by the technocratic nature and relative autonomy of middle-level bureaucracies from the central leadership. Also, in many cases, the beneficiary administration could embrace new administrative practices without having to pass a new law. The insignificance of sector politicisation for institutional convergence may also be construed in a similar fashion.

Surprisingly, the quality of communication, while being central to the network philosophy of TG cooperation, appears to have no bearing on the ultimate effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine. In the preliminary stages of the QCA, I found no link between the participation by CEECs and Twinning effectiveness. Apparently, the above-mentioned added value of CEECs, stemming from their transition experience, socio-linguistic and historical commonalities with the Eastern neighbourhood countries, may not materialise in the greater effectiveness of EU TG cooperation on the ground.

## 2. Broader research implications

Owing to my narrow focus on the functioning of EU TG cooperation in the Eastern neighbourhood and a dearth of pre-existing theoretical research on the subject matter, my area of contribution is mainly empirical. My intention was to explore EU TG cooperation from multiple standpoints by relying on interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and, in such a way, prepare the ground for further hypotheses, including more advanced theorisation of the EU's involvement in the neighbourhood via TG channels. At a more modest scale, I aspired to benefit select debates in international relations, EU external governance, Europeanisation, and public administration scholarship by filling relevant gaps or refining current ways of thinking about EU TG cooperation under the ENP.

For example, how can we look in a new light at the debate on TG cooperation in the international relations literature, discussed at some length in the introduction? (Section 3). First, what becomes noticeable is a somewhat asymmetric nature of EU TG cooperation. Whereas the ENP, and Twinning cooperation in particular, profess a voluntary approach to cooperation between the EU and the partner country, it is actually the EU's laws and standards that need to be adopted by the beneficiary country, and not the other way around. Formally, of course, the actual participation of an ENP country in EU TG programmes is elective; however, once it chooses to engage, it faces some sticks and carrots from the EU, albeit less powerful than the ones under the accession frameworks. Because of that, it is hard to agree with the Europeanisation scholars considering EU technical assistance, of which TG cooperation is a part, a phenomenon of network governance.<sup>5</sup> While being not a hierarchical mode of governance in a strict sense either, EU TG cooperation has these unidirectional dynamics, which put it in some contrast with the prevailing understanding of TG cooperation partners as equals. Second, my data on Twinning also show that the three-pronged typology of TG cooperation – embracing information, regulatory, and harmonisation networks – becomes somewhat blurred in reality.<sup>6</sup> A typical Twinning project fosters exchange of information and best practices, transfer of regulatory standards, and harmonisation of the third country's legislation with EU's – all three occurring simultaneously.

In its communication on a harmonised approach to development aid, the European Commission called on integration of the concept of democratic governance "into each and every sectoral programme" in the neighbourhood

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<sup>5</sup> Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, "EU Rules beyond EU Borders: Theorizing External Governance in European Politics," 897.

<sup>6</sup> Slaughter, *A New World Order*; Lavenex, "A Governance Perspective on the European Neighbourhood Policy: Integration beyond Conditionality?," 943.

countries and beyond.<sup>7</sup> My findings show that the Commission has actually delivered on this pledge in the case of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood. In order to systematically investigate to what extent EU TG cooperation or other instances of EU foreign policy include democratic governance, I introduced the concept of democratic governance substance and mapped out its ideal types according to the presence and configuration of transparency, accountability, and participation. Perhaps, one may argue that this is “just another concept” that further complicates the field already burdened with thick and often overlapping terminology. On the other hand, this concept pinpoints well the normative substance of what the EU is doing about democratic governance promotion and boasts of rather clear conceptual boundaries, permitting application in further studies. Finally, I was also inspired by the kindred applications of *substance* in other EU research programmes, such as those on EU democracy, good governance, and rule of law promotion.<sup>8</sup>

Another relevant addition to the studies of EU external governance and public administration literature is that the democratic governance substance of TG cooperation tends to vary with the technical complexity of the policy field. The more specialised the policy area is – the less of democratic governance substance is included in the relevant instance of EU TG cooperation. On the one hand, it points to some measure of incompatibility of democratic governance norms with the functional essence of TG cooperation in some policy sectors. On the other, it supports the sentiment found in the Europeanisation literature that increasing administrative capacity does not necessarily result in a more democratic government.<sup>9</sup> Some interviewees to this study also concurred that narrow, technically complex policy fields might be less interesting for non-state actors and civil society to contribute.

My comparison of the added value by CEECs and the older MS might also be useful for the students of Europeanisation, EU development cooperation, and MS foreign policy. For example, I observe that different MS feature various comparative advantages and that EU TG cooperation offers a platform through which they can be realised and studied. The country- and sector-specific comparative advantages of CEECs and of the older MS influence perceptions of civil servants in the Eastern neighbourhood and often result in Twinning contracts. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the actual impact by CEECs on the outcome of EU TG programmes in the Eastern neighbourhood remains contested. In studying the effectiveness of

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission, “Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a Harmonized Approach within the European Union,” 6.

<sup>8</sup> Wetzel and Orbie, *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Concepts and Cases (Governance and Limited Statehood)*; Burlyuk, “Variation in EU External Policies as a Virtue: EU Rule of Law”; Börzel, Pamuk, and Stahn, “The European Union and the Promotion of Good Governance in Its Near Abroad. One Size Fits All?”

<sup>9</sup> Youngs, “Democracy Promotion as External Governance?,” 902.

Twinning projects in Ukraine, I find no evidence to support the claim that Twinning projects with the participation of CEECs are more effective than the projects including partners from the older MS only. Here I should also concur with Szent-Iványi and Tétényi, who argue that the new MS are “yet to capitalise” on their comparative advantages.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to a majority of works, which view norm adoption and application (implementation) as two consecutive processes, my study shows that EU TG cooperation is capable of achieving legal and institutional convergence in parallel. Even more so, the cases of institutional convergence seem to be more than those of legal convergence. The necessary condition of policy fit hints that the EU may be effective despite the multiple setbacks, if only it properly factored in the administrative needs and specifics of the beneficiary administration. Even though I could not undertake a comprehensive comparative study of the EU’s influence on the neighbourhood with and without a membership perspective, the analysis of TG cooperation under the ENP and my personal observations point to many similar problems with such cooperation during accession and then under the ENP. Those problems include lack of political commitment by the domestic authorities, a “one-size-fits-all” approach to different partner countries, and the mere incompatibility of institutional templates in MS and those in the beneficiary administration. Nonetheless, convergence with EU norms as a result of TG cooperation does occur even without a membership perspective, which makes me question whether such perspective is necessary in the first place.

While the existing studies of Twinning have covered to some extent the period of the EU’s Eastern enlargement, when the accession conditionality was strong, they did not provide a satisfactory answer to the question, “How effective are Twinning projects?” The literature on the ENP, including policy studies mandated by the European Commission, has also failed to produce the satisfactory answer. Owing to the thick empirical data I gathered on Twinning projects in Ukraine and the methodological approach capturing only the most practical aspects of effectiveness, I find that Twinning projects in Ukraine have been effective 50% of the time. That means every second Twinning project in Ukraine has resulted in the legal or institutional convergence of the respective policy sector with the EU’s norms.

Given a lack of studies employing the same methodological lens, it is hard to say if this number is low or high, as compared to the performance of Twinning projects in other EU’s neighbours or under alternative EU’s foreign policy frameworks. Yet, in light of the general scepticism over the ENP’s ambitions and the lack of membership perspective for the EU’s Eastern neighbours, I view that figure with reserved optimism. As said above, legal and institutional convergence occurred

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<sup>10</sup> Szent-Iványi and Tétényi, “Transition and Foreign Aid Policies in the Visegrád Countries: A Path Dependant Approach,” 582.

in every second case despite the missing membership perspective, thanks to a good policy fit of the Twinning agenda with the needs and capacities on the ground. Finally, because the literature on Twinning during the accession period reported many similar shortcomings to those we find under the ENP, i.e., lack of political commitment, communication difficulties, or high politicisation,<sup>11</sup> the role of EU membership perspective in the EU's ability to bring about change in the neighbourhood becomes less obvious. In light of the relatively effective implementation of Twinning in Ukraine and its potential to carry norms of democratic governance, it may serve as another EU tool to advance its democratic values in the neighbourhood, in addition to its main goal of technical approximation.

Speaking of the methodological contribution, this work brings together multiple analytical viewpoints on a single empirical phenomenon and constructs bridges between the deterministic and probabilistic methods of causal inquiry. This inclusive approach also means to contribute to the growth of quantitative and mixed methodologies in EU studies, which are currently skewed heavily towards the qualitative analysis. In addition, I also attempted to address the problem of Eurocentrism and excessive reliance on the EU's frames of reference in modern EU scholarship.<sup>12</sup> Particularly beneficial in that regard were my personal experiences growing up in the post-Soviet political and cultural context, as well as the command of the Ukrainian and Russian languages. Those advantages have granted me access to a wealth of data and people not readily available for outsiders. Moreover, the use of probabilistic (statistical) methods, more common on the North American campuses, may have contributed to the alleviation of Eurocentrism in terms of data analysis techniques.

### 3. Limitations and space for development

As any other research, this also has its limitations, which relate to the theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of inquiry. First, at the theoretical level, owing to the nature of my research objectives, I am neither testing nor devising an overarching theoretical framework explaining EU TG cooperation in the neighbourhood, which limits the general theoretical contribution of the study. Instead, I am enriching a set of theoretical debates pertaining to the specific facets

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<sup>11</sup> Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Exporting Europeanization to the Wider Europe: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in the Candidate Countries and Beyond"; Tulmets, "The Introduction of the Open Method of Coordination in the European Enlargement Policy: Analysing the Impact of the New PHARE/Twinning Instrument"; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, "Europeanization, Conditionality and Domestic Change: The Twinning Exercise and Administrative Reform in Romania."

<sup>12</sup> Hamid Dabashi, "Can Non-Europeans Think? What Happens with Thinkers Who Operate Outside the European Philosophical 'pedigree,'" *Al-Jazeera English*, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/01/2013114142638797542.html>.

of such cooperation, i.e., democratic governance promotion, MS participation, and effectiveness of norm transfer. Nonetheless, I do hope that this study offers a stepping stone to such a framework in future research.

Second, there may be problems with the current theoretical frameworks covering the specific research questions of this study. For example, with democratic governance substance, it is still not clear whether the inclusion of democratic governance norms in Twinning cooperation happens reflexively as the result of the EU's explicit commitment to it, or as an unintended consequence of EU internal governance and its reflection in EU external governance.<sup>13</sup> While the domestic structure variables explain well the variation in the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, they shed little light on how exactly those norms transpire into specific Twinning niches. I thus cannot rule out the possibility that a micro-level analysis of Twinning instrument, especially at the preparation stage, will not produce more explanatory factors behind the variation of the democratic governance substance of Twinning projects concerned. In addition, I believe there should be a way to measure uniformly the democratic governance substance of the EU *acquis* and of other EU legal sources, which inform the content of TG cooperation in the neighbourhood. That is something I could not accomplish within the confines of this work. Other possible factors, such as the initial levels of adoption of democratic governance norms by the ENP country, pro-Europeanness of political elites and public personnel, or effects by other actors like Russia may also be interesting points for exploration.

Before engaging in further theorising, it would also be worthwhile to check how well my theoretical framework explains variation in the democratic governance substance of EU TG projects in the countries of the Southern neighbourhood under the ENP or the Balkan states under the IPA. In the same vein, future studies should evaluate the democratic governance substance in other EU TG instruments, such as TAIEX or CIB, and draw parallels with Twinning projects. That also applies to my analyses of MS comparative advantages and of the overall effectiveness of EU TG cooperation, both of which could benefit from a broader landscape of data, and not only from the selected countries of the Eastern neighbourhood. On the other hand, factoring in the full extent of differences among the Eastern neighbourhood countries themselves, including their political and institutional dynamics, is also something I could not capture with this work.

Methodologically, the use of probabilistic tests of group differences based on the measures of central tendency may have introduced biases relating to the presence of outliers and the non-normal distribution of data on most variables analysed. Moreover, the relatively small number of cases (117) and four

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Pierson, "The Path to European Integration: An Historical Institutional Analysis," *Comparative Political Studies*, 1996, 129.

independent variables (plus nine control variables), as is the case in Article 2, may have some implications for the generalisability of findings to other regions under the ENP. Some caution is also due in explaining the variation of democratic governance substance of Twinning along the sector-based independent variables within one country. The fact that the relationship between sector politicisation and democratic governance substance does not hold in less liberalised countries may have to do with a lack of cases to establish such relationship, their non-normal distribution, or unaccounted effects by other, unknown variables. With the smaller number of Twinning fiches in some countries and policy sectors (20 or fewer), I also run a greater risk to incur a Type II error. That means that there could have been some omitted effects or that the existing effects could be stronger if the sample size for the specific variable categories of Twinning fiches were to be increased.

My presentation of an added value by CEECs and the older MS also needs to be treated with some reservations. The broad focus on these two groups may omit the inter-country differences among CEECs and the older MS in their sector- and country-specific comparative advantages. In that regard, I could not yet locate sufficient data to systematise comparative advantages of MS in relation to each other and build "country dossiers". In addition, the question of why exactly certain MS are selected for Twinning projects by the beneficiary extends beyond the scope of this dissertation and also remains subject to further research. The division between the country- and sector-specific comparative advantages, mainly used as an heuristic tool for structuring the theorised storyline and the empirical section in Article 3, may also pose some theoretical hindrances. The reason being, some types of comparative advantages, like transition experience or country's size, manifest the attributes of both country- and sector-specific comparative advantages. Added to this, the framing of interview questions and the level of rapport between the researcher and interviewees may have introduced a degree of preference bias to the results, which was partially offset through triangulation with other sources.

The similar type of bias may pose a problem in the analysis of the effectiveness of EU TG cooperation in Ukraine, whereby I also rely on extensive interview data. Additionally, while judging whether a particular Twinning project was effective or not, I did not consider impacts by other programmes by the EU or by other actors in a particular policy sector. As Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier advised, adoption of EU norms by the country may coincide with the adoption of similar domestic norms and not be the direct results of the EU influence. Similarly, the domestic authorities may comply with the requirements of other international actors promoting similar to the EU norms. In both cases, it is difficult to establish formal ownership of the norms.<sup>14</sup> This limitation is somewhat mediated by the fact that

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<sup>14</sup> Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, 9.

Twinning is one of the most important tools of EU TG cooperation and targets very specific domains of public policymaking, normally not covered by the overlapping programmes. Besides, in many instances, specific laws adopted by Ukraine referred to EU policy requirements that could be traced back to given Twinning projects.

One of the specific methodological problems related to the use of configurational methods like QCA is that they do not allow the researcher to deal properly with “hard-to-capture” or “big” events. In my case, it may be the Russian factor and the influence of the Russian aggressive foreign policy in the context of Twinning cooperation. Luckily, the number of policy sectors in Ukraine that were directly affected by the Russian factor has been rather low, yet a more systematic analysis of its implications with regard to my research questions would also be welcome. Another methodological concern is that the crisp-set variant of QCA and the associated process of dichotomisation may lead to some cases being underrepresented or other irregularities, especially in measuring unclear or borderline cases. I tried to address this problem by consistently applying operationalisation guidelines for conditions and outcomes and doing so in close reference to the theoretical literature and interview data.

#### **4. Policy recommendations**

In March 2015, Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign affairs chief, and Johannes Hahn, Neighbourhood Commissioner, presented the joint consultation paper “Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy”, which challenges virtually every aspect of the ENP.<sup>15</sup> Yet, has the EU really failed to transform its neighbourhood? I believe it may be too early to throw in the towel and devise a totally new framework. Based on the findings of this study, I have singled out several possible steps the EU may take to make its involvement under the ENP, and the Eastern neighbourhood in particular, more impactful.

Although the Twinning instrument was originally not designed to promote norms of democratic governance, my study demonstrates that the EU may well exploit the democratising potential of Twinning projects by streamlining transparency, accountability, and participation on project agenda in a more systematic manner. For example, the EU should try to include more provisions for transparent and participatory governance, especially in policy sectors of relevance for EU-third country trade or visa regime. Visible successes of Twinning projects in Ukraine give hope that this instrument may be effectively used to diffuse norms of democracy and democratic governance in the EU’s neighbourhood. Moreover, a typical

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission, “Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy,” 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/consultation.pdf>.



Twinning project fiche already includes a section dedicated to cross-cutting issues, such as democracy and human rights, environmental sustainability, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS. The European Consensus for Development stipulates that those cross-cutting issues be integrated into all areas of donor programmes and be addressed in all political dialogue and development.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the European Commission, can expand the list of cross-cutting issues by including specific requirements for democratic governance during the implementation of Twinning projects and as an explicit objective thereof.

The EU should also consider creating country dossiers, listing comparative advantages of each MS in the policy sectors covered by EU development or TG cooperation in the neighbourhood. Such dossiers need to contain the country- and sector-specific comparative advantages of MS in relation to the ENP countries or other EU's partners. They may be modelled, for example, after the European Transition Compendium, with the self-reported comparative advantages by CEECs.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, these dossiers could rely on the systematic research of MS participation and concrete accomplishments in the given sector at home and as part of EU development and TG programmes abroad. In such a way, the process of MS selection and participation in EU TG programmes would be more informed and the complementarities between the various MS maximised.

Finally, the EU should continue linking DCFTA- and visa-related conditionality with specific Twinning objectives in the target country, as such conditionality is important in fostering legal convergence of the beneficiary administration. The main challenge is, however, to design Twinning interventions with an utmost consideration of the needs and capacities on the ground. Because of a great political volatility and institutional instability in some ENP countries, like Ukraine, the EU should consider making its Twinning projects more flexible. That would include, among other things, cutting back significantly on the average preparation time and making it easier to fine-tune the objectives after the project has begun.

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<sup>16</sup> European Commission, "The European Consensus on Development," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2006, 46, [http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/european\\_consensus\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/european_consensus_2005_en.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, "European Transition Compendium."

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## **APPENDIX**

## List of interviews

**Table 13.** List of interviews

<b>Int. no.</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Location of respondent</b>	<b>Date</b>
Int. 1	Ukrainian expert	Ministry of Social Policy	Kyiv	15 November 2014
Int. 2	Ukrainian civil servant	State Ecology Academy	Kyiv	18 November 2014
Int. 3	Ukrainian civil servant	Ministry of Infrastructure	Kyiv	20 November 2014
Int. 4	Ukrainian expert	Centre for Adaptation of the Civil Service	Kyiv	25 November 2014
Int. 5	Ukrainian expert	State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine	Kyiv	27 November 2014
Int. 6	Ukrainian civil servant	Ministry of Infrastructure	Kyiv	28 November 2014
Int. 7	Danish civil servant	Statistics Denmark	Kyiv	01 December 2014
Int. 8	Ukrainian expert	Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine	Kyiv	09 December 2014
Int. 9	German expert	Central European University	Budapest	24 March 2015
Int. 10	Ukrainian civil servant	State Ecology Academy	Kyiv	25 March 2015
Int. 11	Danish civil servant	Statistics Denmark	Kyiv	26 March 2015
Int. 12	Polish civil servant	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Warsaw	02 April 2015
Int. 13	Dutch expert	Dutch Institute for Public Administration	The Hague	03 April 2015
Int. 14	Dutch expert	Dutch Institute for Public Administration	The Hague*	08 April 2015
Int. 15	Danish civil servant	Statistics Denmark	Kyiv	05 May 2015
Int. 16	EU Commission official	DG NEAR	Brussels*	02 June 2015
Int. 17	EU Commission official	DG NEAR	Brussels*	11 June 2015
Int. 18	Twinning experts	SIGMA (OECD)	Paris	11 August 2015



Int. 19	Lithuanian expert	University of Amsterdam	Amsterdam	18 January 2016
Int. 20	Latvian civil servant	State Plant Protection Service	Riga	08 March 2016
Int. 21	Ukrainian civil servant	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Kyiv	10 March 2016
Int. 22	Austrian civil servant	Regional Court Wiener Neustadt	Vienna	11 March 2016
Int. 23	EU Commission official	Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria	Abuja	16 March 2016
Int. 24	Polish expert	National Bank of Poland	Kyiv	20 March 2016
Int. 25	Dutch civil servant	Netherlands Enterprise Agency	Kyiv	21 March 2016
Int. 26	Ukrainian expert	State Aviation Administration of Ukraine	Kyiv	22 March 2016
Int. 27	Danish civil servant	Danish Veterinary and Food Administration	Copenhagen	23 March 2016
Int. 28	French civil servant	Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales	Moscow	23 March 2016
Int. 29	Swedish civil servant	The Swedish National Financial Management Authority	Stockholm	24 March 2016
Int. 30	French expert	ADECRI	Paris	05 April 2016
Int. 31	French civil servants	SNCF	Paris*	06 April 2016
Int. 32	German civil servant	Ministry of Economics and Technology of Germany	Berlin	11 April 2016
Int. 33	Ukrainian civil servant	The State Committee for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy of Ukraine	Kyiv	18 April 2016
Int. 34	Ukrainian civil servant	The State Committee for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy of Ukraine	Kyiv	19 April 2016
Int. 35	Swedish civil servant	Swedish National Debt Office	Stockholm	19 April 2016
Int. 36	Ukrainian expert	State Agency on Energy Efficiency	Kyiv*	19 April 2016

		and Energy Saving of Ukraine		
Int. 37	Ukrainian civil servant	Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine	Kyiv*	20 April 2016
Int. 38	Ukrainian civil servant	State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection	Kyiv*	20 April 2016
Int. 39	Ukrainian civil servant	Anti-Monopoly Committee of Ukraine	Kyiv	21 April 2016
Int. 40	Ukrainian expert	State Service of Intellectual Property Rights of Ukraine	Kyiv*	21 April 2016
Int. 41	Ukrainian civil servants	Ministry of Finance of Ukraine	Kyiv*	22 April 2016
Int. 42	Ukrainian expert	Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine	Hong Kong	07 May 2016
Int. 43	Spanish expert	Instituto Nacional de Técnica Aeroespacial	Madrid	10 May 2016
Int. 44	Ukrainian civil servant	State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre	Kyiv	11 May 2016
Int. 45	French expert	Université de Versailles	Iasi*	19 May 2016

\* in-person interviews (the rest were conducted over Skype or telephone)

## **Policy brief**

# **Evaluating the EU's Twinning Instrument in the Eastern Partnership Region: A SWOT Analysis of Twinning in Ukraine**

Dmytro Panchuk  
Fabienne Bossuyt

*under consideration by the Eastern Partnership Review*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief evaluates the implementation of the Twinning instrument in the Eastern neighbourhood. To do so, it presents a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of EU Twinning projects in Ukraine, relying on insights from over 50 interviews with Twinning stakeholders from EU member states, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, and Ukraine. The article argues that Twinning projects, while being relatively effective, have generally punched below their weight due to systemic issues related to the internal setup of Twinning cooperation and constraining factors ensuing from local realities. Under effectiveness, we understand the extent to which there is legal and/or institutional convergence of the beneficiary institution or policy sector with relevant EU practices and standards as a direct or indirect result of participation in EU Twinning projects. In order to increase chances for the effectiveness of Twinning projects, the EU should take steps to ensure a better policy fit of the project policy agenda with the local needs and realities of the beneficiary administration. The EU should also make Twinning projects more flexible to change, both content-wise and time-wise.

## **TWINNING OVERVIEW**

Twinning has been a unique institution-building and transgovernmental cooperation instrument linking the EU member states and the ENP countries, including the EaP region and Ukraine. This instrument is unique because it encourages direct cross-border links between public agencies from the EU and those in the EaP countries in different policy sectors. Compared to the other EU's institution-building tools, like TAIEX or SIGMA, Twinning emphasises the long-term character of such relationship. A typical Twinning project in the EaP region may last up to three years from the signing of the contract until the last expert departs. Every project involves a peer-to-peer cooperation between a delegated permanent expert (Resident Twinning Adviser, or RTA) and dozens of short-term experts on the EU side, and the beneficiary country's officials on the EaP side. This personal, two-way character of Twinning cooperation makes it distinct from the other EU's instruments, e.g., Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) programme, boosting institutions through targeted budget support, yet creating few opportunities for exchange of administrative experiences face-to-face.

Twinning boasts of an extensive reach in different policy sectors, a comprehensive design, and formal commitment at the highest level of EU-ENP country agreements. Each project has a budget of approximately one million euros, entailing generous support for short- and long-term experts from EU MS, who are available and willing to share their expertise abroad. Twinning programming under the ENP builds significantly on the Twinning experience with CEECs during the pre-accession phase, as well as with the current candidate countries in the Balkans, financed under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The objectives of Twinning projects under the ENP draw on a joint EU-beneficiary country agenda, contained in bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Action Plans, and more recently Association Agreements (AAs) and DCFTAs. In applying for Twinning projects, the beneficiary countries also often rely on priorities from the National Indicative Programmes, Country Strategy Papers, and other domestic initiatives relevant for approximation with the EU's laws and regulatory standards.

## **TWINNING IN UKRAINE**

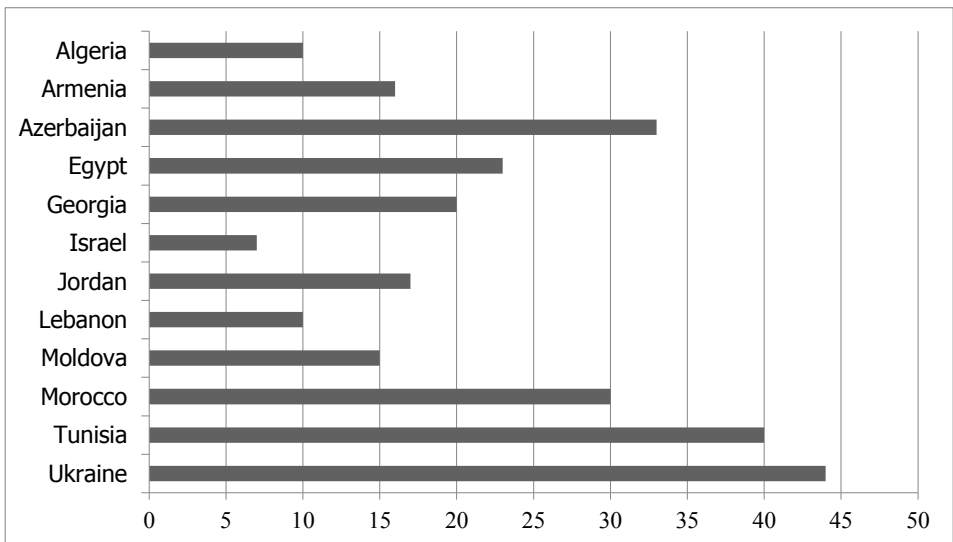
Since the introduction of the Twinning instrument under the ENP, Ukraine has implemented over 40 EU Twinning projects between 2007 and 2016 (Figure 6). That places the country at the top in the EU's neighbourhood by the number of projects completed. The sectoral distribution of Twinning projects in Ukraine is also rather wide, spanning a dozen different sectors in the country (Figure 7).

Our previous analysis has shown that around half of EU Twinning projects in Ukraine have resulted in or paved the way for institutional and/or legal change in the respective beneficiary organisations or policy sectors.<sup>570</sup> In other words, every other

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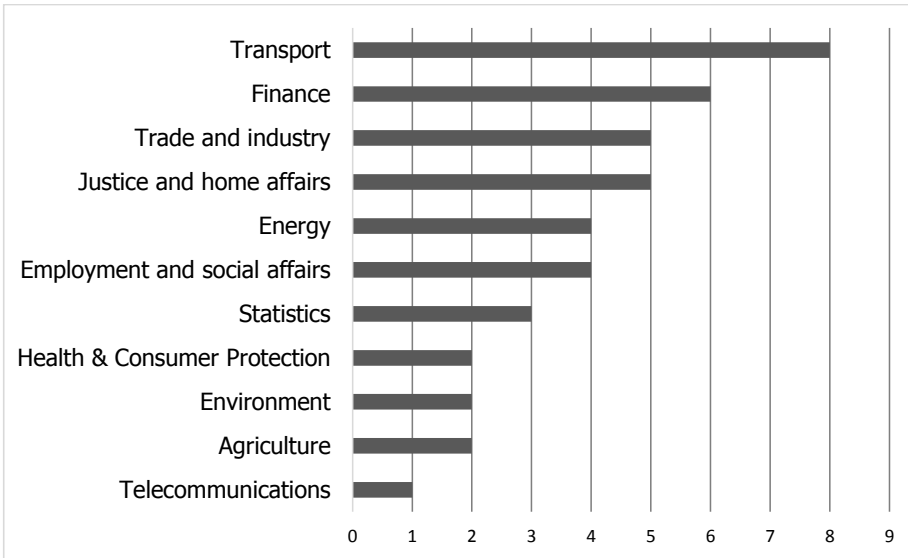
<sup>570</sup> Dmytro Panchuk, Fabienne Bossuyt, and Jan Orbie, "Effectiveness of EU Transgovernmental Cooperation in the Neighbourhood: Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Twinning Projects in Ukraine," 2017.

EU Twinning project in the country has been able to foster legal or institutional convergence of the beneficiary institution and policy sector with EU regulatory standards. Given that Ukraine undertakes harmonisation with the EU’s legislation in response to a more modest set of rewards than those that the candidate countries are offered, this is not such a bad outcome. Among the effective Twinning projects in Ukraine, 63% resulted in legal convergence (law adoption or amendment), 75% led to institutional convergence (successful implementation of a new law or a new administrative practice in the beneficiary institution), and 44% accomplished both. Thus, a significant number of EU Twinning projects have succeeded in encouraging the Ukrainian to adopt and implement pro-EU laws, associated secondary legislation, and best administrative practices from EU MS.



**Figure 6.** Twinning projects in the ENP region, by country, 2007-2016<sup>571</sup>

<sup>571</sup> Estimated based on European Commission, “Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA within the ENPI. Activity Report,” 2013, and publicly available new data on the Twinning instrument.



**Figure 7.** Twinning projects in Ukraine by policy sector, 2007-2016

## UNDERTAKING A SWOT ANALYSIS

In order to evaluate the Twinning instrument in the EaP region, the policy brief relies on a SWOT analysis of EU Twinning projects in Ukraine (Table 14). The **strengths** reflect the aspects of Twinning projects that are largely viewed as successful by the stakeholders, and which may have contributed to the effectiveness of the projects. The **weaknesses**, in contrast, refer to the perceived problems of Twinning projects, which may have prevented them from resulting in legal or institutional convergence in Ukraine. While the strengths and weaknesses refer mainly to the endogenous characteristics of Twinning projects, opportunities and threats, in turn, reflect the exogenous dimension of Twinning projects. This external dimension is manifested through the institutional characteristics of the sending and the receiving side, as well as the domestic (political) environment surrounding the project. The **threats**, for example, refer to the political and institutional dynamics in Ukraine and the EU, which may endanger the effective implementation of Twinning projects. The **opportunities** are the opposite of threats and refer to the political and institutional dynamics that may facilitate the implementation of Twinning projects. Based on the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the policy brief provides a series of recommendations for the EU on how to improve the implementation of Twinning projects in Ukraine and, by extension, in the other EaP countries.

**Table 14.** Overview of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of Twinning projects in Ukraine

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and socialisation forum</li> <li>• Deepening of professional ties between MS and Ukraine's administrations</li> <li>• Enriching personal experience for Twinning participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long preparation times</li> <li>• Low flexibility in adopting changes</li> <li>• Low level of financial incentives for the beneficiary side</li> <li>• Lack of strong sectoral conditionality</li> <li>• No membership perspective</li> <li>• Lack of proper policy planning and political analysis</li> <li>• Low visibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High public support for EU integration of Ukraine and signing of the AA</li> <li>• Ukraine's search for alternative markets for energy imports and industrial exports</li> <li>• Extensive experience of previous Twinning cooperation</li> <li>• Diverse added value by the new and the old MS</li> <li>• Coordination with other foreign actors and domestic civil society in the country and policy sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turnover of public personnel at the senior and middle levels</li> <li>• Red-tape and strong bureaucratic hierarchy</li> <li>• Unexpected changes in the organisational structure of the beneficiary</li> <li>• Low morale among participating public servants</li> <li>• Security concerns over the conflict in the east of the country</li> <li>• Low quality or compatibility of experts</li> <li>• Cross-cultural communication barriers</li> </ul>

## **STRENGTHS**

The Twinning instrument offers a number of strengths that contribute to the legal and institutional convergence of the EaP countries and institutions with the EU *acquis*. First, besides working towards a set of mandatory results agreed upon by the parties, Twinning projects provide a socialisation platform, where participants can exchange valuable day-to-day experience of public administration and best sectoral practices. Very often, merely transposing EU directives or regulations may not be enough without having an actual learning curve in the process of their implementation. The invaluable experience of MS on that count makes Twinning a great tool for helping the beneficiary countries not only formally adopt EU *acquis* and best practices in government but also efficiently implement them without repeating past mistakes. Twinning projects normally attract MS experts with over 10 years of professional experience in their respective policy areas. Therefore, Twinning offers a great opportunity for the beneficiary country's officials, who in their majority only have a remote idea of the EU's regulatory landscape, to learn first-hand about the EU's ways of doing things.

Another benefit of Twinning cooperation are interpersonal ties forged at the level of ministries from EU MS and Ukraine. Such cooperation, for example, contributes to strengthening partnerships between organisations and individuals involved. In the long run, this may bring about more opportunities for cooperation, which includes grants, study visits, or future exchange of experience. It is also common that successful Twinning projects are followed a couple of years later by a new project involving the same team. Sometimes, MS experts offering expertise within a Twinning project are later invited by the Ukrainian side to contribute to related reform projects in the country. Finally, such informal networks between MS and Ukraine have contributed to widening a spectrum of bilateral cooperation to other policy areas and institutions between the countries. Studies have even shown that the socialisation networks associated with Twinning may soften the attitudes of officials involved towards democratic governance in their institutions, hence contributing to the EU's democracy promotion agenda in the near abroad.<sup>572</sup>

Finally, Twinning has been a very fulfilling personal experience for many participating MS officials that we interviewed. Participation in a Twinning projects has allowed them to spend several years in another country, learn about its people and culture, as well as take a fresh look at their own professional experience from the prospective of a different administrative system. Friendships forged during Twinning cooperation have often been lasting and productive, extending in time well over the allocated time for the project. Some Twins have even found partners for life during their stay abroad.

## **WEAKNESSES**

Along with their strengths, Twinning projects have also manifested several systemic weaknesses, related to the process of implementation but also the preparation phase. Based on our analysis, we can distinguish seven weaknesses. First, an average preparation time for a typical Twinning project may exceed two years, starting with formulation of the terms of reference and the fiche to the day the project is launched. This long period can be explained by a significant number of actors involved in the process of project preparation (up to 20 people).<sup>573</sup> Such a lag between the formulation of Twinning objectives and their implementation may invalidate initially relevant policy priorities for the beneficiary institution or for the EU itself. Under such circumstances, the administrative and financial management of Twinning projects may also become cumbersome, especially in view of securing the continued commitment of the beneficiary and the availability of project experts several years down the line.

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<sup>572</sup> Freyburg, "Transgovernmental Networks as Catalysts for Democratic Change? EU Functional Cooperation with Arab Authoritarian Regimes and Socialization of Involved State Officials into Democratic Governance."

<sup>573</sup> Bouscharain and Moreau, "Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries Covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Final Report," 188.



Second, the problem of the long preparation times is exacerbated by some rigidity of the instrument itself. Once the original objectives have been formulated, it is very problematic and time-consuming to change them after the project has begun. For example, once the mandatory results become part of a Twinning fiche, they may not be changed during project implementation.<sup>574</sup> The MS and the beneficiary may jointly request certain modifications during project implementation by means of side letters and addenda. However, these modifications mostly concern adjustments to the work plan, activities, deadlines, or budgetary matters, but may hardly contest the mandatory results agreed upon in the Twinning contract. Such inflexibility has often resulted in project participants being stuck with outdated and irrelevant agenda, hindering the project from reaching its goals.

Third, Twinning participants, especially on the beneficiary side, have often complained about an insufficient level of financial incentives offered by the Twinning instrument. Almost entire Twinning budget covers the salaries of MS experts and organisation of relevant activities (workshops, seminars, conferences, language services) in the beneficiary country. The domestic civil servants are expected to commit to the project in their overtime and on a voluntary basis, in addition to their already heavy workload at a public agency. The Ukrainian public sector is also infamous for its extremely low salaries, barely enough for one to survive, given the current level of prices (hence one of the reasons behind widespread political corruption in the country). This problem of underfinancing of the Ukrainian public sector becomes particularly acute at the interpersonal level, whereby the Resident Twinning Advisor and other MS experts earn more money per diem than a Ukrainian civil servant per month! That disparity in earnings has often led to tensions, implicit or explicit, between the Twins over the course of the project.

Furthermore, the beneficiary side is expected to provide MS experts with office space and necessary equipment (computers, copy machines, phones, etc.), as well as to pay for domestic travel of local experts to and from Twinning events. Its failure to do so has also become a stumbling block for some projects in Ukraine and resulted in delays during project implementation or in a low turnout of Ukrainian experts for project events. In some cases, the project could not start for several months because the beneficiary institution designated no office space or failed to provide internet or phone connection. Since Twinning budgets normally do not cover those costs, Twinning participants often had to look for workarounds or even pay out of their own pockets.

Fourth, Twinning projects in virtually all policy sectors in Ukraine have suffered from a low level of political commitment at the highest state level. While partly attributable to the volatility of the Ukrainian political system, widespread conflicts of interest, and low financial support by the state, this lack of commitment may also be

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid., 37.

traced to the EU's insufficient or ineffective conditionality in some sectors of Twinning cooperation. Both in the Action Plan and, more recently, in the AA and the DCFTA with Ukraine, some policy sectors have received less attention and fewer "sticks and carrots" from the EU. For example, EU-Ukraine commitments in sectors such as social affairs, education, or environment have been less clear than those in more trade-related fields, such as trade, industry, energy, and finance. Consequently, Twinning projects in the latter sectors have tended to be more effective in terms of legal and institutional convergence. Fixing this shortcoming would require bringing the policy agenda of future Twinning projects more in line with the high-priority areas of cooperation in the AAs and DCFTAs for the EaP region.

Fifth, Twinning cooperation in the ENP has formally been modelled on accession conditionality, inspired by the EU's Eastern enlargement 10 years ago<sup>575</sup>. Because EU membership is not in the books for the ENP countries yet, the beneficiary country may not be particularly keen on the costly process of transposing the EU *acquis* or adopting MS administrative experience if the "main carrot" of EU membership is missing. This strategic shortcoming was also confirmed in our interviews with Twinning experts, who worked in the ENP, IPA, or Eastern enlargement framework and who could compare the differences.

Sixth, some observers have pointed out the lack of proper political analysis and planning that precede a Twinning project. Many projects have been planned and implemented without first ascertaining solid commitment at the highest political level and gaining sufficient awareness of all underwater currents. The limited expertise of certain experts drafting a project fiche has also resulted in difficulties accommodating original project objectives to the actual needs and capacities on the ground. This problem seems to be exacerbated by a lack of methodological tools to undertake a local needs analysis in a more precise and uniform manner across different countries and policy sectors.

And seventh, our interviewees suggested that the level of visibility of current Twinning projects was rather low. That manifests itself in low awareness on the part of Ukrainian civil servants of the benefits and expectations of Twinning cooperation. While the situation is somewhat better in policy areas related to the private sector (e.g., trade and industry, transport, or statistics), Twinning projects in policy sectors related exclusively to the public sector (e.g., justice and home affairs) are not very widely known and understood outside of their hosting institutions.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Based on our analysis, we can identify five opportunities for EU Twinning in Ukraine. A first opportunity is the current government's favourable stance towards EU integration. In fact, one of the main triggers behind the Euromaidan protests in 2013

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<sup>575</sup> Tulmets, "Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement?"

was the refusal of the then Yanukovich leadership to sign a landmark AA with the EU. After the agreement was signed by the Poroshenko administration in May 2014, Ukraine undertook additional commitments related to the approximation of the country's regulatory standards to the EU's, along with implementation of the ongoing visa liberalisation roadmap. Many of those commitments have been covered by past and current Twinning projects, helping Ukraine and other EaP countries remove barriers to trade with the EU and improve their systems of governance. Existing studies on Europeanisation have shown that the adoption of EU laws and technical standards in the absence of membership perspective is not uniform across different policy sectors and may be conditional upon a set of rewards or sanctions that the EU attaches to reform progress in a given policy area.<sup>576</sup> Thus, by explicitly linking the policy agenda of Twinning projects with the sectoral priorities from the AA and the DCFTA, the EU may accomplish yet better convergence of Ukrainian institutions with the EU structures and practices.

Another opportunity for Twinning, ensuing from the standoff between Ukraine and Russia, consists in Ukraine looking for alternatives to the Russian market and, by extension, closer integration with the EU.<sup>577</sup> For instance, Twinning projects in areas such as energy, veterinary and phytosanitary regulation, and transport (once flogging a dead horse) may get a second wind, as Ukraine is moving away from the Russia-led customs union towards the EU's single market. Identifying those market niches where Ukraine may be more interested in the EU than in other players should be a priority of policymakers planning Twinning projects in the country. That also applies to Twinning projects in other EaP countries, seeking to reduce their dependence on Russia and diversify their energy and export markets.

As mentioned above, Twinning has already recorded nearly two decades of implementation history, first in the accession candidates from CEECs and then as part of the ENPI and IPA frameworks. That presents Twinning policymakers with ample opportunities for exchange of experience and further improvement of the instrument. Twinning partners from MS with some prior Twinning experience have already been in higher demand than those without such experience. That applies to the forming of consortia between MS in the process of bidding, and also to the selection preferences by the ENP beneficiaries concerning their future Twinning partners. Developing a pool of Twinning implementation experience from different countries and regions may also lead to better Twinning programming in the future and help avoid the past errors.

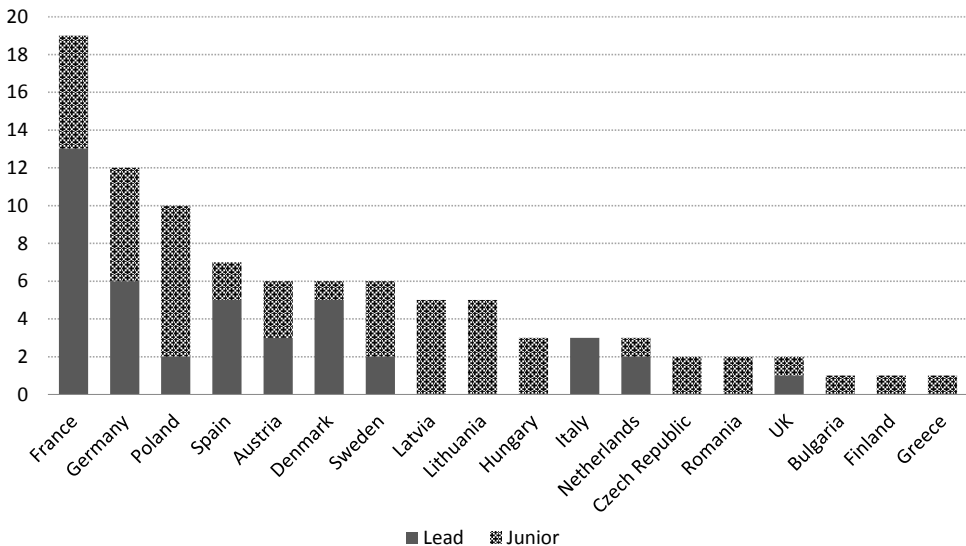
With the EU's enlargement to the East, the EU received another advantage for Twinning cooperation under the EaP. Most new member states, by way of their recent transition experience and historical and socio-linguistic commonalities with the EaP

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<sup>576</sup> Ademmer, Delcour, and Wolczuk, "Beyond Geopolitics: An Introduction to the Impact of the EU and Russia in the 'contested Neighborhood'"; Langbein and Börzel, "Introduction: Explaining Policy Change in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood."

<sup>577</sup> Delcour and Kostanyan, "Towards a Fragmented Neighbourhood: Policies of the EU and Russia and Their Consequences for the Area That Lies in between," 7.

neighbours, offer an added value to Twinning projects as compared to the older member states.<sup>578</sup> The memories of reforms in their home countries are still fresh in the minds of civil servants from CEECs, as they often participated personally in the transitioning of their countries to the EU's standards of democracy and market economy (including being Twinning beneficiaries themselves). At the same time, many older MS have at their disposal an experience of running well-established and reputable administrative and economic systems. Therefore, by identifying the comparative advantages of CEECs and the older MS and their points of complementarity, the EU may further improve the effectiveness of Twinning projects in Ukraine and the EaP.



**Figure 8.** MS Participation in Twinning Projects in Ukraine, 2007-2016

Finally, Twinning projects in Ukraine and other EaP countries may benefit from a more coordinated and consistent interface with the other programmes by the EU, EU member states, and other international and domestic actors. Players such as the IMF and the US, for example, have already recorded progress in the anti-corruption effort and the macro-economic stabilisation of Ukraine. The Twinning instrument can uphold and deepen this progress through consistent and coordinated technical assistance to policy areas such as finance, justice and home affairs, and public administration. Apart from the international actors, domestic civil society organisations promoting political reform in Ukraine have also been on the rise. The EU can therefore adopt a more

<sup>578</sup> Fabienne Bossuyt and Dmytro Panchuk, "The Participation of CEECs in EU Twinning Projects: Offering Specific Added Value for EU Transgovernmental Cooperation in the Eastern Neighbourhood?," 2017.

inclusive approach by factoring in the experiences of those different networks in respective policy areas in the process of Twinning implementation.

## **THREATS**

Our analysis has revealed a number of threats for the effective implementation of Twinning in Ukraine, both on the EU and Ukrainian side. Among the most common threats are perpetuating institutional instability, weak autonomy of public servants, low transparency of Ukraine's public sector, and unclear security situation, associated with a war in the east of the country. On the EU side, these threats consist in the varying quality of Twinning experts and possible incompatibilities between the administrative systems of partners.

Although Twinning projects are planned and implemented in a relative autonomy from the incumbent leadership, public institutions hosting such projects in Ukraine have often been vulnerable to changes in the political weather on the top. Most senior civil servants, heads of ministries, departments, or agencies hosting a Twinning project, are politically influenced appointees. With every change of government or President (and such changes seem frequent in Ukraine), the leadership of the institution is replaced, jeopardising the previous achievements of Twinning projects in that institution. New department heads that come instead are often disinterested or even dismissive of what their predecessors have done. For example, a Twinning project in agricultural land market in 2013-2015 sought to prepare the legal and institutional ground for lifting a moratorium on agricultural land sales in Ukraine. While securing initial support from the authorities, the project endured a change of political leadership and the appointment of a new department head, whose political party was rallying strongly against lifting this moratorium. As the result, a seemingly successful project fell short of its purpose and goals.

In another example, when the department head leaves, their personal assistant, head of staff, and other personnel may follow behind, posing bureaucratic complications for the remaining project team. In more extreme cases, such transformations have resulted in public personnel who participated in Twinning being laid off. Given the highly hierarchical system of public administration in Ukraine, it takes a lot of effort for the RTA to bring the project back on track once the chain of command is broken at the top. In light of that, some RTAs complained of the limited autonomy of middle-range public servants in Ukraine when it came to making even routine decisions without obtaining approval from higher-standing officials. Such prior approvals may be problematic and time-consuming, which results in unnecessary delays over the course of the project.

Similarly to changes in beneficiary personnel, Twinning projects are threatened by unexpected and far-reaching organisational shifts in the beneficiary institution. With nearly any change of leadership in Ukraine, various public agencies are renamed, re-organised, or liquidated. As a result, Twinning projects tailor-made for one institution

become irrelevant after that institution ceases to exist or changes its scope of activities. Such unexpected shifts have wreaked havoc on many Twinning projects Ukraine, both in the preparation and implementation stage. Sometimes, a new institution, where the Twinning project is re-assigned, did not participate in the initial stages of project implementation and hence shows no interest in continuing it. It also comes as no surprise that such institutions have often been slow to provide office space or additional resources, as requested by the Twins.

Another threat to Twinning operations in Ukraine is generally low morale among civil servants (see also section “weaknesses”), who have to spend their extra working time on Twinning commitments. The bonus of participating in study visits to a partnering MS (and getting to keep the per diem money), may not be sufficient and appropriate motivator for Ukrainian bureaucrats tasked with the daily implementation of the project. With the taxing range of their other commitments, Ukrainian civil servants often do not appreciate the benefits of Twinning and work half-heartedly as the result. To add insult to injury, under the circumstances of continuing institutional instability, many civil servants in Ukraine experience an anxiety about the possibility of losing their job.

The Euromaidan protests and ongoing Russian aggression in the east of the country have also had their toll on Twinning cooperation in Ukraine. Several projects running during the tumultuous winter of 2013-2014 were suspended for several months due to security concerns of project partners from the EU. The change of political leadership in aftermath of the Euromaidan affected the institutional landscape in Ukraine and had a rather detrimental effect on some Twinning projects. Our interviewee also reported that some of their male Ukrainian colleagues were drafted into the army during project implementation – something that further dampened the morale of their colleagues. While the political and security situation in the country has recently stabilised somewhat and the military action being geographically far from most Twinning hosts in Kyiv, it is still premature to predict how the situation will unfold in coming years and whether it will have further adverse impacts on Twinning projects there.

As for the EU side, respondents referred to the lack of qualification by some Twinning experts, mostly short-term, as potentially weakening the effectiveness of Twinning projects. There may be several reasons for that. First, due to disparities between the Ukrainian system of public administration and that of some MS, the experience of some MS public agencies may simply be irrelevant or incompatible with the Ukrainian realities. Second, MS experts may be not motivated to learn about the local specifics of the beneficiary country and often do just enough to get the next contract abroad. Third, the process of selection of short-term experts is often driven by personal recommendations and acquaintances of the RTA, Project Leader, or National Contact Point and may be less based on the experts’ qualifications. A similar issue is also present in the setup of Twinning consortiums, whereby the lead MS

partners may abuse their status by nominating their experts to spearhead particular components within a project while not necessarily offering superior expertise compared to the junior partners.

Among less critical threats to Twinning projects are linguistic and intercultural barriers, occurring when people from different countries work together on a daily basis. Some Twinning projects to date have suffered from interpersonal communication difficulties as well. Some of these difficulties have been resolved or tolerated, while others have led to significant delays and, in more extreme cases, to rotations of RTAs and other staff. Under those circumstances, it appears important for the EU to second more experts with the understanding of the local situation, for example by encouraging more expertise from CEECs during project implementation.

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Twinning is a sophisticated institution-building programme, aiming to not only approximate the regulatory environment of the ENP countries with EU standards but also to build transgovernmental and personal ties between civil servants across the borders. Based on the SWOT analysis of Twinning projects in the case of Ukraine, we put forward several policy recommendations, which could help the European Commission improve this instrument and boost its effectiveness in the short and long run. While being particularly relevant for Ukraine, these recommendations can also further improve Twinning projects in other partner countries of the EaP and the ENP more broadly.

- Reconceptualise Twinning as a flexible toolkit, rather than a rigid instrument, by allowing for more flexibility in adjusting and updating project's objectives during planning and implementation stages.
- Cut down on the project preparation times by reducing the number of actors involved in the process of project approval and by speeding up the overall procedure.
- Step up financial support to the beneficiary, which should involve domestic travel grants for local experts and cash bonuses for civil servants in accordance with the time invested in the project.
- Adopt a customised approach to each policy sector, as based on a rigorous analysis of policy background and current leadership's priorities in reform. The European Commission may consider instituting grants for researchers with local knowledge, who will perform a gap analysis of existing legislation and domestic needs by analysing first-hand data and consulting with domestic stakeholders and experts.
- Attempt more visibility measures, effectively communicating the objectives and benefits of Twinning cooperation to a broader swath of stakeholders in the beneficiary country.

- Make Twinning contracts and performance reports more accessible to the general public and research community in order to elicit a wider range of feedback on the benefits and shortcomings of the projects.
- Align the policy agenda of Twinning projects with AA priorities, especially in low-key sectors (e.g., education and social care) and in sectors where the EU enjoys a bargaining power (e.g., trade and industry). A clear and credible EU membership perspective will also likely improve the track record of future Twinning projects in Ukraine and other EaP countries.
- Perform a more thorough analysis of past Twinning projects in a given policy area so as to draw lessons and make subsequent projects more efficient.
- Encourage the joint involvement of older MS and newer MS - especially those from Central and Eastern Europe - in Twinning projects.
- Provide more institutionalised avenues for coordination between the Twinning programmes and other initiatives by the EU and other international actors in a particular policy sector. This coordination should also include domestic civil society organisations pushing for EU-related reforms in relevant sectors.
- Make the process of selection of Twinning short-term experts more rigorous by creating EU-wide expert databases in particular subject areas, as has been done in the TAIEX programme.



## Article 2. Supplement

**Table 15.** Democratic governance substance matrix for content analysis of Twinning project fiches

	High – 2	Medium – 1	Low – 0
Transparency	Project encourages free access to and sharing of information related to the beneficiary institution, policy sector, and/or project itself for domestic civil society, media, EU and/or other international stakeholders. This also includes anti-corruption initiatives	Project foresees discretionary access to and sharing of information related to the beneficiary institution, policy sector, and/or project itself for a limited number of external stakeholders, usually within the policy sector or institution	Project contains no explicit references to access to and sharing of information related to the beneficiary institution, policy sector, and/or project itself for external stakeholders
Accountability	Project seeks to enhance the organisational structure and patterns of subordination within the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector, as well as to create avenues for redress of grievances and monitoring by civil society, authorised public entities, EU or other international stakeholders	Project seeks to enhance the organisational structure and patterns of subordination within the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector, but creates limited avenues for redress of grievances and monitoring by few or none of external actors	Project neither foresees changes of the organisational structure and patterns of subordination within the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector, nor offers any avenues for redress of grievances and monitoring by external actors
Participation	Project encourages participation and feedback from civil society and media both in project activities and in the everyday activity of the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector	Project encourages participation and/or feedback from civil society or media in project activities ONLY, but not in the everyday activity of the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector	Project fiche contains NO references to participation and/or feedback from civil society and media in project activities and in the everyday activity of the beneficiary institution or the relevant sector
Democratic governance substance	An average of transparency, accountability, and participation is [2.0-1.4]	An average of transparency, accountability, and participation is [1.3-0.7]	An average of transparency, accountability, and participation is [0.6-0.0]

**Table 16.** Coding matrix for sector politicisation

	Politicised – 2	Non-politicised – 0
Sector politicisation	Majority of project policy objectives are likely to expose political or commercial conflict of interest, including corruption, in the beneficiary institution or policy sector. Most politicised projects originate in sectors such as energy, finance, trade and industry, and justice and home affairs	Majority of project policy objectives are NOT likely to expose political or commercial conflict of interest, including corruption, in the beneficiary institution or policy sector. Most non-politicised projects originate in sectors such as environment, employment, statistics, and transport

**Table 17.** Coding matrix for sector technical complexity

	Technically complex – 1	Regular – 0
Sector technical complexity	Project policy sector requires an advanced knowledge of calculus, econometric models, or laboratory testing skills in its daily functioning. Most technically complex projects originate in the sectors of finance, health and consumer protection, statistics, trade and industry, and transport	Project policy sector does NOT require an advanced knowledge of calculus, econometric models, or laboratory testing skills in its daily functioning. Most regular projects originate in the sectors of justice and home affairs, employment, social affairs, and environment

**Table 18.** Coding matrix for EU sectoral conditionality

	High – 1	Low – 0
EU sectoral conditionality	Project policy objectives deal with the facilitation of trade with the EU or visa liberalisation roadmaps in respective beneficiary countries. Most projects with high EU sectoral conditionality belong to sectors such as finance, energy, trade and industry, health and consumer protection.	Project policy objectives are NOT related to the facilitation of trade with the EU or visa liberalisation roadmaps in respective beneficiary countries. Most projects with low EU sectoral conditionality belong to sectors such as employment and social affairs, environment, justice and home affairs, transport, and statistics.

### **Example of operationalisation**

To illustrate the application of the coding matrices from Tables above, let me take an example of the Twinning project “Support to the Academy of Judges of Ukraine”, implemented by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice between 2009 and 2011. This project sought to introduce a unified, transparent, and anonymous examination of future Ukrainian judges as one of its mandatory results and stressed the need to address corruption in the judiciary. Therefore, this project was ranked “High” [2] in the category “transparency”. The project scored “Medium” [1] in the category “accountability”, because it sought to ensure impartiality of Ukrainian judges through specialised training and curriculum, yet it did not elaborate how exactly future judges would be more accountable to the general public and monitoring institutions. Finally, the project was ranked “Low” [0] for participation, as it did not foresee any provisions for participation and feedback by civil society. In terms of configuration of substance, this is a transparency-oriented (TO) project, because the transparency score dominates the others. An average score of 1.0 places this project into a medium type of democratic governance substance by magnitude.

As for the independent variables, this project scored 50 according to the World Bank’s VA index for Ukraine in 2008, when the project fiche was drafted. The area of the judiciary of Ukraine, where the project operated, is infamous for its lack of political independence and transparency, and hence considered “politicised” [1]. According to sector technical complexity, this project is considered “regular” [0], because functioning of the judiciary, while requiring a degree of specialised knowledge, normally does not deal with calculus, econometric modelling, or laboratory testing. Finally, this policy sector, while being important for the EU rule of law promotion, is not so much relevant for trade between the EU and Ukraine. That is why it was rated “low” [0] for EU sectoral conditionality.

### Article 3. Supplement

**Table 19.** Sample of EU Twinning projects in Azerbaijan (n=11) and Ukraine (n=19), sorted by policy sector (2007-2016)

Full project title	Country	Sector	Start	End	EU MS*
Support to the State Committee for Land and Cartography of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of establishment of the modern registration system of the state land cadastre information	AZ	Agriculture	2012	2014	<b>Sweden</b> Latvia
Assistance in Development of Open and Transparent Agricultural Land Market in Ukraine	UA	Agriculture	2013	2015	<b>Netherlands</b> Germany Lithuania
Strengthening the capacity of the Department of Tourism in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism	AZ	Employment & social affairs	2013	2014	<b>Austria</b> Lithuania
Support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the Development of a System for Medico-Social Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities	AZ	Employment & social affairs	2014	2015	<b>France</b> Germany (Lithuania)
Support to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for further adherence of the higher education system to the European Higher Education Area	AZ	Employment & social affairs	2015	2017	<b>Finland</b> Estonia
Support to Civil Service Development in Ukraine	UA	Employment & social affairs	2011	2014	<b>Poland</b> UK
Support to the development of the social services system in Ukraine	UA	Employment & social affairs	2012	2014	<b>France</b>
Legal Capacity for Strengthening Natural Gas Regulation in NERC	UA	Energy	2009	2011	<b>Italy</b> Romania Greece
Strengthening of the Administrative and Legislative Framework in the field of Energy Regulation in NERC	UA	Energy	2007	2009	<b>Italy</b> Czech Republic

\* When several MS were involved in a project, the lead partner is indicated in bold. MS are mentioned between brackets when they were not formally a partner of a project but when they seconded one or more of their civil servants during the implementation of the project at the request of the MS that were full partners of the project.

Strengthening of Radiation Safety Infrastructure and development of Supporting Services of Azerbaijan	AZ	Environment	2013	2015	Lithuania
Approximation of the legal and regulatory framework for the securities market of Azerbaijan according to the EU <i>acquis</i> and capacity building for the State Committee for Securities	AZ	Finance	2012	2014	Poland
Support to the Ministry of Taxes of Azerbaijan Republic in the field of Human Resource Development	AZ	Finance	2014	2016	<b>Spain</b> France
Strengthening NBU potential through the approximation to EU standards of central banking	UA	Finance	2009	2011	<b>Germany</b> Poland
Strengthening the enforcement of competition law and policy in Ukraine	UA	Finance	2007	2009	<b>France</b> Hungary
Supporting the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine in the fields of Public Debt Management and Budgetary Forecasting	UA	Finance	2010	2012	<b>France</b> Sweden Hungary
Support to the State Veterinary Service to Prepare for a National System for Identification of Animals and Registration of Holdings	AZ	Health & consumer protection	2011	2013	<b>Spain</b> Poland
Harmonisation of Ukrainian phytosanitary legislation to European regulations and standards	UA	Health & consumer protection	2012	2014	<b>Germany</b> France Latvia
Support to the Professional Development of the Staff of the State Migration Service of Azerbaijan	AZ	Justice & home affairs	2013	2015	<b>Netherlands</b> Latvia Romania
Support to the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan	AZ	Justice & home affairs	2009	2011	Lithuania
Contribution to improvement of the system of public order protection by the Interior Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (ITU)	UA	Justice & home affairs	2012	2013	<b>France</b> Romania
Introduction and Development of Quality Management within the Ukrainian Police	UA	Justice & home affairs	2008	2010	France
Support to the development and improvement of the civil servants training system in Ukraine	UA	Justice & home affairs	2009	2011	<b>France</b> Poland

Development of new Statistical Methodologies and indicators in selected areas of statistics in line with the EU statistical standards	UA	Statistics	2011	2013	<b>Denmark</b> Finland Latvia
Support to Development Processes in the State Statistics Service of Ukraine with the Objective to Enhance its Capacity and Production	UA	Statistics	2013	2015	<b>Denmark</b> France
Support for the Development of a Modern System of Standardisation and Technical Regulations in Azerbaijan	AZ	Trade & industry	2014	2016	<b>UK</b> Slovenia France
Strengthening of Standardisation, Market Surveillance, Metrology, Conformity Assessment, and Consumer Policy in Ukraine	UA	Trade and industry	2007	2009	<b>France</b> Germany
Development and Coordination of Multimodal Transport and Logistic Processes in Ukraine	UA	Transport	2012	2014	France
Harmonisation with EU norms of the legislation and standards of Ukraine in the field of Civil Aviation	UA	Transport	2007	2009	<b>France</b> Poland
Institutional support to the MIU on increasing the operation performance and the competitiveness of Rail transport in Ukraine	UA	Transport	2013	2015	<b>Spain</b> Poland
Support to the Strengthening of Road Freight and Passengers Transport Safety	UA	Transport	2008	2010	<b>France</b> Austria Poland

## Article 4. Supplement

**Table 20.** Boolean configurations for legal convergence

CaseID	legal	polit	cond	fit	comun
Troops vs. [Satellite]	C*	0	0	1	1
Space vs [Aviation, Social]	C	0	0	0	1
FoodSafety, ServDev	1	1	1	1	0
Accred, NERC2, Standardiz	1	1	1	1	1
Bank, Rail	1	0	1	1	1
RoadSafety	1	0	0	1	0
Troops	1	0	0	1	1
Multimodal, Telecomms	0	0	0	0	0
Land, Police	0	1	0	1	1
Efficiency	0	0	1	0	1
Debt, Phytosan	0	1	1	0	1
Copyright, Judges, KRU	0	1	0	0	1
Competition, NERC1	0	1	1	0	0
Audit	0	1	0	0	0
AdmCourts	0	1	0	1	0

1 – condition or outcome positive 0 – condition or outcome negative C – contradictory configuration  
 Parentheses [ ... ] contain cases with negative outcome in contradictory configurations

\* Before obtaining a parsimonious formula for legal convergence, it was necessary to eliminate contradictory configurations (C). In the first instance, project [Satellite] clashed with project Troops because the latter contributed to a new law in Ukraine, while the former did not. This conflict was possible to resolve by taking a closer look at the outcomes of these cases. The law proposed by the [Satellite] project has not passed the Parliament yet and it is also below the 2-year “grace period” of effectiveness. Therefore, during the minimisation procedure, project [Satellite] was removed. In the second contradictory configuration, project Space conflicted with projects [Aviation] and [Social]. Although project Space resulted in a new law and offered two more draft laws, its original design was poorly conceived (Int. 28). According to the interviewee, it was effective only because of an unusual flexibility of the Commission in that particular project, as well as individual efforts of the RTA and the Ukrainian team that they managed to have that law passed (ibid.). There was also a Russian factor. Ukraine started looking up to European space markets because Russia reneged on some of its previous trade agreements with Ukraine in that sector (ibid.). While recognising the importance of this case, we had to exclude it from the QCA to resolve the contradiction.

NOTE: projects containing no legal component (i.e., FDI, ServTrain, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3 – as based on Table 24 – were also excluded from the analysis of legal convergence.

**Table 21.** Boolean configurations for institutional convergence

CaseID	instit	polit	cond	fit	comun
Accred, Standardis vs [NERC2]	C*	1	1	1	1
Police vs [Land]	C	1	0	1	1
FoodSafety vs [ServDev]	C	1	1	1	0
AdmCourts	1	1	0	1	0
Satellite, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops	1	0	0	1	1
Bank, Rail	1	0	1	1	1
Aviation, Social, Space	0	0	0	0	1
RoadSafety	0	0	0	1	0
Multimodal, Telecomms	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency	0	0	1	0	1
Debt, Phytosan	0	1	1	0	1
Copyright, Judges, KRU	0	1	0	0	1
Competition, NERC1	0	1	1	0	0
Audit, FDI, ServTrain	0	1	0	0	0

1 – condition or outcome positive 0 – condition or outcome negative C – contradictory configuration  
 Parentheses [ ... ] contain cases with negative outcome in contradictory configurations

\* Truth-Table 21 for institutional convergence contained three contradictory configurations, which we resolved by removing some of the cases that caused conflict. For example, project [NERC2] with the National Electricity Regulatory Commission of Ukraine operated in the sector of energy, which exhibited strong dependence on Russia in those years. We believe the Russian factor, while probably explaining lack of institutional convergence in [NERC2], cannot be captured by our analytical framework. That is why the case [NERC2] was dropped from the minimisation procedure. Cases [Land] and [ServDev] were also removed because they did not pass the two-year “grace period” of effectiveness.

**Table 22.** Boolean configurations for Twinning effectiveness

CaseID	effect	polit	cond	fit	comun
Space vs [Aviation, Social]	C*	0	0	0	1
Police vs [Land]	C*	1	0	1	1
Audit, FDI, ServTrain	1	1	0	0	0
Competition, NERC1	1	1	1	0	0
Copyright, Judges, KRU	1	1	0	0	1
Debt, Phytosan	1	1	1	0	1
Efficiency	1	0	1	0	1
Multimodal, Telecomms	1	0	0	0	0
RoadSafety	1	0	0	1	0
Accred, NERC2, Standardiz	0	1	1	1	1
AdmCourts	0	1	0	1	0
Bank, Rail	0	0	1	1	1
FoodSafety, ServDev	0	1	1	1	0
Satellite, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops	0	0	0	1	1

1 – condition or outcome positive 0 – condition or outcome negative C – contradictory configuration  
 Parentheses [ ... ] contain cases with negative outcome in contradictory configurations

\* These contradictory configurations were resolved by removing the conflicting cases with a negative outcome, as described in Table 20 and Table 21.



**Table 23.** Analysis of necessity for Twinning effectiveness (coverage threshold 0.75)

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Cons.</b>	<b>Cov.</b>	<b>Case IDs</b>
<b><i>Legal convergence</i></b>			
<b>FIT</b>	1.00	0.75	Accred, Bank, FoodSafety, NERC2, Rail, RoadSafety, ServDev, Standardiz, Troops
<b><i>NO legal convergence</i></b>			
<b>cond+fit</b>	1.00	0.89	AdmCourts, Audit, Aviation, Competition, Copyright, Debt, Efficiency, Judges, KRU, Land, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, Police, Social, Telecomms
<b>POLIT+fit</b>	1.00	0.77	AdmCourts, Audit, Aviation, Competition, Copyright, Debt, Efficiency, Judges, KRU, Land, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, Police, Social, Telecomms
<b><i>Institutional convergence</i></b>			
<b>FIT</b>	1.00	1.00	AdmCourts, Accred, Bank, FoodSafety, Police, Rail, RoadSafety, Satellite, Standardiz, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops
<b><i>NO institutional convergence</i></b>			
<b>fit</b>	1.00	1.00	Audit, Aviation, Competition, Debt, Efficiency, FDI, Judges, KRU, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, ServTrain, SocialSpace, Telecomms
<b><i>Effectiveness</i></b>			
<b>FIT</b>	1.00	1.00	AdmCourts, Bank, Rail, NERC2, Accred, Standardiz, Police, RoadSafety, Satellite, Statistics1, Statistics2, Statistics3, Troops, ServDev, FoodSafety
<b><i>NO effectiveness</i></b>			
<b>fit</b>	1.00	1.00	Audit, Aviation, Competition, Copyright, Debt, Efficiency, FDI, Judges, KRU, Multimodal, NERC1, Phytosan, ServTrain, Social, Telecomms

**Table 24.** Dichotomised data on Twinning projects (sorted by effectiveness)

PROJECT ID	SECTOR	SUMMARY OF CONVERGENCE							
		COND	POLIT	FIT	COMUN	LEGAL	INSTIT	EFFECT	
<i>Accred</i>	Trade	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> The Law of Ukraine "On Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies" included amendments recommended by the project (not part of the project); <i>Institutional:</i> The National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine (NAAU) was recognised in the field of accreditation of personnel certification bodies by the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) in 2009 (Bouscharain & Moreau, 2012; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>AdmCourts</i>	JHA	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> no obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> The Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine (HACU) introduced innovative methods of case management and statistics. The press service of HACU improved their performance upon receiving training from Twinning and could use the new skills on a sustainable basis (Int. 37, 40)
<i>Bank</i>	Finance	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> a new law lowering international transaction costs for Visa and MasterCard customers from Ukraine; <i>Institutional:</i> PR and communications procedures of the National Bank of Ukraine were redesigned and successfully used after the project; 90% of Ukrainian fiscal and monetary statistics was re-modelled according to ECB requirements (Int. 24, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>FoodSafety</i>	Agriculture	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> Current regulations on food safety were amended; <i>Institutional:</i> Ukraine was allowed to export poultry to the EU a year after the project. National Institute of Veterinary Control gained skills to perform inspections in line with EU standards (Int. 7, 27; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)

\* Full project titles and additional info on projects in Table 25 of this appendix.

PROJECT ID	SECTOR	COND	POLIT	FIT	COMUN	LEGAL	INSTIT	EFFECT	SUMMARY OF CONVERGENCE
<i>NERC2</i>	Energy	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	<i>Legal:</i> Gas directive 2003/55/EC partially transposed; <i>Institutional:</i> no obvious impact yet (Int. 23; Energy Community, Ukraine Progress Report 2014)
<i>Rail*</i>	Transport	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> the Law on Railway Transport was amended (on the last day of the project); <i>Institutional:</i> Ukrzaliznytsia, state-owned railway company, changed its ownership type (Int. 40, 42; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>Satellite*</i>	Trade	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> no obvious impact yet (a new law on satellite navigation is pending approval in parliament); <i>Institutional:</i> Twinning experts set up a project office dealing with EU projects in the area of satellite navigation and sensing under Horizon 2020 (Int. 43; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>ServDev*</i>	Employment	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	<i>Legal:</i> Twinning experts involved in the project contributed to drafting a new "Law on Civil Service", which came into effect in May 2016; <i>Institutional:</i> no obvious impact yet (Int. 12, 15, 18; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>Space</i>	Transport	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	<i>Legal:</i> law on space activity was amended in line with EU requirements; <i>Institutional:</i> no obvious impact yet (Int. 28; project's final report)
<i>Standardiz</i>	Trade	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> The Law of Ukraine "On Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies" amended; <i>Institutional:</i> the adopted law and other EU technical regulations are in force (Int. 33, 34; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)
<i>Statistics1</i>	Statistics	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> not applicable; <i>Institutional:</i> new indicators introduced into the macroeconomic and business statistics (Int. 7, 11, 15)
<i>Statistics2</i>	Statistics	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> not applicable; <i>Institutional:</i> introduced new classifications for macroeconomic statistics (tourism, national accounts, structural and production statistics) and new methodologies for measuring wages (Int. 7, 11, 15)

PROJECT ID	SECTOR	SUMMARY OF CONVERGENCE													
		COND	POLIT	FIT	COMUN	LEGAL	INSTIT	EFFECT							
<i>Statistics3*</i>	Statistics	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> not applicable; <i>Institutional:</i> new methodologies and registers introduced (Int. 7, 11, 15)		
<i>Troops</i>	JHA	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> Contributed to the Law about the National Guard of Ukraine (not part of project); <i>Institutional:</i> The PR department of the Interior Troops gained good skills in the "visibility component" of the project and is still using them (Int. 16, 40; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016)		
<i>Police</i>	JHA	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> ICT-Strategy for the Interior Troops adopted and partially implemented (Int. 40)		
<i>RoadSafety</i>	Transport	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<i>Legal:</i> Relevant updates regarding technical investigation of accidents were introduced to the law on automobile transport; <i>Institutional:</i> improvements in the system of technical investigation of accidents (Int. 3, 6, 31)		
<i>Audit</i>	Environment	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 2, 10, 21)		
<i>Aviation</i>	Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 26)		
<i>Competition</i>	Finance	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 4, 39)		
<i>Copyright**</i>	Trade	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 40)		
<i>Debt</i>	Finance	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 35, 41)		
<i>Efficiency</i>	Energy	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 5, Ukraine Progress Report 2014)		
<i>FDI</i>	Finance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> not applicable; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 32; Bouscharain & Moreau, 2012)		
<i>Judges</i>	JHA	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 22, 26, 37; Bouscharain & Moreau, 2012)		

PROJECT ID	SECTOR	COND	POLIT	FIT	COMUN	LEGAL	INSTIT	EFFECT	SUMMARY OF CONVERGENCE
<i>KRU</i>	Finance	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 29)
<i>Land*</i>	Agriculture	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet, lifting of land sales moratorium is pending; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 25, 44)
<i>Multimodal*</i>	Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 31, 40)
<i>NERCI</i>	Energy	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 23; Energy Community)
<i>Phytosan*</i>	Health	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 20, 38)
<i>ServTrain</i>	JHA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> not applicable; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 4, 14, 16)
<i>Social*</i>	Employment	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 1, 30)
<i>Telecomms</i>	Telecommunications	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	<i>Legal:</i> No obvious impact yet; <i>Institutional:</i> No obvious impact yet (Int. 40, 41)

**Table 25.** Overview of analysed Twinning projects in Ukraine

<b>Brief project title</b>	<b>Beneficiary administration</b>	<b>Full project title</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>MS</b>
1. Accred	National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine	Strengthening Activities of the National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine	Trade and industry	2008	2010	NL, SW
2. AdmCourts	Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine (HACU)	Increased Effectiveness and Management Capacities of Administrative Courts in Ukraine	JHA	2011	2013	FR, LT, SW
3. Audit	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine	Support to the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine for the implementation of the Law on Ecological Audit	Environment	2010	2012	AUS, BG, CZ
4. Aviation	State Aviation Administration of MinTrans and Com-s of Ukraine (SAA)	Harmonization with EU norms of the legislation and standards of Ukraine in the field of Civil Aviation	Transport	2007	2009	FR, PL
5. Bank	National Bank of Ukraine (NBU)	Strengthening NBU potential through the approximation to EU standards of central banking	Finance	2009	2011	GER, PL
6. Competition	Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine	Strengthening the enforcement of competition law and policy in Ukraine	Finance	2007	2009	FR, HG
7. Copyright	State Service of Intellectual Property Rights of Ukraine	Strengthening the Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in Ukraine	Trade and industry	2014	2015	SP, DK
8. Debt	Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (MinFin)	Supporting the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine in the fields of Public Debt Management and Budgetary Forecasting	Finance	2010	2012	FR, SW, HG
9. Efficiency	State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine	Improvement of the Policy Framework in the sphere of energy efficiency and renewable energy and its approximation to the requirements of the EU legislation	Energy	2012	2013	GER, FR

<b>Brief project title</b>	<b>Beneficiary administration</b>	<b>Full project title</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>MS</b>
10. FDI	The State Agency for Investment and National Projects of Ukraine (SAINPU)	Enhancing performance of InvestUkraine: the Ukrainian Centre for Foreign Investment Promotion in line with the best European practices	Finance	2009	2011	GER, PL
11. FoodSafety	Ministry of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine (MoAP)	Support for the Ukrainian veterinary services in enhancing the legal and technical aspects of food safety control system	Agriculture	2009	2011	DK, NL, LV
12. Judges	Academy of Judges of Ukraine (AoJ)	Support to the Academy of Judges of Ukraine	JHA	2009	2011	AUS
13. KRU	Control and Revision Office of Ukraine (KRU)	Assisting the Main Control and Revision Office (KRU) in implementing a new system of Public Internal Financial Control	Finance	2007	2010	SW
14. Land	The State Agency of Land Resources of Ukraine (SALR)	Assistance in Development of Open and Transparent Agricultural Land Market in Ukraine	Agriculture	2013	2015	NL, GER, LT
15. Multimodal	Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine	Development and Coordination of Multimodal Transport and Logistic Processes in Ukraine	Transport	2012	2014	FR
16. NERC1	National Electricity Regulatory Commission of Ukraine (NERC)	Strengthening of the Administrative and Legislative Framework in the field of Energy Regulation in NERC	Energy	2007	2009	IT, CZ
17. NERC2	National Electricity Regulatory Commission of Ukraine (NERC)	Legal Capacity for Strengthening Natural Gas Regulation in NERC	Energy	2009	2011	IT, RO, GR
18. Phytosan	State veterinary and phytosanitary service of Ukraine	Harmonization of Ukrainian phytosanitary legislation to European regulations and standards	Health & Consumer Protection	2012	2014	GER, FR, LV
19. Police	Ministry of Interior of Ukraine (MoI)	Introduction and Development of Quality Management within the Ukrainian Police	JHA	2008	2010	FR

<b>Brief project title</b>	<b>Beneficiary administration</b>	<b>Full project title</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>MS</b>
20. Rail	Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine (co-beneficiary: State Administration of Railway Transport (UZ))	Institutional support to the MIU on increasing the operation performance and the competitiveness of Rail transport in Ukraine	Transport	2013	2015	SP, PL
21. RoadSafety	Ministry of Transport and Communications of Ukraine	Support to the Strengthening of Road Freight and Passengers Transport Safety	Transport	2008	2010	FR, AUS, PL
22. Satellite	National Space Agency of Ukraine	Strengthening of the State Space Agency's of Ukraine (SSAU) Institutional Capacity to Implement European Space Programmes in Satellite Navigation (EGNOS/ Galileo) and remote Sensing (GMES)	Trade and industry	2013	2015	SP
23. ServDev	National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service	Support to Civil Service Development in Ukraine	Employment and social affairs	2011	2014	PL, UK
24. ServTrain	National Academy of Public Administration of Ukraine (NAPA)	Support to the development and improvement of the civil servants training system in Ukraine	JHA	2009	2011	FR, PL
25. Social	Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine	Support to the development of the social services system in Ukraine	Employment and social affairs	2012	2014	FR
26. Space	National Space Agency of Ukraine	Boosting Ukrainian Space Cooperation with the EU	Transport	2008	2010	FR, GER
27. Standardiz	State Committee for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy (DSSU)	Strengthening of Standardization, Market Surveillance, Metrology and Legal Metrology, Conformity Assessment and Consumer Policy in Ukraine	Trade and industry	2007	2009	FR, GER



<b>Brief project title</b>	<b>Beneficiary administration</b>	<b>Full project title</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>MS</b>
28. Statistics1	State Statistics Committee of Ukraine	Harmonisation of Ukraine's official statistics with the EU statistical standards	Statistics	2009	2010	DK
29. Statistics2	State Statistics Committee of Ukraine	Development of new Statistical Methodologies and indicators in selected areas of statistics in line with the EU statistical standards	Statistics	2011	2013	DK, FN, LV
30. Statistics3	State Statistics Service of Ukraine	Support to Development Processes in the State Statistics Service of Ukraine with the Objective to Enhance its Capacity and Production	Statistics	2013	2015	DK, FR
31. Telecomms	National Commission for Regulation of Communications	Strengthening the regulatory and legal capacity of the NNRC in the telecommunications sector	Telecommunications	2012	2013	SP, LV, SW
32. Troops	Main Department of Interior Troops of MOI of Ukraine	Contribution to improvement of the system of public order protection by the Interior Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (ITU)	JHA	2012	2013	FR, RO

**Table 26.** Pilot survey on Twinning effectiveness

Questions	answers
1. Can you rate on a scale from 1 (none) to 10 (all), to what extent did this project accomplish its mandatory results?	
2. Did the project result in a new or adapted system, a process or a procedure in policymaking that continued functioning after project completion? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
3. How can you describe the commitment of the Ukrainian beneficiary administration to project goals and activities? (1- extremely poor ~ 10-excellent)	
4. How favourable and conducive to accomplishing your project results and activities was overall political environment in Ukraine? (1- prohibitive ~ 10-totally favourable)	
5. Did you experience any major organisational changes or staff turnovers throughout the duration of the project? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
6. Did you become aware of any conflict of interest, political or commercial, in the work of the beneficiary institution over the course of your involvement with the project? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
7. Please rate the process of coordination between different institutions involved in this Twinning project (EU Delegation, PAO, your home institution and the beneficiary institution) (1- extremely poor ~ 10-excellent)	
8. How equally and fairly were different tasks and responsibilities divided between partners during project implementation? (1- extremely unfairly ~ 10-totally fairly)	
9. Did your immediate Ukrainian counterparts have any previous experience of international cooperation with EU's or other institutions? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
10. How would you evaluate the quality of communication with your counterparts in Ukraine? (1-extremely poor ~ 10-excellent)	
11. Did your RTA speak or understand Russian/Ukrainian? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
12. How relevant was the expertise of short-term experts to Ukrainian recipients? (1-totally irrelevant ~ 10-perfectly relevant)	
13. To what extent did the project design fit the needs and capacities of the beneficiary institution? (1-no fit ~ 10-perfect fit)	
14. In your opinion, how well-defined and realistic were project objectives? (1-overly ambitious ~ 10-perfectly realistic)	
15. To your knowledge, did the EU attach any significant rewards for reform in the policy area covered by the project? Yes (Y)- No (N)	
16. Did your beneficiary institution encourage participation of civil society in project activities? Yes (Y)- No (N)	

## Typical interview questions

**Table 27.** Typical interview questions

1. Did you encourage Ukrainian partners to disclose internal information to the citizens and work in close contact with independent media?
2. Did your project involve any other provisions for transparency as part of the work plan or the mandatory results? What were they?
3. Did your project include any anti-corruption measures? If so, which were they?
4. Did your project involve any provisions for accountability as part of the work plan or the mandatory results?
5. Did your project emphasise the civil society's participation in the work of your institution? If so, in what ways?
6. Speaking of the selection process for this Twinning project, did you have any competitors from other MS? Why do you think your consortium was selected?
7. What comparative advantage/added value did the participating MS offer for their ENP counterparts?
8. Your project invited experts from both the older MS and CEECs, which joined the EU after 2004. Did you notice any difference in approaches to the objectives of the project by representatives from new and old MS?
9. What specific characteristics or best practices of your administrative system were you trying to implement through your Twinning project with Ukraine?
10. Do you think the recent transition experience of your country helped you be more effective throughout the project?
11. Did you highlight any cross-cutting issues related to democracy and human rights through the Twinning project? Were they relevant?
12. What was the most challenging aspect of your Twinning project?
13. Do you think Twinning projects in this sector have been effective overall?
14. Do you have any recommendations how to improve future Twinning projects?





