

# **BETWEEN SOLIDARITY AND ECONOMICS**

*AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY DUTCH DEVELOPMENT POLICY ARRANGEMENT*

Koen Vleugels

Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University

November 2016



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study focuses on the consequences for Dutch civil development actors (NGOs) as a result of a policy shift in official Dutch development aid (ODA) from fiscal year 2014 onwards. The quintessence of this new ODA policy centres around two alterations: on the one hand, Dutch ODA will explicitly emphasise the combination of (development) ‘aid’ with ‘trade’ (economics) using the *Dutch Good Growth Fund* (DGGF), a concessional investment and export funding scheme meant for small and medium-sized enterprises, while on the other hand gradually ending traditional Dutch state-NGO co-funding schemes.

The political decision to primarily aim on improving the market access of developing countries to international and regional markets by supporting private entrepreneurs, while cutting financial ties with domestic NGOs has sparked much criticism, both domestic as abroad. This study is therefore relevant in two spheres: intellectually, the study fuels the academic discussion of what it means ‘to develop’ as the new Dutch ODA set of policy goals increasingly attempts to incorporate traditional non-indigenous elements, next to economics, to development cooperation, such as the provision of human and civic rights. Socially, this study emphasises the importance of a solid and coherence foreign policy balancing the development of social, economic and ecological themes through international cooperation and development aid. In addition, the study is also explorative in nature since the majority of contemporary Dutch NGOs have to deal with less state grants for the first time in over 50 years, thus radically transforming their organisational structures and substantive messages.

Delineating choices limit the scope of the study to Dutch civil development actors, but also include a contextual and explorative study of the inner institutional workings and practicalities of the DGGF. The research question is formulated as:

*What are the consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for the civil actors previously, presently and prospectively associated with international cooperation and schemes of development aid?*

To assess the supposed consequences, the policy arrangement approach (PAA) has been selected in the second chapter as the main analytical-conceptual framework, with Antony Giddens’ structuration theory acting as the leading metaphysical research philosophy fundamental to the PAA. Methodologically, the research is presented as a holistic multi-case study in the third chapter and has made use of four cases (three Dutch-based NGOs and one

private enterprise currently subscribed to the DGGF), but without the largest NGOs that traditionally feature the Dutch realm of development organisations most prominently – an important limitation to this study.

The key findings of the study are divided into two chapters. A historical overview of post-war Dutch schemes and practices of development cooperation is central to the fourth chapter. Next to providing a general oversight of past and present development policies, two main arguments are made: on the one hand, Dutch development policies have traditionally been characterised by an antithesis of a ‘merchant-vicar’, meaning an oscillation of bilateral motives to development cooperation (i.e. self-interested economic growth versus idealistic international solidarity). On the other hand, as a result of decades of political calls and desires to streamline NGO co-funding schemes, nearly all Dutch NGOs affiliated with the official state-led civilateral aid channel have felt radical changes in both the institutional nature and the political dynamics of their relationships with the Dutch government.

An in-depth analysis of the institutional and political design characteristics of the DGGF and the recent ODA policy shift is at the core of the fifth chapter. The presented findings build upon what has been argued in the fourth chapter by moving the historical narrative to an analysis of the present using the framework of the PAA. Once again two main arguments are made: the main cause to the contemporary political orientation of binding Dutch (development) ‘aid’ with (economic) ‘trade’ is a deeply-rooted confidence in market-led development over its state or civil society-approaches. The other argument made is that the institutionalisation of neoliberalist policy frameworks to development cooperation has introduced a managerial mindset that features rational thinking and planning tools next to the agent of social transformation that traditionally hallmarked Dutch-based NGOs.

In the sixth chapter, it is concluded that Dutch NGOs have gradually become accustomed to a hybrid of operating as an agent of social change, while on an institutional level adhering increasingly to the rational problem solving and strategies managerial logic. The recent policy shift and the introduction of the DGGF into the Dutch development policy domain are arguably a solidification to this phenomenon – a phenomenon readily noticed by other academics. In effect, this puts forward a discussion on the commensurability of this supposed hybridisation of Dutch NGO functioning, such as potentially eroding the autonomy of civil society groups, and the increasing fuzziness of the Dutch development policy domain. This provides starting points for further research into the ideational power structures between the state and the mixed bag that is civil society, both in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfT	Aid for Trade
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DGGF	Dutch Good Growth Fund
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFS	'Co-financing program' <sup>1</sup>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAA	Policy Arrangement Approach
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PvdA	'Labour Party' <sup>2</sup>
RVO	'Netherlands Enterprise Agency' <sup>3</sup>
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
VVD	'People's Party for Freedom and Democracy' <sup>4</sup>
WTO	World Trade Organization

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<sup>1</sup> Dutch acronym: *Medefinancieringsstelsel*

<sup>2</sup> Dutch acronym: *Partij van de Arbeid*

<sup>3</sup> Dutch acronym: *Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland*

<sup>4</sup> Dutch acronym: *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*.

All Dutch-English translations have been provided by the author.



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# 1. OPENING

## 1.1 SETTING THE SCENE

The Dutch landscape of development aid and assistance is currently being shaken silently by a policy shift. The publication of the white paper '*A world to gain: A new agenda for aid, trade and investment*' by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Lilianne Ploumen in April 2013 has proven to be a key turning point in Dutch official development aid [ODA]. The newly launched ODA policy was the result of coalition negotiations between the liberal-conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy [VVD] and the social-democratic Labour Party [PvdA] in the formation of the Rutte-II administration (2012-incumbent). Next to domestic affairs, such as the decentralisation of various state-led social programs in tandem with shrinking national budgets, the post-2014 ODA policy was also heavily influenced by the prospect of chairing the Ministerial Council of the European Union, elections to occupy seats in the United Nations Human Rights Council and in the United Nations Security Council. Consequently, the newly formulated policy prioritises themes analogous with international security, the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights [SRHR] as part of human rights, the enhancement of environmental security and justice (i.e. the securisation of food and other natural resources), and the amelioration rule of law in developing countries.

The formulation of Dutch ODA policy in improving processes of peace and development abroad, as envisioned in the '*A world to gain*'-white paper, made political choices inevitable. One decision involved slashing state contributions to Dutch-based non-governmental organisations [NGO] cofinancing ODA, which in the period 2007-2015 accounted for over € 4.4 billion, from January 2016 onwards, and eventually phasing cofinancing ODA through NGOs completely out in 2017. The second major choice was to allocate € 750 million from the international cooperation and development aid budget to the newly established Dutch Good Growth Fund [DGGF], starting in July 2014. The DGGF is a government-led concessional (i.e. mixed public-private) funding scheme aiming at helping to finance small and medium-sized enterprises [SME] in trade and investments both in 'lower and middle income countries' and in the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 25; Ploumen, 2014, p. 3). In sum, post-2014 Dutch ODA focuses primarily on improving the market access of developing countries to international and regional markets through the establishment of economic partnership agreements and supporting private entrepreneurs.

Minister Ploumen presented her new policy agenda for development cooperation for fiscal year 2014 in April 2013 – amidst of the Cypriot banking crisis, the escalation of the Syrian Civil War with the emergence of what would eventually become Islamic State, the

Boston Marathon bombing, the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh, and the inauguration of Willem-Alexander as the current monarch of the Kingdom of the Netherlands –, thus receiving scant media attention and generating little political debate domestically. The debate concerning the potential effects of the new ODA policy was initially predominantly intellectual in nature. Renowned British economist Paul Collier, for instance, expressed his concerns over the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy by labelling it a ‘toxic brew’ that, due to the entanglement of Dutch economic interests with development assistance, was liable to breeding conflicts over and hampering development activities (Vice Versa, 2013).

Time past and gradually more critical voices began to manifest when the planned cutbacks to the Dutch NGOs in January 2016 drew near. In August 2015, OxfamNovib, Cordaid, Hivos and ICCO – the four largest Dutch NGOs receiving over 70% of co-funding ODA – released a joint press statement declaring they were forced to fire up to half of their employees as a direct result from the aforementioned cutbacks in ODA funding. Rather unsurprisingly, these NGOs have expressed themselves exceptionally critical towards the shift of funding in the post-2014 ODA policy by stating it effectivity destroys financial, social and human capital (Van Es, 2015). Especially controversial to these Dutch NGOs is the interconnectedness of new forms of financing ODA (via DGGF) with the altered definition of ‘aid’ as articulated by the Dutch government. A rhetoric example capturing the quintessence of this interconnectedness in the post-2014 ODA policy is found in the ‘*A world to gain*’-white paper: “We are going to build a trade relationship with Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda, and will gradually phase out aid” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 41).

The DGGF itself has also been met by strong criticism. The fund is designed to provide the necessary financial venture capital to any investor on the condition that the applicant can comply to the 34 criteria of the Fund. Critics have pointed out these conditional criteria stress short-term returns on investment or export commodities within a half year (Ploumen, 2014, pp. 6-8), whereas the methods applied by NGOs tend to stress long-term development activities (Van Es, 2015), thus effectively excluding these civil organisations from meeting the criteria. Furthermore, Dutch private SMEs are only eligible for funding from the DGGF if the cross-border investment or export commodity is simultaneously judged ‘development-oriented’ and takes place in one of the 68 countries identified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as ‘lower and middle income countries’ (Ploumen, 2014). However, some of the least developed countries [LDC] are excluded from this list, such as Mauritania, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, and Sudan, without the underlying reasons explicitly specified. Moreover, the LDCs of Liberia and Guinea were added to the list in April 2015 (Ploumen, 2015), again without explicit motivations. The country list was updated in February 2016 by removing the ‘high-middle income countries’ of

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, the Maldives and Thailand and replacing them with Haiti, Chad, Lebanon, Togo and Ivory Coast. Although the number of countries remained the same (68) Minister Ploumen declared she intends to shift the focus of the DGGF, in the light of recent events such as the Syrian Civil War, even more on economic development (aid) of fragile states (Ploumen, 2016).

In sum, the fiscal year 2014 marks a key point in time and space as future Dutch ODA will focus more on aid, trade and investment efforts, thereby gradually completely cutting financial ties with Dutch NGOs. The traditional methods of simply 'giving' aid to developing countries by cofinancing NGOs is bound to rapidly decline. Instead, the focus will shift towards supporting actors that are actively engaged in regions where Dutch enterprises and research institutions are involved and are more aligned with Dutch (trade) policy priorities.

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIM

The post-2014 Dutch ODA policy fits into the broader concept of Aid for Trade [AfT], a development initiative aiming to support developing countries in participating in global trade. Launched at the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization [WTO], the initiative has attracted increasing interest amongst developing countries and donor communities (WTO-OECD, 2015b, pp. 7-8). AfT was conceptualised at the beginning of the Millennium within the context of acknowledgment that previous efforts in trade liberalisations had not been sufficient in improving the economic prospects of developing nations (Hühne, Meyer & Nunnekamp, 2014). These trade liberalisations have been clear manifestations of the revival of the international neoliberalism paradigm and the critique towards aid as only being foreign exchange. For example, by using the 'Dutch disease'-analogy, Collier (2008) has highlighted the deleterious consequences development aid can have on developing countries if 'aid' is interpreted as only the transfer of foreign funds as the abrupt influx of foreign currency is likely to distort the exchange rate equilibrium, thereby unintentionally diminishing export rates, and thus squeezing and marginalising the often fragile domestic competition in developing countries out of the global system of trade and commerce. Therefore, as opposed to the traditional Global North-South development aid dependency relationships in the appearance of lump sum finance, Collier (2008) proposes a complex mix of trade liberalisations, export diversification and the regional integration of economic activities of developing countries, most notably for landlocked LDCs on the African continent.

Given the fact the 2005 WTO Ministerial Declaration postulating the AfT initiative is relatively young and its outcomes on domestic and international trade policies have only recently began to materialise, there is little scientific evidence into its consequences and

effects. This means that large gaps in academic knowledge exist and subsequently that the Dutch popular awareness of the on-going shift in its domestic ODA policy is comparatively low: at the time of writing this study, there has been virtually no public debate concerning the metamorphose of Dutch ODA. Recent research (Holden, 2014; Hühne et al., 2014; WTO-OECD, 2015b) into AfT has been broad, explanatory and exclusively focused on the recipient partners, thus neglecting diving deeper into the consequences AfT can have for the providing partner and the extent to which the post-2014 ODA policy compares to other Dutch policy fields of foreign human development. This is where the concept of policy coherence for development [PCD] comes into play.

According to Hoebink (2008), the agenda setting and formulation of a cohesive development policy encompassing all policy areas on a domestic scale is a challenging and complex endeavour, partly due to political, administrative and institutional conflicts of interests, and partly due to the uncertainties accompanying the implementation of policy in the future. PCD as an explicit concept has a rather short history, even though its concepts have always been a part of the international development discourses. Mainly due to PCD's assumption as an extension beyond human development as simply providing aid and assistance on the long(er) term, the idea is rapidly emerging on the global development agenda among civil development actors in both donor and recipient countries (Nyberg-Sørensen, 2016). The materialisation of contemporary Dutch PCD agendas showcases various competing policy areas – for example, international security, migration, the global division of labour and centres of industrial production, the sustainability of the biophysical environment and the conservation of biodiversity in general, the protection of human rights, and the promotion of democracy – each with its own normative ontology, epistemological framework and substantive lines of argumentation (Siitonen, 2016, p. 5).

To Hydén (1999) PCD has traditionally been a donor responsibility and civil actors in the Netherlands have been actively and structurally forwarding PCD in their development strategies throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Delputte & Söderbaum, 2012, p. 42). The on-going Dutch shift in domestic ODA policy provides an empirical example par excellence of not only systematically assessing the consequences and effectiveness of the AfT initiative in a Dutch policy context, but also the extent to which the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy is consistent with other national policy areas and cooperation with domestic civil development actors, thereby filling and reducing the gap in academic knowledge surrounding the practical consequences of the broader metaphysical AfT initiative on donor countries. This, however, should not be interpreted as a study centralising PCD in a Dutch setting: grasping an understanding of PCD in the frame of referencing to the (Dutch) state and its changing politico-economic relations, priorities, circumstances and choices to the phenomenon of 'development' would require a study on its own. Rather, in this study PCD as a concept is

perceived and utilised as an auxiliary that supports and contextualises Dutch schemes and practices of international cooperation and development activities within broader theoretical and archaeological discussion on AfT. The research problem (P) is formulated as:

*P: There is a lack of academic knowledge concerning the consequences that the newly established Dutch Good Growth Fund within the context of the Dutch official development aid policy will have on Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance previously, presently and prospectively.*

The research aim (A) formulated as:

*A: It is the aim of this study to acquire an academic understanding of contemporary Dutch official development aid by systematically assessing the consequences and impact of the newly established Dutch Good Growth Fund on Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance previously, presently and prospectively.*

### 1.3 RESEARCH RELEVANCE

The academic and social relevance of this study is twofold. In an academic sense, this study adds to the metaphysical discussion and substantive meaning of the verb ‘to develop’. The utilisation of the word can be associated with a latitudinous and mosaic range of verbal meanings, but in common language the term ‘development’ implies an intentional social transformation or change in accordance with certain societal objectives aiming at the minimisation or disappearance of a situation that is perceived as problematic. To Pieterse (2010, p. 3), development is “an organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement”. What makes Pieterse (2010) definition of development particular interesting is the use of the word ‘improvement’, since what constitutes as ‘problematic’ and ‘improvement’ (i.e. a ‘positive development’) varies from an individual subject’s standpoints, cultural setting, historical context and ideational power relations in time and space. This suggests that development is simultaneously a dynamic process of reducing the situational discrepancy between ‘the problem’ and ‘the desired’, but also a static product with an inherent subjective meaning to it.

Academically such an understanding makes a study of the consequences of the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy academically relevant in today’s complex environment of conflict management, aid agencies, the provision of human rights, and humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, the introduction of the DGGF explicitly adds a market-led strategy and an implicit economic dimension to contemporary Dutch schemes of international cooperation and development, while the new policy simultaneously reduces ties with the domestic civilateral aid channel, thus allowing the study to delve deep into the potentially changing accountability structures of development-oriented activities. In sum, intellectually this study adds to the discussion on how (official) development aid is organised in the Netherlands – its actual impact in recipient countries, however, is beyond the scope of this inquiry. In addition, this study is also relevant in the sense of initially refraining and distancing itself from mainstream development literature by opting to theoretically fundament the study from a geographer's point of reference, thus stressing the various socio-spatial relations between individuals and society as a whole. Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration will be the vocal point of this distinctiveness and the motivation for choosing this framework is elaborated in the second chapter of this study.

Socially, this study aims to start or reverberate and support (domestic) public debates surrounding the post-2014 ODA policy. In the first place for the purpose of maintaining a degree of democratic accountability on those who rule, irrespectively of the policy domain, but also on the precise formulation of contemporary Dutch ODA policies, as quoted below:

Social development has an intrinsic value from a human rights point of view, but is not tenable without sustainable economic development. Conversely, economic development requires long-term investment in social sectors. Growth is not sustainable if it is accompanied by great inequality and exclusion. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 17)

In sum, Minister Ploumen points out the importance of a solid and coherence foreign policy balancing the development of social, political, economic and ecological themes through international cooperation. However, as actions speak louder than the political words of policy coherence, an (explorative) assessment of the ongoing shift in the Dutch landscape of development agencies is required to convincingly (dis)prove that the double mandate of economics and development aid through venture capital while minimising the use of state grants is commensurable and compatible with each other, both domestically and abroad, in contribute to human development in recipient areas.

Furthermore, public support for development cooperation in the Netherlands has declined over the past decade from a sacrosanct domain into a politically contentious topic in which the use and effectivity of every taxpayer's Euro has to be accounted for (Meindertsmas, 2012, p. 5). Opponents have spoken disparagingly over international cooperation and labelled Dutch ODA as a 'bottomless pit', a 'leftist hobby' and the 'industry of pettifoggery'

(De Volkskrant, 2011). In all, recent economic hardship (the 2008-09 Financial and 2010 Euro debt crises) and the rise of clamorous social media outlets next to established news channels in combination with post-9/11 (New York and Washington D.C.), post-3/11 (Madrid), post-7/7 (London), post-13/11 (Paris), post-22/3 (Brussels), and post-14/7 (Nice) terrorist attacks has led contemporary public attitudes and political debates on development cooperation to become marginalised, negative, polarised and oversimplified. As such, the contribution of this research is to pave the way for a nuanced public debate regarding the complementarity of policy themes, national economic self-interest and safety, the roles of international trade and local ownership, and the harmonisation of donor agendas within the envisaged goals and practices of Dutch development policy.

#### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND MODEL

The research question (RQ) is formulated as:

*RQ: What are the consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for the civil actors previously, presently and prospectively associated with international cooperation and schemes of development aid?*

The central research question is split into four, more perceptible, sub questions (SQ) with the purpose of steering and structuring the research. The first sub question aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the theoretical fundamentals of the DGGF. Subsequently, the second sub question attempts to explain these theoretical fundamentals. The last two sub questions aspire to grasp the ramifications that the implementation of the DGGF will have the substantive activities (i.e. the philosophical rationales underlying the strategies and methods) and organisational activities (i.e. internal structures and dynamics) of civil actors within the Dutch landscape of international development aid and assistance. A schematic model of the overall research structure is visualised in Figure 1.

*SQ1: How are the institutional and political design characteristics of the Dutch Good Growth Fund constituted?*

*SQ2: What explains the arrangement of the institutional and political design characteristics of the Dutch Good Growth Fund?*

*SQ3: What are the substantive consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance?*

SQ4: *What are the organisational consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance?*

## 1.5 SCOPE AND DELINEATING CHOICES

Researching the consequences of the implementation of the DGGF post-2014 Dutch ODA policy in the context of development policy coherence and from the perspective of the AfT-initiative requires a number of choices being made explicit. The first choice made, both theoretically as methodologically motivated, is the study of the consequences of the DGGF on Dutch civil actors engaged in development assistance and aid only. The theoretical argument of the first delineating choice made is an exclusive scope on the consequences of 'development' through the DGGF can provides interesting linkages within development policy complementarity. The argument of methodology centres around the preposition that it is vital to keep the study feasible in terms of time and academic depth, therefore the choice has been made to focus solemnly on the assessment of civil actors. This does not mean, however, that other important actors in the Dutch realm of ODA policy, such as private and public actors, are completely ignored. As visualised in Figure 1, these two types of actors will act as contextual vehicles to which the consequences of the DGGF to the civil counterparts are assessed.

The second choice made is definitional in nature and related to understanding a 'civil actor' (Part III in Figure 1). Within the policy arrangement of international cooperation related to development activities is a tendency to differentiate the 'aid' along the lines of three distinct paths or channels: multilateral (via international organisations), bilateral (via governments) or civilateral (via NGOs). According to Kinsbergen and Schulpen (2010) this distinction is solemnly based on the type of organisations (i.e. intergovernmental, governmental or non-governmental) that are active in these channels, and consequently says little in respect to the nature of the activities undertaken, the type of partnerships, the amount of funding involved or the effectivity of the conducted activities. In addition, the three aid channels are internally highly diverse and pluralistic: intergovernmental organisations like the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund differ greatly in their teleological rationales, institutional arrangement and activities. Bilateral donors have traditionally organised within the Development Assistance Committee [DAC], but recent shifts in the global economy has driven new players into the arena of state-run development activities, notably the Gulf States, South-Korea, Brazil and behemoths like China, India and Russia (Woods, 2008). Finally, the heterogeneity of organisations and multifariousness of activities characterising the (Dutch) civilateral aid channel is widespread.

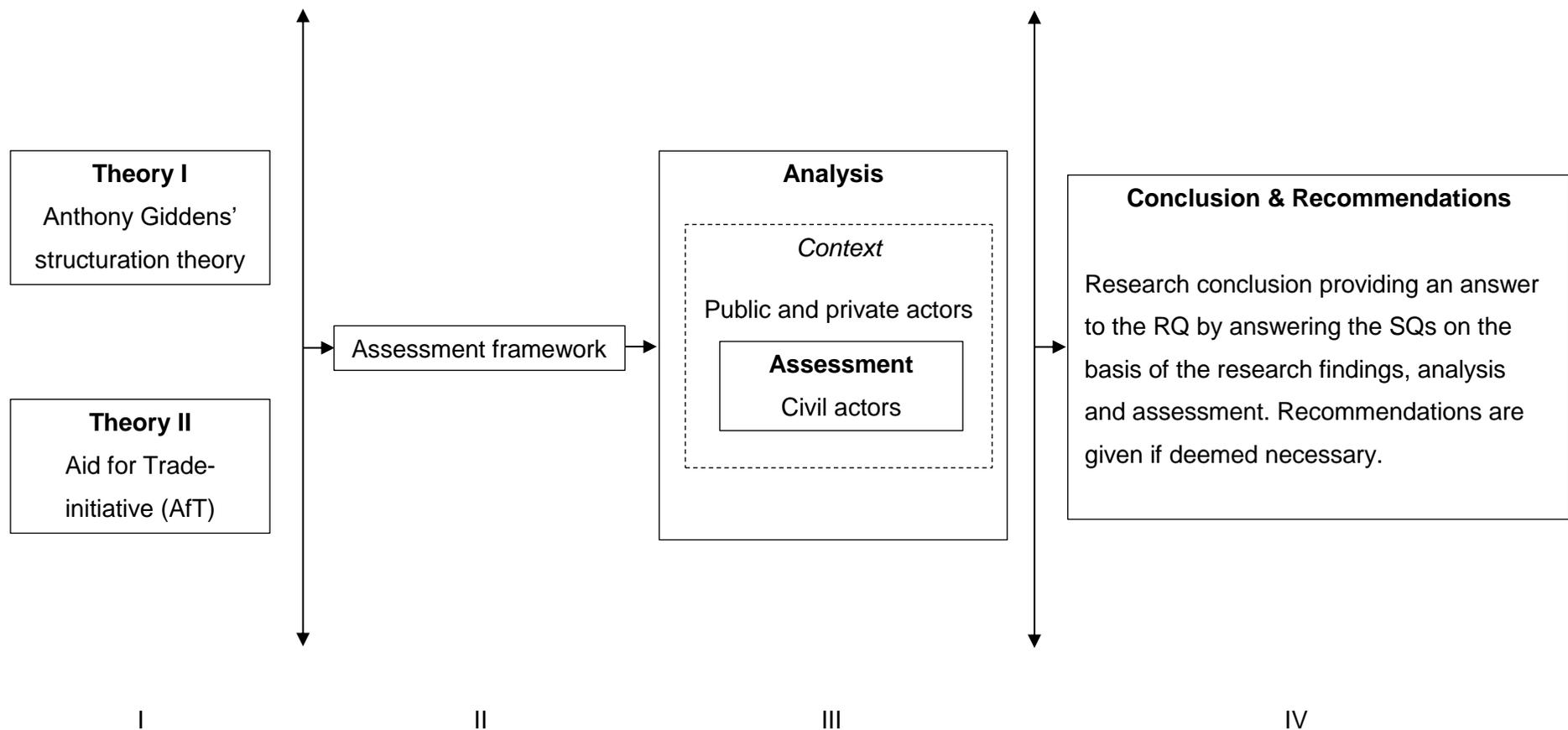


Figure 1. Schematic model visualising the research process. The  $\rightleftarrows$ -symbol represents a conclusion drawn on the convergence of two or more theoretical concepts or empirical phenomena (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010, p. 83). Reading from left to right: Part I involves critically theorising the AfT-initiative and Giddens' structuration theory underlying to the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy. Based on this theoretical discussion, Part II involves the operationalisation of theory to empirically measurable indicators or qualitatively assertions able to obtain results. In Part III the research findings are described, analysed and evaluated. Note that the civil actors are central in the model and the private and public actors present themselves as a mere context to the Dutch landscape of ODA. Finally, in Part IV a comprehensive research conclusion is drawn and the implications of this conclusion to praxis discussed (own work).

The understanding of a 'civil actor' in this study is narrowed down to the Dutch NGOs previously included in the process of co-financing Dutch ODA. The rationale behind this choice is again related to guarding the workability of the research: the philosophical thinking fundamental to the idea of 'civil society' as a societal pillar next to the public (state) and private (entrepreneurs) spheres is extremely broad, varying from classical Tocquevillian writings to the Buchanan public choice theorem. Various academics spend their entire career studying the often ambiguous defined and obfuscating mixed bag of social movements and NGOs. In order not to be engulfed and drown into this multi-interpretable concept, this study explicitly focuses on Dutch NGOs that were formerly cofinancing Dutch ODA. Methodologically the research will not study all of these NGOs, but take a sample from this highly diverse pool of social movements in order to analyse and assess their relationships and the consequences experienced hitherto with the introduction of the DGGF. Therefore, what constitutes as a 'civil actor' in this study is defined as '*A non-governmental, non-private and non-profit organisation that was included in cofinancing pre-2014 Dutch ODA*'.

The contextual 'public actor' is colloquially understood as an individual legal entity who is acting on behalf of a governmental body. When scratching the mere surface of this understanding, the term seems to include only individuals employed by the state. As Siitonen (2016) argues, however, state governments are by no means full unitary actors. Instead, governments are composed of a dense archipelago of departments, multi-scale bodies of legislation, contracted research institutions, and (quasi-)private corporations that all pursue political and financial interests of their own, which in turn makes it regularly nebulous who bears the final responsibility when policy effects 'turn south'. The contemporary Dutch polity and its associated modes of governance are, given the nation's plural society and ever-denser institutional, political decision-making and legislative linkages to the supranational European level, no exception to this argument. Within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs – currently headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Bert Koenders (PvdA) and assisted by the Minister Lilianne Ploumen (PvdA) – the Directorate-General for International Cooperation [DGIS] has been granted the executive responsibility the Dutch development cooperation policies. Also central to the DGIS is the enhancement of policy coherence between Dutch and EU policies, activities of NGOs and other interest groups on developing countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). Therefore, what constitutes as the contextual 'public actor' in this study is equalled with the DGIS and defined as '*The Dutch state department responsible for the agenda setting, the formulation, the funding, the coordination and the communication, the implementation, the monitoring and the evaluation of ODA*'.

Since this thesis uses the DGGF as a reference point of study, the contextual 'private actor' is understood according to the legal definitions specified by Minister Ploumen in 2014. According to ministerial specifications a SME eligible to apply for funding from the DGGF is defined as "small, medium-sized and micro-enterprises [...]; with a branch office located in the Netherlands at the moment when the funding is provided" (Ploumen, 2014, p. 2) and as "Enterprise: any entity, regardless of its legal status, engaged in an economic activity" (Ploumen, 2014, p. 2). Therefore, what constitutes as the contextual 'private actor' in this study is defined as *'A micro, small or medium-sized entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespectively of its legal status, with an office of branch located in the Netherlands at the time when funding from the DGGF is provided'*.

## 1.6 CHAPTER PREVIEW

In the first chapter, this study has been contextualised in an assessment of the consequences of the implementation of the DGGF within post-2014 Dutch ODA policy. In the next chapter the theoretical scaffolding of the study will be addressed: using a critical discussion of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory and its relation to AfT, the policy arrangement approach is selected as a conceptual framework capable of analysing the evolution and policy alteration of Dutch schemes and practices of international cooperation and development. The third chapter is methodological in nature and solidifies the way in which this study is conducted in terms of research strategy (case study method), means of data collection (interviews and desk research), data analysis (heuristic within-case analysis), and limitations. The fourth chapter provides a general overview of implemented post-war Dutch development policies by contextualising them into various political, national and social trajectories and events, both domestically as well abroad. The fifth chapter moves the research from description to analysis by using the policy arrangement approach to, on the one hand analyse the DGGF with the Dutch development policy domain, while on the other hand analyse the consequences of post-2014 on Dutch NGOs. In the sixth chapter an overall conclusion is drawn on the basis of the findings and the main research question answered; the research concludes with a concise discussion on the implications of the conclusion on both theory and practice, and a brief reflection on the research process.



## 2. THEORETICAL SCAFFOLDING

The aim of this chapter is to pour the study into a theoretical mould capable of assessing the consequences for Dutch civil development actors (NGOs) associated with international cooperation and development activities previously, presently and prospectively. Essentially, such assessment comes down to a thorough description and analysis of the domain of development-oriented policies within the broader Dutch foreign policy; this chapter provides the theoretical means to that end. After critically indulging in the standing structure-agency debate, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory postulating the famous ontological configuration on the 'duality of structure' is put central in § 2.1 as the philosophy theoretically orienting this study. § 2.2 delves deeper into the assumptions and logic of 'sensitising' the process and product of structuration through social interaction, thereby identifying the policy arrangement approach as an analytical-conceptual model suitable to understand the stability and change of a policy arrangement, for example the Dutch development policy arrangement. The chapter then moves on into placing the premises of the DGGF within the broader context of AfT in § 2.3. Finally, based on the policy arrangement approach and discussion of the AfT concept, a conceptual model is drafted and subsequently operationalised in § 2.4.

### 2.1 GIDDENS' DUALITY OF STRUCTURE AS RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

According to Richardson (2002) at the basis of every policy assessment and consequences for affiliated policy actors is a fundamental analysis that is dedicated to the dynamics that express the balance of both political systems (structures) and power of individual actors (agency) at specific moments in space and time. The formulation of post-2014 Dutch ODA policy can arguably be part of a structuration process entailing various embedded and institutionalised forms of power relations and patterns of action in international development policy discourse (Figure 2). Therefore, it is essential to understand the premises of structuration before delving deeper into the new (Dutch) development domain it produces.

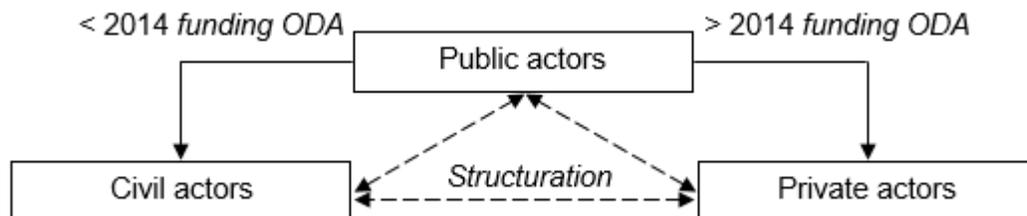


Figure 2. Schematic of post-2014 ODA redistribution among relevant actors (own work).

Before elaborating on the basics of structuration theory, it is useful to contextualise its origination in the 1980s by touching upon one of the most fundamental standing debates in social sciences: the dichotomy of structure-agency. In short, the division between structure and agency revolves around an academic ontology that attempts to account for human action by reference to recurrent patterns of social systematics (structuralism) or as a result of the capacity of individual agents to act independently and freely (individualism). Hence, whereas ontological individualism assumes social life is causal to individual human action (Hollis, 1994, p. 109), ontological structuralism holds holism and institutional power as fundamental to social life (Demmers, 2012, p. 15). Therefore, the structure-agency debate is best to be understood as a matter of ontological formations in which the degree of socialisation determines whether an individual is able to act as an autonomous agent (e.g., granted with the dignity of a conscious and free will) or in a manner dictated by social structures (e.g., subjection to social hierarchy, the possession of the means of economic production, cultural norms, religious or political orientations and ideologies, gender identity, economic doctrines, etc.) overarching and constraining individuals.

The standing academic debate on the exploration of societal ontology has the inherent characterisation to be polarised, which is arguably attributable to the fact that academics are specialised in producing and mirroring intense but narrow beams of light, thus in formulating single-theory arguments corresponding to structure or agency epistemologies. For example, broadly speaking agency-centred approaches have been criticised by structuralists of eschewing scientific explications due to an overreliance on atheoretical and ahistorical interpretations, overlooking broader social forces by focusing on the micro-level, and having no predictive power, whereas structuralists are often accused of downplaying socio-spatial voluntarism, marginalising the power of individual subjectivism and autonomy, and ignoring or overlooking social contextual differences (Rigg, 2007, p. 25). According to Archer (1995) the usual reconciliatory escape from the (problematic) structure-agency juxtaposition has been to conflate the two by avoiding explicitly taking sides by perceiving each as mutually contributing or privileging one view by subsidising the other.

On the contrary, this does not mean that nobody has attempted to harmonise the contrasting arguments made in the structure-agency debate: prominent sociologists like Parsons (1937), Lockwood (1956), Garfinkel (1967), Cohen (1968), and Dawe (1970) have sought to bridge the chasm gaping the debate by constructing a 'unified social theory of everything'. Most recently, the British sociologist Antony Giddens is intellectually renowned for his academic endeavour to bridge the structure-agency dichotomy through the

development of structuration theory in a series of books and publications, starting with *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976), followed by *Central Problems of Social Theory* (1979) and *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981), which ultimately culminated in *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (1984). By building on and having borrowed various valuable contributions from the aforementioned sociologists – notably from Parsons as his *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) provides Giddens with the starting points for his reflections on action theory (Kilminster, 2011, p. 100) – the central span of Giddens' conciliatory thinking in politics and social practice research is its structurationist bridge "in place of such divides as between voluntarism and determinism, individualism and structuralism, and micro and macro" (Whittington, 2010, p. 110).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to extensively discuss every aspect of Giddens' 900-pages magnum opus and its critical expansions by other scholars, as doing so would be an assignment of Herculean proportions. Instead this chapter is theoretical in nature in the sense it aims to operationalise the quintessence of structuration theory by pouring the core theorem into a conceptual model that enables the establishment of a framework capable of assessing the consequences of the shift in post-2014 Dutch ODA policy. Central to Giddens' structuration (meta)theory is viewing socio-spatial reality not as existing independently of human actions nor being a product of it, thus implying neither human agents (individualism) nor society (structuralism) of having 'main' or 'true' primacy (Dyck & Kearns, 2006, p. 87).

The premises of structuration theory aim on falsifying the classical Weberian and Durkheimian paradigms in sociology – both of which fiercely advocated the role of institutions during the rise of post-war European welfare states – by arguing that while the acts of individuals are constrained by social structures (e.g., committing a murder is punishable by criminal law), these constraining structures can be transformed by individual agents (the sentence can be lowered if the accused confesses to the murder). The same applies for instance to religious practices as these are typically shared communally rather than solemnly idiosyncratic, and they have a tendency to constrain action as much as they inspire. The etymological semantic of 'structuration' embodies the reciprocal relationship between structure and agency quintessential to Giddens' ontology of society. Moreover, the neologism of 'ation' adds to the static and solidified word 'structure' a sense of movement or action and incremental change over time, thus an active historical process in which structural continuity is reproduced or amended by agents (Whittington, 2010, p. 112). Therefore, rather than stressing a deeply-entrenched polarised dichotomy, Giddens' (1981) postulates a recursive duality of the reproduction of practices as the result of structures acting both as a medium

(process) and an outcome (product) of intended and unintended of individual and collective human conduct in both time and space.

The main conceptualisation of structuration (i.e. the duality of structure) are the embedded and internal 'virtual' conditions of agency governing the (dis)continuity of paradigmatic existential structures and cyclical reproduction of social practices across time and space (Giddens, 1984, p. 25; Rigg, 2007, p. 25; Kilminster, 2011, p. 75) – as Giddens uses the terms 'agent' and 'actor' interchangeably, the two de jure distinguishable terms de facto imply the same. In turn, the structural constraints are not externally imposed on social reality, but are instead a reflexive application of practical consciousness and (re)constitution (Dyck & Robins, 2006, p. 87). Imagining a university as a social system presents itself as a good example of agency governing the (re)production of the system, as the annual intake of individual agents (students) is a structural condition for the (university) system's existential continuity. Ergo, structuration involves a dynamic, contextual, infinite and recursive process in which agency and structures influences one another mutually and therefore reproduce and regulate the practices embedded in a variety of social systems through space and time.

Giddens' structuration theory of reconciling structure and agency as concepts relates, at first glance, to other academic and research philosophies associated with phenomenology and historical-hermeneutic approaches in human geography, for instance humanism and the Actor-Network Theory [ANT]. Although structuration theory appears to supplement and complement humanistic thoughts as the humanist approach articulates a dynamic process of people making a space their 'home' by familiarising themselves with its surrounding structures (Tuan, 1991). However, the humanist-structuration relation has become gradually one-sided as the agency-part incrementally evolved into a marginal theoretical dimension within humanism (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 34).

On the contrary, the ANT is a framework which perceives both subjects and objects as 'effects' that are capable of establishing anthropocentric relations through highly complex heterogeneous networks (Ettlinger & Bosco, 2004). At its core, the ANT proposes a 'beyond-structure-agency' relational actant-rhizome ontology and consequently forces theorists to think differently concerning the enterological relationship between individual subjects and their abilities to have agency on their surroundings when juxtapositioned with structuration theory. In all this means that, although structuration theory, humanism and the ANT are frequently compartmentalised into the theoretical realm of historical-hermeneutic approaches

to studying socio-spatial relations, the three approaches have gradually drifted apart and in their respective contemporary understandings share little to no theoretical assumptions.

Furthermore, Giddens' structuration theory cannot be equalled with structuralist methodologies since the process of structuration does not advocate the search of universal interrelational laws or overarching structures regulating individual behaviour. Structuration theory also does not fit into postmodernist lines of argumentation since the supposed duality of structures inherent to the process of structuration allows agents to (radically) transform structures, a line of thinking (critical) post-structuralist theorists, like Foucault, Derrida, and Žižek tend to regard as fundamentally as impossible, or find difficult to cope with at best.

Structuration theory has received much critical acclaim and expansion since its conception in the 1980s. Although the notion of structuration has lost some of its prominence in academic writings due to the rise of (critical) postmodernist thinking in social sciences, it has remained its value as a viable 'third way' in navigating the bipolar structure-agency debate (Dyck & Robins, 2006, p. 95). Notwithstanding its epistemological currency in grasping the ontology of social relations, the premises, level of abstraction and method of construction of structuration theory have been heavily criticised by various scholars in terms of a supposed divorce for the relevance to empirical research and soundness towards reality. According to Parker (2010) the voices critically illuminating structuration theory tend to adopt a traditional Bourdieusian epistemology that strengthens the static nature of structure relative to the transformative capacity of agency. As a result, this perspective showcases the gaps and inconsistency of Giddens' general ontology of structuration between its theoretical substantives and validity of agency in practice. For instance, both Whittington (2010) and Sassen (2014) argue that the global distribution of capital is so deeply engrained that one cannot expect agency to be able to significantly alter the brutal expulsions it can produce.

Notably the lack of attention paid by Giddens (1984) to hierarchy and constraints on socio-economic mobility has led scholars like Mouzelis (1991) and Parker (2010) to argue that ontological dualism between structure and agency is at the constitution of society, rather than a duality. Mouzelis (1991) for example has re-examined social action at a syntagmic level and argues, based on the empirical observation that social interactions are rarely fully heterarchical, that a duality of structures does not account for all types of social relations. For instance, a colonel can change the in-field tactics of his soldiers in order to capture a military strongpoint, but as an individual officer has little to no capabilities in transforming the grand strategical doctrines of warfare pursued by the supreme military staff. Also, by recapitalising

on particular historical narratives in which the knowledgeability, emotional reflexivity, and teleology of interacting agents radically differed, Parker (2010) argues a dualism rather than a Giddensian duality of structures offers a more valid explanation of the organisation of social relationships, stating that “how agents relate to structures varies, and cannot be determined by referring to what all agents at all times have in common” (Parker, 2010, p. 158).

## 2.2 MODALITY: FROM STRUCTURATION TOWARDS POLICY ARRANGEMENT APPROACH

The internal logical coherence of concepts within the theorem of structuration theory does not prescribe a particular methodology, thus making concrete use of its theoretical network problematic (Stones, 2005, p. 34). This implies structuration theory prioritises the ontological configuration of social relations over its interpretative epistemology, therefore posing a serious challenge in operationalising structuration theory into an analytical and tangible conceptual model with research indicators. Giddens (1984) himself preferred the strategic conduct analysis, an exploration which focuses on contextually situated action on the dialectic relationship of control of agents (agency) by drawing on the detailed accounts of and the between human agents’ knowledgeability and motivation of conduct. Agency, according to a Giddensian characterisation of humanity’s consciousness mind, spirit or soul and practical conduct, must be understood as the strategic capacity to follow one system while refusing to participate in another (Dyck & Robins, 2006, p. 87). Strategic capacity involves resources and rules. Whereas resources are regarded as structured properties of social systems and involve the power to command entities through space, such as material objects (allocation) or subjects (authority), rules stipulate and grant decision-making power over these resources (Giddens, 1984). Successively, the logic of structuration dictates the more resources people acquire and the more plural the rules they can establish, the more capacity for individual agency they have at their disposal, and ipso facto the more explicit the domination and power of agency becomes.

Social interaction through communication is primarily what conveys agency and is characterised by three corresponding structural dimensions of social systems: signification, domination, and legitimation (Giddens, 1984, p. 29). According to Whittington (2010) ‘signification’ is understood as the system’s discursive and symbolic order (i.e. rules-of-the-game, jargon and dominating image), ‘legitimation’ as the established regime of normatively sanctioned institutions with embedded (un)formalised codes, and finally, ‘domination’ as the capacity of political, civil and economic institutions to allocate materials and subjects. The forms of social interaction in structuration theory is visualised in Figure 3.

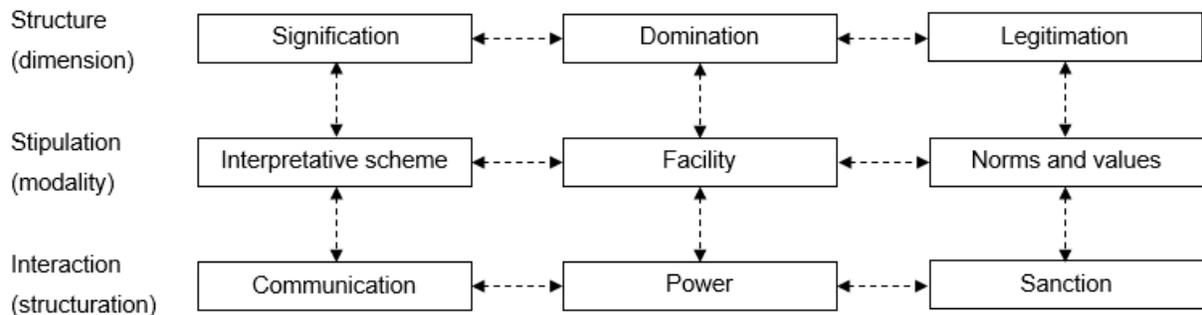


Figure 3. Forms of social interaction in structuration theory (Giddens, 1984, p. 29).

As stated earlier, structuration theory does not prescribe an empirical-analytical methodology nor a readily applicable conceptual model for the study of policy. Scholars like Fincher (1987) and Dyck and Robins (2006) postulate individual concepts are hard to extricate from Giddens extensive treatment and approach to structuration theory. According to Whittington (2010) Giddens' provides 'sensitising concepts' for informing and pointing researcher towards a phenomenon rather than a set of concepts to be applied. For Thrift (1985) the recognition of contextuality is a vital as a sensitising concept of action in space because it contributes to the explanation how social systems transform over time. Contextualisation is also central in Giddens' line of argumentation, as is suggested below:

The settings and circumstances within which action occurs do not come out of thin air; they themselves have to be explained within the very same logical framework as that in which whatever action described and 'understood' has also to be explained. It is exactly this phenomenon which I take structuration to be concerned. (Giddens, 1984, p. 343)

As stated avowedly above, the pragmatic nature of the sensitising concepts underlying to the transformative capacity of agents is utterly important in understanding social power in relation to structures within the analytical lens towards the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy as adopted in this study. Rather than an analysis of strategic conduct, a widely applied empirical-based assessment institutional analysis of policy practice is proposed here, the policy arrangement approach [PAA]. PAA has its origins in the examination of institutional behaviour and defines a policy arrangement "as the process of structuration and stabilisation by which policy arrangement are produce, reproduced or transformed" (Arts, Van Tatenhove & Leroy, 2000, p. 53). Quintessentially, the purpose of PAA is the creation of a thorough understanding of

the duality between stability and change of policy arrangements, thus the way in which the rules and procedures determining who is eligible to make decisions in a certain field of policy (Jaspers, 2003, p. 79). In doing so, PAA enables the study of the potentialities and constrains, skills and amateurism, and strengths and weaknesses associated with the capacities of agents to act accordingly to their structural surroundings.

PAA is characterised by four analytical and inherently interrelated dimensions: *actors*, *resources*, *rules* and *discourses* (Figure 4). According to Veenman, Liefferink and Arts (2009) the dimensions of *actors*, *resources* and *rules* refer to the organisational elements of a policy arrangement (which compare to SQ3), whereas the dimension of *discourses* refer to the substantive elements of a policy arrangement (which compares to SQ4). The tetrahedron of PAA is based on the two assumptions that 1) no dimension is responsible a priori for the stability or change of the policy arrangement, and 2) interdependence, meaning that a shift in one dimension will result into a shift in one of the other dimensions (Liefferink, 2006; Meijerink & Van Tatenhove, 2007).

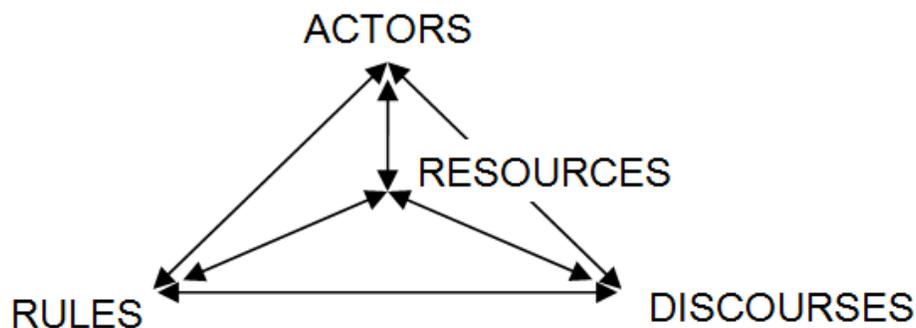


Figure 4. Conceptual-analytical model of PAA (based on Arts & Leroy, 2006).

Observing Figures 3 and 4, it can be readily seen that three abstract dimensions of structuration (signification, domination and legitimisation) directly apply with the discourse in management, organisational power and the institutional legitimacy that is prominent throughout this study. Domination relates directly to both the dimensions of *rules* and *resources* as conceptualised in PAA related to Giddens (1984) definitions of human agency as these two organisational elements make up the strategy capacity determining an agent's primacy. Signification relates to the dimension of *discourse* and legitimisation as the established regime of institutions to the dimension of *actors*. Lastly, the assumption temporal socio-geographical stabilisation of policy content and organisational structures refers both implicitly as explicitly to the duality of structure and of agency.

In all, by bringing together the quintessence of structuration theory with the analytical lens of PAA, a tangible assessment framework is slowly starting to materialise. However, one aspect is still missing before the operationalisation is complete, namely the context. As stated earlier, the application of structuration theory is regarded incomplete and flawed without thoroughly understanding (or 'sensitising') of the broader institutional context (Whittington, 2010, p. 124). The AfT-initiative presents itself as the context fundamental to the shift in post-2014 Dutch ODA policy.

### 2.3 SENSITISING THE CONTEXT OF AID FOR TRADE

The existing academic literature on AfT is quite new and fits mainly into the broader theme on the role of foreign aid in processes of economic growth and reducing global inequalities (Naito, 2013, p. 887; Berritella & Zhang, 2014, pp. 290-291). According to Cali and Te Velde (2010) the idea of AfT is based on two political considerations – as was briefly elaborated on in the first introductory chapter – that matured in the run up to the 2001 WTO Doha Development Round. On the one hand, it had become abundantly clear in the 1990s that the elimination of tariff barriers guaranteeing reciprocal market access had not been sufficient in increasing export levels of developing countries, primarily since the latter had little to offer to their potential consumers in the Global North (Stiglitz & Charlton, 2006, p. 22). On the other hand, several landlocked LDCs argued that they were likely to face further costs in liberalising their domestic economic structures, a prospect deemed unfavourable in the eyes of many world leaders since it would, once again, aggravate (African) state indebtedness to foreign lenders (Suwa-Eisenmann & Verdier, 2007, p. 481). It was in this context that global political agendas in the end-1990s ran high on ensuring multilateral trade negotiations that made sense from a development perspective too, and not again just from a 1980s perspective of monetarism, austerity measures, aid dependency and structural adjustment programs.

The Doha Development Round took place two months after 9/11, thus amidst of the US-led invasion into Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and a brief period marked by economic recession. As a consequence of the economic downturn and (Islamic) terrorism-related anxiety, some state leaders called for a greater political cohesion and saw the international trade negotiations in Doha as a means toward that end (Fergusson, 2008, p. 2). In Doha, the key fundamentals of the AfT principles were laid down with the intention of formalising these at the 2005 WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. The Hong Kong Ministerial Conference was preceded by the 31st G8 Summit in the Scottish town of Auchterarder in July 2005. As the host country, the United Kingdom set the agenda on issues of development aid (notably

the cancellation of US-\$ 40 billion of African state indebtedness) and put forward initiatives to mitigate climate change and to combat terrorism. The G8 Summit was, however, largely overshadowed by the 7/7 London bombings, but just like during the Doha Round these terrorist attacks greatly strengthened global political unity and the public call to act. Six months later AfT saw the light when its principles were intergovernmentally formalised at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference (Hoekman & Nicita, 2010, p. 4). With over 11,000 participants, ranging from government officials of the 148 WTO member states, activists and protestors, intergovernmental organisations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] to numerous development NGOs, the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference was one of the largest international events ever held. The final Ministerial Declaration endorsed the formulation of the AfT-initiative as integral part of ODA (Hoekman & Wilson, 2010; Berritella & Zhang, 2014, p. 290).

At its current core (the legal provisions of the WTO have been slightly updated with the Nairobi Package in December 2015) AfT aims to facilitate the integration of developing countries into the global economy through financial and technical assistance (WTO-OECD, 2015, p. 27). Tangible examples are reducing international trade costs for SMEs in LDCs by red-taping and streamlining border custom procedures, the harmonisation of domestic laws with international standards, the diversification of export product commodity chains, and enhancing the quality of trade-related cross-border infrastructure, especially in the case of landlocked LDCs on the African continent. By institutional and (geo)political design no central global financial agency has been recognised nor newly established as the focal point for coordinating AfT aid flows. Instead, AfT fund facilitation is supplied through formally established country-based allocation mechanisms, such as NGOs and private (inter)national financial institutions (Hoekman & Wilson, 2010).

The progress of AfT towards its desired results is assessed by a joint WTO-OECD panel in cooperation with a large number of multilateral development banks (Hoekman & Wilson, 2010, p. 280), such as the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the International Trade Centre, the Standards and Trade Development Facility, the United National Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United

Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Bank, and the World Customs Organization.

The intergovernmental WTO-OECD panel reports annually on the growth in ODA for AfT facilitation: donor disbursements have been growing at a constant rate of 12% since 2005, thereby reaching an aggregated amount of US-\$ 264.5 billion in ODA and an additional US-\$ 190 billion in other official flows for financing trade-related programmes as of 2015, thus indicating that post-Hong Kong political commitments are being met (WTO-OECD, 2015a, p. 3). Preliminary results postulate evidence that AfT facilitation has a statistically significant negative impact on trading costs: for example, a +100% in AfT fund facilitation correlates with a -5% import costs of a standard sea container (WTO-OECD, 2015b, p. 4).

However, in the global post-2009 Financial and post-2010 Euro debt crisis environment characterised with stagnation and shrinking state budgets in much of the leading donor countries, the WTO-OECD panel has significant political impetuses in articulating the positive effects of donor disbursements and to deemphasise the negative effects of AfT facilitation or methodological gaps in their own assessments (a statistical significant correlation only hints at a causal relationship). In addition, Hoekman and Wilson (2010) point out that the definition of AfT adopted by the WTO-OECD is (too) broad since it includes financing building energy and transport infrastructure capacity, an activity in trade-related support which, due to its relative expensive characteristics, inflates the overall figures of AfT facilitation.

Moreover, on an intellectual level the debate whether the pursuit of an accessible, spatially isotope and quota-free market-based policy has a positive effect on development – the causality of aid and trade *ceteris paribus* – is very much alive (Berritella & Zhang, 2014, p. 305). A sententious body of literature argues getting rid of trade barriers between developed countries and LDCs can have deleterious effects for the latter, for example worsening the distribution of wealth (Morrissey, Mbabazi & Milner, 2002; Meschi & Vivarelli, 2007; Krishna & Guru, 2011). Also, two studies (Hoekman & Wilson, 2010; Berritella & Zhang, 2014) have demonstrated that the effectiveness of AfT facilitation in recipient countries is heavily reliant on the political will of the recipient country to incorporate trade objectives into their national development strategy, its domestic political stability and the quality of governance, and the capabilities of central institutions to effectively and efficiently disperse the incoming ODA.

Lastly, more practically and related to the aforementioned matter of domestic political stability, it is worth mentioning the WTO has, since Afghanistan acceded on 29 July 2016, 164 full member states and 20 observer governments out of the 190 countries whose

statehood, territorial integrity or sovereignty is not internationally disputed. These figures imply that a significant number of states are partly (e.g., Algeria, Ethiopia, Iran, Belarus and Bosnia-Herzegovina) or in its totality (e.g., North Korea, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, the Palestinian Authority, Somalia and Turkmenistan) excluded from participating in the WTO trade regime, while for instance the 28 states of the EU – 27 after the Brexit – are dually represented as the supranational entity of the EU is a full member of the WTO (Peterson, 2012, p. 213). The exclusion of states on the basis of international relations or other political pressures, reveals important (geo)political and diplomatic power asymmetries, both internally as well as externally, between the WTO and its least developed non-members and observers as a number of LCDs is bypassed by international commerce and global trade.

## 2.4 CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND OPERATIONALISATION

Let's review on the progress made in this theoretical chapter. First, on the basis of Giddens' core assumptions and dynamics of structuration theory, the PAA has been identified as an appropriate empirical-analytical framework to study the content of (post-2014 Dutch ODA) policy and its associated consequences for civil development actors. Second, the origination of the post-2014 Dutch ODA policy has been contextualised within the broader phenomenon of the AfT-initiative in international development discourses. In a methodological sense, the research is currently transitioning from discussing the imaginative ontology that supposedly defines social interaction to the operationalisation of these conceptualised relationships into a tangible assessment framework (the PAA) with empirical-analytical indicators. According to Vennix (2011) the first step of an operationalisation is the identification of 'research elements', the leading topics of study. Judging from the formulated RQ and SQs, the civil development actors are identified as the research elements of this study. In turn, the research element of a civil development actor is integrally composed of 'research features' – a distinguishable characteristic of a particular phenomenon, object or subject – of which, in accordance to the PAA, four have been identified.

The second step of the operationalisation involves drafting an overall conceptual model of the relationship between the various research elements and their features. This model is visualised in Figure 5 and based on the discussed theoretical material in this chapter. Since this study presents itself as having a strongly qualitative character, it is worth noting the conceptual model does not advocate nor has the intention to test the individual relationship between a specific set of features as such methodology implies a quantitative approach towards the research elements. Rather the conceptual model visualised above

aims to study the ongoing and meaningful chain of events related to the shift in post-2014 Dutch ODA policy.

The third and final step of the operationalisation is the translation of the abstract conceptual model into empirically measurable indicators (Vennix, 2011). This translation involves the formulation of a stipulated typology of PAA's four dimensions (actors, rules, resources, and discourses). These dimensions are respectively defined and indicated on the following pages on the basis of an iterative discussion between theoretical and practical considerations.

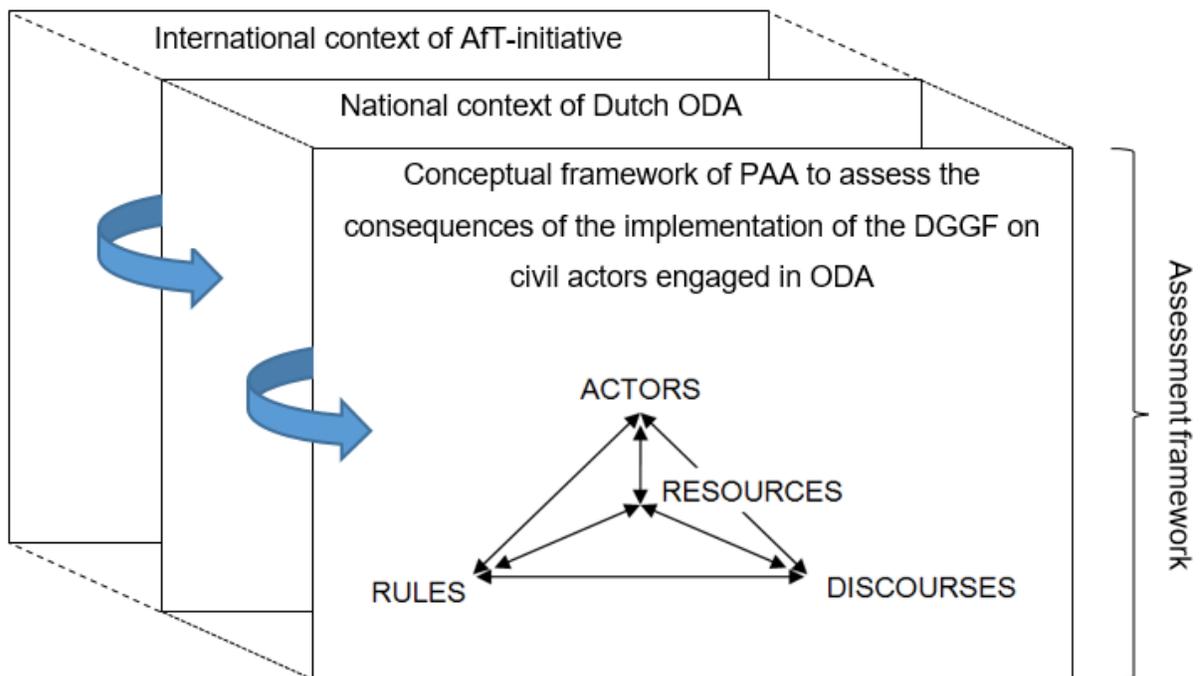


Figure 5. Conceptual model visualising the context of AfT in relation to the DGGF. The model assumes the AfT discourse in international development aid and assistance influences the Dutch formulation of ODA policy. In turn, this has influenced the formulation of post-2014 Dutch ODA policy and the introduction of the DGGF (own work).

#### Actor(s)

According to Veenman et al. (2009) the organisational dimension of actors relates to a set of goal-oriented agents in a given policy domain that display a form of strategic behaviour. The teleological rationale underlying this strategic behaviour is influencing the policy arrangement through agency, and therefore automatically resulting into the establishment of certain coalitions and oppositions between agents (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). Since the end of the

Cold War, the convergence of the international policy domain of ODA with the market for aid has resulted into a proliferation in the number and range of civil development actors (Severino & Ray, 2009). NGOs of all sorts have mushroomed in all developed countries and these civil organisations have come to represent a cardinal proportion of development assistance (Kharas, 2007, p. 10). Also, political liberalisation and decentralisation in many ODA recipient countries has also led to the rise of a civil society on the receiving end of donor disbursements (Severino & Ray, 2009). In sum, the environment of civil development actors active in development assistance is expanding and growing ever-denser. Therefore, the operational definition of an 'actor' within the Dutch policy domain of development activities is formulated as:

*An actor is a goal-oriented agent displaying strategic behaviour in the pursuit of a desired policy arrangement.*

#### *Rule(s)*

According to Giddens (1984) the organisational dimension of rules "imply 'methodical procedures' of social interaction" (p. 18), thus relating to a series of formal and informal codes specifying, demarcating and regulating the social interaction and strategical behaviour of actors. Examples of rules are regulations, permits, canons of law and bureaucratic procedures that are relevant to a certain policy domain. Huitema and Meijerink (2014) fragmented the typology of Giddens' (1984) definition of rules into five domains:

- (1) Authority: rules sanctioning and legitimising the formal competences and granted autonomy of agents within the given official policy domain;
- (2) Aggregation: rules balancing the individual with collective interests of agents within the given official policy domain;
- (3) Boundary: rules demarcating the geographical jurisdiction of the given policy domain;
- (4) Information: communication rules conditioning the access of agents to information within the given official policy domain;
- (5) Pay-off: rules constituting the distribution of costs and profits or benefits among agents within the given official policy domain;

The aforementioned five types of rules closely relate to Giddens' (1984) forms of structure (signification, domination and legitimisation) in the sense that they articulate, manage and

regulate the room to manoeuvre for policy actors, such as access to policy arenas, their participation in agenda setting, decision-making, conflict resolution, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, etc. Therefore, the operational definition of 'rules' is formulated as:

*Rules regulate the (in)formal social interaction between actors within the Dutch development policy domain in terms of sanctioned authority, aggregation, jurisprudential boundaries, communication and access to information, and cost-profit distribution.*

#### *Resource(s)*

Giddens (1984) understands the organisational dimension of resources as "structured properties of social systems, drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction" (p. 15). This definition can be interpreted quite broad, as Veenman et al. (2009) does by referring to resources as assets of power (e.g., legislative power, financial funds, media access, knowledge and expertise, etc.) which a policy actor, depending on the rules, may mobilise and excise. This has two implications. On the one hand, the dimension resources intrinsically linked with the dimension of rules since the use of resources is bounded by the rules. On the other hand, the notion of power implies that the utilisation of resources are manifestations of strategic behaviour and domination that are unevenly distributed among policy actors. This is arguably partly due to their intrinsic design characteristics (e.g., governments tend to have a larger budget compared to NGOs) and partly due to the rules of the policy domain and arrangement. Therefore, the operational definition of 'resources' is formulated as:

*Resources encompass all means an actor is able to mobilise and allowed to use as a part of conducting strategic behaviour in achieving its goal.*

#### *Discourse(s)*

According to Hajer (1995) a discourse is a deliberatively (re)produced intellectual amalgam of ideals, theoretical concepts and experienced narratives which gives a meaning to a certain and (often) multi-interpretable social phenomenon. In turn, the committal and reflexive position of a discourse makes it an important vehicle of social mobilisation as it greatly affects a subject's perspective through using a specific language, thus a vocal frame aiming to (re)produce social reality as perceived by agents or society. For instance, one's opinion on

guerrilla movements can vary considerably when media outlets describe and analyse such movement through the distinct verbalisations of “rebels”, “freedom fighters”, “insurgents”, “anarchists”, “guerrillas”, “activists” or “terrorists”. In turn, the social and political mobilisation of a discourse can result into organisational practices of action that become enshrined in institutionalised patterns of practice (Leroy & Wiering, 2007, pp. 76-77). In other words, by choosing a specific style of communication and expressive vocabulary, discourses rhetorically (re)shape, inspire and constrain the contours of a policy domain, such as the post-2014 Dutch ODA and the political rationales fundamental to the DGGF. For example, the vocal emphasis on the stagnant situation of the Dutch economy, the possibility of a terrorist attack, the AfT-initiative in international development discourse and the teleological justification that development aid-through-exports would be beneficial for both the Netherlands as well for the developing countries in the ‘*A world to gain*’-white paper legitimised the cutbacks in ODA policy to Dutch NGOs and the birth of the DGGF. Therefore, the operational definition of ‘discourse’ is formulated as:

*A discourse is a deliberately (re)produced intellectual amalgam of visions, concepts and narratives which, through the use of a particular language, results into the institutionalisation of an organised pattern of action.*

The overall operationalisation of the PAA assessment framework including its quadruple typology and associated indicators (research features) is visualised in Figure 6. In terms of the organisational dimension *actor*, the indicators focus on the identification of the actor (civil development actors as main research objects, and private and public actors as contextual research objects), the assumptions underlying the existential driving forces of the actor, the dynamics of the (strategic) behaviour of the actor, such as entering alliances. In terms of the organisational dimension *rules*, the indicators outlined aim at unravelling the so-called ‘rules of the game’ played by the actors. In terms of the organisational dimension *resources*, the indicators concentrate on the identification of resources, their distribution among actors, the established rules constraining the utilisation of resources, and the consequences of using these resources for the individual agent and actors. Finally, in terms of the substantive dimension *discourses*, the indicators aim to explicate the expressed vocabulary and the arguments made by the actors along with the institutionalised practices and patterns of action that derive from these discursive configurations.

Dimensions of PAA	Indicators
<p><b>Actor(s)</b> (organisational component for the description of the agent)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>typology (private, public and/ or civil)</li> <li>rationales and driving forces</li> <li>strategic behaviour</li> <li>coalitions and oppositions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rule(s)</b> (organisational component determining the strategic capacity for agency)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authority rules</li> <li>aggregation rules</li> <li>boundaries rules</li> <li>information rules</li> <li>pay-off rules</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource(s)</b> (organisational component determining the strategic capacity for agency)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>types of resources able to mobilise</li> <li>distribution of resources among actors</li> <li>rules regarding the utilisation of resources</li> <li>consequences of the utilisation of resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discourse(s)</b> (substantive component determining an agent's meaning to a phenomena)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interpretation of current dominant discourse</li> <li>position and used language/ rhetoric</li> <li>institutionalised practices</li> <li>acclaim or resistance against practices</li> </ul>

Figure 6. Operationalisation of the PAA assessment framework (format based on Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007; Vennix, 2011; input own work).



### **3. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In the following chapter, the research design, methodology and data collection methods are laid down in four sections. In § 3.1 the argument is made that a qualitative-oriented case study research design is suited best as an overall research strategy. Subsequently the case sampling and methods of data collection are briefly discussed in § 3.2 and followed by a brief overview of the used data analysis method in § 3.3. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion on the limitations of the applied methodology in § 3.4.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

Given the overall study, there can be little doubt concerning the choice for a qualitative approach over a quantitative approach as the framing of the research problem and formulation of objectives and questions hardly allows room for statistical testing or longitudinal research – as stated earlier when discussing the conceptual model. The literature on qualitative research methods is vast and encompasses a grotesque collection of different interpretative approaches and holistic concepts. Various authors on research designs and methodologies (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007; Creswell, 2010; Vennix, 2011) narrow the bulk of methodological literature down to five key approaches, specifically a narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study designs. On a grand level these qualitative-oriented approaches share similarities in terms of research philosophy, data collection methods and analysis, but nonetheless one approach should be selected in order to construct a valid research design and, subsequently to draft a narrative that carries a sound and convincing message (Creswell, 2010, p. 102).

After a careful examination of the aforementioned five qualitative approaches, the case study research design seems to be the most suitable research methodology. The motivation underlying this choice is twofold: in terms of choice-through-falsification, the grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography and narrative approaches can be all rejected as the research objective does not aim on systematically fine-tuning a specific theory nor the study of a contextual experience of a ‘lived’ event. Therefore, a grounded theory, phenomenological, ethnographical or narrative approach are all discarded as suitable research designs for this study, which leaves the case study research design.

In terms of choice-through-verification, the case study approach is deemed a highly suitable research strategy when a study aims to elaborate on the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ a social phenomenon manifests itself (Yin, 2009). In addition, a case study design is commonly used when studying the organisational processes of policy cycles and the context associated with

these cycles (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2014/2015, p. 84). These characteristics are in line when recapitulating on the research problem, aim and questions of this study, therefore making the case study design the most appropriate approach.

Case study research involves the study of a case(s) within a real-life contemporary setting and aim to identify key elements of a specific phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Ergo, qualitative case study research is a 'data enhancing methodology' in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary system over time through a series of detailed in-depth data collection methods (Creswell, 2009). Opting for an interpretative in-depth case study research design has some general ramifications for the characteristics of the study as Verschuren and Doorewaard (2007) define several general features inherent to a case study research:

- A holistic approach towards a relatively small empirically-observable domain as opposed to the broad approach adopted by surveys;
- The identification of a specific case(s) bounded within a limited number of parameters as opposed to the numerous variables of a survey;
- The researcher observes the case(s) in their natural habitat as opposed to the controlled environment usually associated with laboratory experiments;
- A case study research design includes a detailed description of the case(s) on the specific themes. In addition, cross-cutting relationships and dissimilarities in the selected themes between multiple cases are explicated by the researcher;
- The data collection is polymethod in nature (Saunders et al., 2014/2015, p. 90), thus a collection strategy based on a multitude of sources;
- Case study research tends to conclude with a set of comprehensive meanings, which are referred to as 'assertions' (Stake, 1995) or 'explanations' (Yin, 2009);

Saunders et al. (2014/2015) distinguish, on the basis of two discrete dimensions, four methods to case study research: single versus multi, and holistic versus embedded. The former method is commonly used to falsify or verify a degree of generalisation between the used case(s) by letting them serve as either critical, extreme or unique, while the latter emphasises the unit of analysis by focusing either on the case as a whole (holism) or on certain subthemes within the case (embedded). In this study, the holistic multi-case study method is selected for two reasons. The choice of a holistic approach over its embedded counterpart is based on the focus of the study, namely the consequences for Dutch-based civil development actors due to recent policy changes, thus implicitly treating these actors as

one integral unit of analysis. In addition, as the DGGF acts as the key point of departure from which the civil actors are studied, logic dictates the latter are identified as the cases to be studied, thus opting for a multi case study.

In total, five cases have been used in this study: three Dutch-based NGOs (Dokters van de Wereld, Partos, and Terre des Hommes) with divergent thematic assumptions towards ‘development’ and their activities, one public actor (the DGIS) to provide both the context and in-depth specifics of the institutional and political design characteristics of the DGGF, and one private actor (Syntech International) to illustrate the practical consequences of the DGGF put into effect. These cases have been selected using two sampling methods: snowball and purposive sampling. In terms of the snowball (or chain) sampling strategy the NGOs Dokters van de Wereld and Partos were identified as cases of interest from people-who-know-people who know or believe a case to be relevant and information-rich. The other cases (Terre des Hommes, the DGIS, and Syntech International) have been selected because they purposefully inform an understanding of the phenomenon central to the research. Specific descriptive details relating to the NGOs and Syntech International are included in Box 1 and 2 respectively; regarding the DGIS no separate case study has been explicitly included into the study’s narrative, but instead used to support other findings and provide a context of contemporary Dutch schemes and practices of international cooperation and development aid and the DGGF. The sampling method is visualised in Figure 7.

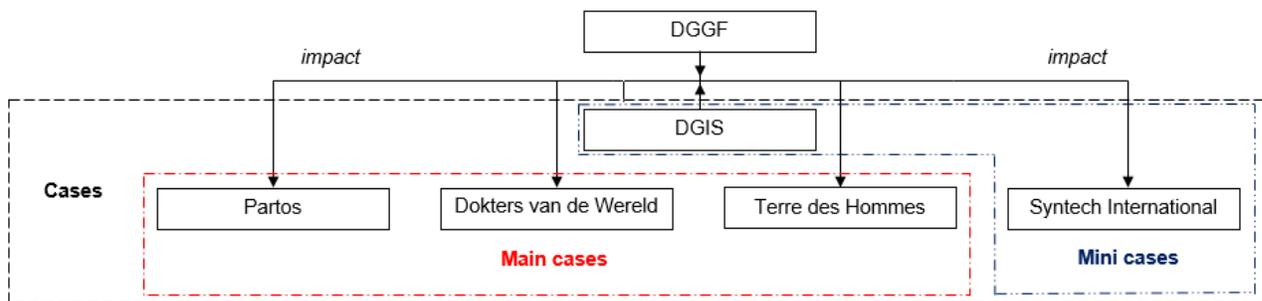


Figure 7. Schematic visualisation of the applied holistic multi-case method (own work).

Observant readers will immediately notice these cases do not involve one of the four biggest Dutch civil development organisations, precisely the actors that have faced the lion’s share of the recent cutbacks and have been the main critics of the DGGF. The absence of these key organisations is consequential to the fact none of these organisations was responsive, willing or available to be interviewed during the course of this research, despite multiple attempts and contacting both present and former employees of these organisations via

various channels of communication and people. To the rationales underlying the refusals to be interviewed or to comment on the study can only be guessed at. A suggestion may be that the employees of the organisations in question did not have the time or fancy to be interviewed while headquarters were being reorganised and/ or downsized. Acting out of strategic future interests in respect to other competing NGOs (i.e. keeping cards close to the chest) might have been another reason why interview requests have been declined.

### **Box 1**

#### **Information on the cases of Partos, Dokters van de Wereld, and Terre des Hommes**

*Partos* is the branch association for civil development NGOs in the Netherlands and has over 100 member organisations, including Cordaid, Hivos, OxfamNovib, ICCO, Dokters van de Wereld, and Terre des Hommes. Founded in 2004 by 60 Dutch NGOs, Partos serves to represent the interests of Dutch development organisations through lobbying and advocacy activities with governmental agencies and state legislators on the quality, quantity and domestic policy coherence for international development cooperation. As an organisation Partos does not conduct development activities and therefore did not receive MFS grants, but relies on its member contributions (i.e. affiliated Dutch NGOs) for its revenues.

*Dokters van de Wereld* [Doctors of the World] is a medical-humanitarian and development NGO whose mission is dedicated to ensuring the universal human right to medical health care, thus helping people in receiving health care and advocating to end health inequities. The Dutch branch was founded in 1997 in order to represent its larger umbrella organisation *Médecins du Monde*, a French INGO consisting of activist-driven group of medical professionals with the desire of instilling medical health care to those who need it, and which effectively split from *Médecins sans Frontiers* in 1980 after intra-organisational frictions during intervention operations concerning the Vietnamese boat refugees in the late-1970s. Between 2005 and 2010, Dokters van de Wereld received MFS grants from the TMF (€ 1,2 million) and MFS-I (€ 3,9 million) co-funding schemes.

*Terre des Hommes* is a civil development NGO with a focus on ensuring universal children's rights by eliminating of exploitation, abuse, trafficking, and prostitution of children. Next to children development issues Terre des Hommes also provides humanitarian relief in instances of crisis and natural disasters. Established in 1966 by the *International Federation Terre des Hommes*, the Dutch branch is among the oldest development organisations active in the Netherlands and is currently active in 22 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. Between 2007 and 2015, Terre des Hommes received grants from the MFS-I (€ 32 million) and MFS-II (€ 32 million), the latter in an alliance with two other NGOs.

Irrespectively of these tentative suggestions, the absence of the four biggest NGOs implies a significant limitation in respect to the collected data and the narrative of this study. This limitation somewhat mitigating by the observation made by Develtere (2009) that the 'world' of Dutch NGOs is relatively small – a hallmark that was put to good use during this research in the quest for respondents – and encompasses a pallet of mutually recognised organisations which all demonstrate a communal interinstitutional behaviour. Because of this observation some secondary statements, notably in the case of Partos, can present some meta-level results that can be partially generalised to the four traditional MFS-organisations. However, the fact remains these involve secondary sources that were not verified by the organisations in question and thus should be subject to needful prudence and scrutiny.

#### **Box 2**

##### **Information on the case of Syntech International**

*Syntech International* Ltd. is a Dutch private enterprise founded in 1911 in Venlo, a city in the south-eastern Netherlands near the German border, as a family business under the name *Kusters Engineering*. In its over one hundred year history, the company has focused primarily on the manufacturing and export of industrial products, most notably installations meant for the destruction of cash currency. Currently, Syntech employs over 150 people domestically, thus categorising the company as a 'medium-sized' according to EU guidelines. Its customer base largely encompasses foreign financial institutions (e.g. Central Banks, cash waste deposal processors and mint facilities) in over 80 countries, with over 90% of the company's revenue originating from these cross-border business

### **3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The data collection method of this study has a two-step methodological sequence due to the shifting focus of the studied elements in this research. Recapitulating on the primary research model explains this methodology. In Part I and II, a concise and critical discussion of the theoretical debates surrounding Giddens' structuration theory and AfT was central and ultimately resulted into the operationalisation of the PAA as the main analytical-conceptual assessment framework of this study. The data collection procedure underlying this process is visualised in Figure 8: by sifting through a multitude of resources a body of preliminary on-topic knowledge was established and subsequently operationalised. This means that Part II

of the research process – the creation of a suitable assessment framework – is completed, thus moving the methodology towards Part III of the study.

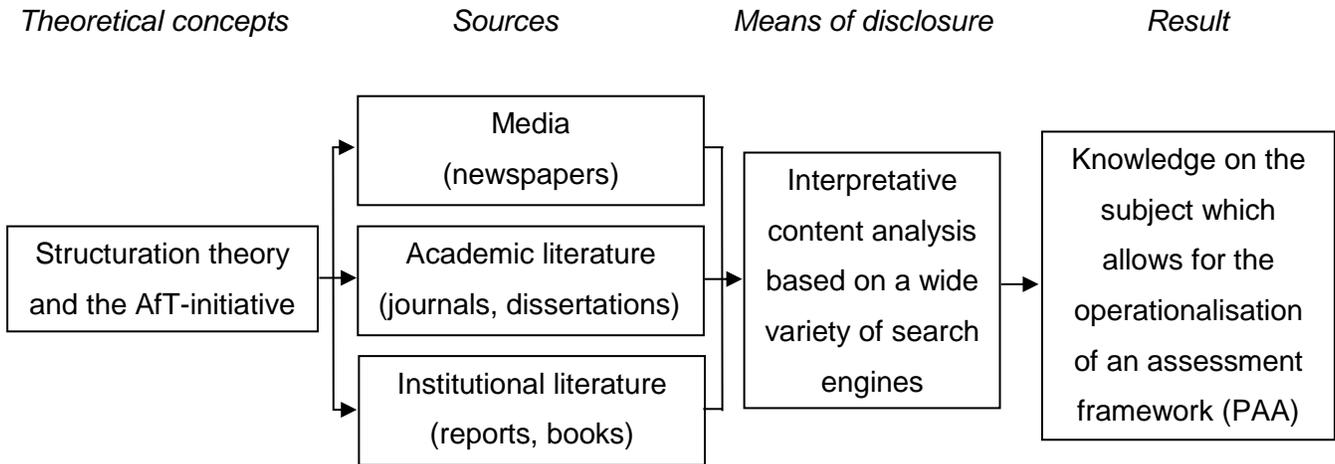


Figure 8. Schematic visualisation of the data collection in Part I and II of the study (own work).

As a fundament to Part III, the data collection method no longer focuses at theorising a metaphysical concept, but at generating information (i.e. research data, results or findings data) involving the cases. Creswell (2009) postulates that the fundamental characteristic of case study research is drawing on the multiple sources of information, a method referred to as data triangulation (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007, p. 184). Out of the four types of data extraction put forward by Yin (2009) in case study research – (in)active participant observations, conducting interviews, studying archival records, and literature analysis via desk research – two have been actively used in this study (interviews and desk research), and one method to a lesser extent (studying archival records). The main reason why (in)active participant observations has been scrapped as a data collection method was the assumption it would not likely to generate meaningful results, as the added value observing an empty working station at a NGO following a reorganisation, for example, is nihil. This leaves conducting interviews and the context analysis of documents (archived and more recent publications) to be the main methods of generating information. This process is visualised in Figure 9.

Interviewing respondents is a frequently used method in qualitative research for the acquisition of primary information (Vennix, 2011). To ensure the allegory, comparability and exemplification of the given answers, the study has made use of a series of in-depth standardised open-ended face-to-face interviews with informants and experts regarding

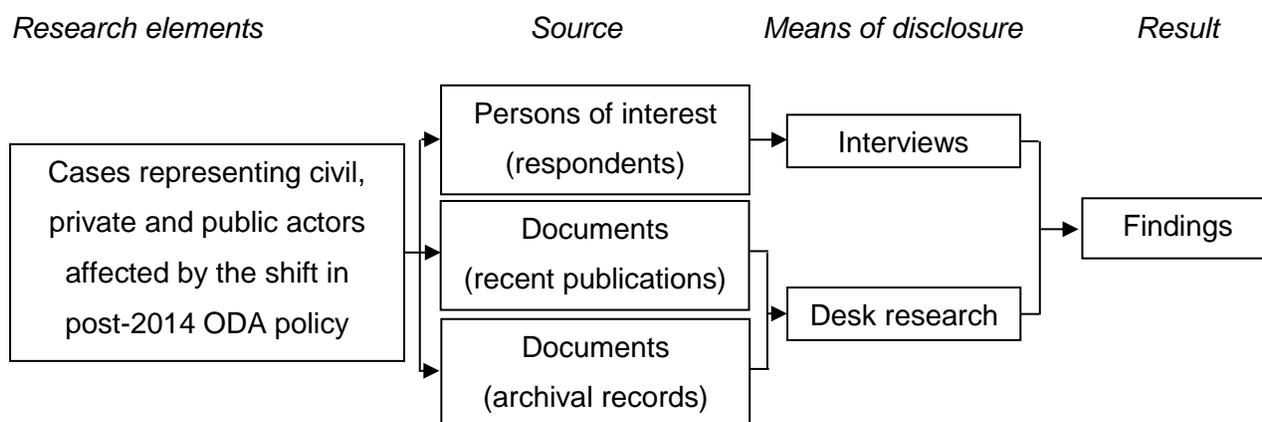


Figure 9. Schematic visualisation of the data collection in Part III of the study (own work).

the shift in Dutch ODA policy (see Appendix A for the interview protocol). In the period May-June 2016 a total of six persons were formally interviewed in face-to-face conversations at various locations throughout the Netherlands. Over 300 minutes was recorded, meaning the interviews lasted on average approximately 50 minutes. Additionally, all respondents fully complied with the terms set in the consent form attached to the interview protocol.

#	Field of expertise of the respondent	Date of interview
A	Academic at the Centre of International Development Issues Nijmegen at Radboud University (non-involved third-party entity)	11 May 2016
B	Employee branch organisation Partos (civil actor)	25 May 2016
C	Civil servant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (public actor)	30 May 2016
D	Employee at Dokters van de Wereld (civil actor)	31 May 2016
E	Employee at Syntech International (private actor)	8 June 2016
F	Employee at Terre des Homes (civil actor)	30 June 2016

Figure 10. List of interviewed respondents. Statements derived from these respondents will be referred according to APA guidelines, e.g., (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016) (own work).

Next to conducting interviews, the other data collection method adopted in this study involved the analysis of documents, also referred to as desk research (Vennix, 2011, p. 262). The added value of using this method in this study was the broad spectrum of information inlets it offered (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007, p. 239). The applied research method of desk research in this study has ultimately entailed three types of information: academically-based research (i.e. articles published in academic journals), institutionally-based reports (i.e.

reports, guidelines or evaluations published by non-academics, such as NGOs or white paper documents released by the Dutch government, the latter are included in Appendix B) and media-based accounts (i.e. newspaper articles).

### 3.3 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

A few words are dedicated on how the collected data has been processed, analysed and revised in order to ensure the validity of the information and the overall robustness of the study. To this end the choreography of information is based on what Creswell (2010) refers to as a 'spiral of analysis', meaning the researcher engages in a process of moving the collected data in analytic circles rather than following a fixed linear approach. According to Creswell (2010) the spiral has four key events: (1) organisation, (2) reading and memoing, (3) coding, classification, categorisation and interpretation, and (4) representation; below follows a summary of these four steps.

Firstly, in terms of data organisation and storage the collected 'raw information' has been digitalised (i.e. interview recordings are verbally transcribed and printed documents scanned) stored and organised using the qualitative data analysis software package *Atlas.ti* (version 7.5.15). All respondents have been given an opportunity to make amendments to their transcriptions (out of the six respondents one did so). Furthermore, all respondents have fully signed the consent forms, thus allowing the respondent to use anonymous in vivo passages of the interviews into the final thesis.

Secondly, in terms of reading and memoing the researcher has read all the transcripts multiple times in order to get a sense of the whole database. Meta-thoughts, statements, and reflections have resulted to the first preliminary ideas and concepts of coding the evidence portrayed from multiple perspective form both respondents and written texts.

Thirdly, the data was coded in accordance to a heuristic within-case analysis. The heuristic within-case analysis is a data analysis format commonly used for providing a holistic and detailed description, analysis and assessment of an individual case and embedded themes (Creswell, 2010). The process of coding involved three steps and gradually became more abstract in nature: open coding (tentative labelling of written text), axial coding (conjoining labels into categories), and selective coding (classifying categories into themes). The schemes of codes, classifications and categorisation were then linked to the larger body of research literature. This holist-oriented approach towards the interpretation of data enabled the author to analyse the dynamic configurations the Dutch institutional structures associated with international development cooperation and its (changing) patterns underlying issue-

relevant discursive meaning over time along with the various roles adopted by civil, private and public actors, whom historically have been subject to external contextual events.

Fourthly, in terms of data representation the researcher opted for presenting an in-depth picture of the case(s) using a narrative and complementing figures. It is worth noting not all information, coded or not, was used in representing the causal story, meaning parts which seemed irrelevant or too far off-topic were discarded – a practice which according to Wolcott (1994) is usual when conducting a qualitative study.

### 3.4 ANTICIPATING ON FORESEEABLE CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

To recapitalise and reflect on the progress made in this chapter: a qualitatively-oriented case study research design using interviews and desk research (analysis of recently published documents and archival records) has been selected as a research strategy suitable of applying the PAA to the research's focus. Compared to the other qualitative approaches outlined at the start of this chapter, the strengths of the case study design are arguably its integral approach to the research foci, the ability to address contextual circumstances along with specific settings and contingency factors, while simultaneously requiring relative less preparation and structure (Crang, 2002). Therefore, the case study research design is abler to anticipate, adapt and respond to changes during the research trajectory compared to other qualitative designs (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007).

Nonetheless, the case study research design is also hampered by drawbacks and methodological limitations, the most important one being the fact that the studied case(s) seldom provide a (fully) representative image of empirical reality or social configurations, implying that conclusions drawn from case studies, in contrast to quantitative research designs, have limited value in terms of generalisation or broad application (Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010). Verschuren and Doorewaard (2007) also underscore that the less structured methodology, notably in the preparatory phases of the study, has the potential to erode the external validity of the findings and conclusions. In relation to the generalisability of case study findings, Creswell (2009) points out other challenges to the case study research, namely the setting of the boundaries and scope of the case(s). Likewise, Swanborn (2008) states that the context of the studied cases is not always clearly demarcated, both to the researcher and to the studied objects/ subjects. Lastly, Vennix (2011) points out a researcher always carries an embedded socio-cultural position (the 'observer bias') that implicitly and unintentionally adds subjective elements to the research narrative (Crang, 2003). In sum, the inherent logic and applied methods of data extraction, collection and analysis nullifies the

possibility of obtaining an absolute degree of objectivity, which inevitably affects the external validity of the conclusions.

It should be noted that the information gathered using interviews is based on personal perceptions and experiences and therefore by definition not fully objective. Combined with the fact that the amount of cases (5) is fairly limited and does not include the four biggest Dutch-based NGOs, the data extracted from interviews in this study does not represent the entire realm of actors active in the Dutch development policy domain to a full extent nor does it fully elaborate on the specifics on how this domain is organised. Fortunately, the other applied research method of desk research can partly attenuate this limitation by triangulating the obtained information, but it remains a substantial methodological drawback to this research that should be taken into consideration.

To anticipate to the aforementioned challenges associated with case study research, the researcher has enacted several 'countermeasures'. In terms of not detaching from social reality and remaining a sense of generalisability of the findings without falling victim to a cascade of information, the researcher shares the stance made by Saunders et al. (2014/2015), namely that continuous iteratively mirroring the research findings in respect to the social relevance of the study will provide a degree of academic and social generalisability. With respect to setting boundaries and maintaining the envisioned scope, the cases have been iteratively reflected upon by linking them with the theoretical conceptualisations of AfT (previous chapter). Also, a historical oversight of post-war Dutch schemes and practices of international cooperation and development activities has been added to the narrative of the study (next chapter) with the aim of embedding the selected cases, thus providing a demarcating context to these cases. Finally, according to Vennix (2011), the observer bias has been reduced (but not completely ruled out) by applying triangulation in the analysis of the collected data to cross-verify the interpretation of the main findings made by the researcher to filter out personal subjective assertions.

## 4. MERCHANT ≠ VICAR

The following chapter aims to outline the background of the Dutch development policy by describing the historical trajectories and activities related to official Dutch development policy. The chapter is organised into two sections, starting with a historical overview of the Dutch development policy is provided up to 2013 (§ 4.1). The historiographic narrative focuses primarily on the development of the Dutch civilateral aid channel by highlighting key events and trajectories that are placed within the broader regional and international context of international development cooperation. The storyline is based on primary sources, such as direct interview statements from the cases and analysed white paper documents, and secondary sources. § 4.2 covers some concluding remarks based on the analysis of key events of this historic narrative. Both sections are important to the reader in order to acquire an elemental understanding of both the historical and contemporary official Dutch development schemes and practices, the latter of which are central in the next chapter.

### 4.1. DUTCH DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Two red lines contour this paragraph: one being the metaphorical ‘merchant-vicar’-antitheses characterising post-war Dutch development thinking, policies and practices, and the other being the incrementally changing relationships of Dutch development NGOs with its national governmental institutions since the start of the new Millennium. The first observation builds on what in academic circles has been referred to as a balancing act of ‘a merchant versus a vicar’, meaning that post-war Dutch development policies as a part of its larger foreign policy, have historically oscillated between the promotion of national exports through international commerce, and the social outreach out to the most underdeveloped regions in the world on the basis of the self-congratulatory idealisms of Protestant Christianity (Hoebink, 1988, p. 71; Smits, 2009, p. 49; Respondent A, personal communication, 11 May 2016). An analysis of this supposed oscillation is at the centre of the following historical overview with the purpose of providing a contextual background in understanding the institutional and political design characteristics of the DGGF. After all, the past shapes the present. The main thing that will become clear is from this analysis is the continuous solidification and institutionalisation of a deeply-rooted confidence that market-based economic conditions are to be the prime driver of Dutch schemes of international development cooperation, both in the past and presently.

The firmly institutionalised idea that allowing freely operating (exporting) businesses – quintessentially the neoliberal paradigm dominating global politico-economic understandings since the 1980s – has also had profound implications for the manner in which Dutch NGOs

receive state grants in the ever-denser and increasingly complex realm of international cooperation. Findings suggest that since the past 15 years Dutch state-NGO co-funding schemes have gradually hollowed out the organisational autonomy of the latter and eroded the substantive content of their programs. In effect, the phenomenon of channelling state funding meant for development aid and assistance to NGOs via contracts is bound to have potentially negative consequences, both for the organisational capacity of these NGOs to function as well for their substantive content and activities. These conclusions form the prelude to the comprehensive analysis of the contemporary policy field in which Dutch NGOs are operating, which is at the core of the next chapter.

#### *4.1.1 1945-1965: DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN A TWILIGHT ZONE*

Prior the Second World War, the political macro-economic structures of many European states relied on the trusteeship of overseas colonies, which in the case of the Netherlands involved Suriname, the Territory of Curaçao, New Guinea, and the Dutch East Indies (Wolters-Noordhoff, 2007, pp. 490-491). During the heydays of imperialism, the approach towards 'development' was mainly understood in terms of colonial resource management, thus the extraction of raw natural resources to be used in European-based centres of industrial production (Pieterse, 2010, p. 6). With the definitive end of the Second World War in August 1945 and the establishment of the United Nations, an era of decolonisation began that also included the gradual dismantlement of much of the Dutch colonial empire – most prominently the formal recognition of the Republic of Indonesia in December 1949.

The simultaneous independence of Indonesia and the initiation of post-war domestic reconstruction proved to be key turning point in Dutch diplomatic relations and its practice on foreign (development) policies as, until 1965, these practices only featured multilateral activities of aid and assistance, such as the *Point Four Program* (Hellema, 2001, p. 159). The Point Four Program involved a technical aid program aiming to win the 'hearts and minds' of former colonial areas based on the promotion of liberal values, such as democracy, civil representation, safeguarding human and political rights and market-based economic modernisation (Paterson, 1972). As a part of the Western-bloc and a key recipient of Marshall funds the Netherlands soon adopted this US-led post-war vision on international cooperation and entered the arena of multilateral development cooperation in October 1949 when the Drees-van Schaik cabinet (1948-1951) announced it would allocate a modest amount of funding (f 1.5 million) to the UN-led *Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance* (Dierikx, 2002, p. 32). The escalation of the Cold War in the 1950s – during the Korean War over

3,900 Dutch soldiers served under the UN-flag – boosted the prominence of an anti-communist rhetoric in Dutch foreign policy and the politico-idealistic motives of Cold War containment underlying its national development thinking. In 1954, for example, the Drees-II administration considered to pour *f* 100 million into a UN investment fund designed to alleviate socioeconomic disparities in decolonised countries, thus straying these areas from their presumed communist course (Smits, 2009, p. 53). Albeit the proposal was never put to a vote in parliament, the *Nota inzake de hulpverlening aan minder ontwikkelde gebieden* [White paper on ‘Aid to less developed areas’] did explicitly referred to “the political unrest and the call of communism” as being “problematic and undesirable” (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1956, p. 3), but favoured multilaterally-issued aid over bilateral due to the assumed neutrality of the former channel (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1956, p. 9).

#### 4.1.2 1965-1973: SOLIDIFICATION AND FORMALISATION OF POLICY

At the height of the post-Second World War boom, economic forces started to play a greater role in Dutch foreign policies as in the early 1960s Dutch-based enterprises, like Philips and the Royal Dutch Airlines, sought to expand their business operations abroad (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016). Subsequently, entrepreneur organisations began to pressure state legislators in developing bilateral and trade-oriented development ties next to the existing multilateral aid relations, as a 1960 plea shows: “[...] bilateral aid must be given an important position in Dutch [development] policy” (Verbond van Nederlandse Werkgevers, 1960, p. 3). These pleas were soon translated into policy proposals explicitly advocating bilateral over multilateral aid channels. And with great success: under the supervision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs the bilateral aid budget grew from *f* 4.5 million in 1965 to *f* 328 million in 1972, thereby outgrowing its multilateral counterpart (Hoebink, 1988, p. 53).

Moreover, in 1965 politician Theo Bot was appointed the first ‘*Minister for the Assistance to Development Countries*’ and became in charge of state matters relating to international development cooperation. Bot’s appointment was, however, not born out of the idealism of professionalising Dutch aid channels, but a political compromise during the 1965 cabinet formation (Hoebink, 2006). It is worth noticing all Dutch Ministers or State Secretaries tasked with development cooperation have lacked a portfolio, meaning broadly they do not head a ministry yet are responsible for a specified section of another minister’s policy field. In this case, Dutch Ministers of Development Cooperation have been accommodated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thus making the former office function an integral part of the Dutch corps diplomatique. Furthermore, the Minister of Development Cooperation traditionally has a

larger budget than the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the former is fully dependent on administrative capacities from the latter (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016). As will become apparent, this somewhat peculiar intradepartmental arrangement has led to numerous frictions with other executive state branches, most notably the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs. Both the pragmatic conception of the Minister's post and its historic institutional subordinate nature signal the disputable importance of the development minister's post within the Dutch state apparatus. Below is an overview (Figure 11) of the Dutch politicians having served as Minister of Development Cooperation since 1965.

Period	Minister	Cabinet	Period (cont.)	Minister	Cabinet
1965-1966	T. H. Bot*	Cals	1986-1989	P. Bukman	Lubbers-II
1966-1967	T. H. Bot*	Zijlstra	1989-1994	J. P. Pronk	Lubbers-III
1967-1971	B. J. Udink*	De Jong	1994-1998	J. P. Pronk	Kok-I
1971-1972	K. Boertien	Biesheuvel-I	1998-2002	E. L. Herfkens	Kok-II
1972-1973	K. Boertien	Biesheuvel-II	2002-2003	A. van Ardenne**	Balkenende-I
1973-1977	J. P. Pronk	Den Uyl	2003-2006	A. van Ardenne**	Balkenende-II
1977-1981	J. de Koning	Van Agt-I	2006-2007	A. van Ardenne**	Balkenende-III
1981-1982	J. P. van Dijk	Van Agt-II	2007-2010	B. G. Koenders	Balkenende-IV
1982-1982	J. P. van Dijk	Van Agt-III	2010-2012	B. P. M. Knapen**	Rutte-I
1982-1986	E. M. Schoo	Lubbers-I	2012-present	L. M. J. Ploumen***	Rutte-II

Figure 11. Overview of Dutch Ministers of Development Cooperation since 1965. (\*) Officially served as 'Minister for Assistance to Development Countries'. (\*\*) Officially served as 'State Secretary for Development Cooperation', but were referred to as 'Minister' when travelling abroad. (\*\*\*) Officially serves as 'Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation' (own work).

Minister Bot published the *Nota Hulpverlening aan minder ontwikkelde landen* [White paper on 'Aid to less developed countries'] in which he envisioned the promotion of bilateral relationships and intensification of commerce as vital to, on the one hand, keeping the Soviet-Union at bay (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1966, p. 66), and on the other hand promote economic ties with developing countries (Smits, 2009, p. 53), through the establishment of "the optimal combination of private activities – by (non)-commercial organisations – with governmental activities" (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1966, p. 62). The proposed manner of doing so was to stimulate private Dutch investments and exports abroad by vouching for these bilateral investments using concessional export credits (Handelingen der

Staten-Generaal, 1966, p. 64). Until 1973 this policy remained the main guidance under Minister Bot's successors Berend Udink (1967-1971) and Kees Boertien (1971-1973), the latter serving as the first Dutch '*Minister for Development Cooperation*'.

Furthermore, following the lobby of Dutch private corporations, a number of civil development organisations also began advocating for state subsidies to support their civil-oriented development activities. Initially, Ministers Bot and Joseph Luns (Foreign Affairs) were hesitant in diverging taxpayer's funding towards the proposed civilateral aid channel, but in October 1965 agreed to start cofinancing the three largest Dutch-based civil development organisations, the Protestant-oriented ICCO, Catholic-oriented Cordaid and secular Novib (OxfamNovib since 1994), in what would be known as the '*medefinancieringsstelsel*' [MFS]. This grant program started with *f* 15 million (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1966, p. 66), which in 1965 compromised 3.5% of the total Dutch development budget (Rijneveld, Mangus & Broere, 2016, p. 8). In the decades that followed the MFS grant program was to become a cardinal aid channel of Dutch development cooperation policy (Smits, 2009, p. 61).

#### *4.1.3 1973-1977: REVOLUTION UNDER PRONK*

The 1973 formation of the Den Uyl cabinet and the appointment of Jan Pronk as Minister of Development Cooperation proved to be a key point as Dutch development policies became thoroughly explicit in its political orientation, formulations, interdepartmental competences, and envisioned goals (Bol, 1976). Within the progressive left-wing administration Minister Pronk placed strong emphasis on the themes surrounding the (growing) international inequalities in economic growth. For example, in an editorial interview of *Tijdschrift voor Anti-Imperialisme Scholing* ['Journal for Anti-Imperialist Education'], he declared the following:

I admit that development cooperation in the vast majority of international politics is still a function of imperialistic actions. Such applies to the USA and also for most of the policies carried out by countries in the European Economic Community in the 1950s and 1960s on aiming to maintain the economic status quo. I only state that this is not the case in terms of contemporary Dutch policy and that it is also not inherent to development cooperation of being a function of such politics. (*Tijdschrift voor Anti-Imperialisme Scholing*, 1973)

Similar rhetoric is absent in Minister Pronk's *Nota bilaterale ontwikkelingssamenwerking* [White paper on 'Bilateral development cooperation'] (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal,

1976), but the editorial clearly showcases on how Dutch development cooperation should be shaped under Pronk's ministerial supervision. However, some nuances to the aforementioned 'radical' statement are appropriate as such proclamations did fit the progressive zeitgeist of the 1970s in the Netherlands (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016).

Pronk thus envisaged a new development vision on Global North-South relations and essentially broke with the prevailing 'dependency theory' – he was arguably inspired by Jan Tinbergen, a Dutch Nobel Prize in Economics laureate and Pronk's mentor. A signature issue to Pronk's policy was strengthening the self-reliance of developing countries by advocating a more equal and social global distribution of wealth and prosperity (Malcontent & Nekkers, 1999, pp. 33-34). Concretely, it meant that Dutch bilateral aid and assistance would function primarily as a holistic bridge to establishing economic autonomy, political self-determination and social empowerment for world's poorest areas. The developing regions the Netherlands was to distribute its development funds to were to be assessed on the degree of absolute poverty according to aid necessity and the existing institutional capacity to absorb the untied aid to benefit the recipient society (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1976, p. 13). This also meant entrepreneurship or international diplomacy were deemed irrelevant to Pronk's selection of developing areas, which resulted to the controversial decision to include Indonesia (a former colony) and Cuba (an ally to the Soviet Union) among the 17 recipient countries (Hoebink, 1988, p. 59). Also, Pronk clearly favoured the bilateral aid channel and was initially, according to Smits (2009), highly sceptical concerning the abilities of the Dutch civilateral aid channel to achieve the envisioned degree of socio-economic self-reliance of developing countries. However, he seems to be persuaded in his 1976 white paper:

The nature and motivation of these organisations often results into a strong commitment to continue and to complete the work once initiated. They are often better capable compared to the government in providing the adequate coordination in the realisation of their aspirations among different groups. (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1976, p. 49)

On an institutional level Pronk was able to transfer a number of policy competences and financial responsibilities in the implementation of development activities from other ministries, most notably those of Economic Affairs and Finances (Hoebink, 1988, p. 57). In conjunction to these institutional reforms he also raised the development budget to 1.5% of Dutch GDP, making the Netherlands one of the few countries to exceed UN guidelines on international

cooperation (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016), despite the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system and the 1973 oil crisis. During the mid-1970s, the overall budget rose fourfold and the number of administrative civil servants increased, meaning that the departmental aid apparatus expanded tremendously in its abilities to implement the formulated policies and bilateral aid programs (van Themaat, 1978; Smits, 2009, p. 56).

#### 4.1.4 1977-2001: PRACTICAL CONTINUATIONS AND NEO-REALISM

Pronk successors Jan de Koning (1977-1981), Kees van Dijk (1981-1982), Eegje Schoo (1982-1986) and Piet Bukman (1986-1989) continued Pronk's set of policy aims, but when faced with a growing national debt and stagflation (i.e. high rates of unemployment and price inflation) during the 1980s, all had to focus on what was considered politically realistic as opposed to Pronk's idealism of a more just international socioeconomic world order. For example, in Minister de Koning's *Nota Ontwikkelingssamenwerking in wereld-economisch perspectief* [White paper on 'Development cooperation in global-economic perspective'] (1980), a policy was introduced aiming to help developing countries in achieving societal self-reliance, but simultaneously all bilateral development ties with Latin-American countries were scrapped with the aim of reducing bilateral expenses (Hoebink, 1988, p. 63).

During the terms of de Koning and van Dijk the lobby advocating the interests of Dutch export commodities via the bilateral aid channel grew again. For example, the Coalition Agreement of the Lubbers-I administration (1982-1986) emphasised the implementation of development policies to be in tandem with the possibilities of the economy (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1982, p. 13). Also, the title alone of a white paper put forward by van Dijk's successor Minister Schoo, *Nota Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en werkgelegenheid* [White paper on 'Development cooperation and employment'] (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1984), shows an obvious self-interested economic bias of Dutch development priorities.

Next to actual policies, the legitimacy and administrative necessity for a Dutch minister for development cooperation remained a contentious topic during cabinet formations in the 1980s – a period featuring political calls for government rollback –, with notably conservatives pushing the minister's post to be engrossed in the Ministry of Economic Affairs. For example, the Committee-Vonhoff submitted a rapport advising to entirely dissolve the post of Minister for Development Cooperation by arguing its political mandate and institutional responsibilities were too limited to justify its continuing presence in Dutch administrations (Vonhoff, 1981, pp. 15-16). Consequently, the VVD proposed a 'Ministry of International Economic Cooperation' during the formation of the Lubbers-I cabinet, but the plan was scrapped (Maas, 1986, p. 81).

Jan Pronk, who returned as Minister for Development Cooperation in the Lubbers-III (1989-1994) and Kok-I (1994-1998) administrations, retrospectively criticised the past trends in his *Nota een wereld van verschil* [White paper on 'A world of difference'] (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1990). According to Minister Pronk the core of the problem remained that "the chasm between those who have an adequate access to factors that determine economic renewal, and those who do not have this access is increasingly becoming unbridgeable" (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1990, p. 38). Still, the overall tone of *Nota een wereld van verschil* was cautiously optimistic inspired by citing rising global environmental awareness, the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent German reunification together with the dissolutions of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet-Union as vital events in the efforts of eliminating absolute poverty by making the world less prone to large-scale (nuclear) conflicts. Albeit the end of the Cold War world order certainly meant new configurations of international cooperation could be established, it also bred new grounds for violent intrastate conflicts, an observation Pronk was compelled to make in his *Nota een wereld in geschil* [White paper on 'A world in dispute'] (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1993, p. 2). In sum, both papers characterise the need for a recalibration of international cooperation schemes as a reaction to the end of the 'clear' Cold War standoff and the rising number of 'fuzzy' civil wars (i.e. Sudan, Liberia, the Balkans, Somalia, Zaire, Rwanda and Sierra Leone) in an increasingly globalising world economy. They also signal an archetypal epistemology in development thinking that links structural poverty and societal stagnation with the incidence of violent civil and intrastate conflicts.

In addition, the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht called for the promotion of coherence, complementarity and coordination in national policies of development cooperation, thus showcasing the impact of the European project on Dutch development practices (Hoebink, 2013b, p. 71). Furthermore, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro intergovernmentally emphasised the need to combat ecological degradation in tandem with poverty and intrastate conflicts. Exemplary to the new practice of politically motivated development activities was, next to a focus on international peacekeeping missions, the envisaged focus "[in] favour of ecological sustainable development, the promotion of autonomy of woman, and recognition of democracy and human rights as conditions for socio-economic development that is beneficial to the whole population" (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1993, p. 1). However, according to Hoebink (1999) these intensions were largely offset in *Nota Herrijking van het buitenlandse beleid* [White paper on 'Revivifying foreign policy'], which Pronk signed, yet called for the need for a "[...] foreign policy in which both bilateral and multilateral channels will be made explicit in serving Dutch economic interests" (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1994, p. 13).

In the meantime, the Dutch civilateral aid channel with its MFS grant program developed itself in the 1970s and 1980s to a unique system of dispersing ODA via co-funding schemes to civil development organisations (Ruben & Schulpen, 2008). In 1978, the humanistic-oriented NGO Hivos was added to the MFS and in 1980s the portion of the Dutch development budget allocated to MFS grew gradually to 10%, which allowed the four MFS-organisations to professionalise and further propelled the MFS to become one of the most internationally-renowned agents in the international theatre of civil-led development cooperation (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 8). Still, despite international acclaim, the MFS program was met with growing domestic criticism, notably from other Dutch NGOs. The core of these criticisms denounced the perceived privileged monopoly of the traditional MFS-organisations, often pejoratively referred to as 'the cartel' (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 9), and the archaic method of distributing grants along the lines of a pillarised society, a politico-denominational structure having lost its prominence completely in the Netherlands in the mid-1990s. Although *Nota een wereld van verschil* does mention the intention to explore relationships with other NGOs besides the four traditional MFS-organisations (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1990, p. 311) and *Nota een wereld in geschil* explicitly denouncing the then-existing monopoly position on state grants (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 1993, p. 115), structural reforms of the MFS program did not occur during Minister Pronk's last two terms.

The lack of political initiative to institutionally redesign its civil development co-funding program culminated during the 1990s when NGO Terre des Hommes demanded access to the MFS program by suing the state in a number of civil lawsuits (Broere, 2010). All cases were lost, but the media attention they brought proved to be the beginning of the end for 'the cartel'. Pronk's successor Minister Eveline Herfkens (1998-2002) feared public backlash and announced she would make substantial reforms of the MFS system her signature issue. Soon a plethora of Dutch-based NGOs, including Terre des Hommes, started to apply for state grants, thus prompting the traditional four MFS-organisations to threaten to sue the Dutch state, despite these organisations having little legal provisions to substantiate their claims other than fearing that successful applications would set precedents (Klein, 2000).

#### *4.1.5 2001-2010: MODERNISATION, COHERENCE, POLITICISATION AND PARTNERSHIPS*

Minister Herfkens kept her political promise, despite the prospect of facing law suits, and set out in 2001 to structurally reform the MFS grant program in *Nota Civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding* [White paper on 'Civil society and structural poverty eradication']. The argument underlying ending monopoly of 'the cartel', whom eventually did not sue the state,

centred around the assumption that competition among all NGOs for state grants would stimulate the quality of their substance (i.e. programs, projects and campaigns) and enhance their organisational capacity (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 9).

Next to the opening the MFS grant program, Herfkens also created the *Thematische Medefinancieringsstelsel* [TMF], a separate thematic co-funding program (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2001, p. 1), which ran from 2005 till 2008 and encompassed € 160 million worth of co-funding. In all, over 66 Dutch and Belgium NGOs – application guidelines were specified in terms of the Dutch sprachraum – received funding from the TMF grant program, differentiating itself in various themes of human development, such as sustainable economic growth, gender equality, social empowerment etc. The TMF co-funding scheme proved to be a huge enabler to its conscripts since it guaranteed a steady annual cash flow. Consequently, Dokters van de Wereld for example started to enthusiastically invest in expertise, manpower and projects on different continents, thus enabling the organisation to professionalise its activities, programs and projects (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016).

In 2003, however, multiple NGOs received word that Herfkens' successor State Secretary Agnes van Ardenne (2002-2007) was to reform the civilateral grant system drastically with the aim to (again) further streamline the state's bilateral aid channel with the programs of NGOs. Her *Nota aan elkaar verplicht* [White paper on 'Obligations to each other'] stated that "The TMF grant system does justice to the role that play NGO in development" yet "There is no substantive reason to strictly separate the MFS and TMF" (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2003, p. 23). Such statements were, among mounting political questions regarding the complementarity and coherence between the bilateral and civilateral aid channels (Schulpen, 2016, p. 8), to become State Secretary van Ardenne's starting points for yet another set of co-funding schemes, which in 2005 colloquially became known as 'MFS-I'.

The MFS-I grant program (2007-2010) and its successor MFS-II (2011-2016) meant the beginning of a radical new approach in the relationship between the Dutch state and its domestic NGOs in respect to international cooperation. The driving force to this new approach were the growing political calls "to create links and to foster cooperation and synergy between the different [aid] channels" in order to accomplish "effective modern development cooperation" (DGIS, 2009, p. 3), thus to (further) streamline and coordinate Dutch NGO funding schemes. Albeit under Minister Herfkens' term the political sought-after desire of coordinating NGO co-funding schemes also lingered, the MFS-I(II) were exemplary to the first time this desire was made explicitly and abundantly clear by state legislators and politicians. The modernisation and coherence effort of minimizing Dutch NGO co-funding

fragmentation manifested during the term of Minister Bert Koenders (2007-2010) and was characterised by conjointly transforming both the political dynamics and the institutional arrangement of the Dutch civilateral development policy field.

In terms of changing political dynamics, Dutch NGOs participating in the MFS-I(I) had to accommodate a more political role by downplaying their traditional neutral and impartial service-delivery role (Schulpen, 2016, p. 8). The politicisation of NGO-activities, irrespective from the desires of state legislators, is arguably a trend that has its origin in the end of the Cold War and has gained momentum since the Wars on Terror and Drugs, with themes like (good) governance, communal identity, political representation, civic rights and human security featuring prominently on the global peacebuilding agenda. As Richmond has pointed out: “It is the space between officialdom, state and human security which NGOs have begun to fill” (2001, p. 6). However, multiple respondents perceived this ‘filling’ as being forced to align NGO programs to the state’s international policy priorities – the (expired) 2015 Millennium Development Goals [MDG] and (new) 2030 Sustainable Development Goals [SDG] – in order to be eligible to MFS-I(I) funding. This political process of delegating the state’s aid agenda through NGOs is, according to Chigas (2007), not limited to the Netherlands but instead experienced on a global scale and is bound to have profound implications on the autonomy of these organisations to act in relation to the state, which relates to the second transformation.

On an institutional level, the relational nature of the civilateral arrangement between the state and NGOs also gradually shifted with during MFS-I(I) from full non-governmental organisational autonomy to substantially closer ‘NGO-state partnerships’. Albeit Minister Koenders pleaded for a continuous commitment to an autonomous and independent domestic NGO-sector by promoting the idea of global citizenship (DGIS, 2009), critics were quick to point out that the strict accountability requirements for receiving state grants would reduce the number of potential MFS-organisations from 200 down to 30 (Pratt, 2009, p. 5). Eventually over 100 Dutch NGOs, including Dokters van de Wereld and Terre des Hommes, proved eligible for the MFS-I funding scheme. The MFS-II proved also quite different from its predecessor as State Secretary van Ardenne had strongly promoted pluriformity of activities and diversity of organisations participating in the MFS-I, whereas Minister Koenders felt the need to make these organisations work together in alliances as a means to meet the political desire to further coordinate the MFS-II grant system. The newly introduced ‘coherence alliances’ for the MFS-II program in 2009 reduced the number of potential applicants tremendously, precisely as early critics of the MFS-I(I) had predicted. All MFS-II applications were subject to two ex-ante evaluations: an ‘O[rganisation]-test’, designed to

survey the organisational capacity of the alliance, and a 'P[rogram]-test', designed to assess the substantive added value of the formulated program. In the eyes of many NGOs these requirements were perceived as to be unfairly strict when it became clear many were not likely to meet the set requirements (Respondent D, personal communication 31 May 2016). This prediction became a reality when in January 2010 Koenders successor State Secretary Ben Knapen (2010-2012) announced that 67 Dutch NGOs in 19 coherence alliances were deemed eligible to the € 2 billion worth of MFS-II funding (Knapen, 2010).

For many NGOs the combined O- and P-tests proved a bridge too far, such as the alliance of Dokters van de Wereld with *Humana* and *Right2Play* on the basis of the alliance's organisational capacity deemed too narrow to justify state grants. Concretely, this meant that neither of these organisations would receive funding from the MFS-II program (Respondent D, personal communication 31 May 2016). In the case of Terre des Hommes, a NGO which subscribed in an alliance with *Kinderpostzegels Nederland* and *Liliane Fonds*, initially also saw its MFS-II application of € 68 million denied, but after a lengthy appeal the alliance was awarded with € 32 million worth of MFS-II grants (Muiderman, 2011).

#### 4.1.6 2010-2016: CUTBACKS, REORGANISATIONS AND 'HARMONISING' AID WITH TRADE

Just like many other Dutch-based NGOs, Dokters van de Wereld lost its tender to MFS-II funding and was quite abruptly and surprisingly deprived of their main form of income. Initially the organisation tried to continue its initiated plans of expanding its international activities by taking over projects from other European delegations of *Médecins du Monde* in Serbia and Myanmar and searching for alternative manners of fundraising. However, mid-2010 the organisation saw its revenues rapidly declining because of pounding inter-NGO competition over private donations, thus a substantial reorganisation started to loom in the near distance. Gradually, the organisation realised the envisaged international ambitions and multiple projects that had been possible with the TMF and MFS-I grants had greatly overstretched its organisational capacity and blurred the core substantive message of safeguarding the universal human right on medical health care in the Netherlands. "We concluded that our strategy had been based on the weaknesses of the organisation, namely the ambition to work at an international scale, but we lacked the solid track record necessary to compete on that level" (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016). To make matter worse, six months after receiving the last MFS-I grants the threat of direct bankruptcy made an imminent reorganisation inevitable and a significant portion of the staff had to be fired, most of them with the expertise related to winning the MFS-II tender. The reorganisation of 2010 drastically

cut expenses on manpower and resulted into saving smaller projects. In the end, the organisation fully recovered from the cutbacks, largely with the help of the *Nationale Postcodeloterij* – the biggest charity lottery in the Netherlands which in 2016 donated € 328 million amongst 81 Dutch charities. According to a Dokters van de Wereld spokesperson:

The MFS-I meant funding for a five-year period, but also blinded us during that period because you have the tendency to sit back and relax, while you have to continuously approach private funds and corporate sponsorships. You cannot allow government money to become your life line, because that is often allocated to projects, so when a project is finished the funding also stops. In our case, it resulted into inflating projects and building the organisation around them, which in retrospect proved to be very risky. (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016)

On the macro level of Dutch development policy, State Secretary Knapen set out in 2010 out to restructure the priorities of Dutch development policies from social to economic sectors associated with international development aid and assistance, starting with lowering the ODA budget from 1.5 to 0.7% of Dutch GDP by reducing the number of bilateral-recipient countries from 33 to 15 (DGIS, 2010). Despite the formulation of new development policy priorities, such as an explicit focus on themes related to peace and international safety, promotion of SRHRs, and the securitisation of natural resources (DGIS, 2011), Knapen's position as 'merely' a State Secretary, thus lacking a say or vote on policy in the executive Council of Ministers, in the short-lived Rutte-I administration did not result into concrete policy changes other than cutting the ODA budget to the set norm of 0.7% of Dutch GDP.

This is not to say Knapen's envisaged priorities, which were arguably relating to The Hague's position as international city of peace and justice, dissolved in thin air as when his successor Minister Lilianne Ploumen assumed office in 2012. In fact, the modernisation process of the Dutch civil development policy agenda reached a momentous point in the sense that the principles of past policies and predecessors – the stimulation of inter-NGO competitiveness (Herfkens), the emphasis on state-NGO partnerships (van Ardenne), the politicisation of NGO activities (Koenders), and the holistic budget cuts on international cooperation and development aid (Knapen) – were adopted into one integral development policy theme that, in essence, attempts to harmonise (development) 'aid' with (economic) 'trade' (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016). This development was

amplified with Ploumen becoming the first '*Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation*' as opposed to the traditional title of Minister for Development Cooperation. The quintessence of Minister Ploumen's policy resonates clearly in the following citations of the '*A world to gain*'-white paper:

We want to help Dutch companies be successful abroad. For Dutch companies, trade is the way out of the crisis. Foreign trade creates jobs at home. Our aim is to increase both the number of companies – SMEs in particular – that are internationally active and the level of exports to and investment in emerging economies. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 47)

The results of this envisioned policy are the introduction of the Dutch Good Growth Fund in July 2014 as the main financial instrument of helping SMEs both in developing countries and in the Netherlands, especially SMEs that want to trade with and invest in low- and middle-income countries, and the definitive end of the MFS grant program in January 2016, at least in its long-established institutional shape. Instead of its traditional co-funding arrangement, Minister Ploumen replaced the MFS-II program by the *Dialogue & Dissent*, *Voice*, and *Accountability Fund* programs, three NGO funding schemes with a focus on advocacy-type of activities and which will run to 2020, all with less annual grants (Respondent F, personal communication 30 June).

According to a Partos spokesperson, the definitive end of the MFS grant program has had tremendous impact on the domestic NGO sector, both in organisational and substantive capacity (Respondent B, personal communication, 25 May 2016). To the sector it has been a bitter pill that the practice of structurally lowering the civilateral aid budget did not involve cutbacks on existing programs, such as the MFS-I or II, but the newest schemes of funding, such as the aforementioned partnership programs, have substantially less funding, thus in practice making cutbacks for NGOs inevitable. In all, the accumulation of recent cuts has shirked the Dutch civilateral aid budget up to 60%, thus resulting some NGOs having to fire up to one third of their staff over the past two years (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016). The four traditional MFS-organisations, which received 70% of the MFS-II funding, have been hit the hardest. For example, Cordaid has significantly reduced the size of its branch headquarter in The Hague, closed a number of subsidiary country offices and has fired 69 of its 250 employees (Filippini, 2015). At ICCO 175 of its 350 employees have been laid off after the organisation received 90% less governments subsidies, while Hivos

saw with 80% less grants its workforce shrink from 145 to 95, and at OxfamNovib a € 55 million gap has resulted in 75 of the 325 full-time jobs disappearing and projects in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Bangladesh have been terminated (Van Es, 2015). On the contrary, in the case of Terre des Hommes, the termination of MFS-II funding in January 2016 had no significant impact on the function of the organisation:

You know this type of funding is fixed to a certain period, thus the organisation is able to anticipate to its ending by asking itself 'What next?' well in advance. For example, projects have been transferred to ensure their continuation; other matters have been phased out in a proper way. Therefore, the termination of the MFS-II has no resulted into reorganisation or other types of cuts. (Respondent F, personal communication, 8 June 2016)

The completely different response of Terre des Hommes can arguably be attributed to the fact the organisation was awarded € 32 million in MFS-II funds after a lengthy judicial appeal, thus granting the organisation a significant amount of funding that was not (fully) anticipated upon (Muiderman, 2011). However, there are also significant difference in organisational capacities and substantive messages between Terre des Hommes and, for example Dokters van de Wereld, which saw its application to MFS-II funding declined. When it comes to organisational capacity, Terre des Hommes has much more manpower combined with a larger budget and decades of experience within the Dutch realm of development activities compared to Dokters van de Wereld. In terms of substantive content, Terre des Hommes has an (inter)national track record relating to safeguarding children's rights, a topic that presents itself as specified niche of development aid that is apolitical and non-belligerent in nature and therefore can count on broad support from donors. In contrast, aside from the facts that Dokters van de Wereld is smaller in size and lacks a (inter)national track record, their main activity aims at safeguarding the access to medical health care of undocumented migrants in the Netherlands, an activity that is much more prone to political debate and public discontent, thus less 'marketable' to private donors through picturesque campaigns.

This last finding relates to a recent trend in Dutch priorities of development aid: as the costs for housing the recent influx of refugees originating from the Middle-East and the implementation of various climate adaptation measures following the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement have mounted tremendously, the Rutte-II administration decided in September 2015 to strip € 240 million from its development budget for fiscal year 2016 to meet these

unexpected domestic expenses. As of now, the Netherlands is spending only 0.52% of its GDP to *international* cooperation and development assistance (Vos, 2015), while the standard of 0.7% set by Knapen in 2012 was considered a bottommost norm by many.

## 4.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this chapter was to provide a contextual background by summarising the historical trajectories, key events and activities related to official Dutch development policy. In the analysis of this historical narrative the (developing) nature of the domestic civilateral aid channel has been central next to the bilateral channel due to the latter figuring prominently in the overall course of post-war Dutch development schemes and practice. Although these channels are theoretically deemed institutionally and politically deemed separate, in practice a convergence of multiparty interests can be identified, especially when observing the MFS policy reforms after 2001. This convergence will be at the heart of the following chapter. Next to this remark three key trends and events can be distilled the contextual and historical narrative as sketched above.

First, post-war official Dutch policies and activities associated with international development cooperation and technical aid assistance genuinely start to take shape with the (pragmatic) appointment of the first Minister for Development Cooperation in 1965. The 1960s are also a decade characterised by a policy priority shift towards bilateralism and foreign policy being explicitly formulated and configured to meet the export commodity needs and preferences of Dutch businesses. From that moment on, the cooperate interests of the Dutch business community are inextricably linked to its domestic development and aid policy, albeit a continuous political balancing act between domestic economic self-interests ('the merchant') and idealistic motives ('the vicar') greatly determines how this dilemma is shaped. This act crystallises most evidently during Minister Pronk's first term in 1973: it is without no doubt his newly ventilated ideas, concepts and terminologies stood for a significant turn in the domestic epistemology of human development and it may be stated his legacy remains the formulation of a 'true' Dutch development policy next to the 'export promoting policies' that were implemented in the 1960s. However, it remains up for debate whether Pronk's thinking structurally solidified the legitimacy of the office and execution of implemented policies, as since the 1980s the foci of development policy have been strongly oriented on foreign exports and investments using state-led concessional schemes, while political calls and desires to dissolve the minister's post (e.g., the Committee-Vonhoff) persistently remain. In response to these priorities Hoebink (1999) even declared the 1994 *Nota Herrijking van het buitenlandse*

*beleid* the 'de-Pronkisation' of Dutch policy schemes of development cooperation. In sum, the post-war Dutch political imperatives of granting aid assistance had an indeed a tendency to oscillate between idealistic and economic motives; which motive dominated largely depended on its domestic economic situation and the political configuration in the national parliament.

Second, in 1965 the MFS grant program formalised the existence of a Dutch domestic civilateral aid channel. Between 1965 and 2001 the MFS program remained institutionally and politically largely unchanged, albeit growing domestic criticisms of other NGOs. After the new Millennium, structural reforms of the MFS aiming to modernise the policy agenda and streamline NGO co-funding schemes were pushed. The efforts to coordinate the grant program and reduce its overall expenses has incrementally transformed both the nature of the state-NGO relationships (from full NGO autonomy to close state-NGO partnerships) and the operations of the MFS-organisations (from service-delivery to lobby and advocacy-type activities). The politicisation of NGO activities is arguably attributed to the fact that NGOs, in order to be eligible to MFS funding, must align their programs with Dutch governmental policies in which the pursuit of the MDGs and SDGs is central. It also showcases the need of NGOs to diversify their funding strategies as an overreliance on state-driven funding can blur the long-term vision and subsequently pose an existential threat when funding ends. Also, with MFS grants gradually cut these NGOs have to operate in an increasing donor-driven sector characterised with a strong competition. Arguably, the increasing donor-dependency felt by these, in theory fully autonomous agents of social change, organisations to effectively become a privatised extension of governmental policies. Being third-party actors NGOs are cannot be held publicly accountable, thus posing questions concerning the credibility of the 'non-governmental' characteristic of these organisations and their legitimacy to act in general.

Third and finally, an important convergence of the first and second key developments has taken shape during Minister Ploumen's ongoing term, notably the combination of 'aid' and 'trade'. This marks a key point in contemporary official Dutch development schemes in the sense that the de jure 'merchant-vicar' contradiction has de facto become one entity under Minister Ploumen; an entity which, as opposed to her predecessors, explicitly attempts to eradicate poverty via sustainable and inclusive economic growth that is simultaneously beneficial to the Dutch business community. However, although merging the two different spheres of state activities under the banner of confidence in market-based economics (the DGGF) has been framed as 'new' and 'unique' to the 21st century and a prime example of a coherent international cooperation policy (Hoebink, 2013b, p. 70), it does remarkably resemble the 1960s practice of 'binding' development aid with Dutch business interests.



## 5. MERCHANT = VICAR

In the previous chapter an analytical overview of key historical events within Dutch schemes of international cooperation and development aid has been given, working ultimately towards the most recent major crystallisations of contemporary development policy, namely the introduction of the DGGF and the end of the MFS grant program during Minister Ploumen's term. In the following chapter the consequences and linkages of these two policy alterations will be closely examined in three paragraphs. The first section (§ 5.1) outlines the institutional and political design characteristics of the DGGF and, on the basis of a contextual case study, critically showcases the political desire that international cooperation should (also) benefit the Dutch economy. These descriptive findings are subsequently juxtapositioned with the observations and trends in the Dutch civil development sphere and the global context of the AfT for allowing the analysis via the PAA of the current development policy field and consequences for Dutch NGOs (§ 5.2). The chapter draws to a close with a series of concluding remarks in § 5.3.

### 5.1 MINISTER PLOUMEN'S POLICY FLAGSHIP: THE DUTCH GOOD GROWTH FUND

The purpose of this paragraph is to answer SQ1 and SQ2 by utilising a contextual case of the DGGF and serves as a contemporary example of the state-led concessional export schemes that have characterised the Dutch contradiction of the 'merchant-vicar'. This paragraph will illustrate the intern workings of such export commodity stimulus with the aim utilising the findings in the comprehensive analysis of the playing field of current Dutch development policy and international cooperation, which is central to § 5.2.

*SQ1: How are the institutional and political design characteristics of the Dutch Good Growth Fund constituted?*

*SQ2: What explains the policy arrangement of the institutional and political design characteristics of the Dutch Good Growth Fund?*

The explicit introduction of the DGGF as a new financing mechanism to stimulate both Dutch and local SMEs by export guarantees and venture capital was first coined in the 'A world to gain'-white paper in 2013. The previous chapter showcased that its core idea of combining 'aid with trade' goes back to the establishment of the first Dutch bilateral aid relations with developing areas in the 1960s. However, the 2001 Doha and 2005 Hong Kong conferences and the crystallisation of AfT meant a recalibration of Dutch trade relations into domestically

focusing on the integration of developing countries into the multilateral trade system by improving market access, while simultaneously acknowledging various cross-cutting issues of other policy domains, such as the protection of the environment, promotion of human rights, and increasing labour standards (Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie, 2005, p. 50). In turn, this has resulted into a post-2005 policy position favouring international trade liberalisation and the need to harmonise Dutch donor-recipient relationships as the prime drivers of foreign economic development.

However, the latest desires to link development cooperation and Dutch economic interests are not the only explanation for the DGGF. Domestic public support for international development cooperation has declined the past decades, largely due the 2008-09 Financial crisis, but also, according to a Partos spokesperson, due to less government-led promotion of a sense of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism (Respondent B, personal communication, 25 May 2016). Consequentially, several prominent politicians have increasingly raised poignant questions on how the Dutch economy can benefit from the combination of binding 'aid' (taxpayer funding) with 'trade' (private exports) (Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie, 2014, p. 17). The enactment of the DGGF on 1 July 2014 is meant to be a direct response to this observation (Respondent C, personal communication 30 May 2016). As stated previously the aim of the DGGF is to increase the number of internationally active private companies exporting to and investing in the emerging economies of developing areas – with a focus on Dutch SMEs. According to the '*A world to gain*'-white paper "The new cohesive approach to trade and development cooperation calls for a new form of funding" on the basis that it has become "difficult for entrepreneurs to obtain funding for activities in emerging markets and developing countries, because of the relatively high risks they entail" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 44). By 'entrepreneurs' two different entities are meant: entrepreneurs of Dutch SMEs and entrepreneurs of local SMEs located in developing countries. Albeit separated geographically, both types of entrepreneurs face a lack of financial capital to invest in business operations and opportunities.

In the case of the former, the lack of capital originates from the 2008-09 Financial crisis, as financial institutions are currently highly hesitant to grant (cross-border) loans on the basis of the high financial risks involved in these investments or exports. In addition, newly passed national legislation aiming to curtail the global circulation of venture capital held by Dutch-based financiers of international exports and investments are also constraining the possibilities for cross-border loans, thus impeding Dutch SMEs in acquiring the necessary investment or export capital (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016).

In the case of local SMEs in developing areas with upcoming markets, the financial situation is even more complex and varies from place to place. Next to the aftermath of the aforementioned financial crisis, local SMEs also regularly have to deal with domestic markets which are heavily homogeneous in nature due the sole focus on the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, with crude oil (e.g. Nigeria and Libya) and diamonds (e.g. Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) being prime examples. Economic diversification, support of infrastructure and distributing of savings in these 'resource-cursed' countries is often delayed or neglected completely in the light of temporary high profitability of resources, meaning that other sectors of the domestic economy encounter problems when requesting capital (Collier, 2008, p. 39). Gender is also a contentious topic in these regions as financiers often demand pledges in real estate to back up the loans, meaning that women are even more constrained in acquiring investment funds since property in these areas is usually not legally theirs (Respondent C, personal communication 30 May 2016).

In sum, the overall problem faced by both Dutch and local SMEs can be described as a discrepancy between the financiers (who want security) and the entrepreneurs (who cannot provide security) that amounts to capital being deadlocked due to financial regulation, a lack of trust, and extraordinary high interest rates. As a financial instrument, the DGGF aims to 'fill' this discrepancy by acting as leveraging intermediary between the financier and the Dutch or local SME by providing additional and customised forms of funding – the fund itself is covered by the current AAA-status on Dutch long-term credit rating. The political backdrop of this financial instrument has been amplified an executive decision of Minister Ploumen, stating that the DGGF serves "to make sure everybody can profit of trade and investment by removing obstacles and creating chances for vulnerable groups in low- and middle-income countries to fully participate in both the economy and society" (Ploumen, 2014, p. 2).

#### *5.1.1 INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DGGF*

Since the introduction of the DGGF in the 'A world to gain'-white paper in April 2013, its institutional design characteristics have been subject to scant political debate in the national parliament before becoming fully operational on 1 July 2014 (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016). In essence, the fund has been developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the supervision of Minister Ploumen with interdepartmental cooperation between the Ministries of Economic Affairs and Finance, and in close consultation with the private sector, most notably the financiers of international loans and insurers of exports. During this period it became clear the fund would become revolving in nature, as opposed to

the subsidiary framework of its predecessors (Respondent C, personal communication 30 May 2016), meaning no annual nett losses may occur since invested resources (€ 750 million in the period 2014-2016) are meant to be reinvested. Next to acting as a political modality to both Dutch and local SMEs in developing areas, the DGGF also aims to support Dutch-based entrepreneurs in exporting to developing countries, an option not restricted to SMEs. The DGGF officially entered into force on 1 July 2014 with a ‘three-track’-configuration, as visualised below (Figure 12).

	<b>Track I</b>	<b>Track II</b>	<b>Track III</b>
<i>Target audience</i>	Dutch SMEs based in the Netherlands with the desire to <i>invest</i> in ‘DGGF-countries’	SMEs in the ‘DGGF-countries’ with the desire to expand their business operations	Dutch (SM)Es based in the Netherlands with the desire to <i>export</i> to ‘DGGF-countries’
<i>Aim of track</i>	To support cross-border investments of Dutch SMEs in one of the DGGF-countries by vouching for the investment	To support the creation of a ‘fund of funds’-model that contributes to the expansion of business operations for SMEs in the ‘DGGF-countries’.	To support exports of Dutch (SM)Es to the DGGF-countries by offering export credit and insurances.
<i>Executive agencies</i>	RVO with the bank of the Dutch SME	Consortium of PwC with Triple-Jump	Atradius with the bank of the Dutch (SM)E
<i>Financial transactions</i>	A maximum of € 10 million of investments is vouched by the DGGF to the bank of the Dutch SME per transaction.	Via a ‘funds of funds’-model a maximum of € 201 million will be invested in intermediary funds and distributed among local SMEs in the ‘DGGF-countries’.	A maximum of € 15 million worth of export and/ or credit insurance is vouched by the DGGF to the bank of the Dutch (SM)E per transaction.

Figure 12. Overview of the inner workings of the DGGF (own work).

As visualised in Figure 12, the DGGF consists of three tracks and applies to two audiences, Dutch SMEs (for track III all Dutch enterprises can apply) and local SMEs in developing ‘DGGF-countries’. Initially the list of countries selected by Minister Ploumen involved ‘low and

middle-income countries’, including 18 countries labelled as ‘fragile’, a recent policy focus of Minister Ploumen (Respondent C, personal communication, 30 May 2016), but in February 2016 the five highest middle-income countries of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, the Maldives and Thailand were replaced with Haiti, Chad, Togo, Ivory Coast and Lebanon; the latter country due to recent socio-economic and demographic pressures as a result of the ongoing Syrian Civil War (Ploumen, 2016, p. 1).

An elaboration of each track is visualised below (Figure 13). Track I presents itself as the most straight-forward track: essentially, the DGGF via the *Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland* [RVO] – a governmental agency under the Ministry of Economic Affairs meant for supporting Dutch entrepreneurs – vouches 60% of the investment to the financier of the SME, thus acting as a trustworthy intermediary between the Dutch SME and its export financier.

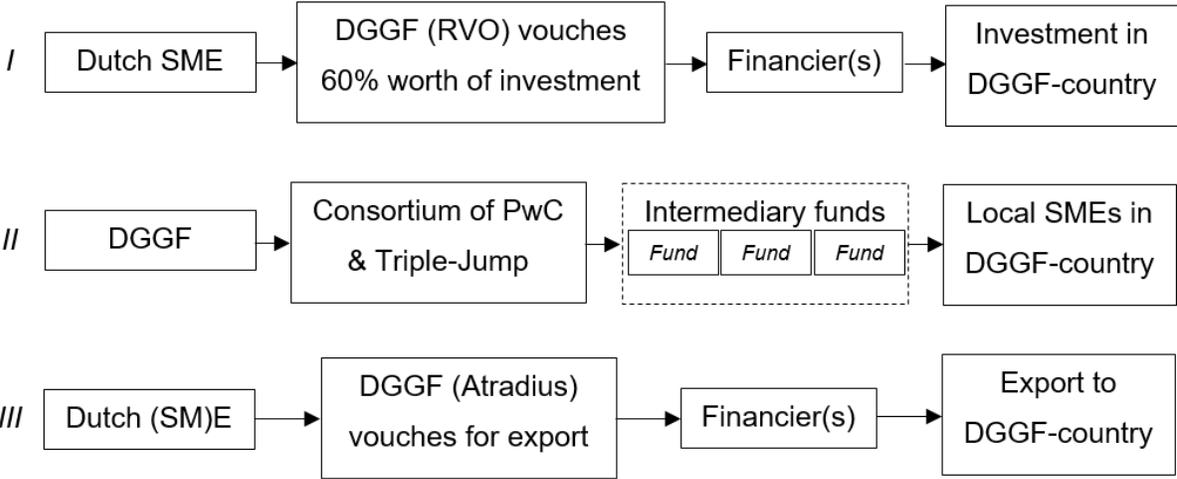


Figure 13. Schematic flow chart of individual tracks of the DGGF (own work).

Track II involves an indirect investment fund in which the DGGF invests through a consortium of private investment enterprises PricewaterhouseCoopers and Triple-Jump into a series of globally operating intermediary funds that distribute investment funding among local SMEs (Respondent E, personal communication, 8 June 2016). Thus, track II differs from track I in the sense the DGGF does not directly invest in local SMEs, but via an international ‘funds of funds’-model. Lastly, track III aims solely as a channel for promoting Dutch exports to upcoming markets which export financiers of Dutch enterprises (irrespective of their size) deem too risky, for example due to pending nationalisation of private property, political instability, or exchange currency devaluations (Respondent B, personal communication, 25

May 2016). As an additional insurance instrument the DGGF in track III makes use of the export insurance services provided by Atradius to vouch for a maximum of € 15 million worth of export products to the financier of the Dutch SME, thus enabling the cross-border export to areas initially assessed as too risky by creditors (Respondent C, personal communication, 30 May 2016).

Lastly, currently all applicants (irrespective of the track) will have to meet 34 criteria to be eligible for funding, most of them business-financial in nature and beyond the scope of this research, but two criteria are worth being briefly outlined. First, entrepreneurs can only apply to funding if they can showcase their future business operation holds a significant degree of 'development-relevance' to the upcoming market, while also guaranteeing the respect of local entrepreneurship. More specifically, this means that funding from the DGGF has to generate local employment, the exchange of knowledge, skills and innovation (technical assistance), or stimulate the production capacity of local SMEs (Carnegie Consult, 2013, pp. 3-4). Second, a 'Corporate Social Responsibility'-assessment [CSR] is an integral part of the application. This means applicants must meet international labour standards set by the OECD for conducting business abroad. These guidelines provided a code of conduct for applications concerning with different social aspects of corporate responsibilities, including environmental issues and respect for human and labour rights (Ploumen, 2014, p. 8). This criterion relates directly to the acknowledgment of the cross-cutting issues of other policy domains.

### *5.1.2 THE DGGF IN PRACTICE: THE CASE OF SYNTECH INTERNATIONAL*

Hitherto an elaboration of the institutional and political design characteristics of the DGGF. What follows is the case study of *Syntech International Ltd.*, a Dutch-based private enterprise currently using funding from the DGGF. The results are based on interviews and materials provided by Syntech International, and additional documents.

In April 2005, Yaga Reddy, the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, announced that the concept of 'financial inclusion' – the delivery of a wide range of financial services at affordable costs to low-income socio-economic segments of society – was to become a key policy focus of India's banking practices (Reddy, 2005). In effect, the financial inclusion mission aimed to provide bank accounts to at least 75 million Indian nationals by January 2015. A practical concern of this inclusive mission involved the establishment of cash supply logistics to newly opened banks and ATMs in rural areas of the countries, a market gap Syntech was engaged to fill with its newly-founded local subsidiary *LogiCash*. In 2008 LogiCash was awarded a contract by the Indian government and became responsible for the

logistics involving cash transportation throughout rural India and employing over 3,000 people. However, in 2010 cash flow problems started to occur due to a time gap in which the benefits necessary to cover incurred production costs were three months overdue. This incidental imbalance grew structural to a million-figure indebtedness in late-2013, thus with a serious chance of LogiCash defaulting on its debt and dragging Syntech down with it. As this possibility grew larger Syntech turned towards the newly introduced DGGF in July 2014 after cross-border loans from the Dutch Rabobank were declined for being too risky.

As an applicant, Syntech faced the 34 criteria in order to receive its six million Euro 'track-I'-funding, the largest amount of funding coming from the DGGF to date. The enterprise passed the 'development-relevance' criteria and CSR assessment with relative ease as LogiCash's business plan complimented the India financial inclusiveness mission by generating 4,500 jobs locally in 2017 (over 3,000 in 2016 and growing) and stimulating the exchange of cash currency logistics to Indians entrepreneurs. The financial justification was also deemed sufficient to meet the revolving nature of the DGGF. In effect, Syntech received the necessary financial vouches of the DGGF in July 2015, as visualised in Figure 14 (below).

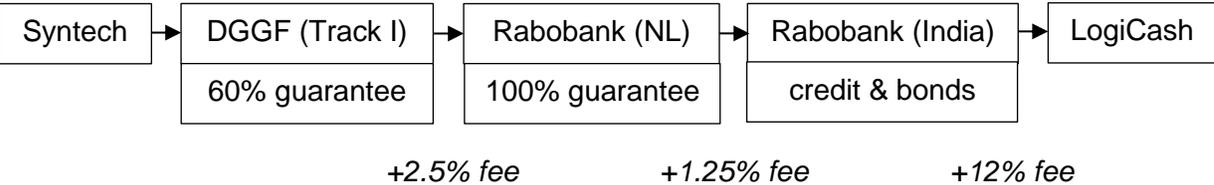


Figure 14. Schematic flow chart of Syntech-DGGF funding scheme (courtesy of Syntech).

At first glance, the Syntech-DGGF funding scheme seems an adequate solution to Syntech's cash flow problems. And although Syntech met the 34 criteria of the DGGF with relative ease, there has also been (and still is) much criticism to both the application process as well as the project's outcome. In terms of the process, the application has been experienced it as a "heavy trajectory" due to its "complex and lengthy process" (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016), the most difficult aspects being the financial underpinnings of the investment (since the DGGF is a revolving fund) and meeting the OESO guidelines-based CRS-assessment. The quintessential frictions derive from the fact that most (Dutch) SMEs do not have or are unlikely to obtain the necessary legal knowledge or financial capacity in meeting the strict criteria, thereby making the DGGF less accessible to its envisaged target audience. As a spokesman of Syntech elaborated upon the application project and especially the CSR assessment:

I once received a call from a fellow entrepreneur who showed interest in the DGGF and was asking how we experienced using the fund. I said to him 'You only should step in if you really cannot get the money elsewhere; if you can get it elsewhere, then you should definitely not do it'. (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016)

In terms of the outcome, making use of the DGGF has also proved to be a highly expensive manner of financing its business operations in India, while simultaneously having no real legal guarantees from the DGGF. On the one hand, it meant that Syntech in the definitive funding scheme (Figure 14) ended up paying annually over € 50,000 worth of fees to the RVO and extraordinary high market-based interests rates to the Rabobank, with the legal provisions encapsulated in the scheme would have the DGGF guarantee 60% of the investment to the Rabobank. On the other hand, however, the DGGF demanded the same percentage (60%) from Syntech (which already stood for 40%), thus ultimately Syntech carrying 100% of the investment risk. In sum, Syntech ended up with a high finance cost and having the DGGF as an intermediary guarantying an international investment. A Syntech spokesman explains:

Back then we had no choice: it had to be this [the DGGF] or to let the company [Syntech] go bankrupt. This has also resulted into a situation when someone wants to buy LogiCash, we will sell it immediately to them. And that is what is happening – the deal is almost complete – and the reason is the 100%-guarantee and highly expensive financings costs. [...] It also means the DGGF is losing its biggest project! We quit because we honestly experienced it as a highly unpleasant financing scheme. (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016)

In the eyes of Syntech the main problem of the DGGF is political in nature:

It is such a shame, because the philosophy of the fund is sound, but politicians and lobbyists have made it to such an unworkable monstrosity. It is meant for SMEs, but under political pressure the CRS-assessment with its overwhelming OECD guidelines became a criterion and under pressure of financial institutions – who do not want a competing fund – the interest rates have to be market-based, etc. (Respondent E, personal communication 8 June 2016)

Indeed, the experience of Syntech corresponds with Minister Ploumen's executive decision to adhere interest rates to "market-based references" (Ploumen, 2014, p. 3), along with the CRS-assessment, but gives no elaboration on its practical implications and whether these have been debated or thoroughly thought through remains unknown. In the eyes of Syntech it seems politics and third-party lobby have resulted into discrepancies between the institutional design characteristics of the DGGF and the practicality of the fund for Dutch SMEs, at least in terms of the first track. On the one hand, the fund is deemed overbuilt to perform far in excess of the perceived needs of SMEs (i.e. the adherence to OECD-guidelines), while on the other hand, its institutional design is considered overcomplicated (i.e. the application process).

In contrast, the *Algemene Rekenkamer* – an independent agency tasked with auditing the spending of the national government in efficiency and legitimacy – published a mid-term evaluation report stating that the DGGF was 'well designed', but also observed tensions between the revolving nature of the fund with the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive growth by developing relevant investments by SMEs (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2016, p. 4). However, since the DGGF is only two years in effect, it remains difficult to presently evaluate whether its experienced over-engineered design and the observed 'tensions' come to maturity or prove to be structurally incommensurable to the wishes of the fund's applicants.

## 5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT DUTCH DEVELOPMENT POLICY ARRANGEMENTS

The previous findings have used a number of case studies as vehicular means of outlining and contextualising the recent trends in Dutch civilateral and bilateral practice of international development cooperation. In this paragraph, all descriptive findings convergence, such as the definitive end of the MFS grant program and the introduction of the DGGF, thus moving the study from description to analysis in the attempt to answering SQ3 and SG4.

SQ3: *What are the substantive consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance?*

SQ4: *What are the organisational consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for Dutch civil actors associated with international development aid and assistance?*

This analysis will make use of the PAA framework is central to this paragraph and quintessential to the thesis as it attempts to seek an answer to the central research question. Since it has been a while the premises of the PAA or the definitions underlying its individual dimensions have been discussed, a recapitalisation of the model is visualised in Figure 15.

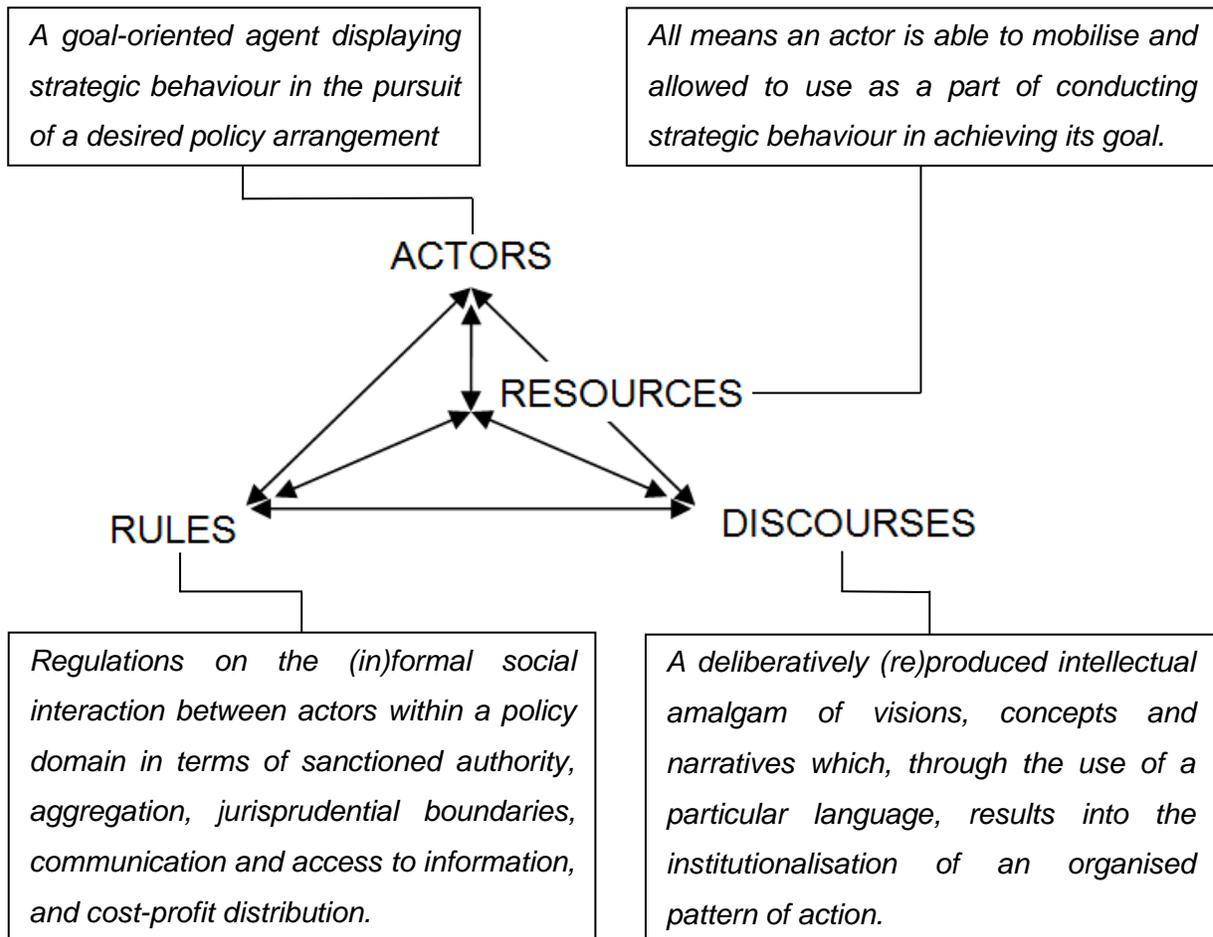


Figure 15. Schematic representation of the PAA tetrahedron (own work).

Recall that the predefined tetrahedron assumes that no sole dimension is a priori responsible for the stability or transformation of a policy arrangement; in practice, however, one dimension tends to be more dominant than others, due to providing the root cause(s) of institutional change or stability (Veenman et al., 2009). Therefore, it makes sense to start the analysis with the discourse dimension on the basis that previous findings (e.g., the antithesis of the ‘merchant-vicar’) have arguably amplified the importance of endo- and exogenous discursive configurations in the dynamic ontology Dutch (development) policies.

Subsequently, the analytical narrative begins with the dimension of *discourse* (§ 5.2.1), following by *actors* (§ 5.2.2), then *resources* (§ 5.2.3), and concludes with *rules* (§ 5.2.4).

### 5.2.1 DISCOURSES

According to Wagenaar (2011) discourses are makeshift structures that are put together by a wide range of social actors that are dispersed in place and time and whom negotiate a practical challenge out of the ideological, institutional and moral material that happens to be available to them in time and space. This implies that, albeit it remains debatable how 'meaning' is precisely translated into actual policies, discursive configurations are a depersonalised and self-referring structural form of 'meaning' that is historically contingent.

In the previous chapter, it has been argued through the metaphorical 'merchant-vicar' antithesis that Dutch practice of development cooperation has been since its conception in the 1960s inextricably linked with self-interested economic motives. Although the degree of discursive configurations among state legislators, ministers and state secretaries stressing this linkage has varied periodically, there has been a steady increase in a rhetoric that prefers pro-market development activities over its civil-led counterpart, which definitively prevailed at the start of the new Millennium. The year 2000 was ushered after a decade in which much of the developed world seemed to be collectively drunk with success: intellectually with Francis Fukuyama coining the popular theory that the advent of Western liberal democracy would, in a Hegelian sense, signal 'the end of history'; politically with the end of 44 years of Kremlin rule and subsequent enlargements of the WTO, EU and NATO to the Baltics and Danubian Europe; and economically with the continuing triumphal march of liberal-oriented capitalism and the embraced belief of a new economic world order driven by ICT and by picking the fruits of globalisation. According to Pieterse (2010) these forces, notably the revival of classical liberalism along with airy contemplations of global unity, have definitively shifted the dominant discussion in international models of development cooperation and agendas of peacebuilding towards a discourse featuring the promotion of liberal democratic governing systems and market-oriented economic growth.

In effect, the convergence of these globally operating driving forces, in addition to the growing domestic criticisms on the monopolistic position of the traditional MFS-organisations, has driven Dutch ministers of development cooperation since the mid-2000s to a stance that prefers market-led development activities over its civil-led counterpart. Minister Koenders, for example, immediately took a strong stance when he denounced the Dutch civil development sphere as "the aid industry" in his policy memorandum (DGIS, 2009, p. 4), a verbalisation that

was widely criticised in the Dutch development sector for reducing their commitment and idealism to a simple (industrial) product (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 10). Koenders' successor State Secretary Knapen was also clear in his envisaged Dutch development agenda:

The number of partner countries will be reduced substantially together with the number of policy themes. There will be a transition from social to economic development. A great emphasis will be put on self-reliance, we are going from aid to investments. There will be no budget support in cases of corruption, human rights abuses or a lack of good governance. [...] There will be a strong expansion of business opportunities. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for 2015 are to remain our international anchor. (DGIS, 2010, pp. 1-2)

Similar phrasing appraising the confidence in pro-market development can be found in Minister Ploumen's '*A world to gain*'-white paper: "We want to help Dutch companies be successful abroad. For Dutch companies, trade is the way out of the crisis" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 47). Arguably, this strategy of embracing aid with trade offers developing areas a modality (the DGGF) to fit into globalising markets by building on the contemporary prevailing consensus that a market-based economic order with free international trade and commerce as its fundamentals will create stable and secure livelihoods for the world's poorest. In addition, the identification of private companies in the realm of development cooperation that is made discursively explicit also related to the recent political landscape dominating the Netherlands for the past decade, as the successive administrations of Balkenende-I, -II, -III, and -IV (2002-2010), Rutte-I (2010-2012) and Rutte-II (2012-present) have been characterised by (moderate) conservative political forces, most notably Christian-democrats and the conservative-liberal VVD party, that have a long tradition of called for government rollback regarding in domestic affairs.

The discursive confidence of state legislators in market-based structures to get the prices 'right' has had a profound impact in the way (Dutch) NGOs are operating since the 2000s. With respect to the organisational capacity of NGO activities, these civil organisations have from their traditional idealistic-activist stance been reluctant to engage in markets which do not, according to a Partos-led MFS-II evaluation study, internalise the "unsustainable nature of the current policy and market development" (van Wessel, Arensman, Barrett, van Bodegom, Hilhorst, Klaver, Rasch et al., 2015, p. 173). From the stance of dogmas, it makes sense to not stray into certain markets that are perceived as 'dysfunctional', but it also meant

Dutch NGOs had little to no experience with the conduct of intrasectoral competition over public funding schemes. This, however, pushes smaller NGOs with a less strong track record of development activities – an organisational curriculum vita – out of ‘the NGO-market’, such as Dokters van de Wereld. Consequently, and rather unsurprisingly, those active in the Dutch civil development sector are fundamentally critical of the global neoliberal economy due to its (perceived) negative social and environmental consequences and postulate that the current aid-trade agenda and the DGGF are not a desirable next phase for international development cooperation. Brach organisation Partos has also been (and still is) highly critical towards the DGGF and its underlying ideological assumptions, stating that: “We strongly disagree with the third track, the export credit and insurance schemes. We believe that is something the government should not finance at all, and most certainly not from the development budget” (Respondent B, personal communication, 25 May 2016).

However, the resistance towards the dominant discourse and substantive criticism raised by NGOs towards the facets of market-oriented economic growth and financial modalities like the DGGF is biased due to the fact that the policy shift and redistribution of the ODA budget existentially threatens the strategic capacity of these organisations in deploying their own activities. More impartial yet critical voices have been raised by academics like Hoebink (2013a), who argues that development-oriented foreign investments instruments set up by the Dutch state (e.g., the DGGF) have a traditional tendency of rarely being used for actual investments, but instead utilised solely to subsidise exports from Dutch producers. Moreover, besides the current practice of binding development-related export credit is at odds with the philosophies and policies of Minister Ploumen’s predecessors, it also a violation of the spirit of the 1992 Helsinki Package for effective aid governance, which ensouls that states will not use taxpayer funding in obtaining export orders (OECD, 2006, p. 2), thus essentially limiting tied aid credits in concessional financing schemes of cross-border to projects that are deemed independently commercially viable. In addition to this notion of ‘commercially viable’ exports and investments, Van Westen and Zoomers (2014) rise poignant questions on the revolving nature DGGF by arguing that the least developed and most deprived countries probably have the least potential for responsible investments that may generate a good return rate, thereby greatly nullifying the DGGF’s purpose of embracing development aid with trade.

### 5.2.2 ACTORS

The range of goal-oriented civil agents active in the Dutch civil sphere of development activities has been characterised by two key transformations. Firstly, following the end of the

monopoly on state grants the number of NGOs has skyrocketed and the enlarged range of their activities, while the sector as a whole has been increasingly imagined as uniform and homogenous. Secondly, the implementation of Minister's Ploumen aid-trade agenda has expanded the scope and typology of the development sector by adding of a range of new actors, namely SMEs and financial institutions.

Since the end of the Cold War with its bipolar political stand-off, the environment of (I)NGOs active in development assistance has been growing ever-denser and has come to represent a cardinal proportion of development assistance (Kharas, 2007). According to Rigg (2007) between 1993 and 2000 the number of internationally operating NGOs grew from roughly 29,900 to 37,200, thus nearly adding three organisations each day. However, the mushrooming of Dutch NGOs has really taken off since the end of the monopoly on state grants held by the traditional four MFS-organisations and the enactment of the TMF in 2003, which proved to be the first of many shortly-lived co-funding schemes that aimed at streamlining and coordinating the Dutch civilateral aid channel,

Paradoxically to this political desire, the TMF proved to be an early bird for successive Ministers and state legislators into setting up, abolishing or continuing of a plethora of NGO funding schemes: one study alone found 58 different NGO funding schemes set for the period 2003-2020 (Schulpen, 2016, p. 6). Retrospectively, Schulpen and Hoebink (2014) have suggested that this contradiction between intention and practice to act stems from the fact that setting up new funding schemes provides an opportunity 'to act', thus to fund new political or policy priorities, while simultaneously allowing and helping ministers to mitigate 'untouchable' or 'precarious' schemes set up by their predecessors, as obviously no politician wants to be infamous for cancelling a funding scheme meant for eradicating child poverty.

Next to the fact that the absolute number of Dutch NGOs has skyrocketed since 2003, the sector as a whole has featured a trend of allowing for internal pluriformity of organisations with a diverse spectrum of activities, while externally becoming imagined as a homogeneous and egalitarian sector. This gradual trend is expressive for the balancing act of meeting the political calls for donor coordination and harmonisation of the many funding schemes with the autonomy of Dutch NGOs that was central to State Secretary van Ardenne's set of formulated policy goals (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2003, p. 23). In effect, the MFS-I was made accessible to both large organisations covering several themes with media campaigns and programs that were based on interrelated intervention strategies, such as lobbying for the global socio-economic and political context of children's rights (e.g. Terre des Hommes), and smaller specialised agencies conducting practical development projects (e.g. Dokters van de

Wereld). The end-result was a mishmash of solidarists NGOs that was orderly from the assumption of having one funding scheme (the MFS-I), but messy from the perspective of the Dutch NGOs, which collectively saw their sector and working environment becoming deprived from nuances in scale, philosophy, history and activities to the public eye and in political debates. Exemplary to this experienced deprivation is illustrated by a Dokters van de Wereld spokesperson: “Cordaid has a business case department which, for example, acts as a broker to make sure coffee farmers receive their fair share from Starbucks. That does not match our history or activities as we focus at certain bottlenecks” (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016). The perceived lack of subtlety became even more felt when the MFS-II was introduced and NGOs were forced to subscribe in the coherence alliances that, by 2009 not only felt unnatural in the eyes of NGOs, but also further homogenised a highly heterogeneous civil development sphere.

With the recent enactment of the DGGF under Minister Ploumen, the range and typology of actors has also expanded, most notably to private companies (SMEs) and financial institutions (banks and insurance enterprises). Corporate interests have historically always been inextricably linked with Dutch imperatives of development cooperation, but as the case of Syntech has showcased that the DGGF straightforwardly and unequivocally juxtaposes the relationship of state with business with development cooperation in the sense that it explicitly welcomes Dutch SMEs and financial institutions as tools in of combining aid with trade. On the level of economic ideology, the rationales driving the strategic behaviour of private actors does also neatly fit the political normative of ‘less state subsidiaries’ and ‘more private investments’ as postulated by the recent Rutte-I and Rutte-II administrations (Schmidt & Zandbergen, 2013). Consequently, the sacred confidence in the competitive-based development sphere has also resulted Dutch NGOs to put more emphasis on the (social) business case of their organisational structures, such as the cost benefit relationships of public awareness campaigns (Respondent B, personal communication, 25 May 2016). The findings do not suggest Dutch NGOs are presently and directly competing with Dutch SMEs over development-related activities. They do, however, exemplify an interesting continuum of actors that are currently present in the Dutch realm of international cooperation development.

### *5.2.3 RESOURCES*

This paragraph delves deeper into the fierce competition over private donations by NGO, as findings suggests the lack or plenty of financial resources drives the strategic behaviour of these organisations. Dutch NGOs were first presented with the concept and ramifications of

intrasectoral competition when State Secretary van Ardenne demanded that for NGOs to receive MFS-I grants these organisations needed 25% of their annual revenues to be derived from private donors, such as individual donations, inheritances and other institutional donors (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 9). This precondition has been an obvious manifestation to the institutionalised idea of market-led development featuring competition among NGOs over private donations. A 'survival of the fittest NGO' is, however, by no means a new phenomenon as, for example, Smillie (1995) and De Waal (1997) already identified fundraising as a crucial component of NGOs activities in general. Aldashev and Verdier (2010) have even attempted to apply Gresham's monetary law in which 'bad money drives out the good' to the sector, arguing that "An organisation that is most determined to get the highest media profile obtains the most funds. [...] It prioritizes the requirements of fundraising: it follows the TV cameras and engages in picturesque and emotive programmes" (p. 50).

According to Pieterse (2010) the emergence of the pro-market policy frameworks within development thinking is a consequence of the global neoliberal creed that gained political momenta during the era of Reaganomics and Thatcherism. In this period the Netherlands too shifted away from back-then Keynesian conceptions of domestic economic policy and, during the administrations led by Ruud Lubbers (1982-1994) and Wim Kok (1994-2002), adopted a series of neoliberal economic policies characterised by government rollback and deregulation, such as privatising the postal services (1986) and railways (1995), opening the public broadcasting system (1992), and loosening the Shop Trading Hours Act (1996). A cultural explanation to the question why the neoliberal perspective needed to mature more than a decade before it structurally affected the Dutch civilateral aid channel during State Secretary van Ardenne's term in 2003 remains difficult to answer. One possibility for its incremental institutionalisation is that the Dutch post-war socio-economic 'polder model' combines free markets with the social-democratic components of governance traditionally found in Nordic countries, like a comprehensive welfare state with consensus building (Sanandaji, 2012, p. 20), together with a Calvinist ethic featuring modesty and austerity (Sanders, 2004, pp. 104-106), thereby disempowering the more radical Anglo-American approach to neoliberalism in gaining a strong foothold. Another more pragmatic explanation might be the fact that the Netherlands already had a functioning state-led co-funding scheme since 1965, thus perhaps mitigating the immediate need or political desire to redesigning or reforming the civilateral aid channel.

Regardless of the reason, the neoliberal thrust eventually also impacted the Dutch MFS system tremendously: its effect in Dutch context was an increased the urgency of NGO-

profiling with the aim of winning ‘the survival of the fittest’ over private donations. A Dokters van de Wereld spokesperson recalls:

I personally think the [development] sector copied itself a lot: what works for one organisation also worked for the other. [...] Previously, you would receive a pamphlet with a forlorn child on the cover and the urgent message to donate. It spoke of an obvious problem – in a quite stigmatising manner by the way – but it was faceless, it had no creator; any organisation could have stamped its logo on it. [...] Nowadays the sector continuously needs to refresh itself and constantly feels the need to adapt its message to the public. (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016)

In the contemporary competitive-driven environment in which Dutch NGOs are active, the need to resist isomorphism in the eye of the public is vital. Logic dictates the necessity for each organisation to differentiate itself and the most effective manner of doing so is by getting broad and positive media attention. This presents some interesting case examples, some more successful than others. For example, in November 2009 OxfamNovib experienced major negative public response when it was discovered that over € 135 million worth of MFS-I funding meant for projects in Africa was redistributed among smaller Dutch-based NGOs, such as *International Socialists* and the Trotsky-inspired *Nederland Bekent Kleur*. Despite OxfamNovib being technically allowed to (re)distribute the MFS-I funding according to their own wishes, the organisation received widespread public critique to such extent that Minister Koenders had to answer critical questions in national parliament (Rijksoverheid, 2009).

An example of a successful campaign was the sting operation of Terre des Hommes’ *Sweetie*-program in November 2013. Using motion capture technology, the Dutch animation company Lemz created an animated photorealistic image of a 10-year-old Filipina girl, named ‘Sweetie’. Its aim was to lure online sexual predators into providing personally-identifiable information, so that Terre des Hommes could report these individual to law enforcement agencies (Respondent F, personal communication, 30 June 2016). In effect, the program ran for ten weeks and could identify over 1,000 sexual predators in 71 countries, mostly in Asia, and led to multiple arrests (CBS News, 2013). Although some legal experts have nullified the degree of criminal liability by arguing the method being an example of entrapment and vigilante justice (Schweizer, 2014), the Dutch branch of Terre des Hommes received global media coverage with Sweetie and thereby revived its campaign to eradicate online child

prostitution (Respondent F, personal communication, 30 June 2016). In addition, the international acclaim has also resulted into the initiation of 'Sweetie-II' starting in September 2016: a de facto continuation of the original program with a geographical focus on online sexual predators operating from the Netherlands, thus leading Terre des Hommes to again receive broad coverage in various media outlets with the hope of boosting their fundraising activities (Barbier & Lin, 2016).

Aside from public campaigns, the findings also offer an interesting insight in another type of resource, specifically the activity surrounding lobby and advocacy by civil actors. Multiple respondents confirmed that pleading at the national policy level is an essential part of NGO activities, but also maintain that the activity of influencing state legislators has a shady reputation in general due to negative publicity after several incidents in which various NGOs were accused of spending too much on management fees instead on actual projects. In one instant, an employee of *Inspire2Live* was allowed to claim over € 160,000 in personal expenses, despite the foundation's commitment to dedicate every Euro to fighting cancer (Weeda & Wester, 2013). This presents an interesting empirical event that seems to defy its inherent logic: if lobby and advocacy means that major NGOs, most notably the traditional four MFS-organisations, are structurally within the proximity of the state legislators whom draft long-term development policies and the means of financing them, how can it be these organisations did not foresee the recent major cutbacks that led to reorganisations in nearly all Dutch development NGOs? The 'why'-part of lobby seems obvious: "[...] if you're not visible, then I do not believe you will be chosen or selected [by the government]" (Respondent F, personal communication, 30 June 2016), but this does not explain the 'how'-part of the black box that is third-party (NGO) policy influence. The answer to this question remains regrettably unknown, but it hints a 'failure' or 'loss' of political resources by these NGOs.

#### 5.2.4 RULES

The organisational dimension of rules constitutes the room to manoeuvre for actors active in the of Dutch development policy arrangement and is arguably a recessive dimension of the PAA, since the rules of conduct are largely derived from formulated policies. With regard to the *authority* rules, the findings suggest that the formal competences and autonomy of NGOs within the Dutch policy development domain have diminished in the search for funding by these organisations. An example of this phenomenon has been the felt need by NGOs to align their projects with the government's agenda, thus reducing the autonomy of the former on the pain of not being awarded a MFS-I(I) co-funding scheme. In effect, this meant that

NGOs have been explicitly simulated in focusing on a specific theme intrinsic to development cooperation that are deemed important by Dutch state legislators (Respondent A, personal communication 11 May 2016). In the case of the Netherlands these policy focus points have traditionally been the promotion of SRHRs, gender rights and natural resource management, while attention towards education, provision of medical health care and the eradication of poverty has vanished completely over the past years from Dutch ODA policy priorities (Respondent F, personal communication 11 May 2016).

Fisher (2008) has criticised the practice of implicitly setting the agenda of NGOs as it implies the potential hazard of NGOs becoming disguised implementers of policies set by the state. More concrete, NGOs start to function in a limbo of constituting themselves as an independent organisation, while in practice act as an executive branch of government. Also, the overdependence on state-driven funding suggests means a degree of domestication of the traditional idealistic-activist nature of these organisations, and consequently diminishes the incentives to critically review official state policy priorities, as described by Verbruggen, Christiaens and Milis (2010), and experienced first-hand by Dokters van de Wereld:

If you are publicly funded for years, then the government will always be in your sight and long-term vision. After the MFS-I we did not had to take the government into account, so our first step was no longer 'What about the government?'. Quite the opposite, it allows us to challenge the government. (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016)

The rules organising the exchange of *information* have also changed over the past 15 years: whereas the requirements of the TMF were deemed lax – even by the NGOs themselves: “In 2003, you only had to have a good idea and there was money available!” (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016 –, the strict accountability rules predetermining MFS-I grants have featured a tremendous pressure on NGOs to, on the one hand, showcase concrete results on the short term, while on the other hand demanding a high level of justification of activities, which meant that NGOs were under constant pressure to plan, monitor, evaluate and report their efforts and activities to state legislators (Respondent D, personal communication 31 May 2016). To meet the felt pressure, many NGOs started to invest in highly-skilled office management, in most cases by hiring administrative and technocratic professionals, and excessively applying the accompanying vocabulary of the ‘expert’ (Jad, 2007). The MFS-II further pushed the imperatives of NGO-professionalisation

and project-orientation as the accountability demands were made stricter with the O- and P-tests and the precondition of spending at least 60% of the grants to the 15 partner countries selected by State Secretary Knapen (DGIS, 2011, p. 18). As stated previously, these new requirements were with considerable criticisms from within the development sector due to the fear of NGOs being forced to pour their activities into an 'iron log frame' (Rijneveld et al., 2016, p. 9).

However, such criticism is partly unjustified since Dutch NGOs themselves have had a long history in persistently oversimplifying the reality of international cooperation and development activities in order to acquire donations. This often crystallised in a bias towards people that are easy to reach, which according to Anderson and Olsen (2003) translates in charismatic and emotive programs that centre around apolitical themes presented in an innovative manner, such as 'Sweetie'. A major consequence of this practice has been the scale being tipped to the other extreme into a 'to-measure-is-to-know'-culture: contemporary programs have to appear to be value-free, linearly outlined and mapped in their desired end-state using rational planning tools, and each chronological step has to be accounted for by using figures and numbers (Mowles, Stacey & Griffin, 2008, p. 806). However, in the eyes of many NGOs this methodology of planning and the epistemology underlying it is not suitable to handle the often instable, complex and unpredictable nature of social transformations as conducted by civil development organisations, thus raising the possibility of projects being formulated to be risk-adverse.

The *aggregation* rules that balance individual (organisation) with collective (sector) interests have also significantly changed since the introduction of the MFS-I(I) program and the increased competition among NGOs. Prior to 2003 the sector was characterised by a certain degree of interorganisational solidarity and cooperation: Dokters van de Wereld for example received funding from Cordaid and OxfamNovib to jointly set up projects in Papua New Guinea (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016). The end of the co-funding monopoly and the subsequent stimulation through competition effectively ended such amical working relationships and left only the pragmatic coherence alliances during the MFS-II (Respondent F, personal communication, 30 June 2016). While there are many advantages to strategic alliances – i.e. combining qualities of various NGOs can spark synergy and increase the comparative advantages of each organisation – the quintessence of each alliance remains, according to Das and Tang (2000), centres around the possibility of "being able to procure valuable resources from another party without losing control of one's own resources" (p. 44). This is a rather cynical and a-social approach to the idea of alliances

among civil development actors, but one must not forget that formation of alliances was a precondition to the MFS-II, meaning that NGOs were pushed from a policy environment that was set by state legislators rather than their own intrasectoral motives.

The rules stipulating the geographical *boundary* jurisdiction of Dutch NGOs have also radically changed because of Minister Ploumen's policy, as is best showcased below:

Civil society organisations have grown stronger in low- and middle-income countries in recent years despite the growing political pressure. A reappraisal is therefore needed of the relationship between the Dutch government and Dutch civil society organisations. We must prevent Dutch civil society organisations competing with local organisations. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013, p. 53)

The appraisal of a new geographical jurisdiction within the statement above hints at more abstract change in modes of development thinking, namely replacing the traditional and asymmetrical Global North-South development relations with equality and independence. According to Rigg (2007) this transition is the result of a growing political desire to empower people and awarding them a manner of agency through civil society organisations denied by others for a long period. Moreover, it seems that the recognition of indigenous NGOs as social agent of change has also seeped into the consciousness of Dutch NGOs:

[...] the entire landscape of development cooperation has matured and the question becomes more phrased like 'Who is developing who?' Eyes have really been opened and people are starting to wonder 'Why is the main office in the Netherlands that big?' or 'Why do the regional offices not get more responsibilities?'. (Respondent D, personal communication, 31 May 2016)

The growing awareness of the added value NGOs in developing countries by their civil counterparts and state legislators in the Netherlands has had a profound impact on Dutch NGOs as they have been incrementally curtailed in the geographical freedom to act, move or deploy. Whereas Minister Herfkens envisioned the geographical spending of TMF and MFS-I funding to be based on the OECD-issued DAC-I list (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2001, p. 5), which in 2001 included 49 LDCs, State Secretary van Ardenne brought the number of countries down to 36 in 2003 (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2003, p. 32). Seven years

later, State Secretary Knapen lowered this number to 15 in 2010 and even expressed the intention of going as low as 10 countries (DGIS, 2010, p. 8), but he never got to it. The steady reduction of countries is an important development since a requirement of MFS-II funding was that a minimum of 60% had to be spent in the countries that had bilateral relations with the Netherlands (DGIS, 2011, p. 18), which implies that there were increasingly less and less countries 'available' to Dutch NGOs to conduct their activities using MFS-II state grants. On the contrary, the geographical boundary rules for concessional export schemes have been relaxed over the past years: from 31 in 2003 (Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, 2003, p. 33) to 50 countries being included in State Secretary Knapen's "development cooperation-business support instruments" (DGIS, 2010, p. 18), to the 68 countries presently included for funding from the DGGF (Ploumen, 2016). In sum, the findings suggest that Dutch NGOs have been increasingly curtailed in terms of geography, while private companies enjoy an expanding state-driven list of countries in which they are eligible for concessional funding schemes.

Finally, the rules governing the *pay-off* of development activities have also recently shifted towards a social marketisation of activities, both for NGOs and private companies active in Dutch schemes of development cooperation, but with both actors having their own rationales. Whereas the combination of intrasectoral competition with the termination of co-funding schemes has driven NGOs to setting up social business cases (Respondent B, personal communication, 25 May 2016), private companies, such as enterprises utilising investment or export funding via the DGGF, have to account their development activities through CSR assessments (Respondent E, personal communication, 8 May 2016). This again presents an interesting continuum of actors having two radically different approaches of the idea of social entrepreneurship – a mode of economic conduct that targets an adverse price equilibrium that causes the marginalisation to a segment of society with the aim for establishing a new equilibrium that secures a lasting benefit for the targeted group (Martin & Osberg, 2007, p. 13) – on how to shape market-led human development. Grotenhuis (2016), however, adds a critical note by stating existing CSR policies, such as included in the DGGF, will not fundamentally alter or challenge the for-profit driven paradigm of private companies, thus that is to be seen whether companies who support such policies will continue to do so when competition and accompanying pressure on profits mount. Johnson (2000) puts it, after an extensive literature review, differently by stating that "socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sector, and emphasize hybrid models of for-profit and non-profit activities" (p. 1). This implies that social entrepreneurship is not a tidy conceptualisation that can be easily containerised with 'a social

entrepreneurship' spurred by money and 'social entrepreneurship' driven by altruism nor can it be easily generalised to private, public or civil actors. A modest prediction of the continuing presence of social entrepreneurship in the Dutch sphere of development activities may thus only be limited to the commitment of pursuing a social goal.

### 5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this chapter was to examine the consequences for Dutch-based NGOs of the latest policy alterations in Dutch schemes of international cooperation, ODA funding schemes (the TMF and MFS-I and -II) and a concessional investment and export fund (the DGGF) by building on the historical overview given in the previous chapter and by analysing the current development policy arrangement through the PAA tetrahedron. Integrally, the main findings of this chapter suggest two key changes in contemporary Dutch development policy.

Firstly, it seems that contemporary Dutch development policy is heavily influenced by its past arrangements and currently presents itself as the continuation of the ingrained belief that an economic system resembling a market economy should be the driving force of international cooperation and development activities. However, it does not seem to be a mere continuation of the past, but also that this orientation is becoming more explicit and radical in Dutch foreign policies, both in terms of international development activities, distribution of ODA via NGOs, and the stimulation of export commodities. This raises the question whether the history contradiction of the 'merchant-vicar' has transformed into a supposedly symbiotic interaction between economic self-interests and idealist motives that are mutually beneficial. In terms of political orientation and policy implementation, the DGGF is typical to such a symbiosis for the embodiment of a deeply-rooted and persistent confidence in market-led development activities over state- or civil-oriented approaches to international cooperation.

Secondly, aside from the concrete formulation of policy in the form of 'aid and trade', the findings also suggest a paradigm shift in the logic underlying the practice of development activities in which technical problem solving featuring a framework of effectiveness, efficiency and transparency is the new axiom. Since the 2000s, Dutch NGOs have had to sequentially accommodate a new approach that aims to linearly improve the performance of civilateral aid by rationally planning the organisation's social intervention strategies as a contribution to 'development', thereby altering much of its institutional logic and practice. Copious examples of this trend have been illustrated: the MFS-II pushed intrasectoral relationships towards the belief the alliances were a means to an end (i.e. complementarity of funding schemes), rather than traditionally a means of sparking synergy among NGOs; during both MFS schemes the

domestic civil society sphere became decreasingly autonomous and more complementary in their position in relation to the Dutch state, as the latter swooped in as the main donor to these organisations through co-funding contracts; and, NGOs have to comply with a given set of apparent value-free and rational planned development targets along rigid accountability requirements specifying the nature of development activities, the local organisations and degree of local ownership, geographical areas, and the value of spend taxpayer money. In the end, the results point to an increasing and accelerating commodification of the Dutch development policy arrangement and a playfield in which NGOs progressively have to fend for themselves in terms of funding, but also have to accommodate rational policy-based solution strategies next to their traditional civic values of international solidarity.

## 6. ENDING

In this concluding chapter, the main research question is answered on the basis of the findings of the past two chapters § 6.1. Based on these conclusions section § 6.2 provides a series of recommendations for theory and praxis. The study ends with a critical reflection in § 6.3 on the research as a process as well as a project.

### 6.1 RESEARCH CONCLUSION

The research question of the study was formulated as following:

*RQ: What are the consequences of the implementation of the Dutch Good Growth Fund for the civil actors previously, presently and prospectively associated with international cooperation and schemes of development aid?*

There are two ways of answering the central research question: a rather simple one – which is limited is to stating that the DGGF presents itself as a shift of domestic development policy priorities and ODA through which Dutch NGOs will face structurally less revenues via co-funding schemes – or a more complicated way, as the PAA-analysis of the Dutch policy development arrangement, with all its complexities, has shown to resist the simplicity of the assumed direct relationship. Instead, the DGGF has been the financial modality to a brewing domestic and international political desire of combining the efforts of private exports (trade) with international cooperation (aid), two spheres of activities that are theoretically separated, but traditionally featured indissolubly in overarching Dutch foreign policies.

The analysis of historical documents and researching a number of cases as vehicular means has showcased that the Dutch civilateral aid channel and its affiliated NGOs have been subject to radical changes in political and institutional design characteristics of ODA distribution over the last two decades, culminating in a policy arrangement favouring market-led over state or civil development approaches. At the base of this transition is a multi-causal amalgam of events and trajectories. Domestically, the convergence of mounting political calls to streamline traditional NGO funding schemes in a political landscape ruled for nearly a decade by conservative cabinets that favoured less Keynesianism to domestic development economics set the tone to the gradual implementation of a rational planning and policy-based logic to the MFS-I(I) co-funding schemes. Internationally, the growing global prominence of the AfT-paradigm in the 2000s reverberated the notion among Dutch Ministers and State Secretaries for Development Cooperation that market-led development modalities (i.e.

concessional investment funding and export credit schemes) that stimulated international trade and commerce would be the prime driver of development economics. This set of circumstances proved to be causal to the budget cuts (and ultimately the end of a unique 50-year-old co-funding scheme) on the Dutch civilateral aid channel and its affiliated NGOs, while simultaneously introducing the Dutch Good Growth Fund as financial intermediary that attempts to combine development with 'made in the Netherlands'. From this perspective, the relationship between the Dutch NGOs and the DGGF nor its effects on the organisation and substantive capacities of the former is not one of direct causality, but rather the result of much deeper and structural transformation of the Dutch development policy arrangement.

A large part of the problem with the traditional arrangement of the MFS was a problematic discrepancy, as perceived by Dutch state legislators, between the coherence of economism and civil society-oriented forces each contributing to 'development'. Arguably inspired by the continuous institutionalisation of market-based policy frameworks, the solution to this discrepancy of complementarity, coherence and harmonisation has been the diffusion a 'new' managerialist thinking with the 'old' idealistic development thinking – an observation readily made by Elbers, Knippenberg and Schulpen in 2014: "the agencies' [NGOs] belief systems still primarily follow the social transformation logic, whereas their associated practices have or tend to become hybrids, containing elements of the social transformation logic and managerial logics, with a growing accent on the latter" (p. 9).

The findings from this study seems to confirm the notion as showcased by the MFS-I(I)'s creeping institutional logic of managerialism at practice was translated into a series of regulatory and administrative criteria aiming to assess to the programmatic focus, (inter)national track record, financial position, capacities to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate, and interorganisational structures of cooperation with other NGOs. In effect with the successive budget cuts, it seems Dutch NGOs are slowly becoming accustomed to a hybrid or a mixed agency of operating as an agent of social change on the practical level, while on the institutional level to adhering increasingly to the rational problem solving and planning strategies managerial logic. Therefore, depending on one's personal political orientation or economic-ideological preference, the recent budget cuts in ODA and definitive end of the MFS were either a badly needed revision of an overdue system bound to spin out of control and thwarting development policy complementarity, or an act to further align NGO program proposals, geographical distribution of activities, nature of projects, and intrasectoral alliances to the predilection of the Dutch government. Either way, the Dutch NGOs that were affiliated with the MFS currently face a social Darwinism-like playfield characterised by fierce

competition over private donations, while state-driven initiatives like the DGGF attempt to stimulate the economic side of development activities by entrusting the market to get the prices of investment and exports to recipient countries rights. NGOs and private companies competing in parallel 'development markets': the former contributes on the basis of idealism and social transformation, while the latter contributes on the basis of generating employment and profits. If and when their paths cross remains unknown, but contemporary schemes and practices of Dutch development have set the tone to make such a congregation more likely, at least on (policy) paper and the spaces of international development cooperation.

## 6.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

The identification of NGOs functioning in the Dutch policy arrangement of development activities puts forward a four-part discussion on the commensurability, feasibility and expediency of this supposed hybridisation or dual loyalism. Moreover, a few words are dedicated to the future of the Dutch development policy domain in practical nature.

Firstly, one issue raised multiple times during this study is the felt erosion of NGO autonomy due to steering programs to spearheads of governmental priorities. According to Smillie (1995) civil society's strength lies in the ability to engage in issues that are perceived as dysfunctional or marginalising in nature and which the state (purposely) does not address – for example the domestic activity by Dokters van de Wereld of providing medical health care to undocumented migrants in the Netherlands –, but this role is bounded to result in frictions when NGOs are required to work within a state-led development policy framework that holds a strong managerial logic, such as the MFS-II program, thus eroding the autonomy and effectiveness of development NGOs. In the words of Elbers et al., “[...] the managerial logic runs the risk of excluding those types of organisations that are preferred in social transformation logic” (2014, p. 10).

Secondly and in line with the aforementioned argument raised, the NGOs that do decide to internalise the logic of managerial thinking run the additional risk of becoming a privatised extension of governmental agencies and an instrument of achieving agendas set by the state. Such disciplining phenomenon, albeit not limited to the Netherlands, is extremely at odds with the capabilities of an organised and independent civil society to act as check on the functioning of the public sphere, as the 'privatisation' of NGOs can potentially make them in the best case domesticated in their activities or in the worst-case be part of the problem when domestic or international forces, in whatever shape, attempt to influence or capture the state to serve their interests.

Thirdly, according to Leach (1995) merely the objectives of the donor party matter to interventions using the managerial logic in policy cycles, thus nullifying any expectation by either the donor or recipient that an established development-relation will extend beyond the term of the contract. Not only does this particular epistemology clash with alternative understandings to development that hold indigenous conditions, interests or solutions preponderant to outsiders as postulated by Pieterse (2010), academics like Thede (2013) and Li and Carey (2014) have made cases critically argued the former also reduces developmental behaviour to an instrument aiming at controlling the hegemonic interests of Western donor countries and Global North-South hierarchies over poor countries by framing the 'development truth' under a narrow set of economic, social and political conditions associated with the liberal peace model (Siitonen, 2016, p. 5). Accordingly, the piecemeal accommodation of and step-by-step commitment to managerial logics in (Dutch) NGO functioning, notably the much-felt alignment of civil with public agendas to development, calls for scrutiny in the examination of ideational power structures and relations.

Fourthly and finally, the recent emphasis of combining aid with trade in Dutch schemes of development cooperation has also broadened the analytical scope of the PAA by introducing a new range of actors, establishing new rules, competition over resources, and a discourse which explicitly expresses confidence in 'the market' to contribute to development. It signals a de-institutionalisation of the old arrangement – a breakdown of “a punctuated equilibrium” (Veenman et al., 2009, p. 203) – and the rapid institutionalisation of a new policy domain: a domain characterised by the idea that public, private and civil actors are working together towards a global cause in a mode of development thinking that favours a pro-market approach. This implies that a future analysis of the PAA aiming to explain the social interaction, modality and structuration of agents (i.e. stability, change, cooperation or conflicts) within the Dutch development policy arrangement needs to take a broader departure in its four interrelated dimensions to understanding policy practices.

Regarding the practical nature, distribution of ODA and shape of Dutch international cooperation and development policies for the coming period remains little meaningful to say as elections for the national parliament will be held no later than 15 March 2017 and its outcome is presently uncertain. On the level of national politics, the cycles of foreign policy that are associated with development cooperation tend to play a relative marginal role in the light over overall state affairs, as its institutional configuration has traditionally been heavily dependent on other domestic matters and policy fields, such as unemployment rates and

public support, although the progressive Pronk years in the 1970s are perhaps the exception to this rule. Therefore, it is not unthinkable that the continuity of both the state-business DGGF or the state-NGO partnership models will be at the mercy of the coalition negotiations after the polling stations are closed.

In addition, an editorial of *De Volkskrant* reviewed, in the context of the presenting the state budget for the fiscal year 2017, the policy actions undertaken by the Rutte-II cabinet over the past year. With respect to Ploumen's actions as the nation's first Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Minister, the editorial board wrote the following:

She swears it every time: 'I'm here for the poorest'. In practice, however, more than a quarter of her budget is allocated to domestically accommodating asylum seekers and refugees. And then there are also companies rummaging in the 4.8 billion Euros which Ploumen controls; they can claim 750 million worth of investments in developing countries. Development organisations and associated lobbyists have nailed her to the pillory for that. [...] Time is on her side: traditionally, development cooperation was politically unimpeachable, but nowadays the Dutch want something back. Regimes that receive our money may not be corrupt, and our domestic industry should also profit from it. For the latter, she has along with [Minister] Koenders established a sophisticated network of economic trading posts, ranging from Burma [also known as Myanmar] to Kazakhstan. Yes, Ploumen fights for the poor, but she is also just a businesswoman. (Political editorial board of *De Volkskrant*, 2016, pp. 8-9)

In sharp contrast to the signals rooting for the economic motives of Minister Ploumen, there are also international forces at work bound to alter the (Dutch) development landscape. During the 1990s, economic globalisation was welcomed in Global North and suspected in the Global South, but 25 years later these attitudes have turned as in the wake of the 2008-09 Financial crisis and its 'jobless recovery' many G8-countries are retreating to doctrines of retraining international commerce and trade protectionism (Pieterse, 2010, p. 208). Although public discontent about (global) capitalism's oddities, inherent instability and crises goes back to Classical Greek philosophy – "And so they grow richer and richer, and the more [people] think of making a fortune, the less they think of virtue [...]" (Plato, 2000, p. 9) –, the latest crisis has left a strong resentment against global economism due to its association with complex high-frequency finance, internationalisation of subprime housing mortgages and

speculative financial instruments featuring short investment horizons (Sassen, 2014), rather than the idyllic politico-economic landscape of a convivial Edinburgh market square featuring a butcher, a greengrocer, and a beer brewer as sketched by Adam Smith.

In much of the Western world, ordinary citizens, their representatives in national parliaments, environmentalist groups and unions are increasingly perceiving economic globalisation as something impacting their 'ordinary' livelihood in a negative manner: as an unstoppable, transcending and elusive juggernaut being greater than themselves and capable of subordinating their 'ordinary' problems to larger global concerns, such as migration or climate change (Elshout, 2016, pp. 14-15). Mixed together such antic cosmopolitan sentiments and collective felt loss of grip on people's personal situations can be powerful centrifugal forces resulting in less international cooperation, more economic protectionism and political isolationism, and increased nationalism, such as the recent public and political resistance against free-trade agreements like CETA (EU-Canada) and TTIP (EU-USA). Cracks are also appearing in the edifice of the European project as the 2010 Euro debt crisis, the Brexit, and a hausse of popular referendum have, on the one hand, reverberated an old north-south fault line, while, on the other hand, the revival of the Visegrád Four as a result of the ongoing migrant crisis has bred new west-east frictions on the continent (Marshall, 2015, p. 101). Presently, the EU no longer has the same degree of economic solidarity, political bandwidth or pan-European identity to lure countries like Serbia, Ukraine or Turkey towards 'Brussels'. As a consequence, the ideological dream of 'an ever-closer union' is on an uncertain footing and the diplomatic ties that bind are fraying; consequently, in the present post-Brexit environment the supranational process of European integration and cooperation appears to be have frozen or possibly even in reverse, at least for the coming years.

Also, the persistent fear of (Islamic-inspired) terrorism as well as the ongoing civil war in the Ukraine and the Dutch-backed UN intervention in Mali will certainly contour prospective Dutch development policies by emphasising on themes related to peacekeeping and security. In addition, the outcome of the presidential elections in the USA in November 2016 and the subsequent inauguration in January 2017 can potentially also shift the balance and priorities of international politics and trade relations as a Clinton, Trump or third-party administration is likely to draw stronger ties between development investments and US-oriented national security goals, thereby possibly altering intergovernmental development cooperation policy goals and aspirations.

On a slightly more opportunistic tone, the recent transition of the MDGs into the SDGs is perhaps the sole structural and somewhat future-proof international aspiration of what it

means 'to develop'. Contrary to the MDGs, the 169 thematic goals of the SDGs target global intersectoral linkages of inclusive sustainable progress that are bound to affect the richest areas of the world on policy themes, such as climate change mitigation, clean energy generation, and responsible patterns of production, consumption and waste disposal. In the pursuit for such aspirational goals the ontological nature and epistemology of human development conceptualisations are likely to substantively shift the existing dominant power interdependencies by transforming the traditional donor community and constructions of the classical North-South conceptualisation of 'foreign aid' within the architecture of global development governance. Exemplary to these changing patterns is the fact that South-South commerce has eclipsed its North-South counterpart (Grotenhuis, 2016, p. 44). The nature and scope of the SDGs is also likely to change the existing pattern of lobby and advocacy by NGOs and private companies, currently largely executed in the North in order to acquire private donations, influence state legislators and financial flows, and concrete projects that are carried out in the South.

Risks and opportunities abound in the contemporary rapidly-changing international cooperation landscape; how the forthcoming changes will ensoul Dutch policy arrangements of 'development' and impact the existing Dutch agents of social development and change, in spite its complexities and contestations of social imaginaries of idealism, altruism, business opportunities, geographies, social entrepreneurship or international solidarity, for different peoples and spaces around the world remains a poignant question only time can answer.

### 6.3 REFLECTION

Seldom is a study free from flaws or limitations and this research is no exception. As the narrative draws to an ending, the only thing remaining is a critical reflection on the conducted study. Firstly, looking back to the original scope of the study (a focus on Dutch civil actors associated with development activities), it retrospectively seemed an ingenuous endeavour in keeping a strong focus on the actors that have been active for decades in a policy domain including a diffuse range of private and public entities. During the research this often led to problems concerning the separation and in- or exclusion of primary and secondary matters related to the main research question; the fact the author has little substantive academic training or knowledge on the subject of Dutch schemes of international cooperation and policies relates to development did not help either. Related frictions were revealed later when applying the analytical-conceptual framework of the PAA to the collected data: as the PAA is primarily meant for the analysis of a single coherent policy arrangement within a single

institutional agency – two assumptions made by the researcher – the internal fuzziness of study object (i.e. multiple aid channels, a domestic development policy arrangement characterised with periodical stability, and a vast range of actors) meant the endangerment of sticking to a clear research scope.

Secondly, when it came to data collection via interviews, the amount and quality of answers provided by respondents differed tremendously. This is also clearly visible in the verbal transcripts: some respondents had an assertive attitude and talked freely, while others had a tendency of answering questions more laconic and concise. This also meant the length of each interview varied considerably: from one interview lasting 35 minutes to other one's being almost three times as long. The interview guide, although shortened multiple times during the study, proved to be a bit long, although not every question was posed during the interview. One respondent made use of the possibility to answer several questions of the interview off-record, a wish obviously respected by the author. The analysis of primary documents (white papers and other policy memoranda) took significantly more time than previously imagined as it was the author's first time in doing so. Despite the spend effort, the author believes the quintessence of the primary written sources has been captured and serves as strong fundament to support the claims made in the thesis.

Thirdly, during the data collection and writing process, it soon became clear that the selected 'constructivist narrative format' would be difficult to apply in its envisaged framework of neatly demarcating the cases and assigning them all their own chapters. Instead, the identification of subterranean developments (i.e. the 'merchant-vicar' antithesis and incremental institutionalisation of managerialism) in Dutch practice of international cooperation became the main framework to which the selected cases were connected. After careful consideration, the final structure ultimately made for a narrative better presenting the scope and aims of the study – essentially a chapter focusing on a historiographical storyline and a chapter in which the PAA-analysis stood central –, since it enabled the author to swiftly refer to historical events and executive decisions on various scales between different development aid channels, without having to explain such references. The spend effort and time of formulating, (re)writing and reflecting on the narrative poses a major lesson learnt, namely that the collected data largely determines the ultimately storyline and that stoically clinging to the envisaged narrative can result in a great loss of time.

Fourthly and reflecting on a substantive approach, it is important to (again) stress the limitations of this study, especially the absence of the four traditional MFS-organisations (Cordaid, OxfamNovib, Hivos or ICCO), as this poses a critical restriction to the data used in

this research. The reasons underlying the non-appearance of these organisations have already been put apart in the methodological chapter and the absence of primary statements has been substituted by secondary and tertiary sources from various spokespeople and documents. Nonetheless, any reference to these specific organisations should be subject to needful prudence and scrutiny. Also, in the historical analysis of the of Dutch development policy arrangement the author acknowledges the fact that the prominence of the multilateral aid channel and other smaller (semi-)civilateral channels aside from the MFS fades into investigative oblivion, thus perchance sketching the indiscriminate impression that the Netherlands does not engage into international development cooperation that is multilateral in origin – the extensive lobbying efforts for seats in the United Nations Human Rights Council and in the United Nations Security Council by the Dutch government as mentioned in the opening pages of the research are exemplary to this acknowledgment. Therefore, one could argue this study could have draw more attention to Dutch practices of multilateral development cooperation. Additional research could be built upon this matter. Furthermore, the study has shed an in-depth beam of light on the DGGF, both its inner workings (theory) as well its entry into force (practice), by using its biggest subscriber as a leading case study. However, since the DGGF currently has 21 existing or proposed projects globally and only one case making using of one track has been used in this study, the beam of light is also quite narrow in illuminating the broader issues at stake. In addition, as a program the DGGF is projected to run for another two years, thus rendering jumping to conclusions premature. This provides, however, starting points for further academic research into the coherence and effectivity of contemporary Dutch policy adoptions of combining (development) aid with (economic) trade.

Finally, the author is the sole responsible for flaws in the data organisation, handling and analysis, typographical inaccuracies, mistranslations or other types of errors or misrepresentations made in the written text or in the figures.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<b>CONSENT FORM</b>		
Name researcher: K. J. R. Vleugels (Koen)		
Function researcher: Master student Human Geography at Radboud University		
Contact information: Mobile +31 (0)6 13827587 E-mail koen.vleugels@student.ru.nl		
Date (dd/mm/yyyy): - - 2016		
As a participant to this study, I hereby declare that:	Yes	No
1. I have read and fully understand the information given by the researcher and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	[ ]	[ ]
2. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I can end my participation at any time without stating any reason.	[ ]	[ ]
3. I am fully aware that, even though all efforts will be made in ensuring the anonymity of me as a participant to this study and the confidentiality of the information I give, this can only be guaranteed within the limits of Dutch constitutional (Articles 10 and 13) and European law (Data Protection Directive 95/46/EG)	[ ]	[ ]
4. I authorise the permission to record the conversation during the interview. The possibility of answering questions 'off the record' during the interview remains open at all times.	[ ]	[ ]

5. I authorise the permission to print and use solemnly anonymous [ ] [ ]  
quotes and statements in the final publication of the study.

Name participant:

Signature participant:

Name researcher: K. J. R. Vleugels (Koen) Signature researcher:

The opening of the interview covers the formalities concerning the confidentiality of the conversation, asking permission to record the conversation, reaffirming the purpose of the study and the estimated length of the interview, expressing appreciation for the allocated time, and setting a friendly atmosphere to help put the respondent at ease.

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### **Introduction**

1. Tell me about your field of expertise and history of participating in the organisation [in question]. What is/ was your position in the organisation and what does/ did it entail?
2. To what degree are/ were you involved in decision-making regarding the activities carried out by the organisation?

### **The organisation [in question]**

3. Can you tell me briefly about the history of the organisation [in question]? How is the organisation structured organisationally, financially and legally?
4. Has the organisation ever been part of Dutch ODA policy?
  - If yes, did the organisation (ever) receive funding within the framework of Dutch ODA policies?

5. Can you describe the employees of the organisation [in question]? What is their professional background? What drives them to participate in the organisation?
6. Does the organisation [in question] cooperate with other likeminded organisations, for example, in order to receive funding from the Dutch government?
  - What have been the consequences of such partnerships?
  - To your knowledge are there partnerships opposing the partnerships your organisation is engaged in?

### **Rules of conduct**

7. Is there an official mandate specifying the responsibilities, competences and authority of the organisation [in question]?
8. What are the limitations of the organisation in terms of scope of the activities?

### **Resources**

9. How does the organisation generate revenue?
  - Does the organisation face 'competition' from other organisations in these activities? If so, how does the organisation cope with this competition?
10. Can you elaborate on the experiences of the organisation [in question] with Dutch ODA policy? What has been the role of lobby and advocacy in generating ODA funding for the organisation?
11. Does the organisation [in question] make use of the DGGF?
  - If so, what are your experiences with the Fund? How were the decisions regarding allocation of investments funds made? Was a certain path obvious?
  - If not, why?
12. Did the recent shift in Dutch ODA funding structures change in any way the activities conducted by the organisation [in question]?
  - If so, what have been the response of your organisation to these changes? Did contestation arise as a result of cutbacks in ODA funding OR as a

consequence of the possibilities to invest using funds from the DGGF? If so, what topics were particularly contentious?

13. IF the organisation in question [in question] had to deal with cutbacks, what have been the main differences in the cost-benefit-distribution?

### **Discourses**

14. From your professional experience, can you describe the current discourse on Dutch ODA policy? What have been the key changes in Dutch ODA under Minister Ploumen and what has remained unchanged?
15. Is the current discourse in line with the 'development philosophy' OR business case of the organisation [in question]? To your knowledge, has your organisation's [in question] policy changed over time in relation to Dutch ODA? If so, why and how?
16. How do you conceive the future of Dutch ODA in the near future? To your knowledge and experiences, what do you expect to happen in the coming years? How will these changes affect your organisation [in question]?

- - -

The ending of the interview recapitalises on the formalities concerning off-record questions from/ to the interviewee and reaffirming the interviewee over the further process of interview. The interviewee will be asked whether they want to receive a digital copy of the interview transcription or the complete inquiry and is thanked for the spent effort and time.

APPENDIX B: ANALYSED DOCUMENTS

White papers & Executive decisions 1/3		
Minister/ state secretary	Title ['Translation']	Official source / archive designation
Luns (1956) M	<i>Nota inzake de hulpverlening aan minder ontwikkelde gebieden</i> ['Aid to less developed areas']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1955-1956, Kamerstuk 4334(2)
Bot (1966) M	<i>Nota hulpverlening aan minder ontwikkelde landen</i> ['Aid to less developed countries']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1966-1967, Kamerstuk 800(3)
Pronk (1976) M	<i>Nota bilaterale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: Om de kwaliteit van de Nederlandse hulp</i> ['Bilateral development cooperation: To enhance the quality of the Dutch aid']	Handelingen Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1976-1977, Kamerstuk 14100(3)
de Koning (1980) M	<i>Nota ontwikkelingssamenwerking in wereld-economisch perspectief</i> ['Development cooperation in a world economic perspective']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1979-1980, Kamerstuk 800(15);
Schoo (1984) M	<i>Nota ontwikkelingssamenwerking en werkgelegenheid</i> ['Development cooperation and employment']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar, 1983-1984, Kamerstuk 503(1)
Pronk (1990) M	<i>Nota een wereld van geschil: Nieuwe kaders voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking in de jaren negentig</i> ['A world of difference: New frameworks for development cooperation in the nineties']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1990-1991, Kamerstuk 21813(2)

White papers & Executive decisions (cont.) 2/3		
Minister/ state secretary	Title ['Translation']	Official source / archive designation
Pronk (1993) M	<i>Nota een wereld in geschil; De grenzen van ontwikkelingssamenwerking verkend</i> ['A world in dispute; A survey of the frontiers of development cooperation']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1993-1994, Kamerstuk 23408(4)
van Mierlo (1994) M	<i>Nota herrijking van het buitenlands beleid.</i> ['Recalibration of the foreign policy']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1994-1995, Kamerstuk 24337(2)
Herkens (2001) M	<i>Nota civil society en structurele armoedebestrijding</i> ['Civil society and structural poverty eradication']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 2000-2001, Kamerstuk 27433(3)
van Ardenne (2003) S	<i>Nota aan elkaar verplicht - Ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsbeleid voor de komende jaren</i> ['Obligated to each other – Development cooperation policy for the coming years']	Handelingen der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 2002-2003, Kamerstuk 29234(1)
Koenders (2009) M	<i>Policy memorandum of the Netherlands on civil society organisations: Cooperation, customisation and added value.</i>	The Hague: DGIS under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Knapen (2010) S	<i>Basisbrief ontwikkelingssamenwerking</i> ['Basic letter development cooperation']	The Hague: DGIS under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Kapen (2011) S	<i>Focusbrief ontwikkelingssamenwerking</i> ['Basic letter development cooperation']	The Hague: DGIS under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Ploumen (2013) M	<i>Nota wat de wereld verdient: Een nieuwe agenda voor hulp, handel en investeringen.</i> ['A world to gain: A new agenda for help, trade and investments']	The Hague: DGIS under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**White papers & Executive decisions (cont.) 3/3**

Minister/ state secretary	Title ['Translation']	Official source / archive designation
Ploumen (2014) M	<i>Besluit tot vaststelling van beleidsregels voor het verstrekken van subsidie in het kader van onderdeel 1 van het Dutch Good Growth Fund. ['Executive Decision concerning the establishment of policy rules for granting the subsidies in the framework of track 1 of the Dutch Good Growth Fund']</i>	Besluit van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van 10 juni 2014, nr. minbuza-2014.304011, <i>Staatscourant</i> , 16589, 1-14.
Ploumen (2015) M	<i>Besluit tot wijziging van de subsidieregeling internationaal excelleren en van de beleidsregels voor het verstrekken van subsidie in het kader van onderdeel 1 van het Dutch Good Growth Fund. ['Executive Decision concerning the changes of the subsidiary framework for international excellence and the policy rules granting the subsidies in the framework of track 1 of the Dutch Good Growth Fund']</i>	Besluit van de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking 21 april 2015, nr. minbuza-2014.201776, <i>Staatscourant</i> , 11620, 1-2.

