The EU as a Civilized Superpower: European Development Cooperation Policy and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

This article is edited from a research entitled the European Development Cooperation Policy toward Vietnam (1990s-2000s): A Case Study of Constructivist Foreign Policy Analysis (Bunnag 2009). Due mainly to the limitation of space, the article has to leave out a great deal of information and details of the original research. However, it does contain some additional arguments and information, in particular the arguments about the EU as a civilized superpower and on the possible direction of the EC development cooperation policy in the future. The research tried to observe if the EC development cooperation policy has been designed and implemented along normative forces dominant in international society, the Union level, and within member states. As such the constructivist model of foreign policy analysis offered by Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner was used as an analytical tool, against which the Community’s development cooperation in Vietnam in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s was observed and understood. The norm of sustainable development was proposed as an important norm existing firmly at all the three levels, with sufficient degrees of commonality and specificity. Therefore, the norm was assumed to greatly influence the policy being studied. The whole work demonstrated that the predictions of the constructivist theory have been fully corroborated by the observable behavior of the EC in the case study and that the EC/EU can rightly be seen as a civilized/normative superpower in today’s world. At the end, the possible development of EC development cooperation after the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty is discussed.

Background and Significance of the Problem

The research tried to observe if the EC development cooperation policy has been designed and implemented along normative forces dominant in international society, the Union level, and within member states using the constructivist model of foreign policy analysis offered by Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner as an analytical tool. The choices of the research’s explanandum and explanans are meaningful in their own right. As for the research’s explanandum, it has to firstly observe that the EC/EU’s important role in the world politio-economic sphere has been immense. It has developed close relations with practically all regions of the world and been one of the most important actors in international trade and investment regime. This is also the case in international politics when turning to such issues as the international environment, development cooperation, as well as promotion of human rights, good governance and democracy in the world (Bretherton and Vogler 1999; Piening

1Development cooperation policy is an important aspect of the Union’s foreign policy and a policy within the Community pillar. In this research, the term EC will be applied when the development cooperation and/or other policies falling within the Community pillar are dealt with. On the other hand, the term EU will be used when policies which either fall outside the Community pillar or fall both within and outside the Community pillar are referred to. It will also refer to development cooperation activities of the Community and the member states as a whole.
Furthermore, it is by far the developing world’s main partner, providing 55 percent of all international ODA, and also being their biggest trader and foreign investor. The EU as a whole has committed an increase of ODA from 0.33 to 0.39 percent of GNI by 2006, bringing ODA from 29 billion to about 39 billion US Dollars per annum. The development aid at the Community level, which comprises a certain share of EU aid managed by the Commission and the European Investment Bank, has also been significantly increased, from 3.3 billion Euros in 1990 to 9.3 billion Euros in 2000 and around 9.6 billion Euros annually thereafter. The EU also handles over 10 percent of the world’s public development aid and its humanitarian role has been developed substantially over the past decade. The European Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) is by far one of the world’s largest donors of humanitarian aid. Over the years, its influence in world affairs has been on the increase and it has proved to be an actor with the same status and importance as the United States and Japan in world society (Allen and Smith 1990). Some scholars even observed that the Union’s important role rests mainly on its reputation as a civilian and economic superpower as against, but of no less importance than, superpowers in terms of military strength (Duchene 1972, 1973:19-20; Piening 1997; Laursen 1991; Lodge 1993). In connection with its growing significance, the Union’s domestic and external policies always have a considerable impact upon its trading partners. Attempts to establish an understanding about the Union’s policies, their decision-making process and their effects upon other countries are undeniably interesting and necessary for academia, practitioners, and the public, especially those in the developing world.

One of the reasons why development cooperation policy was chosen to be at the core of this work is that it is today one of the three principal components of the EU’s external action, alongside trade policy and common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Despite the EU’s leading role in this field and its immense contribution to the betterment of the well-being of people of the world, there is less academic interest on the policy in comparison with other main policy areas. Moreover, basic works dealing with the policy sector usually involve with the analysis of interaction and relationship between the EU and groups of countries in ACP region, in the Mediterranean, and, recently, in the former Soviet Union and Eastern, as well as Central European regions. Therefore, this study tries to bridge the gap between available works concerning the Union’s cooperation with countries in the aforementioned regions, and those concerning its relations with Asian countries, which are relatively “understudied” (Grilli 1993: xiv). It is also hoped that this work will add another piece of jigsaw to a better understanding about the economic and political relations between the Union and Asia in particular and its role toward the betterment of developing countries in general.

Moreover, the development cooperation policy of the Union toward Vietnam is also particularly interesting because the country has experienced profound changes following the implementation of its economic reform and the opening of its market since 1986 (Doi Moi). The Vietnamese government normalized its relations with the Union in the year 1992. The research result is, therefore, hoped to provide a reference point of departure for other scholars and the public interested in studying and researching the topic of Vietnamese dynamism and/or the topic of the Union’s relations with or its development cooperation policy toward Vietnam. The main attempt of this research is also to observe the conformity between the norm of sustainable development and the Community’s development cooperation policy and activities in Vietnam. The result of such an observation would provide an answer to the question of whether the European relations with Vietnam in general and its development cooperation policy toward the country in particular have been really beneficial to the country’s balanced development. Even if this research is a case study and it does not directly focus on providing the readers statistical observation of a correlation between main
components of the EC’s ODA policy and activities and the indicators demonstrating success or failure of the policy in Vietnam, this study definitely shed more light on the way the EC’s development policy have been formulated and implemented in reality. Through such an observation, the question if the EC’s ODA really benefit the recipient country and reach its people will also be implicitly, but concisely, answered. And the answer to such a question is important not only to academia, but also, and even more important, to policy makers and administrators of the EC and its member countries. It is hoped that strength and weaknesses of the EC’s development policy in general and its implementation in Vietnam in particular can be uncovered and, accordingly, the way to address some of the observed weaknesses revealed.

As for the choice of theoretical framework, or the explanans, this study hopes to be another empirical study of a constructivist foreign policy analysis, which is among the three most important theoretical approaches in recent academic circles of international relations in general and that of foreign policy analysis in particular, and the one which is counted as initiating the newest great debate in the field (Rittberger 2001). For scholars and lay persons interested in theoretical debates in the field, therefore, this study proposes to provide a test case and a more precise understanding of the constructivist foreign policy analysis, which in turn will automatically shed more light onto the newest great debate of the field and therefore bring about a better understanding also of rationalist approaches of foreign policy analysis.

In fact, the choice of a constructivist approach to foreign policy analysis lies on the writer’s belief in not sharing the idea of an objective political science founded on a mechanistic conception of political and social activity. Such a supposition does not really correspond to human experience, since human beings are capable of reflecting, both individually and collectively, on their experience and behaving accordingly (Allum 1995). Constructivist theory concentrates on how far inter-subjective structure institute interests and actions of the actor under observation. However, the approach also fully asserts the significance of both normative and material structures and the mutual constitution of agents and structures in defining the meaning and identity of the individual actor and the patterns of appropriate activity engaged by the actors. Moreover, this study’s outcomes are expected to successfully help in explaining the EU as a political system, as perceived by relevant and participating actors involved in making the whole system operate along with changes in its political environment. Furthermore, such analysis of the foreign policy of the EC hopes to extend the scope of theoretical debates in the field of foreign policy analysis to include those for the actors other than strict Westphalian nation states.

**Research Objectives**

1. To study development cooperation policy with particular interest in its ideological driving force and the Union’s worldview about its role in trying to solve international problems by using the case study of the development policy and programs in Vietnam as a test case of constructivist foreign policy analysis

2. To study the implementation of the Union’s development cooperation in Vietnam with special interest in comparing, and finding the correlation of, the policy’s ideologically-based objectives, driven by the norm of sustainable development, with the real formulation and implementation of the action programs.

3. Along 2.1. and 2.2., to observe if basic premises of Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner’s model (1999) in the constructivist research tradition are empirically feasible when it is applied to a particular case study.
4. Along 2.1. to 2.3., to review the formulation and implementation of the EC development cooperation policy and activities in Vietnam and to find out if the policy and activities have been really beneficial to the recipient country as intended.

Framework of the Study

What is Foreign Policy Analysis?

The application of the constructivist theory in this study falls clearly under the subfield of foreign policy analysis. This subfield comprises with a diverse set of activities, dedicated to explaining and understanding the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor—often, but not always, a state—towards the external environment and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements, and actions (Gerner 1995: 18). As such, it becomes clear that the scope of the subfield is rather broad. With its “limitless boundaries”, or the continuing erosion of the distinction between domestic and foreign issues (Rosenau 1987: 1, 3), the subfield deals with both arenas, jumping from individual to state to systemic levels of analysis. It also involves a diverse set of issue areas ranging from those of a sociopolitical nature to an economic one, those that unfold at home and those that transpire abroad. Reflecting such a broad scope of analysis, the field has always been diverse and dynamic, with scholars pursuing an assortment of substantive topics through a variety of methodological approaches (Gerner 1995: 17).

The explanandum, which foreign policy analysis seeks to explain and understand, also involves a variety of issue areas and levels of analysis. When looking at a broad definition of foreign policy as the activity of developing and implementing relationships between the states and other international actors, through which domestic values, interests and policies of the actor in question are promoted (Smith 2002: 7), the foreign policy activities of the Union can still mean different things for different people. In reality, the EU’s ‘foreign policy system’ is argued to comprise of three pillars and the member states’ foreign policies (White 1999: 46-7). The three pillars are common foreign and security policy (CFSP), the European Community pillar and the Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters Pillar (PJCC). The EU produced foreign policy within all three pillars, as well as ‘across’ them—in that decisions involve policy instruments from one or more pillars (Smith 2003: 2). However, the decision-making rules governing the three pillars are clearly distinct. On the one hand, decision-making in the EC pillar is by and large supranational, in which states could, in theory, be outvoted since qualified majority voting can often be used, and central institutions play a great role over legislation. On the other hand, an intergovernmental framework is the rule of the day in the other two pillars’ decision-making, meaning that the member states, with their capacity to veto decisions, retain more control over decision-making. It is worth recalling that the Community’s development cooperation policy, which is the central concern of this research, is within the EC pillar.

At the same token, the field’s explanans are even more diverse and problematic. Consensus within the field on the methods to explain and understand foreign policy in particular as well as broader theoretical and meta-theoretical perspectives in general is still absent. As Wendt has put it, the “observation” of “unobservable” in social life is always theory laden, involving an inherent gap between theory and reality (the under-determination of theory by data) (Wendt 1999: 5), a diverse set of theories and approaches has been developed within the field. Each contains not only a distinct underlying actor model and assumed logic of actors’ actions, but also different levels of analysis. Each theoretical approach, therefore, tells an absolutely different story about foreign policy.
Constructivist Tradition

The end of the Cold War and the following systematic changes of international politics\(^2\) left the mainstream rationalist or utilitarian tradition particularly exposed to both logical and empirical anomalies (Wendt 1999: 4; Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1999: 30-1) and have opened up space for a sociological orientation, often referred to as constructivism, in the study of foreign policy (Lapid and Kratochwil 1996). The field has even been pointed as having undergone a “constructivist turn”\(^3\) (Zehfuss 2002), along which the debate between materialist rationalism or utilitarian-ism as against sociological constructivism has repeatedly been argued as currently being the recent grand debate of the field (Zehfuss 2002: 2). Despite the fact the theory has only been introduced to the field of international relations with Nicholas Onuf’s “World of Our Making” in 1989 and has had a very short life compared with the two other main approaches, its increasing significance has manifested itself in various distinct stands. Not only that a growing numbers of scholars have claimed to observe and explain international reality using constructivist approach, but the perspective has also been recognized in both basic textbooks\(^4\) and a prominent journal\(^5\) as one of the most important standard ways of analyzing international politics.

The constructivist perspective stresses the significance of inter-subjective bases of social action and social order and the nature of the “duality of structure”, at once constraining social action but also being (re)created and potentially transformed by it (Gidden 1981). The main proposition is that despite their loose nature, international identities, rules, values, norms and institutions evolved and implemented in the international structure, international regime and/or governance in specific fields\(^6\) do have an influencing power over its members’ foreign policy formulation and implementation, provided that such international inter-subjective factors have enough degrees of commonality and specificity. As against the concept of utility-maximizing \textit{homo oeconomicus} which is at the core of other main schools of thought, actors are seen as being \textit{homo sociologicus} or role players (Hasencelver, Rittberger and Mayer 1997: 155), who are embedded in a social context and whose behavior is both heavily influenced from, and has a great impact on, such a social context. Actors fully recognize themselves as members of their society and, instead of trying to maximize their consequent gains to acquire exogenous and given goals as seen by the rationalist stance, take decisions and behave on the basis of norms and rules on the background of subjective factors, historical-cultural experiences and institutional involvement (Schaber and Ulbert 1994: 142). When actors are faced with alternative behavioral choices, they choose the one that follows rules and practices that are socially constructed, inter-subjectively-shared, valued based, and socially accepted and, therefore, matches the obligations of their identity or role to a specific situation (Cerulo 1997). As such, the actors base their behavior on the “logic of appropriateness”, in which “behaviors (beliefs as well as actions) are intentional but not willful. They involve \textit{fulfilling the obligations of a role in a situation}, and so of trying to

\(^2\) These include, for instance, ethnic conflicts, terrorist problems, and severe environmental and natural resources deterioration, and international drug and human trafficking.

\(^3\) For some other scholars, the term “sociological turn” is used instead (Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1999: 35).

\(^4\) These textbooks are, for instance Baylis and Smith (1997: 183-7, 204-5), and Rittberger (2001: 1-7, part 1).

\(^5\) These textbooks are, for instance Baylis and Smith (1997: 183-7, 204-5), and Rittberger (2001: 1-7, part 1).

\(^6\) Consult Walt’s article in Foreign Policy (1998: 38). It is also worth noting that the journal itself is aimed not only for theoretically minded academia, but for a wider audience.

\(^6\) While an international regime, which can traces its conceptual origins from Krasner’s work, means a set of “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner 1982: 186), the concept of governance is popularly defined as “the process or method by which society is governed, or the condition of ordered rule”.

\textit{The 2nd International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences}  
\textbf{April 10th, 2010}  \textit{Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University}  
\textit{Identity – Culture – Communities_009}

In a constructivist vein, therefore, foreign policy is seen as the application of socially constructed, publicly known, clearly anticipated, and widely accepted rules, which are associated with actors’ particular identities in a particular situation. Among other interpretations, this study proposes, following Boekle, Rittberger, and Wagner (1999), that such guiding rules of the state’s foreign policy are norms defined as inter-subjectively shared, value-based expectations of appropriate behavior emanating from the actor’s social environment, i.e. social norms of sufficient commonality and specificity. Four characteristics are pointed out to distinguish norms from other ideational variables, namely inter-subjectivity, immediate orientation to behavior (Finnemore 1996: 22f), reference to values, and counterfactual validity (Hasenclever, Mayer and Rittberger 1997: 164f; Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986: 767f).

The Indicators of the degree of normative influence on (foreign) policy behavior depends on two criteria, namely its commonality and its specificity. The first depends on the extent, to which it is shared by political units within the society. A high degree of commonality is seen if all the actors in a social system, for instance member states of an international system, share a certain value-based expectation of behavior. On the other extreme, the low commonality can be realized, when only a minority of actors shares a certain expectation of behavior. The constructivists hold that a norm can only be counted as influential on a state’s behavior, if it can claim at least a medium degree of commonality (Boekle, Ritterger and Wagner 1999: 6). The lower the degree of commonality of a value-based expectation, the greater the risk that this expectation is not an independent variable (but itself the effect of a previously ignored independent variable), and therefore is not accurate for explaining both the expectations of behavior as well as the non-compliant manners that can be observed.

Moreover, the degree of specificity is regarded as how precisely a norm distinguishes appropriateness from inappropriateness in actors’ behavior. According to constructivist scholars, a norm gains a higher degree of specificity, when it is formally expressed in the form of, for instance, an explicit statement in written conventions/laws, and when it clearly distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. In the case that a norm has a lower degree of specificity, the expectation of behavior is then unclearly specified. Consequently, there can be a wide range of behavioral options, which can be unclearly justified as appropriate, and it is difficult for actors within a social system to determine when such an unspecified norm has been violated. A norm with an insufficient degree of specificity is, therefore, unsuitable as a standard for appropriate foreign policy behavior (Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner 1999: 7; Legro 1997: 34).

In the constructivist tradition, the logic of appropriateness links the independent variable, norms, with the dependent variable, a state’s foreign policy behavior. Norms have a constitutive effect. They legitimize goals and define actors’ interests. By acting as a standard for identifying certain goals as legitimate, norms act as “a motive” which determines the goals, toward which states should legitimately strive (Klotz 1995: 26). States are seen as defining their interests in accordance with the goals that have been ascribed as legitimate and appropriate by norms. The impact of norm on the expectation of state behavior is attributed directly to “process of socialization” or “process of emulation”7. The process of socialization

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7 The process of emulation means that actors see others behaving in a certain way and copy these behavior.
is neither a one-way process\textsuperscript{8}, nor an ever-ending one\textsuperscript{9}. The socialization process of foreign policy decision-makers is distinct. This is because the actors interact at the interface of the two social systems of the international arena and the intra-national sphere, in which the two analytically distinct socialization processes run simultaneously. Foreign policy decision-makers, therefore, go through the dual processes of transnational and societal socialization. The first is defined as a process whereby government decision-makers internalize international norms, i.e. value-based expectations of appropriate behavior that are shared by states within international community. The latter is, on the other hand, described as a process whereby government decision-makers internalize societal norms, i.e. value-based expectations of appropriate behavior that are shared by majority of citizens of their own state (Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner 1999: 9). In the case of the EU, moreover, such spheres have to be added by the socialization process at the European system, whereby member state decision-makers internalize societal norms that are shared by most member states and the surrounding European institutions.

Table 1: Predictive Capability of Constructivist Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International level</th>
<th>Societal level</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Explanatory/ Predictive Capability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norm present</td>
<td>Norm present</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm present</td>
<td>Norm absent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm absent</td>
<td>Norm present</td>
<td>Contradictory</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm present</td>
<td>Norm absent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner (1999: 11)

Research Methodology

The analysis of this study is mainly conducted through literature research based on both primary and secondary sources in archives in Thailand, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Vietnam. The interviews with senior officials in various European countries’ embassies, and Vietnamese government as well as academic institutions were conducted during the year 2001. The lists are included in the acknowledgement section. A case study method is used in this research to observe and interpret the Community’s development cooperation policy and its implementation in Vietnam in recent time according to the application of Boekle, Rittberger and Wagner’s model in the constructivist research tradition. The method is considered suitable here, since it allows the researcher to limit the boundary and factors in applying a theoretical concept to observe and analyze social facts. Although the knowledge generated by this method might be criticized as lacking generalization, it suits the researcher’s aim to use a constructivist research tradition to observe and interpret one particular foreign policy of a social actor in one specific context. The resulting work hopes to

\textsuperscript{8} The person being socialized may, in times, consider carefully about what he/she internalizes during the socialization process and, on due reflection, modify its contents (Schimmelfenning 1994: 339). The socialized person might also decide to abandon the norm and recourse to a new one, when the time and situation changes.

\textsuperscript{9} This is in the sense that the actors continuously confront new decision-making situations in every phase of their lives and, consequently, need to learn new expectations of behavior or reinterpret those that they have already internalized.
be another piece of the jigsaw to shed more light onto the applicability of the constructivist research tradition in general.

As for the research structure, the study’s main arguments and findings will be constructed along the descriptive analysis basis. The analysis will neither be directed toward the main economic impact of the Union development cooperation policy on the Vietnamese socioeconomic development, nor be a prescriptive analysis offering main predictions on such a policy’s future and its effects, topics which should mainly be dealt with by scholars of economic studies.

Conclusions

The main findings of the chapters 3, 4, and 5 all indicated that sustainable development has not only been popularized but has also continuously existed and had influential normative power in all the three levels of international sphere, the EU community and the member states’ societies. It has also been institutionalized in legal instruments, both of a legally binding and declaratory nature, and by political organizations at all the levels as one of states’ ultimate objectives or as a norm, against which they define their behavior. At the international level, sustainable development has been increasingly incorporated in various international treaties and soft laws since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), and the norm has gained some meaning and normative value throughout the years. Even though it is still not definite if sustainable development has, as yet, the character of a customary norm of international law (Boyle and Freestone 1999: 16-8), it is clear that we are witnessing an emerging corpus of international legal principles and instruments which address the intersections between international economic, environmental and social law (including human rights law), toward development that can last for the benefit of present and future generations (CISDL 2005: 1). Sustainable development has a dual significance in international law. Apart from serving as the object and purpose of many international treaties and “soft laws” (CISDL 2005: 2), it has also been considered as an interstitial norm, which serves to reconcile other conflicting norms related to the environment, the economy and social development.

Sustainable development has been identified as part of the purpose of a rising number of treaties and most soft laws. Therefore, the norm has been directly relevant in the interpretation and realization of more and more treaties’ provisions10, which in turn legally bind the signatory states. It has been incorporated in several treaties and soft laws including several regional sea conventions, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol, the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the 1987 Action Plan for the Environmentally Sound Management of the Common Zambezi River System, the 1985 ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, the 2000 Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the ACPs, and the 2001 International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The aim of sustainable development based on integrated framework of economic, environmental and population’s social-wellbeing concerns has also been a main element of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change11 and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)’s recommendations. This resemblance has been seen by some scholars as a reflection of the

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10 According to article 31 (1) of the Vienna Convention on Law of Treaties [23 May 1969, 1155 U.N.T.S. 331; 8 L.L.M. 679 (1969)], “a treaty shall be interpreted in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning to be given to the terms of the treaty in their context”, considering also its objectives and purpose.

positive law of the concept of sustainable development (Timoshenko 1995: 153). The norm was also identified to guide legal development under the auspices of the Program for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, henceforth the Montevideo Programs I and II of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)\textsuperscript{12} and within an auspice of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)\textsuperscript{13}. Apart from treaties related to the environment and natural resources, sustainable development has also been gradually codified in economic and trade law. In particular, the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) included sustainable development as an objective of the WTO. It has also developed to have a strong footing as an important customary international law, general principle of law, and in the judicial decisions\textsuperscript{14} and teachings of the most qualified international lawyers. The norm has also been incorporated repeatedly in several important legal acts of international organizations, both within the UN aegis and outside, and the final acts of several international conferences\textsuperscript{15}.

Within the European Union, sustainable development has also strongly enshrined as one of the most fundamental European norms. It has repeatedly been mentioned in the European Treaties, for instance, in the 130r (1) and 130s (5) of the Single European Act, the significant articles 2 and 3 as well as the Title XIX on environment (Articles 174-6) of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. It has also been clearly codified as one of the general objectives of all European policies and activities in both the draft Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty. Furthermore, it has continuously been codified in several important Declarations of the European Council, for instance, those of the 1988 Rhodes and Dublin European Council Meetings, the 1998 Cardiff Summit, the 2000 Lisbon European Council, and the 2001 Gothenburg European Council. The European Union has also developed its strategy to achieve sustainable development objectives as early as 2001 covering three integrated and inseparable documents of the Sustainable development strategy, the Communication “Towards a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, and the Sixth Environmental Action Programme.

Sustainable development has also developed firmly in the level of member states’ society. It has been explicitly codified in several “constitutions” of the member states including that of the Portuguese Republic, the Belgian governments, the German and the Austrian government. It has also been codified in legal order of most if not all of the member states. Most member countries also institutionalized institutional framework to actualize the

\textsuperscript{12} The program was elaborated in 1981 and integrated into the UN system-Wide Medium-Term Environment Program (UNEP Governing Council Decision 10/21, 1982). Sustainable development enshrines in the main mandate of the program, which was “directed to harmonizing developmental and environment concerns by the adoption of an integrated and coordinated approach in all aspects of environmental legislation and its application”. Particular attention was also placed on the interests and limited capabilities of developing countries in the process of codification, progressive development and implementation of effective environmental law and consequent responsibility of developed countries to give technical and/or financial support for such activities initiated by developing nations.

\textsuperscript{13} The WCED established an Expert Group on Environmental Law of distinguished international environmental lawyers assigning the group with the main aim to “give special attention to legal principles and rules which ought to be in place now or before the year 2000 to support environmental protection and sustainable development within and among all States”. The Group has then produced the Elements for a Draft Convention on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, in which the integration of environment and development has been emphasized.

\textsuperscript{14} The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Case

\textsuperscript{15} These include, for instance, the Stockholm Declaration, the Stockholm Action Plan for the Human Environment, the 1974 Cocoyoc Declaration, the 1980 The World Conservation Strategy, and its follow-up, “Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living” (1991), the Brundtland Report, the 1992 UNCED or the Earth Summit, and the Johannesburg Declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).
norm in practice. In most countries, a strong involvement of civil society in such an institutional framework can also be seen.

Furthermore, the norm has been elaborated in the way to attain a high degree of specificity in all the three levels. While there have been some dissimilar wordings of its definition and different choice of foci by different actors, the main tenets have been consistently accepted to be a development that is based on the balanced recognition of social, economic and environmental aspects of development at all levels. In the end, it was accurate to conclude that sustainable development has over time been a norm attaining sufficient degrees of commonality and specificity and, therefore, is a norm having influencing power over the European Community’s development cooperation policy under observation.

Chapter 6 briefly supplied readers with information on political and economic development in Vietnam since the Doi Moi, before the Community’s development cooperation policy and activities in Vietnam since the 1990s were observed in detail. Its findings demonstrated clearly that, by observing the Treaties, the secondary legislations, and soft law instruments, sustainable development has been placed high on the agendas of the EC/EU’s development cooperation policy. It appears in several primary legislative including articles 177-181 on development cooperation of the Maastricht Treaty, article 181 (a) on economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries of the Nice Treaty (consolidated version) and articles 182-188 on association of the overseas countries and territories of the Maastricht Treaty (consolidated version). In several secondary legislations, sustainable development has either been explicitly or implicitly stated as a normative basis or major concern of the Community’s policies and courses of action. This can be seen, for instance, in the Regulation (EC) No. 1567/2003, No. 625/2004, No. 806/1999, the Council Regulation (EC) No. 2836/98, and the Council Regulation (EC) No 1658/98. The EC’s commitment to sustainable development is also codified in various secondary legal documents covering European relations with different geographical regions. The Council Regulation (EEC) No. 443/92 of 25 February 1992 on Financial and Technical Assistance to, and Economic Cooperation with, the Developing Countries in Asia and Latin America, henceforth the ALAs, the Fourth ACP-EC Convention of Lomé (1990-2000), and the Council Regulation (EC) No. 2666/2000 on Assistance for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia can demonstrate this point well.

At the end, this work tried to answer if the EC’s development cooperation activities in Vietnam been in Accordance with sustainable development strongly rooted in all the three levels of community surrounding the EU in Reality. It is found that the balanced tri-dimensional approach to development has been specified in various documents underlying development cooperation policies and activities in Vietnam in words. This can be seen in the fact that the EC-Vietnam Cooperation Agreement explicitly defines the term sustainable development in article 11 on environmental cooperation. In the article, both parties commit “to take full account of environmental protection as an integral part of economic and development cooperation”, recognizing “the importance of environmental issues and sustainable development”. Moreover, the integrated consideration of economic, social and environmental objectives underlying sustainable development is clearly stated in other important articles. In the Preamble, both parties show their recognition of the “need to support Vietnam in its efforts to achieve sustainable economic development and to improve the living conditions of the poorer sections of the population” as well as “the importance of the protection of the environment on a global and at a local level and the sustainable use of natural resources and...the linkage between the environment and development”. Article 2

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16 OJ L 052 (27/02/1992: 0001-6).
also clearly demonstrates the Commission’s respect for the integrated three facets of sustainable development. Sustainable development objectives are also enshrined clearly in article 9, which states the Community’s willingness to assist Vietnam, through specific projects and programs in accordance with the priorities both mutually agreed and set out in Regulation (EEC) No. 443/92, in order to contribute to Vietnam’s efforts and strategies “to achieve sustainable economic development and the social progress of its people”, targeting the poorer sections of the population.

The norm has also been reflected in deeds in the financial composition of the EC’s ODA and the EU’s ODA in Vietnam, in the consistency of main objectives and activities of major EC development cooperation programmes in Vietnam and the basic tenets of sustainable development, as well as in the implementation of all projects in the area development sector and in the field of environmental preservation, which were chosen to be observed in detail. While the second and third will not be touched in details here for the sake of limitation of space, the first can be seen from sectoral distribution of the EC’s and EU’s ODA in Vietnam in various years (Table 2 and 3).

### Table 2: Sectoral Distribution of the EC ODA in Vietnam in Various Years (%)\(^{17}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Development Administration</th>
<th>Natural Resources</th>
<th>Human Resources Development</th>
<th>Agricultural Forestry Fisheries</th>
<th>Area Development</th>
<th>Social Development</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-years average 1994-1996</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>19.01</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>20.88</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14(^{18})</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16.39</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>25.28</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other sectors in the period 1994-1996 covered humanitarian aid (7 percent), while there was no specific data on the economic development and social development sectors


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\(^{17}\) The data is based on total cumulative commitments of ODA in different sectors in individual years

\(^{18}\) The statistics also include the ODA for improvement of international trade in goods and services, which was 4 percent of the total EC ODA.
Table 3: Sectoral Distribution of the EU’s ODA in Vietnam in Various Years (from total cumulative commitments until 31 December of that year) (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Management</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>11.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Administration</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Natural Resources</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>13.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries</td>
<td>16.61</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>17.58</td>
<td>16.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Development</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>9.22</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Trade in Goods and Services</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Trade in Goods and Services</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>13.31</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>7.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>10.38</td>
<td>10.98</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>10.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Preparedness</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Aid and Relief</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Credits</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The whole work demonstrated that the predictions of the constructivist theory have been fully corroborated by the observable behavior of the EC in the case study.

Discussions

In this part, the main topic which would be discussed is whether the findings of the research could contribute to the more and more claim that the EC/EU is a civilized/normative superpower in today’s world.

In recent years, one of the most interesting and theoretically sophisticated debates on the study of European foreign policy centres on the claim that the European Union acts as a normative power on the world stage. Ian Manners (2002) has argued that, as a post-
Westphalian actor, ‘Normative Power Europe’ (NPE) plays a unique role in promoting the globalization of universal norms. His concept of normative power developed from the prior notion of the EU as a civilian actor, introduced into the EU studies literature by François Duchêne. In this, the European Community was seen as an exemplar of a ‘new stage in political civilisation’, a political cooperative that would have a chance to demonstrate the civilizing influence that can be exerted in international affairs through ‘essentially civilian forms of power’ (Duchène, 1973: 19). Drawing on role theory, Hanns Maull (1990, 2005) consequently refined the concept by identifying the key elements of civilian power. A state can be labeled with this description if it deploys primarily non-military foreign policy instruments, especially economic ones, and works together with other states and through multilateral institutions to manage international problems.

As for Manners, both Duchêne’s and Maull’s conceptions suffer from a bias. They privilege ‘physical power in the form of actual empirical capabilities’, especially economic ones (Manners, 2002: 238). This, he underlines, disregards the power of norms and thus underestimates the international influence of the EU. According to Manners (2002: 239), the ideational force of the EU consists in ‘its ability to shape conceptions of “normal” in international relations’ in line with its unique normative basis, which is rooted in its sui generis history and character as a post-sovereign or post-Westphalian entity. Displaying ‘a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions’ (Manners, 2002: 239), the Union in this sense promotes universal values such as peace, sustainable development, democracy, the rule of law and human rights by virtue of its international presence and value-rational conduct in foreign policy. Limiting the moral significance of the political difference between citizens and foreigners, NPE contributes to the reduction of cruelty in world politics and the promotion of global social justice. This makes it a form of embodied care for the ‘other’, an expression of border-crossing solidarity with less fortunate people that is grounded not in self-interest but in normative convictions (Merlingen 2007: 436-7).

The research findings demonstrated clearly that sustainable development has been developed strongly as an influencing norm, with a certain degree of commonality and specificity, at the three community levels surrounding the EU, namely international sphere, European community, and society of the EU member states. The research results also revealed that sustainable development as a balanced, tri-dimensional development has been put high on the agenda of all EU policies and activities, including those of development cooperation sector. And at the end, it was shown that actual budget distribution of EU development cooperation activities in Vietnam, and the implementation of all projects in the area development sector and in the field of environmental preservation in that country, have followed the way of balanced, tri-dimensional sustainable development. Therefore, the way the EU assisted one of the least developing countries, Vietnam, to attaining her development in the balance, and sustainable way demonstrates, first of all, that the Union, at least in this case, works on limiting the moral significance of the political difference between its own citizens and “outsiders”. Thus it helps reducing cruelty in world politics and promoting global social justice. Such a promotion of universal values, in this case, sustainable development, in Vietnam will not only set a framework of development that sustains the benefits of the Vietnamese of this generation and those of the future generations, but will also be another positive example guiding other developing countries for the positive way to modernize in the future.

In this sense, the EU did not just expand its power basing primarily on deployment of non-military foreign policy instruments and on working together with other states and through multilateral institutions to manage international problems, but internationally influences and shapes conception of “normal” in international relations’ in line with its unique presence and normative basis. In this sense, we could at least say that, in this case
study, the EU gains not only its role as the civilized superpower, but also that of a normative one. While this is just one case study of one particular policy of the EU, therefore it alone is not sufficient to lead to a concrete claim of the EU as either the civilized or the normative superpower. This finding, however, provides us another empirical evidence toward the conclusion along that direction.

In the recent years, however, it has been a growing concern that the EU role in the world development promotion might be less sufficient with the new institutional frameworks introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, which has already entered into force in 2009. The Treaty provides for a number of changes to the EU’s external policies. It both strengthens and clarifies the EU’s development cooperation policy and, for the first time, sets out humanitarian assistance as a specific Commission competence. Other significant changes set out in the Lisbon Treaty include reforming the system of Council presidencies from its current six-month rotation to appointing a full-time Council President for a period of two-and-a-half years; reducing the number of Commissioners (applicable from 2014); changing the weighting of votes by Member States (applicable from 2014); and extending the scope of qualified majority voting to new areas. One of the most important changes that will be introduced in terms of development cooperation is a call for the 27-nation bloc’s development policy to be managed within the European diplomatic service. This bringing of development aid together with Europe’s foreign policy is seen by some as “will inevitably lead to development becoming part of the EU’s foreign policy” and “When aid is politicized in this way, which was the approach of the Bush administration, development fails”. There has also been increasing call for development policy remains sufficiently independent of the EU’s diplomatic service “for it to be able to achieve its principal objective -- the eradication of poverty”\(^\text{19}\).

**Recommendations**

As mentioned before that even though this research has done well in providing us another positive evidence of the way the EU positively influences the world by its presence and normative drives, it alone are not sufficient to lead to the concrete conclusion of the claim that the EU has either been a truly civilized or normative superpower. For that conclusion to be drawn, such empirical studies of this sort have to be repeatedly done against empirical background of the EU’s other foreign policy sectors and in other socio-political context. While the use of the Constructivist foreign policy analysis might do a great job here, it also contains theoretical weaknesses in some points. Therefore, it is also advisable that other theories, which will have theoretical strength in some other ways, should also be used to test the very same policy sector at the very same social and politio-economic context in the future. This might in turn helps us to see the other dimensions and findings of, and thus a more complete picture surrounding, the particular knowledge of EU foreign policy role and influence in the world.

\(^{19}\) The comment from Simon Stocker, Director of Eurostep, a network of autonomous European non-governmental development organisations working towards peace, justice and equality in a world free of poverty.
References


