



# OPINION MONITOR FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2021

*Media content, information, appeals and their impact  
on public opinion*

2021

The DEval Opinion Monitor 2021 examines five key questions: (1) How often and in what way does the media report on the topic of development policy? (2) What impact do arguments for and against development cooperation used in the media have on the general public's attitude towards the topic? (3) What impact does information on the effectiveness of development cooperation projects have on attitudes towards the topic? (4) What role do moral arguments and various foundations of morality play in attitudes towards the topic? (5) What expectations do citizens have of development cooperation? The report also explores how public opinion on development policy and on specific development policy measures has developed during the coronavirus pandemic.

# OPINION MONITOR FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2021

*Media content, information, appeals and their impact  
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*2021*

# IMPRINT

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The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has given the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) the mandate to perform independent and comprehensible analyses and assessments of German development cooperation measures.

With its evaluations, the institute contributes towards improving the basis for decision-making to structure the policy area effectively and helps to make the results more transparent.

In its “Opinion Monitor for Development Policy” series, DEval regularly draws up analyses on the attitude of the German population towards development policy and cooperation as well as global sustainable development.

This report is also available on the DEval website as a PDF for download at:

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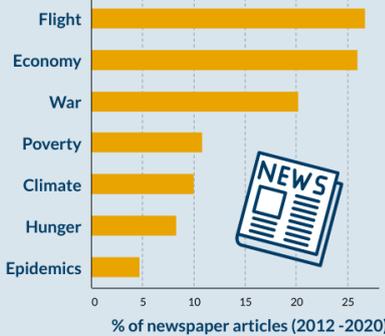
# Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2021 at a glance



## Development policy in the media

Development policy is given little space in the media.

Less than 0.5% of TV reporting deals with development policy.



When print media reports on DC, this is often in connection with flight, the economy and war.

## What impact do arguments for and against development cooperation (DC) have on attitudes towards DC?



Reports on the ineffectiveness of DC or corruption can reduce support for DC.



Reports on the contribution DC makes to tackling global challenges can prevent negative effects.



Positive arguments on the effectiveness and relevance of development cooperation cannot or can barely influence attitudes towards DC.

## The impact of effectiveness information

Information on the effectiveness of DC projects results in an improved assessment of DC projects and increases the perception of DC's effectiveness.

Outcomes



The public perceives information on beneficiaries and outcomes of the projects as particularly important.

Outputs



Inputs



## Morals as a foundation for DC support

Moral appeals can influence support for DC.



Whether and how moral arguments work depends on a person's "moral compass".

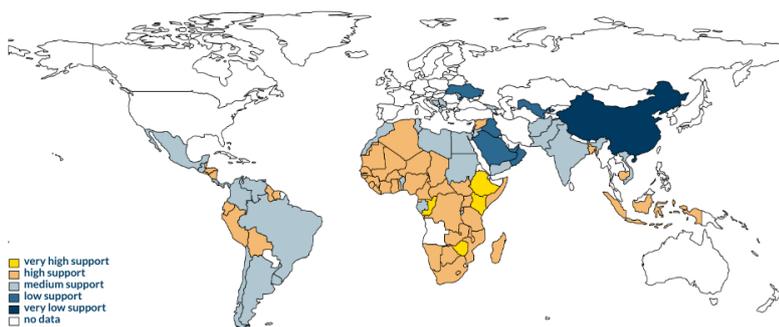


However, they may have unintended results (e.g. reactance) and should therefore be used cautiously.



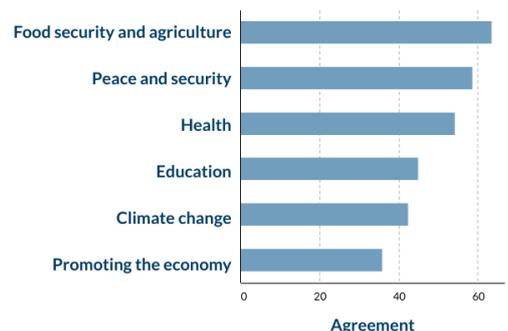
## The public's expectations of DC

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are perceived as particularly worthy of support



■ very high support  
■ high support  
■ medium support  
■ low support  
■ very low support  
■ no data

Traditional DC sectors - food security and agriculture - receive high support



# SUMMARY

## Background, motivation and questions

In 2015, the international community agreed on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals to tackle global challenges. These include eradicating hunger, fighting climate change, improving education opportunities, promoting peace and rule of law, and promoting gender equality. The 2030 Agenda serves as a development policy framework for governmental and civil-society development policy stakeholders. In this context, development policy and development cooperation are positioned as measures for tackling global challenges, which include the fight against hunger and poverty but also go far beyond this with their formulated goals. This broad understanding of development policy means it is important that the majority of the population supports state involvement in the area of development policy, development cooperation and sustainable global development – not least because these measures are tax-payer funded. Insights on the public opinion of development policy are therefore relevant for development policy planning and decision-making processes, communication and PR work, and development education.

In light of this, the DEval Opinion Monitor 2021 gives development policy decision-makers feedback on the general public's attitudes to development policy. In doing so, it supplies them with orientational knowledge, which allows them to design the policy field and communication with the public based on sound information. The publication follows on from the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 and the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2019, which examined attitudes towards development cooperation and sustainable development in Germany (2018) and media use with a focus on international reporting and global poverty (2019).

The Opinion Monitor 2021 examines the following questions in five sections:

1. What information on development policy is available to the public via the media? (Section 2)
2. What impact do the arguments for and against development cooperation used in the media have on the general public's attitude to development cooperation? (Section 3)
3. What impact does specific information on the effectiveness of development cooperation have on the general public's attitude to development cooperation? (Section 4)
4. What is the effect of moral appeals and which role do moral concerns play in support for development cooperation? (Section 5)
5. What does the general public expect from development cooperation? (Section 6)

These questions have not been examined for Germany to date – or the available data and studies are outdated. There are also only few contributions available from other development cooperation donor states that specifically address these questions.

## Data sources

Data sources for the analyses are quantitative content analyses of TV news broadcasts, print media and the short message service Twitter as well as population-representative survey experiments. These sources were supplemented with survey data from the *Development Engagement Lab* (DEL).

## Findings

### *What is the relevance of development policy in the media?*

The media content analyses in Section 2 show that, viewed in absolute terms or proportionally, development policy plays only a minor role in the media. During the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic at the beginning of 2020, the number of TV news broadcasts and print-media articles focused on this topic area was even lower. However, this negative trend was not observed on Twitter. Overall, the findings indicate that media reporting is unlikely to result in the general public paying much attention to the topic of development policy. Topics that link to development policy content vary between the examined media types. However, flight and migration play a key role in all three types (TV, print and Twitter). TV news broadcasts on public

channels and newspaper articles often mention development policy in connection with war and conflict. Tweets frequently mention development policy in relation to climate change and epidemics. TV news reporting and print media primarily focus their attention on state and international political actors, while actors from civil society are more present on Twitter. The tonality of reporting on development policy is more positive in the regional press than the national press. The latter tends to report more neutrally. On Twitter, by contrast, communication on this topic tends to be more positive. Downward and upward swings in the context of media-worthy events can be seen across the entire examined period, both for print media and Twitter.

***What impact do arguments for and against development cooperation have on the general public's attitude to development cooperation?***

Section 3 presents findings from experimental studies which show that arguments against development cooperation can influence support for development cooperation. Arguments regarding corruption or ineffectiveness of development cooperation in particular have a negative impact on support for development cooperation and on approval of the expenditure for development cooperation within the federal budget. However, these negative effects are not equal across the entire population. People who generally support development cooperation react somewhat less to arguments that are critical of development cooperation than development cooperation critics. In other words, their support for development cooperation hardly declines through exposure to arguments criticising development cooperation. By contrast, positive arguments that emphasise the effectiveness and relevance of development cooperation cannot or can barely influence attitudes to the topic area. The findings differ from those of previous studies, which found that positive arguments also have a positive effect on the general public's attitudes. Overall, the results indicate that it is difficult to increase support for development cooperation with relevant arguments, at least those used in the survey. However, it is at least possible to lessen the negative impact of arguments against development cooperation – for example suggestions of corruption – by pointing out the general relevance of development cooperation for tackling global challenges, such as climate change or refugee movements.

***What impact does specific information on the effectiveness of development cooperation have on the general public's attitude to development cooperation?***

In Section 4, a survey experiment investigates how information on inputs (“How much money did a development cooperation measure cost?”), outputs (“Which activities were carried out?”) and outcomes (“What impact did a development cooperation measure have?”) impacts the evaluation of a development cooperation project, the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation and support for development cooperation. The findings can be summarised as follows: (1) Information on the effectiveness of development cooperation projects can contribute to the general public assessing such projects more positively. Information on outputs and outcomes appears to be more important than information on inputs. (2) Both information on outputs and outcomes and information on inputs can contribute to the general public assessing development cooperation more positively. (3) With regard to general support for development cooperation, the information presented had some positive – albeit only small – effects. It therefore appears that general attitudes and pre-held beliefs regarding the policy field influence support for development cooperation more strongly. Furthermore, the data show that, when assessing a development cooperation project, the general public attaches the greatest importance to information on the beneficiaries and outcomes of the project.

### ***What is the effect of moral appeals and which role do moral concerns play in support for development cooperation?***

Section 5 examines the extent to which moral appeals influence support for development cooperation, whether the effect of moral appeals depends on different moral foundations and how the various moral foundations and the support for development cooperation relate to one another. The findings show that strong moral appeals can result in public rejection. This rejection, in turn, can threaten the support for development cooperation.

Independent of moral appeals, the findings illustrate how relevant morality is to support for development cooperation. There are significant associations between various moral foundations and support for development cooperation. While the foundations fairness and, in particular, care are positively associated with support for development cooperation, there is a negative association between loyalty and support. Specific appeals to individual moral foundations only have a limited impact. There are scattered hints that targeted appeals could potentially, for example, reverse the negative relationship between loyalty and support for development cooperation.

### ***What does the general public expect from development cooperation?***

The findings from Section 6 show that citizens' support for development cooperation varies depending on the partner country. Consistent with previous studies, levels of poverty and corruption are the decisive factors. High poverty rates are associated with greater support, while high levels of corruption correspond to lower support. At the same time, development cooperation with countries in which a high percentage of the population are Muslims has less support. This "Muslim bias" is also familiar from previous studies in the US. However, it is less pronounced among people who are interested in development policy than those who have little or no interest in the topic. The level of state fragility in partner countries also influences whether the public supports development cooperation with specific partner countries. The decisive factor is which dimension of fragility is dominant in the respective country: while weak state capacities to satisfy the basic needs of the population make public support for development cooperation with the respective partner country more likely, there is a negative effect if the population of the partner country does not trust its government (lack of government legitimacy) or if the government of the partner country does not have a monopoly on the use of force (lack of authority).

If the citizens are asked to decide on specific partner countries for development cooperation, the countries with which they are most in favour of cooperation include Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Republic of the Congo. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, China and Ukraine are the countries that citizens least support for development cooperation. The cooperation sectors that the general public classifies as most worthy of support are food security and agriculture along with peace and security. The sectors they perceive as less worthy of support are promoting the economy and climate change.

### **Implications for development policy and development cooperation**

The findings of this report give rise to four cross-cutting implications for development policy actors:

1. Cooperation with influencers in social media and linking development policy to "mega topics" such as climate change or combating root causes of flight provide the potential to increase the public's attention to development policy. Thus, it is important to ensure that short-term outcomes do not cause the medium and long-term development policy and development cooperation goals to take a back seat. It is also essential to allow citizens to personally experience the field of development policy and link it to their everyday lives. Crucial starting points here are sustainable consumption and communication that connect to citizens' personal experiences with development cooperation. This could be following stays abroad and voluntary work in partner countries or in connection with civil-society development policy initiatives.
2. Arguments concerning corruption and low effectiveness of development cooperation can reduce support for development cooperation. On the other hand, positive arguments, information and moral appeals show barely any potential to increase general support for development cooperation. In order to increase the chances of increasing support in the medium term and appropriately place counterarguments in

context, it appears reasonable to focus on communication work that places the effectiveness of development cooperation in the foreground and, at the same time, highlights its contribution to resolving global challenges. The aim is to allow the general public to realistically assess the actual effectiveness of development cooperation. Development education, on the other hand, should transparently identify the existing risks and challenges to the effectiveness of development cooperation. It should clearly communicate the complex circumstances that development cooperation actors face and the framework conditions that they work in. Thus, it is important to always also portray the crucial role that development cooperation plays in tackling global challenges.

3. There is an area of tension between the general public's expectations of development cooperation, which are characterised by a narrative of care and aid, and the self-image of many development cooperation actors, in which the focus is on partnership-based global development and mastering global challenges. The development cooperation actors' task is now to create connections to the existing narrative without neglecting the objectives that are linked to their own self-image. Consistently emphasising the interrelationships between fighting poverty on the one hand and mastering global challenges and creating stable governmental structures on the other could contribute to this in the medium term.
4. Information on development policy, development cooperation and sustainable global development frequently has different effects on different population groups. Something that has the desired effect for one population group may produce unintended effects in another group. One example of this is arguments with a strong moral claim, which may be endorsed in some population groups but result in the opposite reaction in others. Stakeholders should always pay attention to these complex causal relations, especially for development policy communication. Quantitative and qualitative empirical data can help to avoid mistakes and increase the effectiveness of development policy communication and education work. However, this does not mean that development actors should try to satisfy every opinion that is represented in the population. They should still use their own normative convictions or understanding of development policy as the benchmark for communication with the general public.

## Outlook

This report is part of DEval's Opinion Monitor for Development Policy series. The next report in the series is planned for 2022.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAT	Aid Attitudes Tracker
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany)
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union Deutschlands (Christian Social Union of Germany)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DEG	Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft (German Investment and Development Corporation)
DEL	Development Engagement Lab
DEval	Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (German Institute for Development Evaluation)
EU	European Union
DC	Development cooperation
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
Fifa	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
HC	Heteroskedasticity-consistent
IFEM	Institut für empirische Medienforschung (Institute for Empirical Media Research)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IS	Islamic State
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Credit Institute for Reconstruction)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NER	Named-entity recognition
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SD	Standard Deviation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
MFT	Moral Foundations Theory
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

USA	United States of America
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund
VENRO	Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen e.V. (Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs)
WEIRD	Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Second channel of German TV broadcasting)

# GLOSSARY<sup>1</sup>

## Attitudes

Attitudes may be understood as a summary assessment of specific objects (e.g. cars), people (e.g. Angela Merkel) or social groups (e.g. refugees) (Bohner and Wänke, 2009, p. 5). They have the purpose of processing information and organising knowledge (Raatz, 2016, p. 76). They also make it easier for people to navigate in their environment: “Attitudes [...] influence how we view the world, what we think and what we do” (Maio and Haddock, 2009, p. 4; Raatz, 2016, p. 65). Social psychology distinguishes between cognitive, affective and conative attitude dimensions (e.g. Eagly and Chaiken, 1993).

Attitudes play an important role for human reactions and behaviour, although their predictive value for actual behaviour is poor in many cases (attitude-behaviour gap). This is especially the case when general attitudes towards broad issues are researched and the behaviour investigated is abstract or unspecific (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005). The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex (Bohner and Wänke, 2009, p. 5) and is influenced by the strength and consistency of the attitudes, direct experience of the object of the attitudes, subjective and perceived standards, the social environment and behaviour intentions.

Attitudes towards development policy and cooperation are neither simple, nor directly observable characteristics that can be ascertained by means of a single question or a very small number of questions (Bae and Kim, 2016). Due to the combination of their complexity and little importance in everyday life, it can rather be assumed that attitudes or perceptions are ambivalent or even inconsistent. To take one example, despite generally supporting development cooperation, people may simultaneously have doubts concerning its effectiveness. Likewise, people may support development cooperation in general, but not agree to spending tax revenues on it. Therefore, standards of technical precision or logical consistency should not be applied to either individual or aggregated attitudes. Aggregated attitudes in the form of average or percentage values, for instance comparing population groups, should thus be considered to provide tendency statements or pictures of public opinion that are often stable over the course of time (Erikson and Tedin, 2011, p. 93-94). Substantial changes in aggregated attitudes indicate a change in public opinion.

A distinction needs to be made between specific political attitudes, for instance regarding a political measure, and an individual’s political orientation (or even ideology). The latter comprises central values, standards and more general political attitudes that aim to shape a society (Erikson and Tedin, 2011, p. 72). As a rule, political orientation is established by means of individuals positioning themselves on a scale from left to right, or alternatively from liberal to conservative in the English-speaking world (Jost et al., 2009).

## Attitude measurements and their interpretation

Many characteristics that are of interest in this study cannot easily be measured as a manifest characteristic. In contrast to income, educational qualifications or age, attitudes towards development cooperation and moral obligation are latent characteristics that have to be determined by presenting statements or agreement questions – referred to as “items” – on a questionnaire. Analysing survey data such as from the Development Engagement Lab presents a challenge because relevant characteristics need to be made measurable, in other words operationalised, on the basis of the data material available. Below, therefore, we often have to fall back on individual items – that is, individual statements or questions – to answer specific questions. Whenever the data situation allows, however, we calculate what are known as Likert scales (Likert, 1932). This means that, across the answers to several items, the average value of agreement is calculated for each person questioned, thus allowing a more reliable measurement of the respective construct. However, this only applies if the items map an individual latent characteristic (one-dimensionality) and there is a strong relationship between them on average (consistency or reliability; for an introduction see Moosbrugger and

<sup>1</sup> The glossary was taken from the Opinion Monitor 2018 (Schneider and Gleser, 2018) and modified slightly.

Kelava, 2012). The key figure used to determine consistency is Cronbach's Alpha. In the literature, a threshold value of 0.7 for acceptable consistency is often named.

Measurements based on such individual items or attitude scales are more difficult to interpret than measurements of manifest characteristics. For example, if a comparison of the average incomes of men and women indicates a difference of 500 euros, the statistical interpretation requires no further discussion.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, in the case of a measurement of attitudes yielding, for instance, that people who have the *Abitur* (higher school-leaving qualification) differ in their support for development cooperation by 0.3 scale points from those with the *Hauptschulabschluss* (basic school-leaving qualification), the conclusions are less obvious.

### Development cooperation and development policy

In this report, "development cooperation" is understood to mean all measures by state and social actors of industrialised countries and international organisations that aim to promote better political and socio-economic living conditions in developing countries.<sup>3</sup> Strictly speaking, Official Development Assistance (ODA) refers only to services and activities of governmental agencies that are carried out with the main objective of promoting economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development in the partner countries (see, e.g., Faust, 2016, p. 338–339; Stockmann, 2016, p. 425–431).

State development cooperation is implemented bilaterally between governments as well as via multilateral organisations. Civil-society organisations also receive state funding to carry out projects. Measures by civil-society organisations that finance them using their own funds (for example donations) are also part of development cooperation in a general sense, but are not classified as ODA.

Furthermore, a terminology distinction is often made between structural development cooperation that aims to achieve medium and long-term results and humanitarian aid in emergency and crisis situations. With "transitional aid", development policy also has an instrument to specifically strengthen the affected people's and institutions' resilience and development capacities. This is therefore a means of bridging the gap between humanitarian aid and structural development cooperation.

The complexity of the topic, the interaction between fields of action, the various ministerial responsibilities and the large number of development policy actors mean that it cannot be assumed that the general public understands the difference between these terms. Therefore, when recording public opinion on these issues, it is sometimes necessary to work with terms that match the population's everyday understanding but do not reflect the self-image of individual or multiple development policy actors. For example, the surveys for this study sometimes used the term "development aid" that is popular among the population and in the media to ask about the long-term dimension of development cooperation (see Schneider and Gleser, 2018, p. 20 for more on this). By contrast, the German Government and many development organisations use the less familiar (at least for the general public) term "development cooperation". With this, they express that they do not view the countries, organisations, communities or individuals with which they cooperate on development policy as recipients of aid but equal partners.

Furthermore, the general public frequently equates development cooperation with "combating global poverty". Accordingly, parts of the survey focus on this aspect. By contrast, the goals of German development policy relate to the various dimensions of development as specified in the comprehensive 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (see United National, 2015). This leads to measures that are not focused solely on fighting poverty, but also aim to promote economic, social and ecological development, environmental and climate protection, and governmental structures and democracy in the countries of the Global South.

<sup>2</sup> The social significance, on the other hand, does require discussion. Likewise, it is also necessary to take account of further characteristics such as (vocational) training, practised profession, age and employment relationship.

<sup>3</sup> This definition was taken from Schneider et al. (2019, p. 4–5) and modified slightly.

In the current study, “development policy” is understood in a simplified way as an overarching field of action, while “development cooperation” means concrete measures that contribute to economic, social and ecological development in the Global South. Here, it is irrelevant whether governmental or civil-society organisations are responsible for the measures. If the population surveys used made further specifications, this is indicated in the text.

### Regression analysis

Regression analyses constitute a widespread statistical method for analysing relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (for an introduction see Backhaus et al., 2011). The dependent variable, for instance general support for development cooperation, is estimated using a collection of individual characteristics such as sociodemography and political orientation. In the case of quantitative characteristics, the regression coefficients specify the average number of measuring units by which support for development cooperation changes, under control of the remaining characteristics, if the respective independent variable – such as the person’s age – changes by one unit. In the case of categorical variables such as gender, educational qualifications or experimental group, “dummy” variables are used, the coefficient of which specifies the average difference in general support for development cooperation for a characteristic value (e.g. the higher school-leaving qualification “*Abitur*”) compared to a previously defined comparison category (e.g. the basic school-leaving qualification “*Hauptschulabschluss*” or the “control group” in an experiment). To make things easier to understand, the tables in the main sections of this study show only the direction and statistical significance of the relationship (see glossary entry “Statistical significance”). The numerical results of regression analyses can always be found in the Annex.

The key figure  $R^2$  (referred to as the determination coefficient) additionally specifies what proportion of the variance of the dependent variable is explained by the model. This key figure can be viewed as an indicator of the model quality. However, due to the numerous factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, we should not let it lead us to draw premature conclusions. The results regarding the significance and substance of the individual coefficients are more important here (see glossary entry “Statistical significance”). If the report speaks of a logistic regression, the principle described above is conveyed to a two-stage categorical dependent variable, for instance the use of a certain form of civic engagement (yes/no). In this case, the interpretation of the coefficients becomes more complex. In simple terms, they can be interpreted as a change in the probability of occurrence of the investigated event (for example engagement that has taken place) when the independent characteristics change by one unit.

### Statistical significance

To check whether a relationship or difference is statistically relevant, meaning significant, significance tests are used. If the p value falls below the critical threshold value of 0.05 often used in social sciences, then a relationship or difference is considered to be significant (Bryman, 2016, p. 347). The p value is the probability of observing the relationship found in the sample or an even stronger relationship if the null hypothesis were valid, in other words if there were no relationship (Goodman, 2008, p. 136). To put it simply, there is only a low probability that the result is due to chance, and the null hypothesis can be rejected. In the case of p values below 0.10 (i.e. 10%), a relationship is also shown, but the greater uncertainty regarding the rejection of the null hypothesis is pointed out. Finally, in the case of p values above 0.10, the null hypothesis is upheld.

However, significance must not be taken to imply substance, as even very small results become significant with large samples. Although significance means there is very likely to be an effect, this effect is very small. So it may be the case that it is only of little importance in reality. Substance must therefore be checked separately. In addition, a statistically significant result must not unconditionally be taken to imply causality as, when cross-sectional data is used, neither the chronological sequence of the cause and effect nor the influence of non-measured characteristics can be checked (e.g. Gangl, 2010). Cross-sectional data is data that records both independent variables – such as political orientation – and dependent variables – such as attitudes towards development cooperation – at the same time. In many cases, therefore, it is not possible to rule out a reverse direction of action or a common cause of change in the independent and dependent variable. However, the survey experiments used in the study are an exception because the independent

variable was specifically varied by means of the random division into different experimental groups. A causal interpretation is permissible in this case.

### **Sampling error**

The analyses presented are based on a sample. This leads to statistical uncertainty regarding the proportional and average values reported. Let us assume, for example, that out of 1,000 respondents in a fictional random sample, 20 percent stated that they had donated to a development cooperation organisation in the past year. Then, there is a probability of 95 percent that the percentage of the entire population lies between 17.5 and 22.5 percent (confidence interval).<sup>4</sup> If the sample size is increased to 5,000 respondents, then the value lies between 18.8 and 21.1 percent. Generally, in the case of a sample of 1,000 respondents, we assume for a dichotomous characteristic such as “yes/no” or “for/against” that the sampling error amounts to +/-3 (Erikson und Tedin, 2011, p. 30-31). High proportional values around 50 percent exhibit broader confidence intervals than small ones. As a rule, to avoid overloading the text and diagrams, the bar charts in this report do not contain any confidence intervals but always specifies the observation number.

<sup>4</sup> The calculation (in German) is available at <http://eswf.uni-koeln.de/lehre/stathome/statcalc/v2202.htm>.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Flight and migration, climate change, hunger and poverty, increasing challenges to democracy and rule-of-law, war and conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic – none of these respect national borders, and all pose major challenges for the international community (BMZ, 2020a). At the same time, we can observe shifts in global political power structures and a crisis of multilateralism. For example, under the Trump administration the US withdrew from international organisations and agreements, while China is increasingly acting confidently as a global force (see, e.g., Copelovitch et al., 2020).

Development policy stakeholders act within this constellation. They position development policy and development cooperation as a contribution to mastering global challenges. This goes far beyond the general understanding of development cooperation as a measure for combating hunger and poverty (see, e.g., BMZ, 2020a). The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a central normative point of reference (United Nations, 2015). At the same time, the donor countries' national or economic self-interests play a role for development policy measures (e.g. Riddell, 2007, Chapter 6).

In light of this broad understanding of development policy, it is important that the majority of the population supports state commitment in the area of development policy, development cooperation and sustainable global development – not least because these measures are taxpayer-funded (Czaplinska, 2007, p. 6). However, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil-society development policy actors also require public support, because they both receive state funding to perform development policy measures (Dreher et al., 2012b; Verbrugge und Huyse, 2020) and finance themselves through donations from the public. Accordingly, both governmental and civil-society development policy have an interest in raising public awareness of development policy activities in order to foster transparency and accountability as well as support for their measures.

In this context, it can be helpful for development cooperation actors to continuously monitor public opinion on development policy, development cooperation and sustainable development and analyse which factors affect general beliefs among the population. In Germany, studies to date have revealed a favourable situation for development policy stakeholders. The public supports development cooperation, even if it has only a vague understanding of what it actually means and reservations regarding its effectiveness (Schneider and Gleser, 2018). This is particularly true of the assumption that development cooperation funds are lost to corruption in the so-called developing countries.

However, there are at least two key knowledge gaps that have hardly or never been addressed in Germany to date:

1. What information on development policy and development cooperation is easily available to the public?
2. How does received information impact attitudes towards development cooperation?

The first question is linked to the DEval Opinion Monitors 2018 and 2019 (see Table 1). These two reports revealed that the majority of the population have no perception of improvements in pertinent development indicators such as poverty rate or child mortality and that citizens overestimate spending on development cooperation (Schneider and Gleser, 2018). However, they also showed that the public registers reporting on global poverty and is interested in news on international topics (Schneider et al., 2019). To understand how this apparent contradiction comes about, it is necessary to investigate what information is easily available to the public. Although sustainable consumption provides a tangible connection between citizens' everyday lives and development policy, it is difficult for the majority of people to directly experience this topic in normal life. Reporting in the media is therefore important. It provides information on development policy and development cooperation as well as on the general global political situation and the specific situation in developing countries. Media reporting is also a key instrument for reaching citizens with development policy communication and education work. This includes both traditional media formats such as TV news or reports in the daily papers on the one hand and social media on the other.

The second question relates to the direct impact of the information provided. This includes information on the impact and effort for development cooperation projects, the impact of frequent arguments for and against development cooperation that are used in the media in particular, and the impact of moral appeals. Although the DEval Opinion Monitor and numerous academic publications to date have examined the effect of influencing factors that remain relatively stable over time on attitudes towards development policy – such

as sociodemographic characteristics or political orientation – until now the role specific information plays in forming attitudes remains open (for exceptions see Bayram and Holmes, 2019; Dietrich et al., 2019; Gilens, 2001; Hurst et al., 2017; Scotto et al., 2017; Wood, 2018, among others). One thing that needs to be considered is the aforementioned reporting in the media. In addition, informational materials and campaigns that the development policy stakeholders themselves provide directly, for example in the scope of development policy education or communication work, play a role. The latter includes, in particular, information on the cost and impact of development policy measures.

This report therefore addresses research gaps revealed by the analyses of the Opinion Monitor 2018. While the general public is critical of the effectiveness of development cooperation, the following question remains unanswered: *How does the public determine the effectiveness of development cooperation?* In view of the great significance of aid effectiveness in development policy, this report therefore examines how the population responds to information on the “input”, “output” and “outcome” of development cooperation, terms that development cooperation stakeholders often use in their project communication.

In communication about development cooperation, as well as providing information on effectiveness, development cooperation actors often also make use of moral appeals – for example to acquire donations. The sense of moral obligation towards developing countries is also closely related to a range of development cooperation-related attitudes and forms of commitment. Whether and how moral appeals influence attitudes towards development cooperation and to what extent the impact of these appeals depends on various moral foundations has not been scientifically analysed to date. Both of these questions are highly relevant. Although we know that there is a positive association between a sense of moral obligation and support for development cooperation, we cannot automatically infer from this that moral appeals will increase public support and commitment. After all, citizens may respond differently to such appeals depending on their varying moral compasses. Moral appeals may also generate backlash, and therefore result in unintended effects such as lower support for development cooperation. Against this backdrop, the following questions are addressed: (1) *What impact do moral appeals have on support for development cooperation?* (2) *What is the connection between moral foundations and support for development cooperation?* (3) *Is it possible to reach citizens more effectively through targeted moral appeals?*

**Table 1 Overview of DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy reports**

Opinion Monitor 2018 (Schneider and Gleser, 2018)	Opinion Monitor 2019 (Schneider et al., 2019)	Opinion Monitor 2021 (this report)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic information on the general public’s attitudes, knowledge and engagement in the field of development policy/development cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic information on media use and perception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic information on development policy/development cooperation in the media</li> <li>Impact of information</li> <li>Expectations of development cooperation</li> <li>Public opinion on development cooperation during the coronavirus pandemic</li> </ul>

Source: own table.

A closely related question is *what role specific characteristics of developing countries play in support for development cooperation with a view to the respective partner countries*. For example, in summer 2019 BMZ was strongly criticised in the media for its continued development aid in China (see, e.g., Focus, 2019). Similar criticism arose in autumn 2011, when funds from development cooperation continued to flow into Syria despite the commencing civil war (see, e.g., Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2011). In the same way, public support may differ depending on which partner countries are involved in development cooperation. Both the specific

needs of the local population and the political-social situation in the partner country could play a role. On the one hand, it is likely that those countries that are classified as especially fragile (see, e.g., Ferreira, 2017,) rely on cooperation with donor countries. On the other hand, the population in donor countries may have particularly strong reservations towards development cooperation with a partner country if the government in the partner country cannot enforce laws, there is a high degree of corruption, or the majority of the population does not recognise the government – in other words, when characteristics of a fragile state are prevalent.

## 1.1 Structure of the report

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This report looks at the previously outlined questions in seven sections. Following a separate look at the subject of COVID-19 and public opinion on development policy (Schneider et al., 2020, 2021), Section 2 looks at the information environment surrounding the general public. It investigates the frequency, thematic context, the actors mentioned in media reporting and tonality of reporting on development policy and development cooperation over time in the German media landscape. A distinction is made between TV news broadcasts, articles in daily and weekly newspapers and contributions on social media (Twitter). Section 3 then builds on this and investigates the impact of information in the media by analysing how arguments for and against development cooperation that are frequently used in the media and public discussions affect the public's attitudes towards development cooperation. Section 4 examines whether and how information on the effectiveness of development policy projects and financial expenses for such projects affect attitudes towards development cooperation. Section 5 shows to what extent moral appeals can influence support for development cooperation and what role moral considerations play for support. Section 6 is concerned with which partner countries the citizens view as particularly worthy of support and on what characteristics this perception depends. The report concludes with implications for development policy practice (Section 7). Box 1 additionally illustrates how public opinion on development policy stood during the coronavirus pandemic.

Through these analyses, the DEval Opinion Monitor gives development cooperation stakeholders feedback on the general public's attitudes to development policy and development cooperation. In doing so, the study would like to contribute to and expand a feedback loop between the public and development policy decision-makers. Secondly, the Opinion Monitor supplies development cooperation stakeholders with orientational knowledge for strategic planning and decision-making processes as well as for development communication and education work.

### Box 1 COVID-19 and attitudes to development policy

The coronavirus pandemic affects the lives of all people and is a cross-border health, social and economic challenge. Mastering this challenge requires both national and international cooperation and solidarity. The economic consequences of the pandemic are particularly severe for so-called developing countries. The World Bank forecasts that economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa will decrease from 2.4 percent in 2019 to an average of -2.1 percent. The forecasts for Angola, Nigeria and South Africa are particularly negative, at -5.1 percent (Calderon et al., 2020, p. 43). A study in Uganda confirms these findings and shows that measures during the course of lockdown have reduced business activities by almost 50 percent, with small and medium-sized enterprises the hardest hit (Lakuma and Sunday, 2020). In Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso, for instance, every fourth person lost their job in the course of the coronavirus pandemic and half of all those surveyed for one study experienced a loss of income (Balde et al., 2020). On the other hand, the health consequences have been less dramatic to date (see, e.g., Lakemann et al., 2020; Mbow et al., 2020).

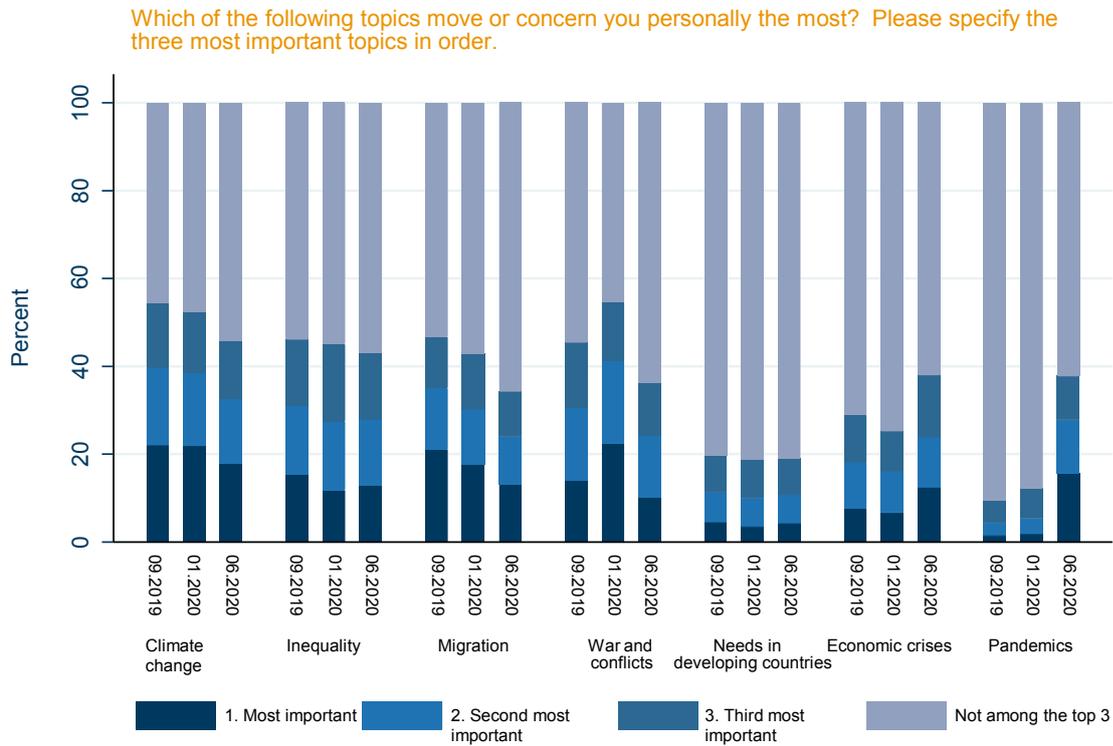
Despite these severe impacts, there is a risk that public attention to development policy topics will decrease as a result of the pandemic because, for example, it is suppressed by media reporting on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Western, industrialised countries. Conversely, the cross-border pandemic may make it clear to people in “western” countries just how tightly the individual countries and parts of the earth are woven together, or it may encourage empathy towards people in developing countries (see, e.g., Bayram and Holmes, 2019). This may also change attitudes towards development cooperation. For this reason, this report investigates below whether the general public’s perception of problems has shifted during the pandemic and what it thinks about specific development cooperation measures to combat the pandemic, but also about development cooperation in general.

The results of three DEL surveys before and during the pandemic show first of all that the number of people who worry about pandemics and epidemics increased significantly between early 2020 and mid-2020.<sup>5</sup> While in both September 2019 and January 2020 around 10 percent of those surveyed stated that the topic of pandemics and epidemics moved or worried them, in June 2020 38 percent of those surveyed expressed such worries (see Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> This result is in line with media content analyses, which show that the coronavirus pandemic dominated news reports in the first half of 2020 (see, e.g., IFEM, 2020). The finding that the perceived concern about the needs in developing countries (education, medical care, clean drinking water and hunger) has not changed during the course of the coronavirus situation sends an ambivalent signal. In all three surveys, just under 20 percent of those surveyed mentioned this. It appears, therefore, that the general public has not realised that these countries are particularly affected by the economic effects of the pandemic.

<sup>5</sup> For further information on the data used in this box, see *Section 1 of the online Annex*.

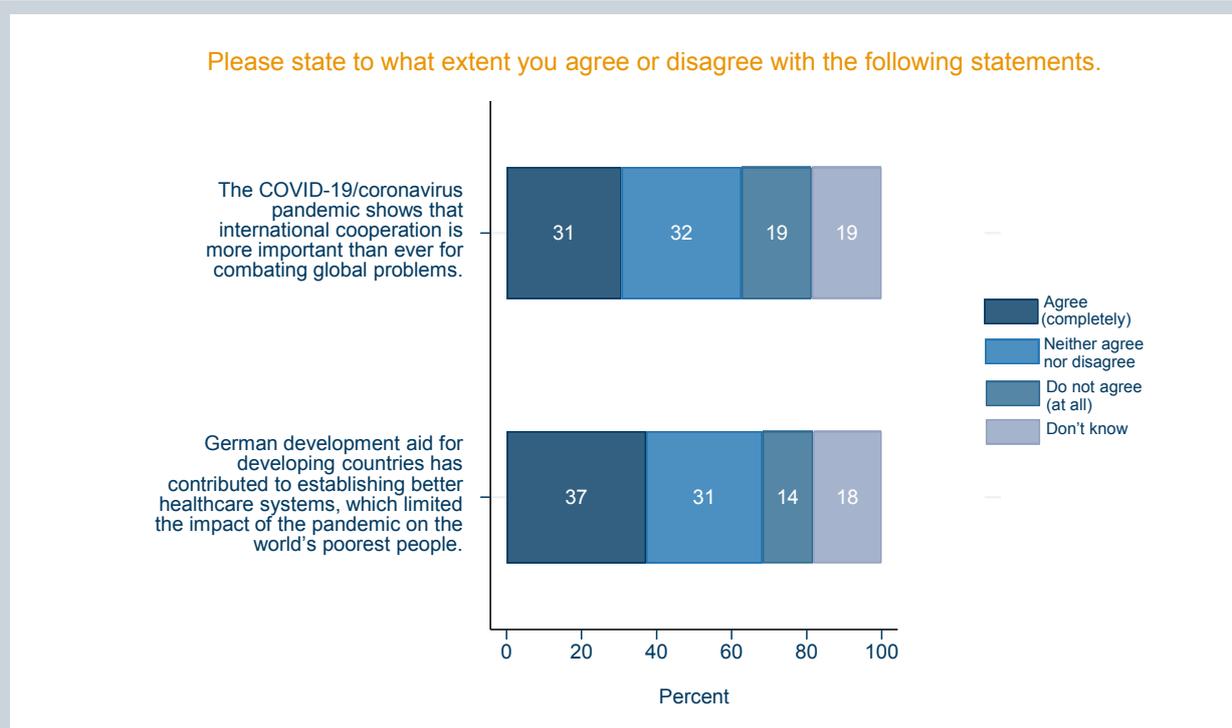
<sup>6</sup> The surveys in ZDF’s Politbarometer also show that the general public considered the coronavirus pandemic as the most important political problem in Germany, particularly during the first lockdown phase from mid-March 2020 (Politbarometer, 2020). In the surveys between the end of March and mid-May, the proportion of people who mentioned coronavirus was around 80 percent.

**Figure 1** Most important social and political topics over time



Source: own visualisation; data basis: DEL surveys September/October 2019 (N = 6,004; panel survey), January 2020 (N = 1,141), June 2020 (N = 1,025). Percentage values under 5 are not shown for the sake of clarity.

However, when directly asked about measures to control the pandemic, more than 30 percent of the participants in a DEL survey in July 2020 agreed with the following statement: “The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that international cooperation to tackle global problems is more important than ever” (see Figure 2). 37 percent of those surveyed believe that development cooperation has a preventive effect and agree with the statement “German development aid for developing countries has contributed to establishing better healthcare systems, which has limited the effects of the pandemic on the world’s poorest people”. Data from the COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring (COSMO), in which DEval acts as a partner for the development policy topic area, also indicates that Germany’s population generally supports development cooperation measures to control the pandemic, but has reservations when it comes to debt relief, economic aid and support for refugees in developing countries (Schneider et al., 2020).

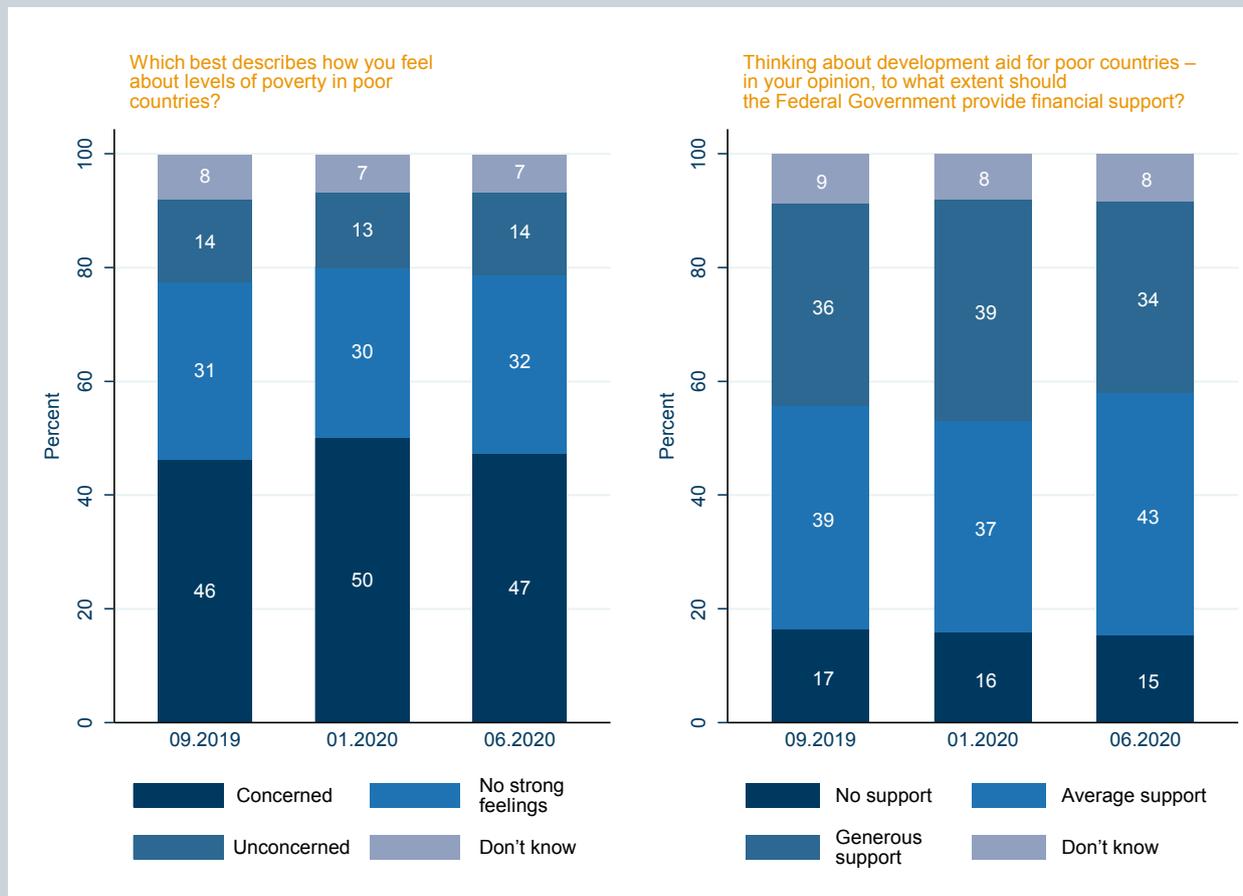
**Figure 2** Public opinion on development cooperation during the coronavirus pandemic

Source: own visualisation; data basis: DEL survey July 2020 (N = 2,012).

Looking at attitudes that are generally relevant to development cooperation, it is clear that the proportion of respondents who feel concerned about the poverty level in developing countries has not changed significantly across the three surveys (see Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> There is a slightly negative trend regarding support for state development cooperation. The proportion of people who state that the Federal Government should provide generous support for developing countries has declined slightly – from 39 percent to 34 percent. At the same time, the proportion of people who advocate a medium amount of support has increased by 6 percentage points while the proportion of people who advocate “no support” has remained constant. The proportion of people who are sceptical towards development cooperation and do not want any state funds to be spent on developing countries is thus still low. Current investigations also show that, at least in Germany, health and economic concerns do not necessarily go hand in hand with less support for development cooperation (Schneider et al., 2020, 2021). On the contrary, there is a positive, although weak, relationship between health concerns and support for increased development cooperation measures during the pandemic (Schneider et al., 2020).

<sup>7</sup> The wording of this question is the standard wording for determining support for development cooperation that is used, for example, in DEL surveys. However, the wording of the response categories (“very generous”) does not correspond to many development cooperation stakeholders’ current self-image and allows an interpretation in the sense of “acting as a patron” rather than “well thought out spending of tax revenues” or “partnership-based cooperation”. This possible interpretation of the response category should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

**Figure 3** Concern about the situation in developing countries and support for state development cooperation



Source: own visualisation; data basis: DEL surveys September/October 2019 (N = 6,004; panel survey), January 2020 (N = 1,141), June 2020 (N = 1,025).

Overall, the public views international cooperation as an important instrument for controlling the coronavirus pandemic and believes it has a preventative effect on the impact of the pandemic through expansion of healthcare systems. In addition, general support for development cooperation is declining slightly during the coronavirus pandemic, but to date this has not resulted in a clear rejection of development cooperation. It is therefore important to continue monitoring public opinion on this topic, keep communicating existing needs in developing countries and corresponding development cooperation measures against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, and encourage discussion about the relevance of development cooperation in managing this global challenge – which a large proportion of the population agrees with (see Schneider et al., 2020).

## 2. WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE MEDIA?

**Box 2** Key results in Section 2

- The proportion of content relating to development policy is low in all the investigated media (time period for TV and print media: 2012 – 2020; Twitter: May 2019 – June 2020).
- During the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, there was less reporting about development policy and development cooperation on average than in the other examined time periods.
- In terms of topics, reporting in all three of the examined media formats frequently relates to flight and migration. TV news and print media also often report on war and conflict.
- During the period under investigation, content relating to development policy was continuously shared on Twitter. However, posts with controversial or scandalous content received greater attention.
- Reporting during the period under review featured governmental and international stakeholders (e.g. European Union, United Nations) more prominently than civil-society stakeholders.
- In national newspapers, the tone of reporting was neutral to positive during the period under investigation. Reports in regional newspapers and communication on Twitter is slightly more positive.

The majority of people in Germany rarely come into personal contact with the specific implementation and impact of development policy and development cooperation in their day-to-day lives – as is the case with foreign policy topics in general (for more on this see Maurer and Reinemann, 2006, p. 144-145). This does not mean that it is not possible to experience development policy topics in daily life, for example by consuming fairly traded and sustainably produced goods. However, specific development policy measures and their effects are not part of most citizens' day-to-day lives. Consequently, development policy differs greatly from policy fields like social affairs, health or education, where citizens can personally experience the effects in their daily lives (for more on this see Wimmer, 2003, p. 339). The general public's picture of development policy and development cooperation is accordingly diffuse and the state of knowledge is generally low (among others Milner and Tingley, 2013; Riddell, 2007, Chapter 7; Schneider and Gleser, 2018; Scotto et al., 2017). In light of this, the media's representation of development policy and development cooperation plays a key role in providing information and shaping political opinions (e.g. Baum and Potter, 2008; Hoewe and Peacock, 2020).

To date, few studies have examined the media's presence in development policy and development cooperation. Fohrbeck et al. (1983), Bieth (2012) and Brunswick Consulting (2018) examined reporting in German media using various methods and came to the unanimous conclusion that development policy and development cooperation are niche topics that are of little significance in general reporting.<sup>8</sup> For 1982-83, Fohrbeck et al. (1983) report that the proportion of reporting in national and regional newspapers and the "Tagesschau" TV news programme was 0.2 to 0.4 percent. According to interviews with journalists and editors, the selection criterion or thematic link for reporting often was catastrophes, crises and conflicts, but climate and security policy interests, (inter)national development agendas, conferences also played a role (Bieth, 2012). These interviews emphasised the complexity and long-term nature of development policy and its measures as a challenge to media communication. The interviewed journalists and editors also saw it as problematic that reporting is often personalised and based on example cases, while structural issues in the developing countries and in development cooperation receive too little attention.

There are even fewer analyses of development policy content in social media such as Facebook and Twitter.<sup>9</sup> However, as the DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2019 (Schneider et al., 2019) showed, social

<sup>8</sup> Fohrbeck et al. (1983) and the Brunswick Institute (2018) use qualitative and quantitative content analyses, Bieth (2012) uses interviews with journalists and editors from various media.

<sup>9</sup> As a consequence of the events surrounding the data analysis company Cambridge Analytica (see Hu, 2020 for information on this), there are now stricter regulations that restrict analyses of social media and their content. For this reason, we had to forego an analysis of content relating to development policy on Facebook for this report.

media also has a certain relevance as a source of information and news, especially for younger people. A comparison of traditional and new media reveals that more development policy discussion takes place in social media and, there, increasingly on Twitter (Brunswick, 2018), where it is primarily dominated by stakeholders from politics and civil-society organisations.<sup>10</sup>

Current figures on the absolute and relative proportions of development policy and development cooperation-related reporting are not available. The same applies to observations across a longer period of time. This section aims to close this gap by examining what information on the topics of development policy and development cooperation the general public can access via common media channels. The focus of interest is therefore on the following aspects:

1. How often does German media report on development policy and development cooperation?
2. Which topics does reporting link to?
3. Which state and civil-society actors are mentioned in reports?
4. How did reporting change between 2012 and 2020?

The focus is on TV news broadcasts, national and regional newspapers and social media, for example Twitter. These are the key sources of information for news on global politics (see Schneider et al., 2019 for more on this).<sup>11</sup> Table 2 contains details on the data basis used. Details on methodology are documented in the online Annex.

### Box 3 Data basis for the analysis of TV news

Data from the media analysis institute Media Tenor was used for the analyses of the content of television news from the public broadcasters (ARD “Tagesschau”, ARD “Tagesthemen”, ZDF “heute”, ZDF “heute-journal”). In this database, trained coders analyse programmes based on a specified coding plan. The coding units are statements relating to stakeholders. The stakeholders may be countries, people, organisations or institutions. The analyses included 17,656 coded stakeholder-related statements and 1,859 reports from the period between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2020 that dealt with either the topic of development policy and development cooperation or humanitarian aid or were additionally addressed in contributions relating to development policy and development cooperation.

<sup>10</sup> Added to this is the general finding that African, Asian and Latin American countries – and therefore often developing countries – are mentioned significantly less frequently in foreign affairs reporting than EU member states, other European countries and North America (Maurer and Reinemann, 2006, p. 148-149; Wimmer, 2003). Again, crises, conflicts, natural disasters and political-social problems (including corruption and human rights violations) stand out as central topics with negative connotations, although positive frames such as progress and development or economic growth also exist (Maurer and Reinemann, 2006, p. 150–151; Nothias, 2018; Wimmer, 2003). However, Scott (2015) points out that in analyses of the representation of Africa in British and US media, often only very few, specific media, certain countries or tightly defined time periods and events are examined. Against this backdrop, generalising conclusions that reporting about Africa is primarily negative and takes place in the context of crises may be inadmissible.

<sup>11</sup> Other social media, radio channels and news websites cannot be considered in this analysis due to a lack of systematic access to the data.

**Table 2** Data basis of the media analysis for various media types

	TV news	Print media	Social media
Data source	Media Tenor	LexisNexis	Meltwater
Analysed media	ARD “Tagesschau” (8 p.m.), ARD “Tagesthemen”, ZDF “heute” (7 p.m.), ZDF “heute-journal”	National: “Bild”, “Die Welt”, “Die Zeit”, “FAZ”, “Süddeutsche Zeitung”, “taz” Regional: “Nordwest-Zeitung”, “Nürnberger Nachrichten”, “Rheinische Post”, “Sächsische Zeitung”	Twitter
Time period	1 January 2012–30 June 2020	1 January 2012–30 June 2020	1 May 2019–30 June 2020
Observation unit	Text passages (statements relating to stakeholders)	Article	Post (tweet)
Methodology	Quantitative content analysis by trained coders	Search-term based identification of the relevant articles/quantitative analysis using a dictionary and <i>named-entity recognition</i> <sup>12</sup>	Search-term based identification of the relevant contributions/quantitative analysis using a dictionary
Number of observations	1,859 reports, 17,656 coded statements relating to actors	29,463 articles	225,517 tweets <sup>13</sup>

Source: own table. The regional newspapers were included in the analysis based on their circulation volume and availability in the database. For social media, the legal framework conditions restrict the media that can be analysed meaningfully as well as the available time period. The search-term supported identification uses an identical list of search terms for newspapers and Twitter that includes key phrases such as “development policy” or “development aid” as well as the names of different state and civil-society organisations. Details on the methodology can be found in Section 2 of the online Annex.

<sup>12</sup> This is an automated procedure for detecting the names of persons, organisations, institutions and brands in large text volumes. The procedure also considers different spellings and abbreviations.

<sup>13</sup> Please note that users on Twitter can remove tweets retroactively and the messaging service can retroactively delete tweets or entire accounts, for example if they violate the terms of use. It therefore cannot be ruled out that the number of identified tweets relating to the topic may change if queried again.

## 2.1 How frequently are development policy, development cooperation and humanitarian aid mentioned?

To determine how relevant development policy is in media reporting, it is first necessary to analyse how frequently the media reports on the topic of development policy. This analysis assesses how often the general public has the opportunity to come into contact with development policy content and information via the media.

### 2.1.1 Development cooperation is rarely addressed in news broadcasts on public TV stations

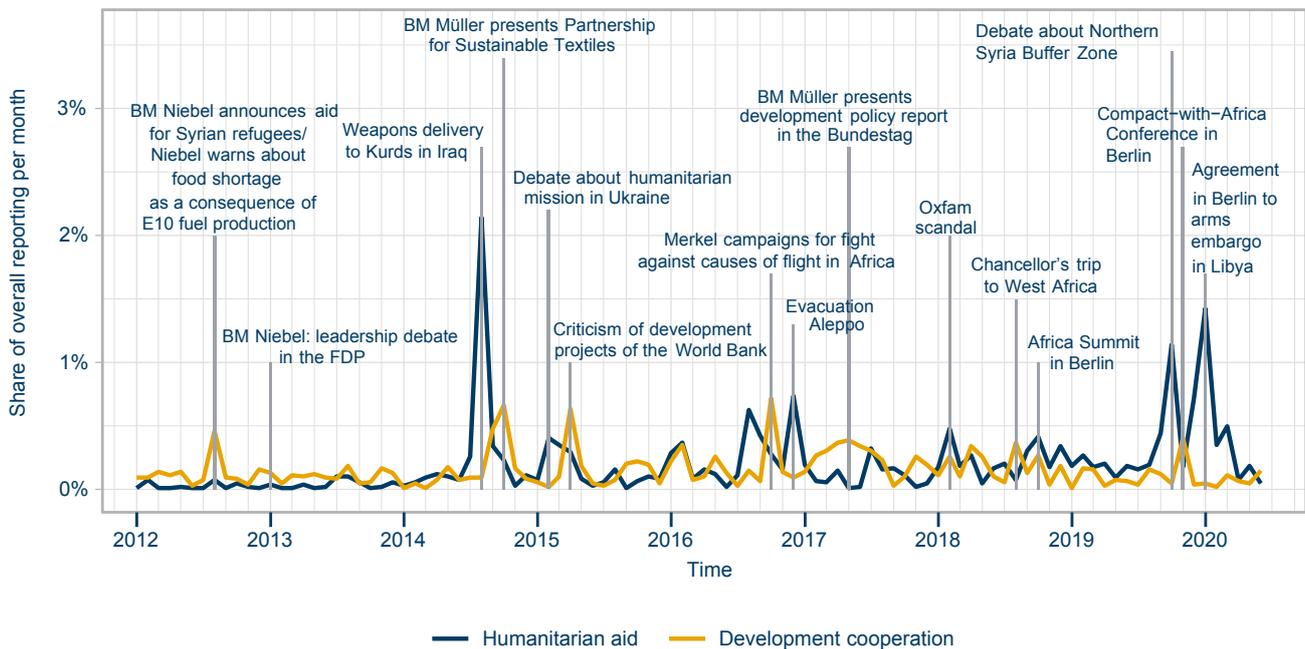
Figure 4 shows the frequency of reporting about development cooperation and humanitarian aid in the most important news broadcasts on public TV stations, which are the main source of news for the majority of the population (Schneider et al., 2019, p. 11). This illustrates that, in the period under review (January 2012 to June 2020), development cooperation-related news – represented by the yellow line – made up only a small portion of the overall monthly reporting. The proportional values are generally in the range between 0.0 and 0.5 percent, only exceeding 0.5 percent in rare cases. During the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic from February/March 2020, the proportions were also low, although there was already discussion at this point regarding to what extent the consequences of the pandemic could affect developing countries particularly badly (e.g. ILO, 2020; WHO, 2020). However, the continuing low relevance of the topic area can most likely be attributed to the fact that an even greater than usual share of reporting focused on Germany, other (neighbouring) European countries and the USA (see also Maurer and Reinemann, 2006, p. 147-148 regarding prioritisation in foreign affairs reporting). Another probable factor is the hindrance of journalism due to travel restrictions.

Greater fluctuations in the time series generally correspond to Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel addressing development policy topics. Furthermore, slightly greater fluctuations in the frequency of development cooperation-related reporting can increasingly be seen since around mid-2014, which shows that development cooperation receives more attention at times. A general increase in TV news paying attention to development cooperation cannot be seen over the past few years.

A similar overall pattern can be seen for humanitarian aid (blue line). The proportional values generally move between 0.0 and around 0.5 percent. During severe humanitarian crises, for example in the course of specific escalations in the military conflict in Syria, the proportional value at the end of 2019 rose to above one percent. In the case of discussions regarding arms deliveries to Kurds in Northern Iraq, the proportion even exceeded two percent. The results show that, compared with reporting about “traditional” development cooperation, humanitarian aid sporadically has the potential to appear prominently in the media.

Aggregating the individual coded statements on contributions reveals that on average around ten items per month in public broadcasters’ TV news address development cooperation in some form; the minimum was one item, the maximum 42 items per month. With a total of approximately 1,750 items in the four analysed news broadcast programmes throughout the entire investigation period, this results in an average proportion of 0.6 percent of all items.<sup>14</sup> For humanitarian aid, the average is 13 items per months, with a minimum of one item and a maximum of 126 items. This corresponds to an average proportion of 0.7 percent of all items in a month.

<sup>14</sup> The comparison value was determined based on figures for items in the programmes “Tagesschau”, “Tagesthemen”, “heute” and “heute journal” from the info monitor of the magazine “Media Perspektiven” (Krüger, 2013, 2014, 2015; Krüger and Zapf-Schramm, 2016, 2017, 2018). The figures also include reports on weather and sport.

**Figure 4** Frequency of reporting about development cooperation and humanitarian aid in TV news

Source: Own visualisation; data basis: Media Tenor data for 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the proportions of the topics “development cooperation” (yellow) and “humanitarian aid” (blue) in the overall monthly reporting on “Tagesschau”, “Tagesthemen”, “heute” and “heute-journal”. In order to calculate the proportional values, the coded statements for the respective topic areas were compared with the total number of coded statements per month. BM = Bundesminister (Federal Minister).

Overall, it can be concluded that neither development cooperation nor humanitarian aid is featured particularly prominently in TV news broadcasts, especially considering that all the programmes analysed are generally broadcast on every day of the year. This is consistent with an older study, which revealed a 0.3 percent share of development policy reporting in the ARD “Tagesschau” in June 1982 (Fohrbeck et al., 1983, p. 10).

### 2.1.2 Articles relating to development cooperation are also comparatively rare in print media

Figure 5 shows that, in the period from 2012 to 2020, the examined national newspapers generally published an average of between 150 and 200 articles that address the topic area of development policy and development cooperation in any form (yellow line).<sup>15</sup> In the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic, the time series reaches a minimum number of reports. Again, it is likely that an increased focus on Germany, Europe and the United States as well as travel restrictions for journalists played a role. Upward swings in the time series can be seen particularly in months in which the relevant development policy events took place – for example the disclosure of a joint initiative to combat malnutrition at the end of 2013, the announcement of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles in autumn 2014 and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. At the time of these events, the number of articles is around 250. Taking into consideration the fact that, with the exception the weekly newspaper “Die Zeit”, all national newspapers are published on at least six days per week, the numbers must be rated as low.

<sup>15</sup> At this point, it should be noted that the fluctuations in the time series are significantly larger due to the absolute numbers compared with the proportional values for TV news in Figure 5. For technical reasons, it is not possible to determine the total of all articles in the analysed newspapers per month due to limited access to the data.

#### Box 4 Data basis for the analysis of print media

The basis for the analysis of print media was the LexisNexis press database, which provides access to the complete text of numerous German-language newspapers and magazines. From this database, the researchers selected the most important national daily newspapers and the four German regional newspapers with the highest circulations and, using a search term list containing both key phrases such as “development policy”, “development aid” and “development cooperation” and organisation names such as “Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)” or “Welthungerhilfe”, identified relevant articles (29,463 articles in the period between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2020).<sup>16</sup> On the basis of this data, the number of articles over time was plotted, the topics and actors (people, organisations) mentioned in the articles were identified using automated content analyses, and the tonality (known as the sentiment) was determined. In some articles, development cooperation is also addressed together with humanitarian aid. In addition, the NGOs in the search term list are often active in both development cooperation and humanitarian aid. It is therefore not possible to precisely differentiate between development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

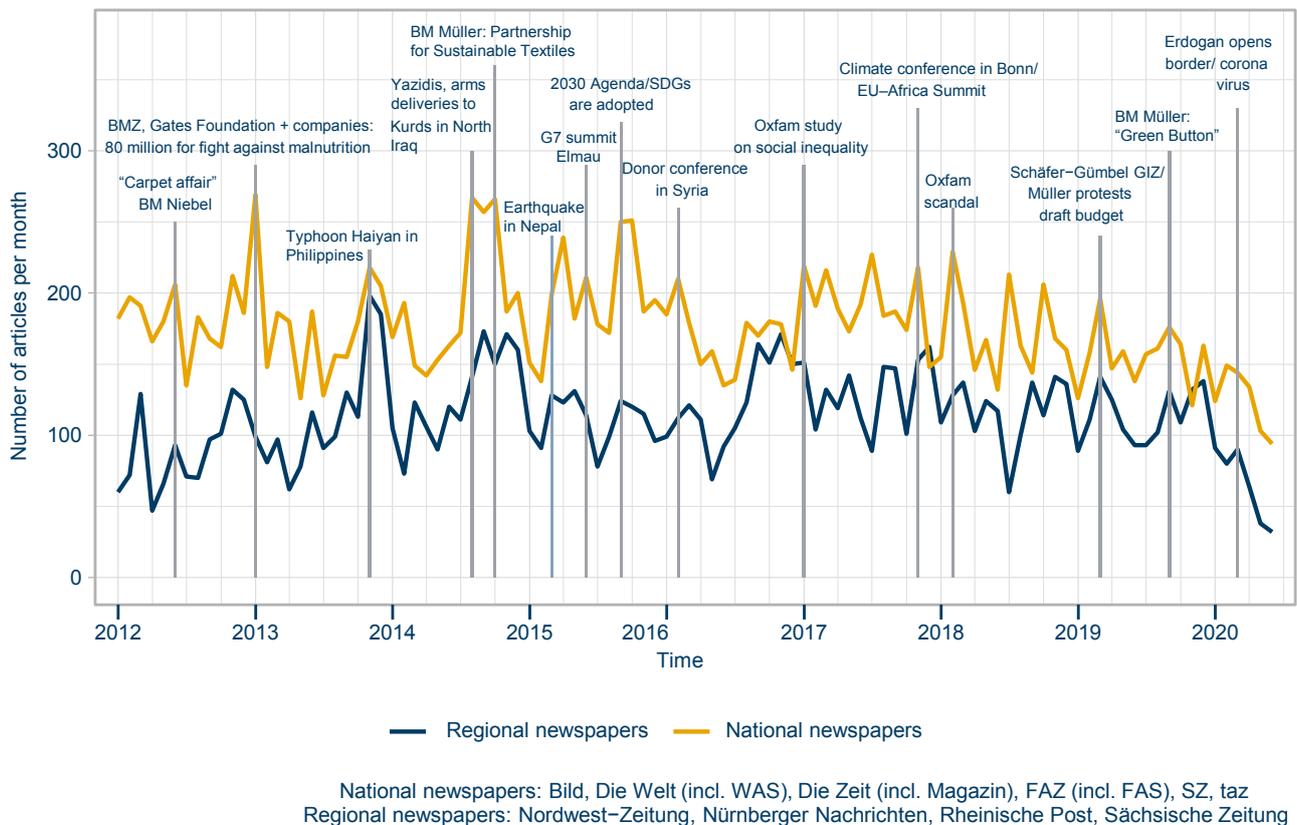
For the four regional newspapers – represented by the blue line in Figure 5 – it is possible to see a broadly similar picture over time as for the national newspapers. The number of articles per month varies on average between 75 and 125; in some months the time series fluctuate upwards or downwards. In the regional newspapers, too, the number of development cooperation-related items declines to a minimum in the first few months of the pandemic from February/March 2020.<sup>17</sup>

By way of illustration of the article figures: In March 2020 – the month in which the Federal Government restricted public life with its coronavirus measures – the examined national newspapers published 144 articles relating to the topic of development policy and development cooperation out of a total of 20,900. The regional newspapers published 90 articles on development policy and development cooperation and a total of around 34,900. This corresponds to 0.7 percent and 0.3 percent respectively of the overall reporting.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The online offers of the examined newspapers were not included.

<sup>17</sup> The interpretation that national newspapers publish articles relating to development policy and development cooperation more frequently than regional newspapers is not permissible as only the four regional newspapers with the highest circulations were chosen for the analysis.

<sup>18</sup> To calculate the proportions, the researchers used the LexisNexis database to identify all articles for the month of March 2020 in the analysed newspapers that contained the most frequently used words in German: “die”, “der” and “und”.

**Figure 5** Frequency of reporting about development cooperation and humanitarian aid in print media

Source: own visualisation; data basis: search term-supported query of the LexisNexis press database for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the absolute number of articles in which at least one of the search terms was found. BM = Bundesminister (Federal Minister). For details on the print media included, the time periods available and the search terms used, see Section 2.1 in the online Annex.

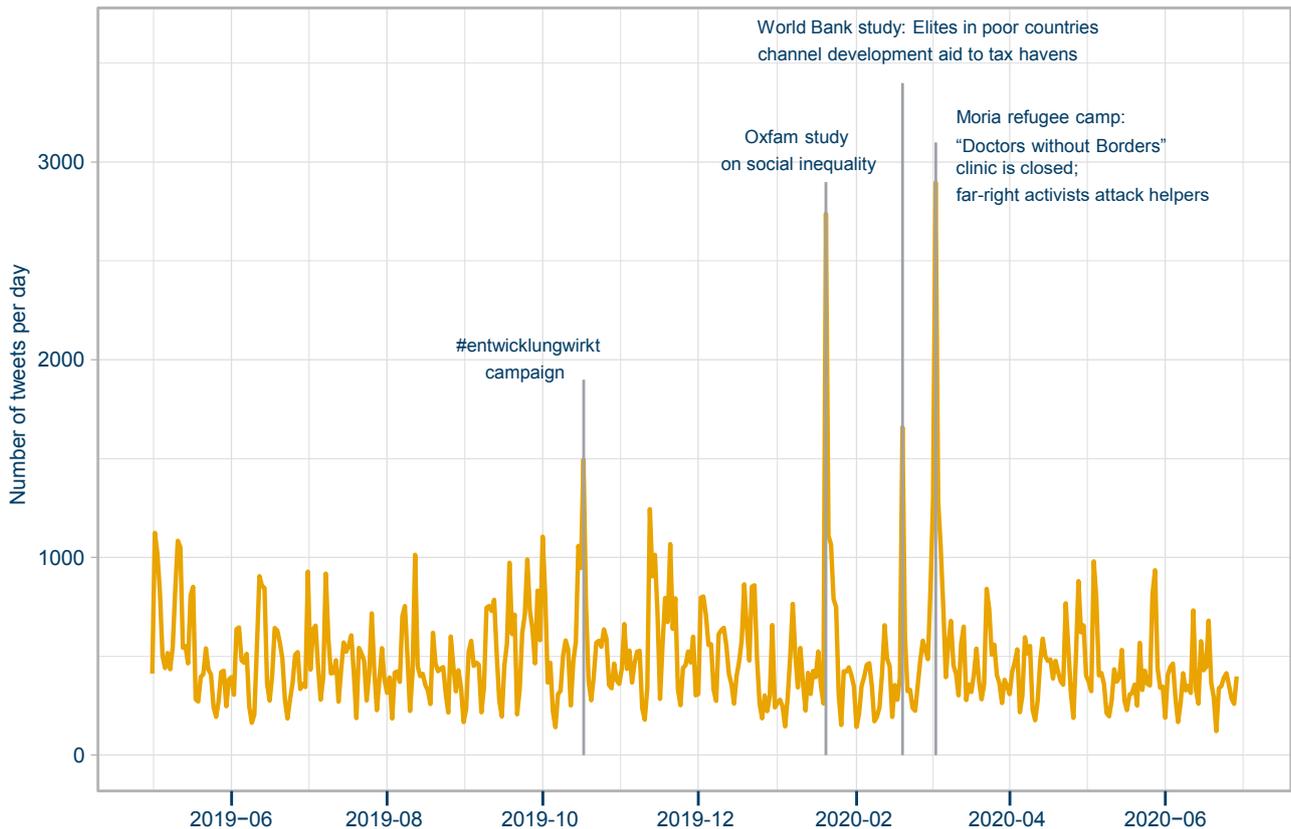
“Süddeutsche Zeitung” (SZ) reports particularly frequently on “development policy and development cooperation”, with an average of 57.7 articles per month, followed by “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” (FAZ) with an average of 40.5 articles and the “Tageszeitung” (taz) with 35.1 articles. By contrast, “Bild” publishes on average just ten articles per month relating to the topic area.

### 2.1.3 On Twitter: proportionally lower number of development cooperation-related items with intermittent fluctuations

Social media represents a key source of information for young adults and adolescents in particular (see, e.g. Schneider et al., 2019). The user structures of social network platforms, and Twitter in particular, deviate significantly from the structure of the overall population (Hölig, 2018; for other countries Barberá and Rivero, 2015; Mellon and Prosser, 2017). Although Twitter is not representative of the population, the platform is relevant for public discussions. This is evident from the fact that print media and TV discuss selected tweets and, vice versa, tweets address the reporting in such media (for information on this see, e.g., Jungherr, 2019). Consequently, analysing Twitter allows us to examine how people communicate about development policy topics on social media. It also allows us to determine starting points for development policy communication, as development policy content can be conveyed more easily via social media than traditional media.

Around 490 tweets in German are posted to Twitter per day that either relate to development policy and development cooperation or originate from actors in this field.<sup>19</sup> As Figure 6 shows, this value varies considerably over time; the minimum during the period under examination was 122 tweets, the maximum was 2,897. No systematic change in the time series compared with the previous time period can be found for the first months of the coronavirus pandemic starting in February/March 2020. Given that approximately 500,000 tweets in German from Germany are published on an average day, the observed numbers must be classified as low.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 6** Frequency of tweets relating to development cooperation and humanitarian aid over time



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The number of tweets per day is shown.

The highest upswing can be seen in connection with the situation at the refugee camp in Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos at the beginning of 2020, followed by the Oxfam report on social inequality from early 2020 (Coffey et al., 2020). Other significant upswings can be seen for the launch of the “Entwicklung wirkt” (development is effective) campaign in October 2019 as well as reporting on a World Bank study (Andersen et al., 2020) in February 2020, which addressed the issue of elites in the partner countries transferring development cooperation funds to tax havens.

<sup>19</sup> These are tweets by public figures, organisations and private individuals. The reach of the tweets is not considered in this analysis.

<sup>20</sup> To determine this, the researchers used the Meltwater platform to call the entire volume of tweets in German and by accounts from Germany for random days in the 2020 calendar year. The number was between 400,000 and 600,000 tweets.

**Box 5 Data basis for the analysis of Twitter posts (“tweets”)**

The starting point for analysing Twitter is the media monitoring platform Meltwater, which provides an interface to Twitter. Via this interface, the researchers used the same search term list as for the print media, supplemented with the Twitter accounts of the organisations contained in the list (including, for instance, BMZ, GIZ, Welthungerhilfe and Oxfam) to identify relevant contributions (“tweets”) (225,517 tweets within the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020). The number of tweets over time was presented in the same way as the analysis of the print media. In addition, the topics were identified using automated content analyses (dictionaries) and the tonality (sentiment) measured. Added to this are evaluations of the activity of individual Twitter accounts as well as the user engagement resulting from their content (for example retweets, comments or “likes”). For tweets, too, it should be noted that development cooperation and humanitarian aid can be addressed simultaneously and, accordingly, no clear differentiation is possible.

**2.1.4 Comparison of frequency**

Overall, it can be concluded for all the examined items on TV news broadcasts, daily and weekly newspapers and Twitter that the topic of development policy and development cooperation receives little attention in relation to the total number of items. At the same time, it should be noted that social networks offer the possibility to reach a broader audience with development policy information or campaigns. To date this can only partially be seen in the data for Twitter; however, the upswings in winter 2019 and spring 2020 indicate that there is great potential (see Zhao et al., 2011 for more on this).

The topics that temporarily draw more attention to development cooperation are also the same across all three media types. However, it is remarkable that, on Twitter, individual events as well as campaigns and studies have the potential to achieve greater reach for a short time. This can be seen from the strong peaks in the data.

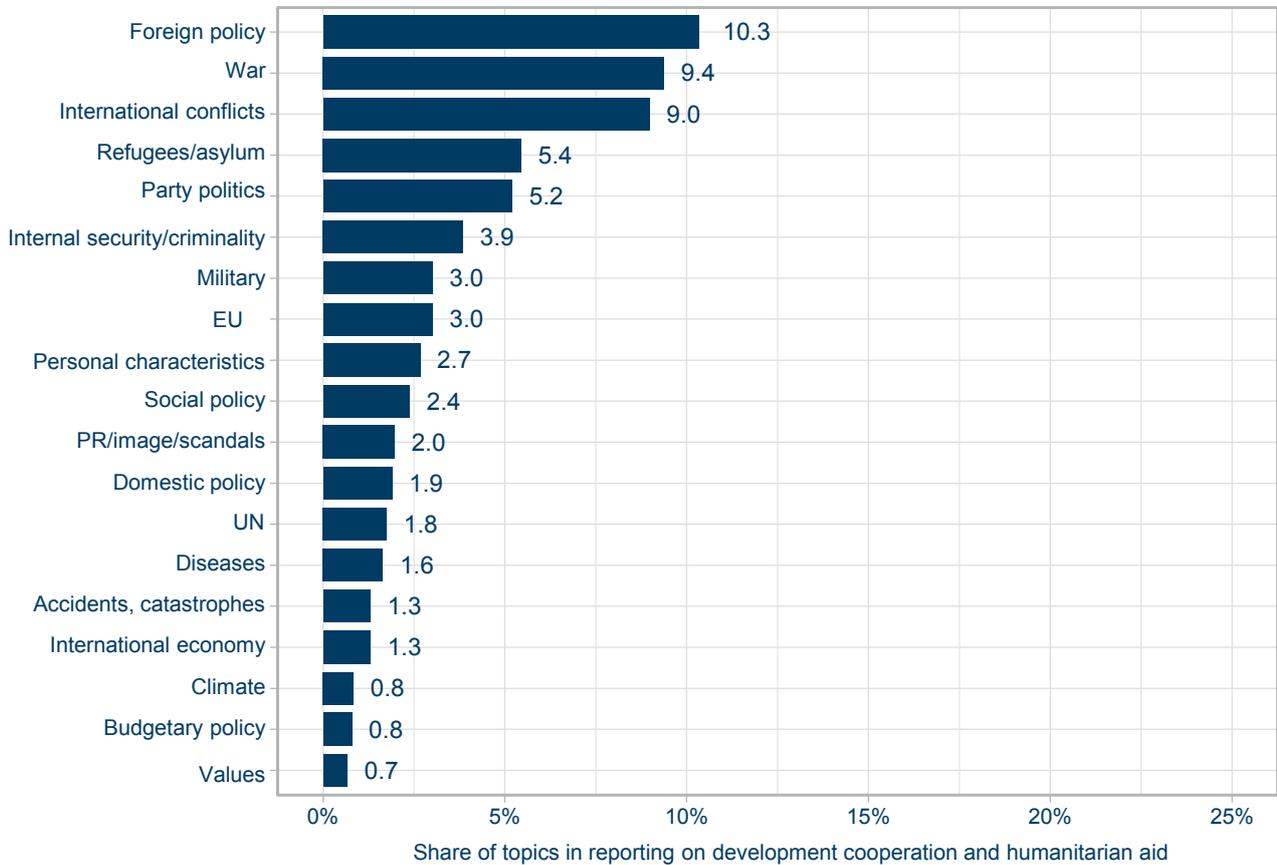
The analysis of the TV reporting shows that the media pays less attention to development cooperation than to humanitarian aid. At the same time, it must be emphasised that attention to humanitarian aid is predominantly based on negative events such as military conflicts.

**2.2 Which topics does the reporting link to?**

As the results so far show, development cooperation as such gets little attention in the media. This gives rise to the question of which topics provide potential reference points. In order to answer this question, the study investigated which other topics are reported on in connection with development policy and development cooperation. With regard to the topic of “global poverty”, which is closely interwoven with development policy and development cooperation, the Opinion Monitor 2019 showed that the German public was primarily aware of this in the context of wars and conflicts, flight and migration, climate change and natural disasters (Schneider et al., 2019, p. 36).

### 2.2.1 TV news: War and conflict and flight and migration as key related topics

**Figure 7** Related topics in TV news broadcasts that address development cooperation or humanitarian aid



Source: Own visualisation; data basis: Media Tenor data for 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the additional topics mentioned in items on development cooperation/humanitarian aid. Due to the coding of actor-related statements, an item may mention several topics. It is not possible to precisely separate development cooperation and humanitarian aid in this case. The data provider developed the category system.

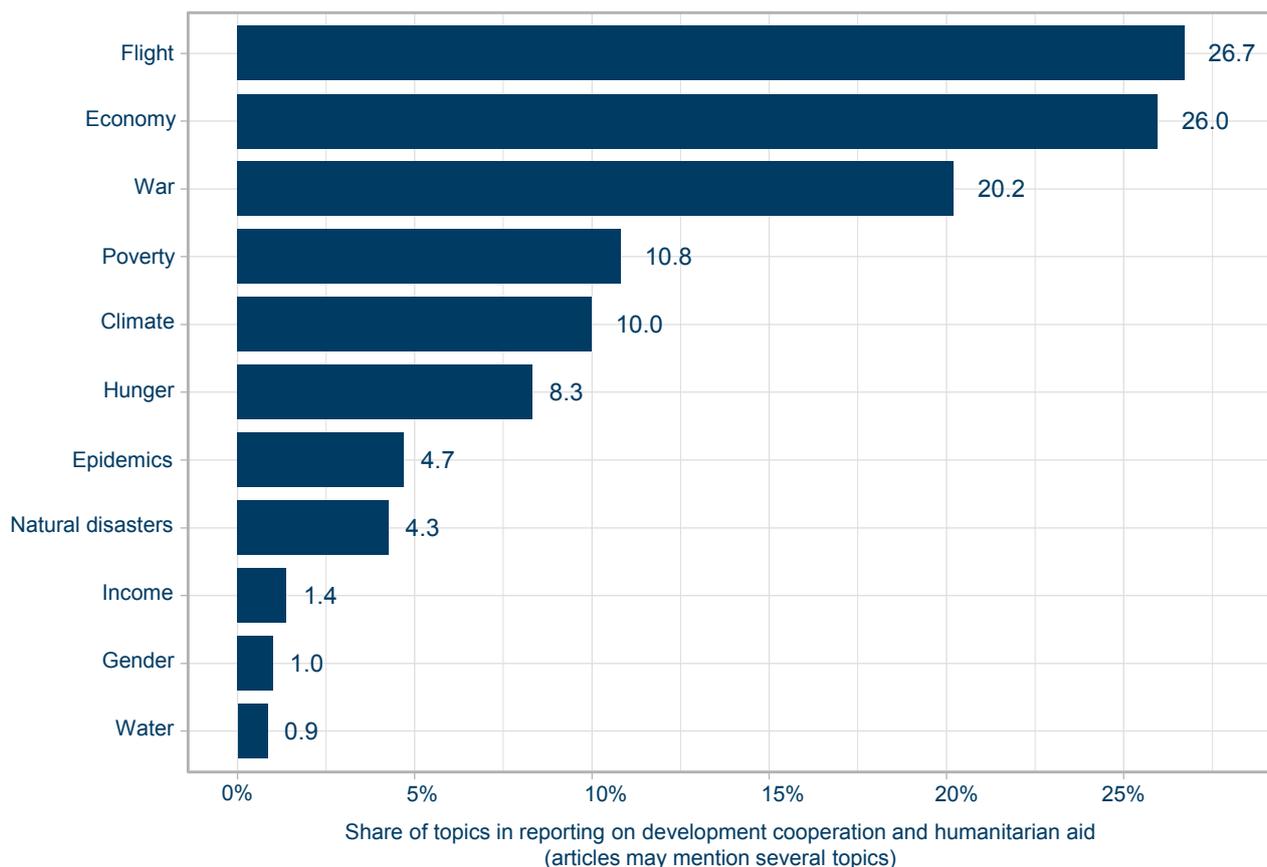
For TV news, Figure 7 shows that in each case around nine percent of items that mention development policy/development cooperation or humanitarian aid also address war or international conflicts; some five percent address flight/asylum. Other topics are internal security/criminality at four percent and military with a share of around three percent. Diseases and climate are addressed much more rarely at one percent and 0.5 percent respectively.

Another thing that stands out in Figure 7 is that in TV news broadcasts just over five percent of the coded news items discusses party politics. This can be attributed to the fact that representatives of different parties can have their say on development policy topics (for example when discussing the budget for development cooperation within the federal budget). The relatively high share for the category “foreign policy” at around ten percent primarily results from the fact that items often discuss Germany’s relationship with a certain country or the relationship between countries.

### 2.2.2 Print media: Flight, economy and war are key related topics

The picture for the examined print media is similar – reporting links to comparable topics to those addressed in TV news broadcasts. In the analysed print media, the dominant topics as reference points to development cooperation during the examined period between 2012 and 2020 were “flight” and “economy” with shares of around 27 percent and 26 percent respectively (Figure 8). Other frequent topics were “war” with some 20 percent, “poverty” (11%), “climate” (10%) and “hunger” (8%). Around five percent of reporting was in the context of epidemics and four percent of reports related to natural disasters. The remaining topics did not play an important role.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 8** Related topics in print articles that address development cooperation or humanitarian aid



Source: own visualisation; data basis: search term-supported query of the LexisNexis press database for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The topic categories were coded using separate dictionaries. If a matching term was found in an article, the article was assigned to the topic in question. Consequently, items can be assigned to multiple topics. For details on the print media included, the time periods available for them and the dictionaries used, see Section 2 in the online Annex.

<sup>21</sup> However, both for print media and Twitter it is important to note that individual articles or tweets can be assigned to multiple topics. For example, development cooperation-related reporting may have flight or war as the main topic and create cross references to sub-topics such as poverty or the economy. The methodology used does not allow weighting of the various topics within an article. The automated procedure simply checks whether certain terms are mentioned in an item. This also explains the higher level of percentage values in the analysis of print media compared with the analysis of TV news. In the latter, only a limited number of the topics mentioned in an item are coded.

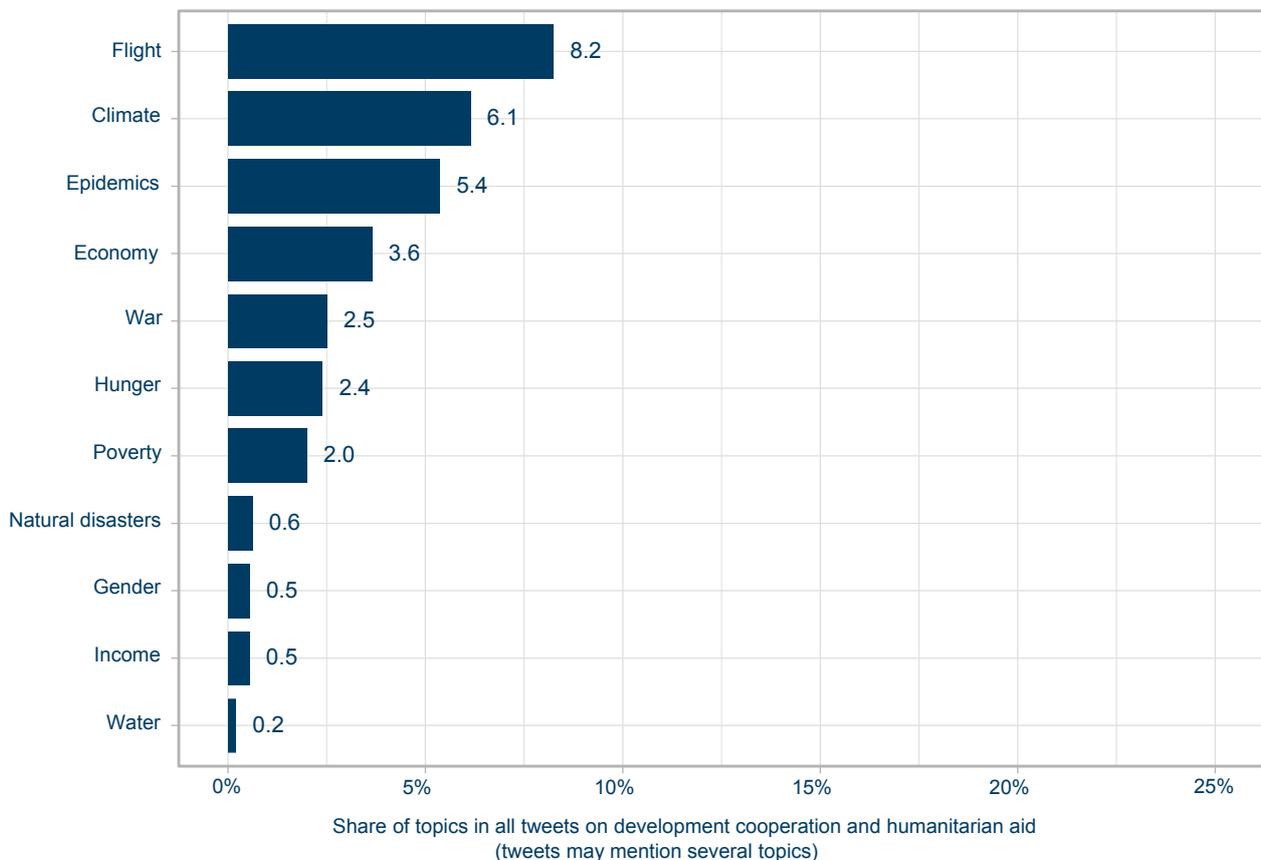
In the case of reporting in print media, too, the data indicates that the public frequently has access to development cooperation-related information in the context of crises or conflicts. Think of the situation in Syria and Iraq, for example, and the associated European “refugee crisis” of 2015. This finding is in line with older content analyses (Fohrbeck et al., 1983) and results from interviews with journalists and editors (Bieth, 2012).

### 2.2.3 Twitter: Frequent related topics are flight, climate and epidemics

Posts on Twitter show a slightly different picture. However, it should be noted that the time period available for this analysis is restricted to May 2019 to June 2020. It is also important to consider that Twitter works with particularly short contributions (a maximum of 280 characters) that address development policy topics without explicitly mentioning keywords or that contain links and multimedia content (images, videos and animations). Due to the methodology, these cannot be assigned to any topic.

In the period from May 2019 to June 2020, the most frequently mentioned topic on Twitter relating to development policy was “flight” at around eight percent (Figure 9). Other prominent development policy-related topics in tweets were “climate” (6%), “epidemics” (5.5%) and “economy” (approx. 3.5%). The topic of “war”, which was prominently represented in the other two media types, receives little attention on Twitter (2.5%). “Hunger” and “poverty” – two central topics in development cooperation – were each mentioned in only around two percent of tweets relating to development cooperation. At the bottom end of the ranking are “natural disasters”, “gender”, “income” and “water”, all of which have shares far below one percent.

**Figure 9** Related topics in tweets that address development cooperation or humanitarian aid



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The topic categories were coded using separate dictionaries. If a matching term was found in a tweet, the tweet was assigned to the topic in question. Tweets can be assigned to multiple topics or may not address any of the specified topics. Details on the dictionaries used can be found in Section 2.2 of the online Annex.

The strong dominance of “flight” compared with the other topics can be explained by an increase in tweets in relation to the events in the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos at the beginning of 2020. During this period, governmental and civil-society development cooperation actors as well as political figures and actors from the (national) conservative and right-wing populist spectrum actively discussed the topic of flight on Twitter. The high share of development cooperation-related tweets that mention epidemics can be traced to the start of the coronavirus pandemic at the beginning of 2020.

#### 2.2.4 Comparison of related topics

Overall, it can be established that, across all three of the examined media types, development policy and development cooperation are primarily discussed in connection with flight and migration. On TV news and in print media, they also come up in relation to war and conflict. By contrast, war and conflict are mentioned much less frequently on Twitter. Reporting in connection with the global challenge of climate change is more common in print media and on Twitter. The same applies to reporting relating to epidemics. However, it is important to note the much shorter examination period of the Twitter analysis, which results in the topic of “epidemics” featuring proportionally more strongly in the overall view thanks to the coronavirus pandemic becoming a major topic from March 2020 at the latest.

### 2.3 Which actors are represented in reporting?

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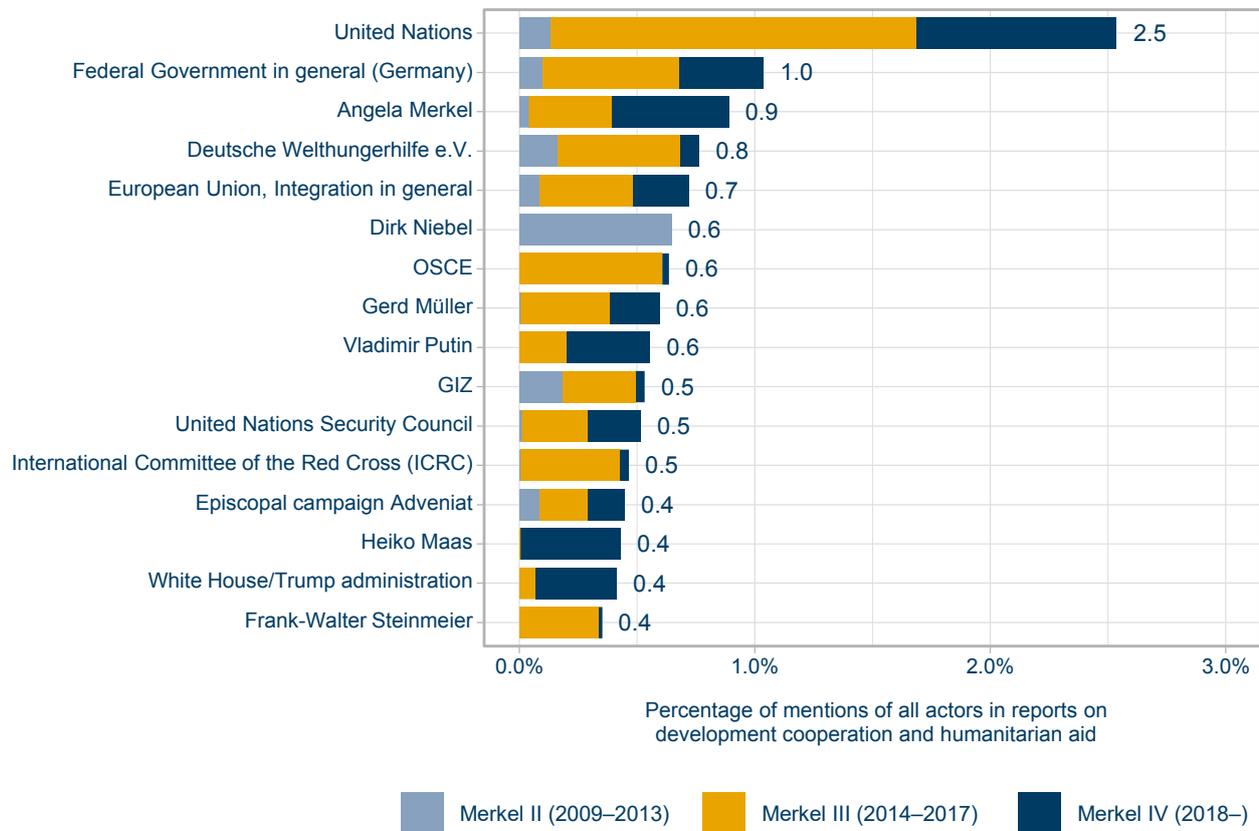
As well as the topics, the actors – persons, organisations, institutions – that are mentioned in the media in connection with development policy, development cooperation and humanitarian aid are of interest. Findings in this regard also provide starting points for disseminating development policy, for example by means of cooperation with actors that are visible in media reporting.

#### 2.3.1 Actors in TV news broadcasts: National and international governmental political actors are frequently mentioned

As shown in Figure 10, development cooperation-related reporting in the news on public TV stations feature the United Nations and the European Union particular frequently along with the Federal Government, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) and individual German ministers or politicians (including SPD Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Sigmar Gabriel).<sup>22</sup> The two development ministers Dirk Niebel (FDP, 2009–2013) and Gerd Müller (CSU; since 2013) account for approximately 0.6 percent of reporting during the examined period.<sup>23</sup> Development cooperation implementing agencies such as GIZ or non-governmental organisations such as Welthungerhilfe are mentioned rarely in comparison to national and international political actors. At this point, we would like to point out that television news also airs campaigns and donation appeals from charities. This explains why, for example, the episcopal campaign Adveniat is mentioned in Figure 10.

<sup>22</sup> At this point it should be noted that the named individuals change their offices and positions over the course of time. For example, at the start of the period under examination Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) was Minister of Labour and Social Affairs until 2013, then Minister of Defence from 2013 to 2019. She has been President of the European Commission since 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Please note that only the last two years of Dirk Niebel’s term are covered while Gerd Müller’s entire term is included.

**Figure 10** Actors in TV news

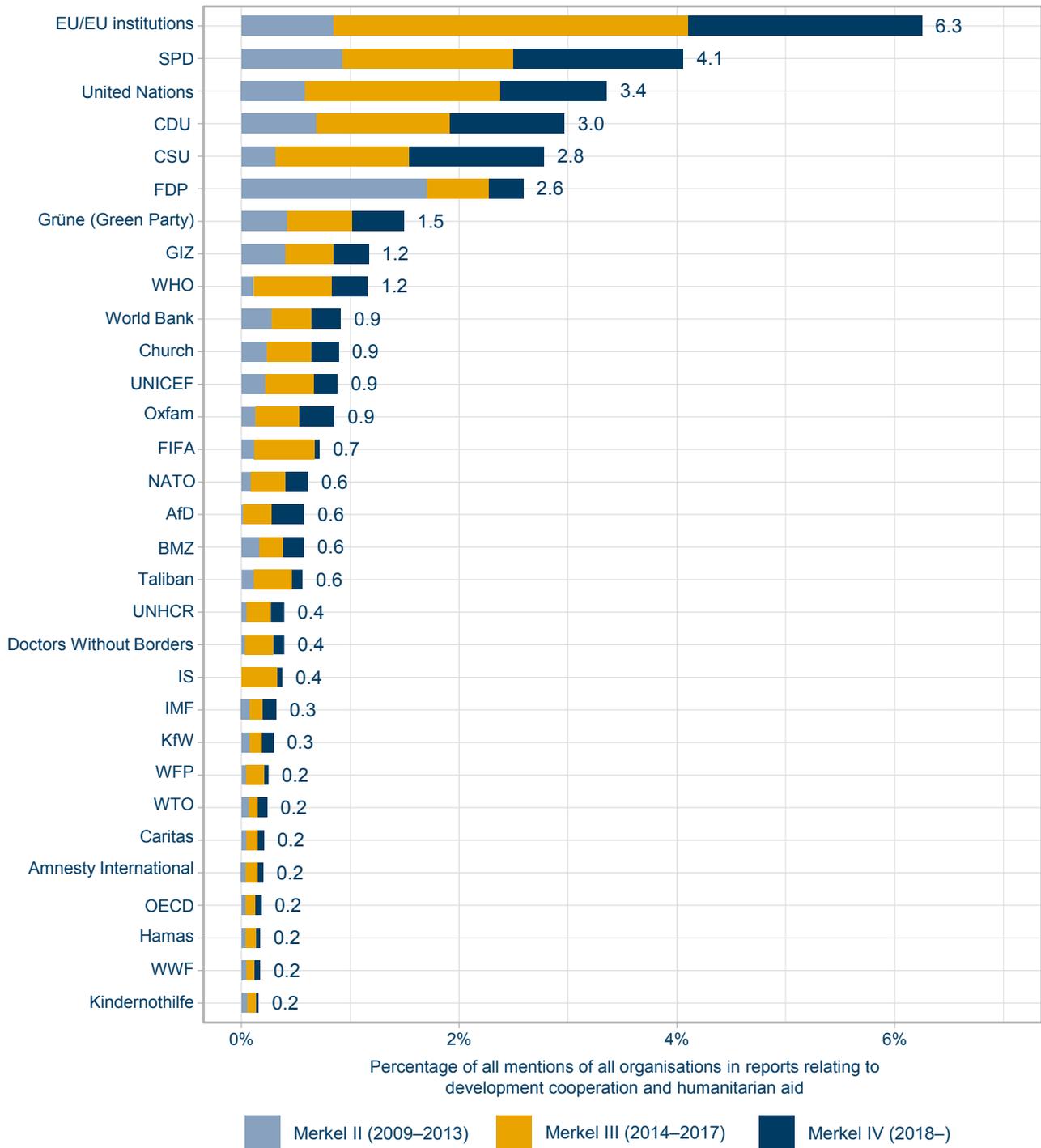
Source: Own visualisation; data basis: Media Tenor data for 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The data provider specified the categories. To make the differing prominence of the actors over time visible, the legislation periods of the Bundestag (German parliament) with the corresponding governments under Federal Chancellor Merkel are marked in colour. The Figure shows only the most frequently mentioned actors or organisations and institutions.

### 2.3.2 Actors in print media: National and international governmental political actors are frequently mentioned

For actors in print media, individuals and organisations are considered separately.<sup>24</sup> Again, articles on the fields of development policy and development cooperation mention individuals from governments or German politics most frequently. Angela Merkel is mentioned most often, followed by Dirk Niebel and Gerd Müller (not shown on the graph, see Figure 42 in the Annex). Next on the list are Donald Trump and Barack Obama along with a few German politicians. Again, the various terms of the politicians should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

<sup>24</sup> This is because the procedure used to determine the actors (named-entity recognition) identified people and organisations separately.

**Figure 11 Actors (organisations) in print media reporting**



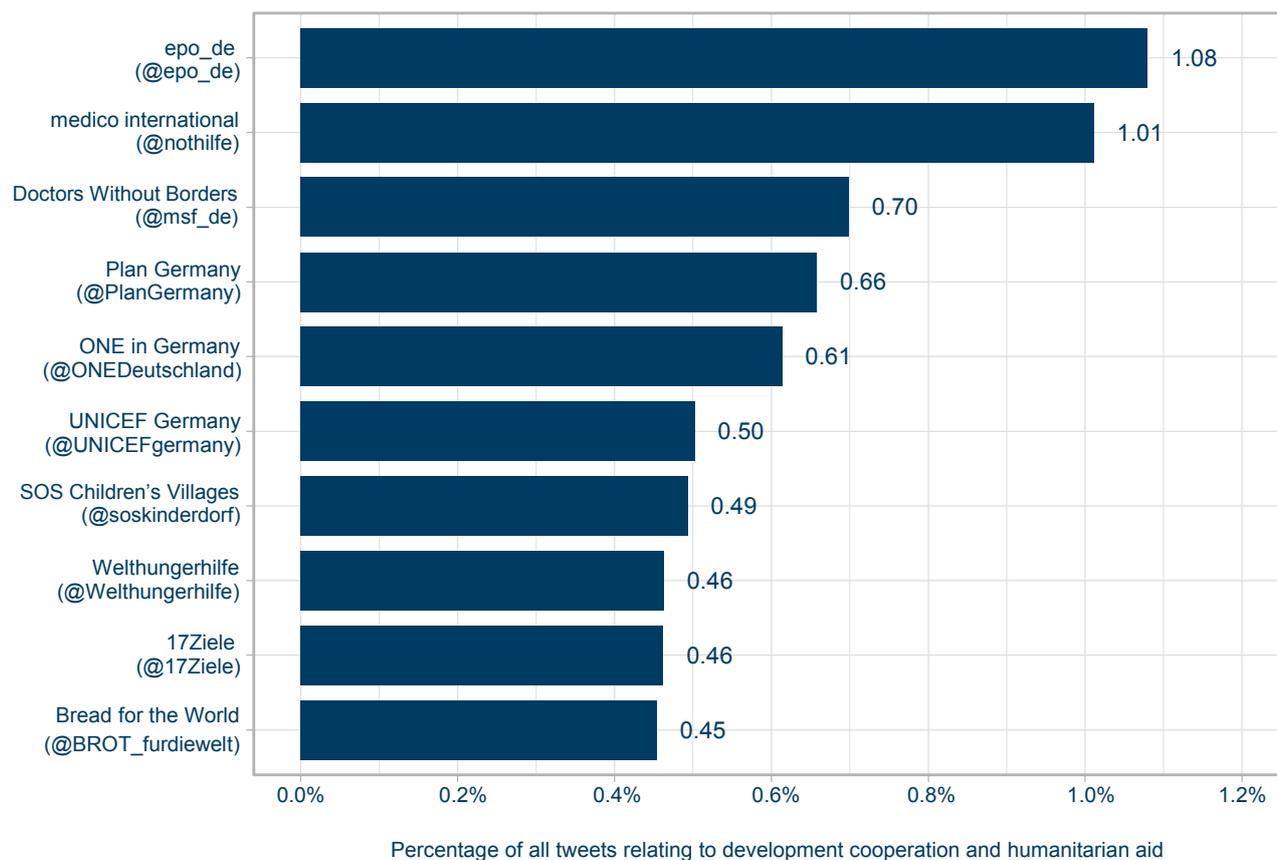
Source: own visualisation; data basis: search term-supported query of the LexisNexis press database for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The organisations were extracted from the identified articles in the topic area of development policy/development cooperation using the spacyR package in the software environment R. To make the differing prominence of the actors over time visible, the legislation periods of the Bundestag (German parliament) with the corresponding governments under Federal Chancellor Merkel are marked in colour. For details on the print media included, the time periods available for them and the search terms used, see Section 2 in the online Annex.

Of all the organisations mentioned in the articles, the most frequent at just a little more than six percent is the EU and its institutions (such as the EU Commission), followed by the SPD (Social Democrats) with four percent and the United Nations at just under three percent, followed by the remaining German political parties (see Figure 11).<sup>25</sup> The next most frequent, GIZ and various multilateral actors (such as WHO, World Bank and Unicef), are some way behind. There is only a low share of mentions of various NGOs in the articles relating to development policy. The development and aid organisation Oxfam is mentioned most often – with a share of around 0.9 percent.

### 2.3.3 Actors on Twitter: Greater visibility of civil-society actors

Twitter differs considerably from TV news broadcasts and reporting in print media in that the development cooperation actors and other users create their own content. Some of this content is then picked up by the traditional media. In this connection, the most interesting factors are: (1) which development cooperation-related Twitter accounts generally post a particularly large number of tweets, (2) which accounts are particularly active in certain thematic areas and (3) how many people a tweet reaches in social networks. This can be seen based on the metric engagement – tweets with a lot of engagement have a particularly high reach. A very interesting aspect is therefore which tweets and which Twitter accounts have generally high engagement – meaning retweets, comments and likes. This can be used to derive starting points for development policy communication work, for instance with regard to inter-organisational cooperation on certain topics. Figure 12 and Figure 13 provide answers to these questions.

<sup>25</sup> The high proportion of parties named in the articles compared with the results for TV news can be explained by the fact that TV news focuses on actors (for example the Government, ministers, multilateral organisations), but their party affiliation (if relevant for the actors in question) is not coded separately.

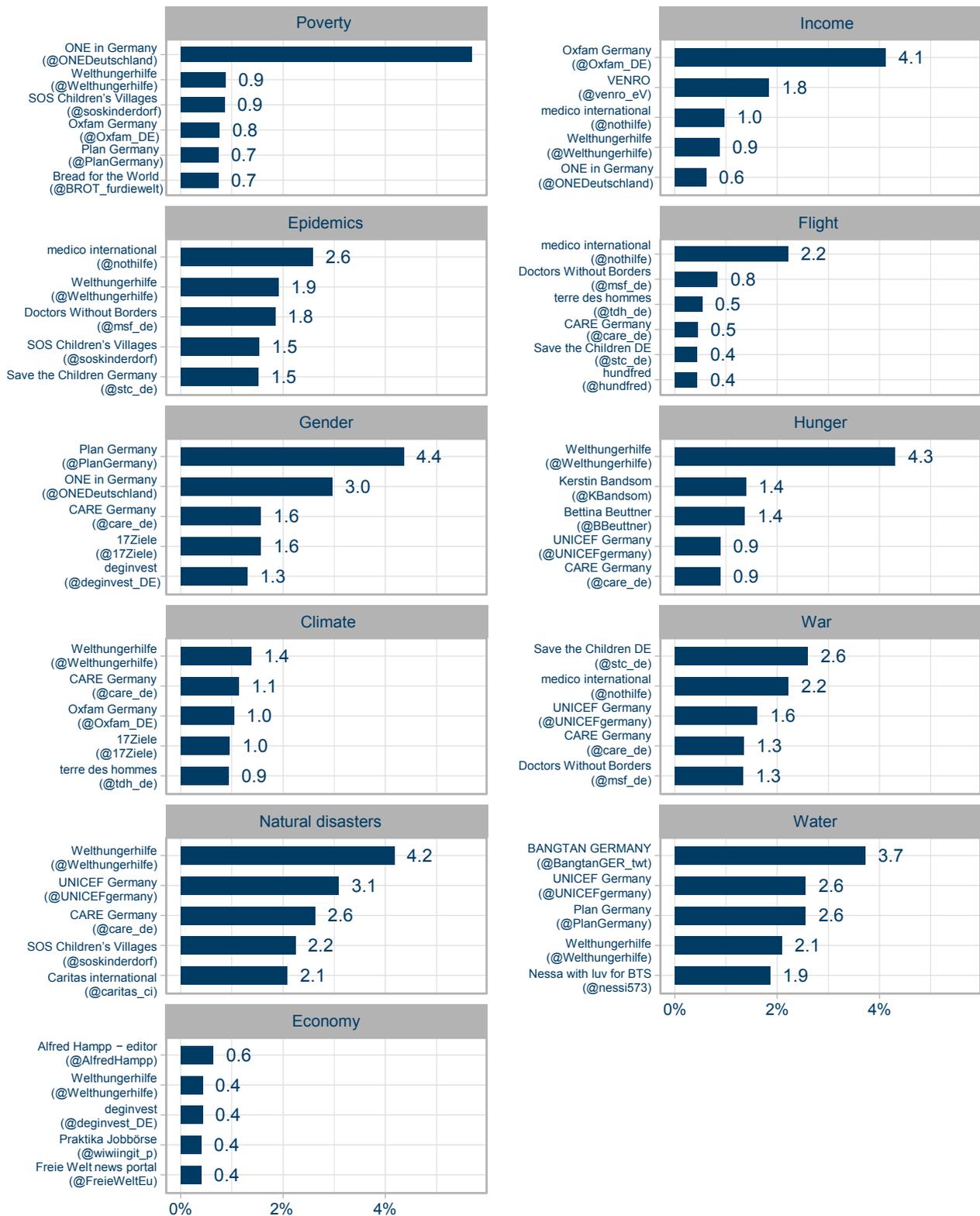
**Figure 12 Most active Twitter accounts in terms of development policy-related content**

Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The researchers calculated the share of a Twitter account's tweets in the total volume of tweets relating to development policy/development cooperation/humanitarian aid.

The most active account with regard to development policy, development cooperation and humanitarian aid belongs to the portal *entwicklungspolitik online* (@epo\_de), which posted the most tweets during the period under consideration (2,429) but has only limited reach with around 3,300 followers.<sup>26</sup> Next on the list are the accounts of several NGOs, such as *medico international* (@nothilfe; approx. 11,000 followers), *Doctors Without Borders* (@msf\_de; 32,500 followers) and *Plan Germany* (@PlanGermany; approx. 5,000 followers). The only actor from the public sector under the ten most active accounts is @17Ziele (approx. 2,750 followers) – an account run by Engagement Global with a focus on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. *BMZ* (@BMZ\_Bund; approx 59,000 followers), *GIZ* (@giz\_gmbh; 56,000 followers) and *KfW Entwicklungsbank* (@KfW\_FZ; approx. 400 followers) are the next highest in places 14, 22 and 46. Finally, the account with the greatest reach in Figure 12 – measured by the number of followers – is *Welthungerhilfe* (@Welthungerhilfe; approx. 149,000 followers).

<sup>26</sup> All details of Twitter followers were accessed on 23 September 2020.

Figure 13 Most active Twitter accounts by topic

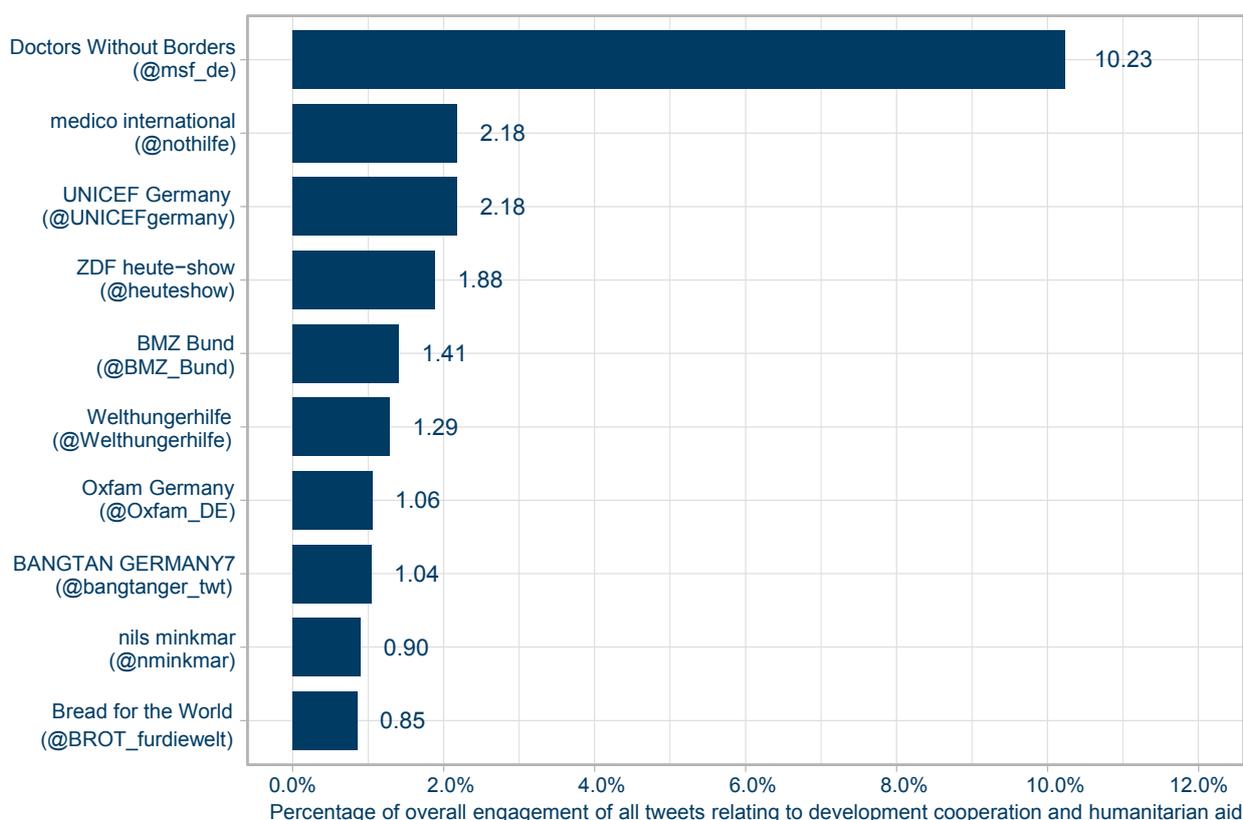


Percentage of all posts relating to development cooperation and humanitarian aid per topic

Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the share of posts (tweets) by an organisation in the total volume of tweets relating to development policy/development cooperation/humanitarian aid that additionally address a specific topic. Tweets can also deal with multiple topics.

When looking at individual topic areas with a relationship to development policy, particularly active accounts emerge in Figure 13 for a number of the examined topics. For “poverty”, for example, this is One (@ONEDeutschland; approx. 54,500) and for “income” it is Oxfam Germany (@Oxfam\_DE, approx. 43,000 followers). The most active accounts for the topic of “hunger” are Welthungerhilfe as well as accounts run by their employees Kerstin Brandsom and Bettina Beuttner, while Plan Germany is particularly active in the area of “gender”. No accounts particularly stand out for the topics of “natural disasters” and “epidemics”. Note that topics such as income, gender and water appear in only a small share of the total tweets during the examined period. This in turn means that, in relative terms, the accounts that are particularly active in these areas still draw only little attention to the topics in question. Overall, when it comes to Twitter activity, it is apparent that NGOs and civil-society actors substantially shape the communication.

**Figure 14** Twitter accounts with the greatest user engagement



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the share of the total engagement values of a Twitter account across the examined period in the total engagement for all tweets relating to development policy. Engagement includes retweets, quotes, comments and likes.

Something that must be considered separately is follower engagement in relation to tweets, as shown in Figure 14. How often are tweets shared (known as retweets), commented on or liked?<sup>27</sup> Doctors Without Borders’ account clearly stands out from the other accounts, achieving the highest engagement during the period under observation. Other accounts with the highest levels of engagement include a few NGOs as well as the Twitter accounts of BMZ, the ZDF comedy show “heute-show” (@heuteshow; around 1 million followers) and a German fan account for the South Korean boy band “BTS” (@BangtanGER\_twt; approx. 19,000 followers). The last of these seems strange at first glance, but is explained by the fact that the band has been involved in Unicef activities since 2018 – for example against violence towards children. This was

<sup>27</sup> To do this, the tweets from the accounts that had been identified using a search term list were extracted and their share in the overall engagement calculated across the period under consideration.

discussed on Twitter during the examined period and therefore included in the analysis. This illustrates how actors without a direct connection to development policy and development cooperation can draw attention to the topic and therefore occasionally reach an audience that is usually barely concerned with the topic. For both the BTS fan account and the ZDF “heute-show”, it is of course important to note that they only sporadically post content relating to development policy on Twitter.

The key figure “engagement” can also be put in relation to the number of tweets published during the period under examination that relate to development cooperation. At the top of the ranking are accounts run by individuals who are not involved with development cooperation, but sporadically posted content relating to development policy during the period being examined. The politically left-leaning journalist Stephan Kaufmann (@StephanKaufman1, approx. 1,500 followers) achieved the highest engagement per tweet. Following him in the ranks are a striking number of accounts that are associated with the (national) conservative or right-wing populist political spectrum. These include prominent representatives of the right-wing populist party AfD and the Bavarian branch of the WerteUnion – an association linked to the CDU/CSU – as well as accounts run by political commentators (e.g. Linnéa Findelee – @klee\_lina, 15,500 followers; Niklas Lotz alias Neverforgetniki – @nikitheblogger, 34,500 followers). Added to this are the aforementioned ZDF “heute-show” account, the account belonging to web video producer iBlali (@iBlali; 1.5 million followers), the account of Malte Grosse-Brömer, Chief Whip of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag (@MGrosseBroemer; approx. 15,500 followers) and journalist Nils Minkmar’s account (@nminkmar; approx. 21,300 followers). What all of these accounts have in common is that their tweets relating to development policy trigger high engagement among users, who retweet them, add comments or press “like”. This occurs primarily because they address controversial or polarising content (for example development cooperation in the context of migration; global social inequality; German development cooperation with China). Figure 15 shows examples of such tweets.

**Figure 15** Examples of tweets with high user engagement



Sources: “heute-show” (2020). Translation: “According to #Oxfam one percent of the population owns 45 percent of global wealth. This is usually the point where we sweep the Monopoly board off the table.” Meuthen (2019). Translation: “Germany continues to provide the country whose tanks are rolling down here with “development aid”, a whopping €630 million this year – while our pensioners rummage through public rubbish bins looking for deposit bottles. All thanks to Merkel!” [shared news report: “Beijing: China shows strength with greatest weapons display in its history. On the 70th anniversary of the People’s Republic, China brought out more weapons than ever before – a massive display of its power.”].

### 2.3.4 Comparison of actors

Briefly summarised, TV news and print media primarily mention governmental and international political actors. One thing of note is that political parties make up a significant share of reporting in print media. NGOs also play a somewhat larger role in print media than on TV news, most likely as a result of the narrower range of topics on TV news compared with print media.

The comparison between traditional media (TV and print media) and social media is particularly enlightening. Entirely different actors are represented. NGOs are the main contributors of Twitter content, and even when this is not the case, NGOs and other private actors play a greater role. By contrast, governmental actors are less present, although BMZ and GIZ certainly have wide-reaching channels.

However, it must be noted that, for the majority of the population, TV news and newspapers or their online content are a more important source of (international) news than social media (Hölig and Hasebrink, 2020; Schneider et al., 2019). The latter are becoming increasingly important though.

## 2.4 What is the tonality of development policy reporting?

The data on newspaper reporting and on Twitter posts allows us to examine whether the tonality of the content is positive, neutral or negative by means of a sentiment analysis.<sup>28</sup> Using dictionaries as a basis, the number of words in a text (e.g. newspaper article, tweet) that have a negative connotation in German are subtracted from the number of words with a positive association and then divided by the total number of words in the text (Rauh, 2018). If there are more positive words, the sentiment score is positive; if the share of negative words is higher, the score is negative.<sup>29</sup> If the proportion of words with positive and negative connotations is equal, the sentiment score has a value of 0.

**Figure 16** Examples of tweets with positive and negative tonality



Sources: Positive tonality (left-hand tweet): Unicef (2019). Translation: “Thank you for your fantastic commitment and involvement”; negative tonality (right-hand tweet): Welthungerhilfe (2019). Translation: “Frustration and bitter disappointment: #COP25 World Climate Conference in #Madrid bears almost no fruit”. [Shared news article: “World Climate Conference ends with almost no results. The end of the Madrid Climate Conference brought only a minimal compromise: a political final declaration with ...”.]

<sup>28</sup> This type of analysis is not possible for TV news data because the available data contains codings with the actors’ evaluations, meaning the overall tonality of the entire news item cannot easily be determined.

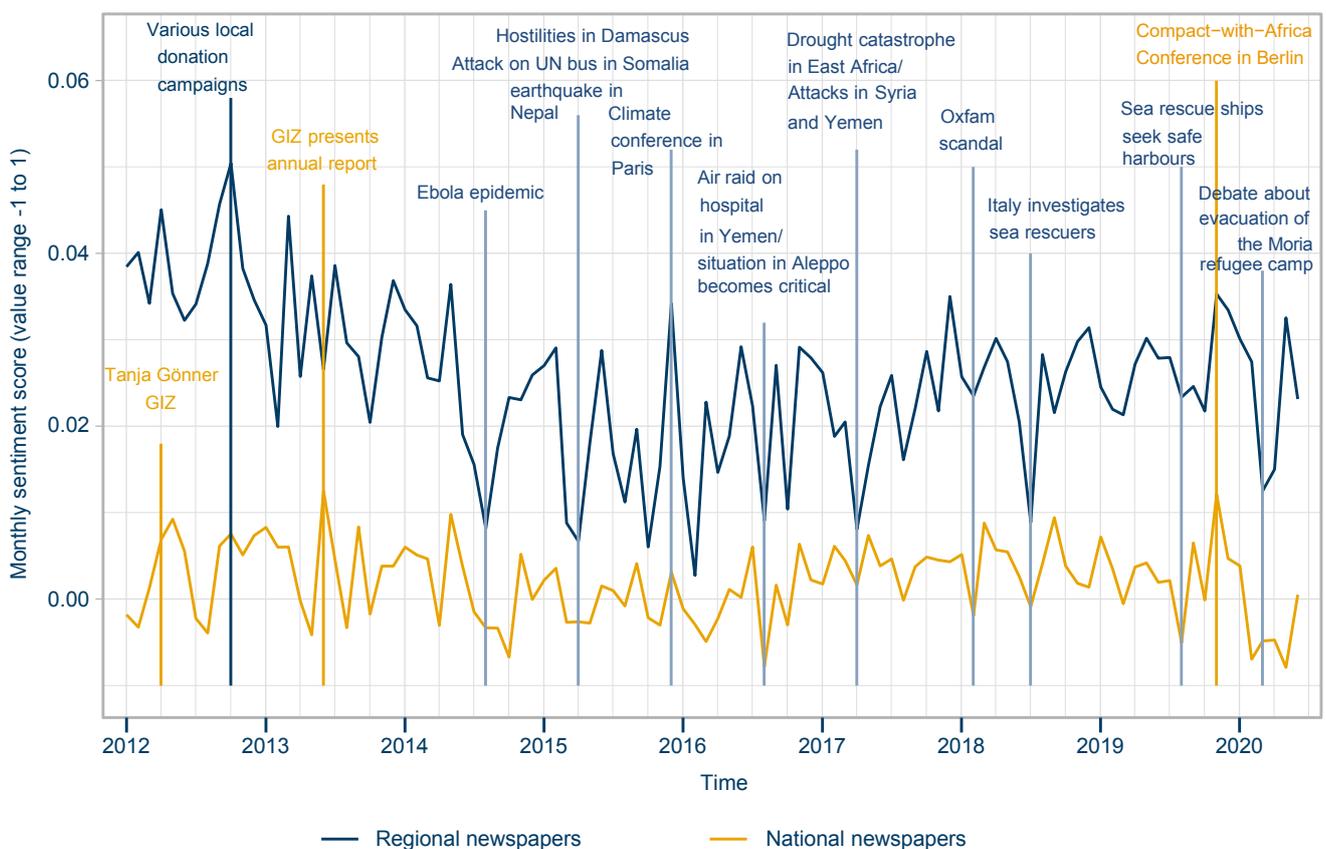
<sup>29</sup> Punctuation marks, numbers and stop words (non-content words such as articles, conjunctions and prepositions) were removed before performing the analysis (see Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). The method used can determine negation (for example “not effective”) (Rauh, 2018). For further details, see Section 2.2.4 of the online Annex.

By way of illustration: a sentiment score of 0.25, for example, means that the share of terms with a positive association is 25 percent greater than the share of negative terms (see Rauh, 2018, p. 320). Conversely, a score of -0.25 expresses that the share of negative terms is 25 percent higher. Figure 16 contains examples of tweets with a positive (tweet on the left) and negative (tweet on the right) tonality.

This analysis helps us understand whether the information on development policy that is available to the general public has a more positive or negative sentiment. Although many other factors influence how the general public perceives such information, the general tonality can certainly be a key information component in the formation of an opinion (see Beierlein and Burger, 2019 for an introduction).<sup>30</sup>

#### 2.4.1 Tonality of reporting in print media: neutral in national newspapers, slightly positive in regional newspapers

**Figure 17** Tonality of reporting in print media



Source: own visualisation; data basis: search term-supported query of the LexisNexis press database for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The graph shows the average monthly sentiment scores over time for regional and national newspapers. Blue label: topic-related peak tonality in regional newspapers. Yellow label: peak in national newspapers. Grey-blue label: peak in both groups.

<sup>30</sup> Examples that can be mentioned include the specific TV station and individual attitude towards it, prior knowledge on the topic, comprehensibility of the content or repeated availability of the content in question (see, e.g., Beierlein and Burger, 2019; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Wood, 2000).

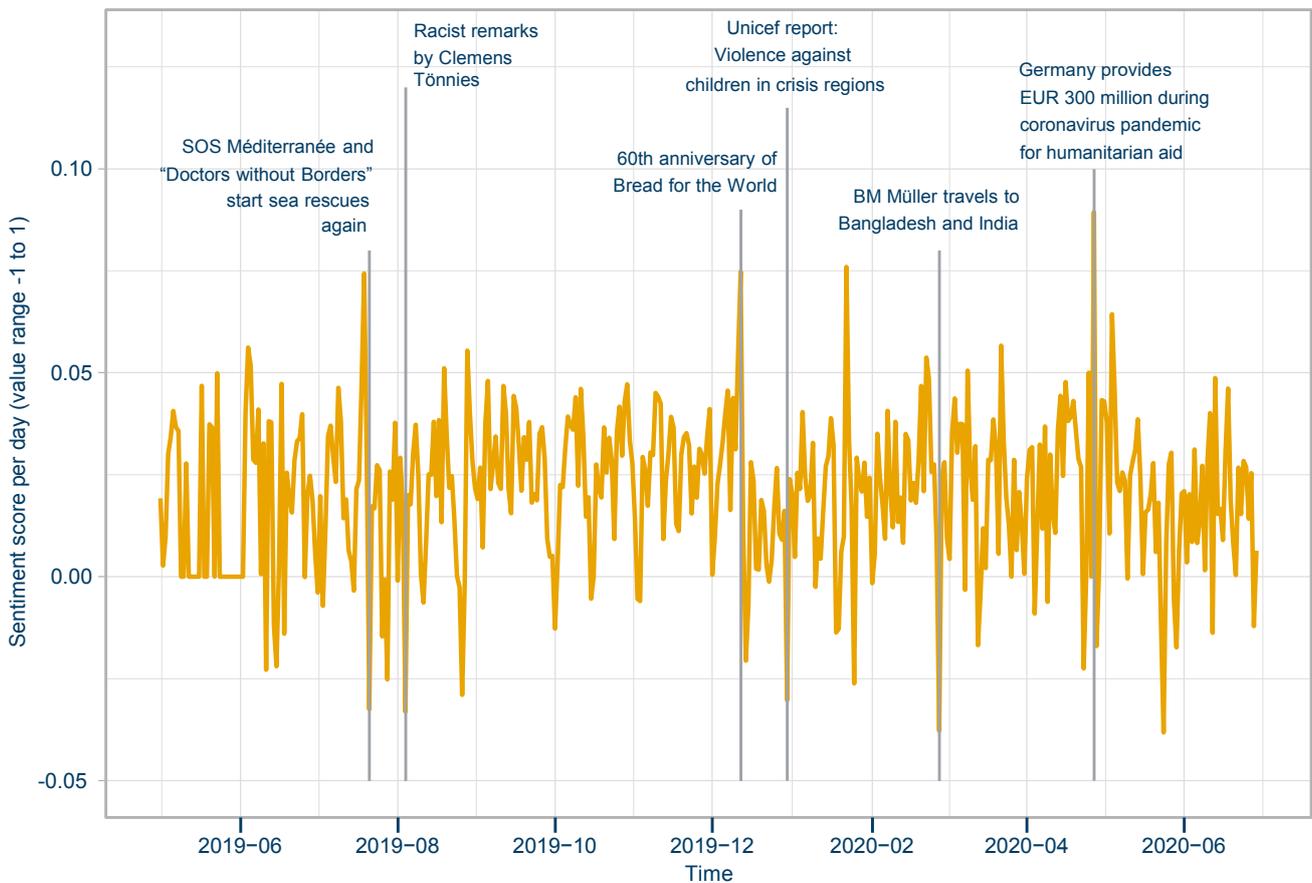
Figure 17 clearly shows that national newspapers report relatively neutrally over time (yellow line). The average sentiment scores – which express the average tonality of the reporting per month – are always very close to the zero line. Clearer positive fluctuations can be seen during periods in which BMZ or GIZ was involved in the media-relevant events (staff changes, annual report, conference). On the other hand, the tonality of reporting in the four analysed regional newspapers (blue line) is always slightly positive on average and is also continuously above the average of the national newspapers. This can most likely be attributed to the larger share of reports on local initiatives (such as charitable donation activities). Finally, it is clear for both types of newspaper that the tonality of reporting during the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic (February/March 2020) was slightly more negative than in the months before.

#### **2.4.2 Tonality of communication on Twitter: slightly positive on average with occasional negative and positive fluctuations**

For Twitter, the sentiment scores are slightly more positive on average during the period under observation (see Figure 18). Individual clear upswings and downswings can also be observed. These often occur in the period surrounding events that are regarded as significantly positive (for example anniversaries of NGOs) or negative (for example racist remarks by the businessman Clemens Tönnies or reports from international development organisations about increasing violence against children).<sup>31</sup> Occasionally, targeted defamation campaigns that use false information in an attempt to damage organisations also play a role.<sup>32</sup> In general, the largely more positive sentiment scores can also be explained by the fact that posts on Twitter are shorter and more concise, generally contain a larger share of evaluative terms, and the creators are often development policy actors who present their own work in the best possible light. Finally, it should be noted that the reach of the tweets is not taken into account. This means that the provocative or polarising negative tweets by individual actors mentioned in Section 2.3.3 are not given any particular weight in these analyses although they strike a major cord among Twitter users.

<sup>31</sup> At an event in August 2019, Clemens Tönnies made a statement to the effect that the German Development Minister should fund power plants in Africa to prevent people there from cutting down forests and conceiving so many children (e.g. Spiegel Online, 2019). Both development policy organisations and tweets with development policy key words discussed and criticised this statement, leading to corresponding tweets being included in the database used for this analysis.

<sup>32</sup> For example, in summer 2019 a rumour was spread on social media that a man who had been charged with child abuse in Nepal was the head of Unicef (Mimikama, 2019). The only facts that could be confirmed were that the person in question had founded an aid organisation in the past and had worked for the United Nations. This case is also reflected in Figure 18.

**Figure 18** Tonality of post (tweets) on Twitter

Source: own visualisation; data basis: Meltwater data for Twitter for the period from 1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020. The average sentiment scores per day are shown. BM = Bundesminister (Federal Minister).

### 2.4.3 Comparison of tonality

Overall, the tonality analysis indicates that national newspapers tend to use a more neutral language when reporting on development policy while the tone in regional newspapers is more positive. Twitter, too, tends towards a more positive tone, probably as a result of consciously positive reporting by development cooperation actors using this channel. However, more significant positive or negative fluctuations can be seen in connection with events that are of interest to the general public.

## 2.5 Summary

The analyses can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. In all three examined media types, the development policy and development cooperation topic area plays only a minor role in both absolute and proportional terms. During the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic at the beginning of 2020, the number of TV news broadcasts and print-media articles focusing on this topic area declined slightly. This could not be observed on Twitter. Increasing attention to this topic area cannot be seen for any of the analysed media. Overall the findings suggest that press reporting in the examined media is unlikely to result in increased attention to development policy and development cooperation.
2. The dominant related topics vary between the examined media types. However, flight and migration play a key role in all three types. TV news broadcasts and newspaper articles frequently mention development policy and development cooperation in connection with war and conflict. On Twitter, this happens in relation to climate and epidemics. However, it should be noted that, due to the restricted data access,

the researchers analysed a period of time (1 May 2019 to 30 June 2020) that was shaped strongly by public discussion of climate change (“Fridays for Future”) and the coronavirus pandemic.

3. Government and international stakeholders dominate TV news and print media. By contrast, civil-society actors predominantly shape the conversation on Twitter.
4. The tonality of reporting on development policy and development cooperation is more positive in the regional press than the national press. The latter tends to report more neutrally. On Twitter, by contrast, communication on this topic tends to be consistently positive. Downward and upward swings in the context of newsworthy events can be seen for both print media and Twitter.

The results so far show how the media reports on development cooperation. However, they do not allow any conclusions regarding how the arguments for and against development cooperation that are frequently used in both the media and public debates affect public attitudes towards development cooperation. Section 3 provides further insights in this regard.

3. WHAT IMPACT DO ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION HAVE ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION?

**Box 6** Key results in Section 3

- If corruption in the partner countries or the ineffectiveness of development cooperation are topics of discussion, this can reduce public support for development cooperation.
- However, the negative effect of reports on corruption or ineffectiveness is counterbalanced if the relevance of development cooperation in tackling global challenges is highlighted.
- Positive arguments in favour of development cooperation do not influence attitudes towards development cooperation.
- People who generally support development cooperation respond less markedly to critical arguments that address the effectiveness of development cooperation than those who tend to reject development cooperation in general.

Although the topic of development policy generally attracts little media attention, as shown in Section 2, the question arises as to whether and how reports about development cooperation and the arguments within them can influence public opinion.<sup>33</sup> For example, do arguments against development cooperation that point out their lack of effectiveness or corruption in the partner countries reduce public support? And vice versa, does support increase if the emphasis is on mastering local and global challenges or on the needs of the partner countries? It is important to consider that citizens may also encounter such arguments in other contexts such as discussions with family and friends or political communications. At the same time the question arises whether the effect of such arguments depends on a person's pre-held beliefs on the topic. If people who have a generally positive attitude towards development cooperation react negatively to arguments that are critical of it, this presents a challenge for development cooperation actors' communication. Conversely, if people who generally reject development cooperation react to arguments for development cooperation with greater support or a better assessment of its effectiveness, this presents an opportunity for development cooperation actors.

Before addressing these questions, we must first clarify which arguments are used in the media and in public debates. Based on academic literature, websites and newspaper reports, Hurst et al. (2017) determine ten central arguments for and against development cooperation for the American context. Topics include the costs for development cooperation, its effectiveness, the needs of developing countries, national self-interest, dependency of the partner country, market-based solutions as an alternative to development cooperation and corruption in the partner country. In a study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Brunswick Consulting (2018) identified fairly similar arguments for Germany, however "self-interest" is differentiated again into economic and migration-policy interests.

To determine which effect the above arguments have on attitudes towards the topic, a survey experiment was conducted (for information on the usefulness of experiments in media research, see Nelson et al., 2011). For practical reasons, six of the central arguments named in the previous section – three for and three against development cooperation – were selected based on their relevance for current development policy discussion. The following three arguments were put forward in favour of development cooperation:

1. Development cooperation as an important contribution to overcoming global challenges;
2. Development cooperation out of self-interest to master global challenges;
3. Development cooperation as a necessary means of combating hunger, poverty and diseases in the partner countries.

<sup>33</sup> Alternatively, instead of "arguments" it would be possible to use the term "frames" (e.g. Chong and Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1993). However, as this term is understood differently both between and within the various social and behavioural science disciplines, the decision was made not to use this term.

The arguments against development cooperation were the following:

1. Development cooperation has had little impact in terms of reducing poverty to date;
2. Large parts of development cooperation are lost due to corruption in the recipient countries;
3. Spending on development cooperation could also be used for social measures in Germany.

Alongside the three arguments each for and against development cooperation, three scenarios were formed, each with one positive and one negative argument. Each of these combined the contribution of development cooperation to overcoming global challenges – the current self-image of many development cooperation actors as it were (see, e.g., BMZ, 2020a) – with

1. the prevalent issue of corruption;
2. the lack of effectiveness in the sense of reducing poverty;
3. the resource conflict within Germany and the potential to use funds for projects in Germany.

### 3.1 The impact of arguments for and against development cooperation in the media – a survey experiment

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In the experiment carried out for this section, the respondents received a randomly selected extract from a fictitious newspaper article containing one of the abovementioned arguments or some combination thereof (see Table 3). The random allocation of the respondents to the control group or different experimental or treatment groups ensured that there were no systematic distinctions between the individual groups. This rules out that differences in the response behaviours between groups are a result of the group composition (see, e.g., Druckman et al., 2011 for information on this). Instead, observed differences between the groups can be attributed exclusively to the different information presented to them (for a more detailed explanation of the logic of experimental research, see Box 7).

The articles presented in the experiment were based on a BMZ press release regarding the federal budget from March 2020 (BMZ, 2020b). Either one of the arguments or one of the argument combinations was added to the press release. Table 3 provides an overview of the experimental groups. Following this, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the amount of the current planned expenditure for development cooperation within the federal budget, whether they support state engagement in development cooperation, and how effective they believe governmental development cooperation is. In this way, it is possible to examine whether the information or arguments presented affect support for the topic.

It can be assumed that pro arguments increase support for governmental engagement in development cooperation while contra arguments reduce support (also refer to the hypotheses in Hurst et al., 2017), whereby negative arguments may have a stronger effect (known as negativity bias; see, e.g., Soroka et al., 2019). However, in general it is likely that the effect of pro and contra arguments depends on the respondents' a priori attitudes towards development cooperation (known as motivated reasoning, Taber and Lodge, 2006; or confirmation bias; Nickerson, 1998). People who view the topic in a positive light may weight positive arguments more highly than negative arguments. Equally, people who have negative attitudes towards the topic may place more weight on negative arguments than positive ones. The expected consequence of this is that people who are critical towards development cooperation will adopt an even more critical position when presented with negative arguments and simply ignore positive arguments, while those who have a positive view of development cooperation will respond to positive arguments with even greater support and discount negative arguments.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> So-called moderation analyses are performed for this. In the regression model used to analyse the experiment, multiplicative interaction terms are added in between the treatment variables (operationalised through the dummy variables) and the attitudes measured before the experiment. If the interaction terms are statistically significant at a level of at least 5 percent, the impact of the information in question varies with the examined attitude characteristic (see, e.g., Pepinsky, 2018). If the 10-percent level is reached, it is assumed that the data contains at least one tendency with greater statistical uncertainty.

### Box 7 Survey experiments

Survey experiments allow the identification of causal relationships by randomly dividing the respondents into equal-sized groups and presenting them with varying information (“treatments”). They are then asked about their attitudes or other characteristics that are relevant to the investigation (“outcomes”; for an overview, see Gaines et al., 2007; Mutz, 2011). Due to the random division into a control and a treatment group, it is possible to estimate the effect of the respective treatment. At the same time, other causal influences can generally be ruled out, as the randomised group allocation ensures that any differences between the groups before the treatment are random – and, provided the sample is large enough, very small. This provides an advantage over basic correlational analyses based on cross-sectional data, in which alternative explanations – such as that the assumed cause-effect relationship is actually reversed – often cannot be cancelled out. This study utilises such experimental designs – which have been used increasingly over the past few years for research into development cooperation-related attitudes (see, e.g., Baker, 2015; Bayram and Holmes, 2019; Dietrich et al., 2019; Dietrich and Winters, 2015; Gilens, 2001; Hurst et al., 2017; Scotto et al., 2017; Wood, 2018; Wood and Hoy, 2018) – to examine the potential impact of media reporting (Section 3), information on the effectiveness of development cooperation (Section 4) or moral appeals (Section 5) on public opinion. In addition, this study uses a survey experiment to examine the general public's expectations of development cooperation in the context of fragile states (Section 6).

The survey experiments focus first of all on the direct impact of the information presented on the public's attitudes (known as treatment effects) and, secondly, on the question of whether the impact of the information differs based on certain characteristics of the respondents (known as moderation analyses). For example, it would be expected that people who have a particularly negative attitude towards development cooperation would be less convinced by information regarding successful development policy measures than people with a more neutral stance (e.g., Taber and Lodge, 2006). It must be stressed that the experimental designs used in this report examine the short-term impact on attitudes towards development cooperation (also refer to Box 15 for information on this).

The logic of experimental research, which is also used to evaluate development cooperation measures (see Faust, 2020) can be illustrated using a greatly simplified example from the medical field: during the coronavirus pandemic, there is high public interest in a medication that reduces the viral load of infected patients. Let us assume that such medication has been developed and is to be tested for its effectiveness. Accordingly, the interest is on what impact the medication (“treatment”) has on the dependent variable “virus load”, the “outcome” of the study. To examine this effect, coronavirus patients are randomly divided into two equal-sized groups. Provided the group size is large enough, this ensures that the groups are not systematically different, for example in terms of gender and age but also with regard to other factors that could influence the course of the disease (such as pre-existing conditions, smokers). The first group is the treatment group and receives the medication, while the second is the control group and does not receive the medication. Subsequently, after a certain length of time, the dependent variable – “virus load” – is measured for each group. The difference in the virus load between the treatment group and the control group forms the causal effect, or treatment effect, of the medication. If this difference is sufficiently large and statistically significant, meaning a random result can be ruled out, it can be assumed that the medication is suitable for reducing the viral load of coronavirus. Within the scope of a moderation analysis, it is also possible to examine whether, for example, the medication is less effective for older patients.

**Table 3** Experimental groups for the impact of arguments for and against development cooperation

Group	Information presented
Control group 1	No information
Development cooperation budget	Information on the federal budget: <b>Federal Government specifies budgetary expenditure for development aid</b> The Federal Government has decided on the key points for the 2021 federal budget. EUR 10.88 billion is planned for development aid – exactly the same figure as for the current budget year.
Global challenges	Information on the federal budget + The expenditure for development aid contributes to mitigating the consequences of climate change and reducing refugee movements to Europe.
Self-interest	Information on the federal budget + The expenditure for development aid is also in Germany's interests, for example in view of mitigating the consequences of climate change or reducing refugee movements to Europe.
Need	Information on the federal budget + Developing countries need the expenditure for development aid because of the hunger, poverty and diseases they experience.
Ineffectiveness	Information on the federal budget + To date, the expenditure for development aid has not helped reduce poverty and hunger in developing countries.
Corruption	Information on the federal budget + A large part of the expenditure for development aid is lost to corruption in the developing countries.
<i>Home first</i>	Information on the federal budget + Spending on development aid could also be used for social measures in Germany.
Challenges + Corruption	Information on the federal budget + The expenditure for development aid contributes to mitigating the consequences of climate change and reducing refugee movements to Europe. However, a large part of the expenditure for development aid is lost to corruption in the developing countries.
Challenges + Ineffectiveness	Information on the federal budget + The expenditure for development aid contributes to mitigating the consequences of climate change and reducing refugee movements to Europe. However, to date, the expenditure for development aid has not helped reduce poverty and hunger in developing countries.
Challenges + Home first	Information on the federal budget + The expenditure for development aid contributes to mitigating the consequences of climate change and reducing refugee movements to Europe. However, spending on development aid could also be used for social measures in Germany.

Source: own table. The arguments are based on Hurst et al. (2017) and Brunswick Consulting (2018).

Figure 19 shows the effect that budget information and the arguments for and against development cooperation used in public debate have on general support for the topic. The control group is the respondents who did not receive any information. If a coefficient (represented by a dot) is to the right of the orange vertical line and the confidence interval (the horizontal line) does not cross the zero line, the support for development cooperation is statistically significantly higher in the group in question than in the control group. If a coefficient is to the left of the orange zero line and the confidence interval does not cross the line, support for development cooperation is statistically significantly lower in the group in question than in the control group. The figure also shows the mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD) of the support for development cooperation for all respondents in a group. The higher the mean value, the greater the support for development cooperation; the lower the standard deviation, the smaller the differences in support for development cooperation within a group.

### Box 8 Data basis for the survey experiments

The data for all survey experiments presented in this report was collected by the survey institute Respondi. These are randomly selected quota samples – meaning the sample was selected so that it is representative of the German population in terms of the distribution of gender, education levels, age and federal state – from the Institute's respondent pool (Online Access Panel). The samples correspond to the distribution of age, gender, educational qualification and federal state of the German population up to the age of 75. The size of the sample varies depending on the number of pieces of information (treatments) presented in the experiments. The experimental and control groups were formed according to the randomisation principle, meaning their sociodemographic composition is not systematically different.

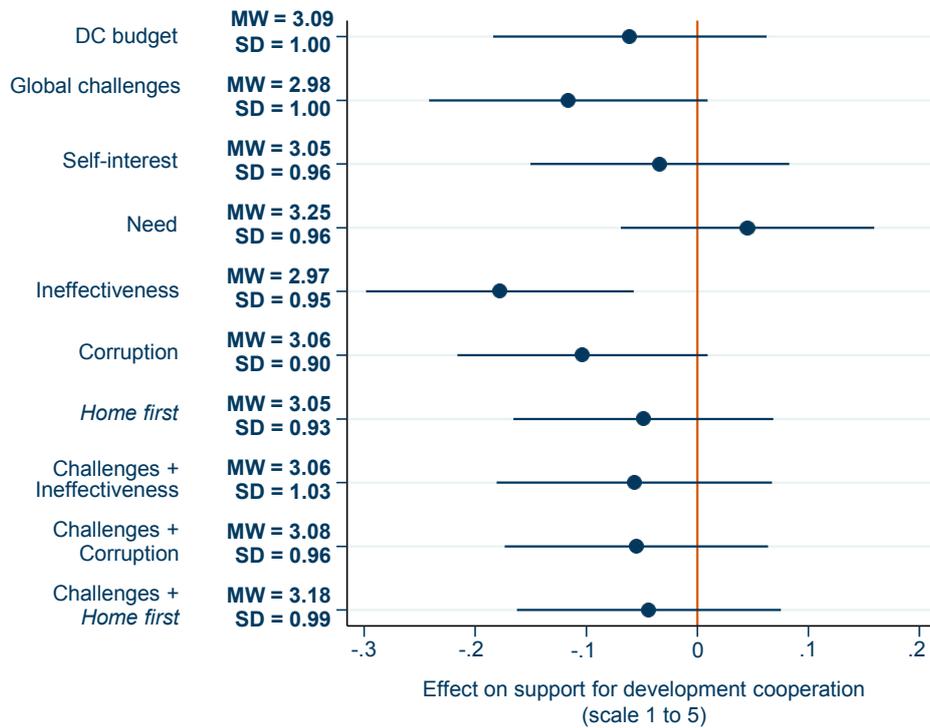
As multiple survey experiments in one survey can result in the information presented in the various experiments influencing each other, thereby leading to distortions (Gaines et al., 2007; Transue et al., 2009), each experiment was conducted in a separate survey.

The results of the multivariate analysis in Figure 19 show that the group that received information on the need for development cooperation supports development cooperation the most (M: 3.09). However, this support is not significantly higher than in the control group. The group that received information on the ineffectiveness of development cooperation supports it the least (M: 2.97, SD: 0.95). Support in this group is significantly lower than in the control group.<sup>35</sup> A surprising finding is that information on global challenges tends to have a negative effect on the attitude towards development cooperation although this is an argument that emphasises the relevance of development cooperation and should therefore increase support.<sup>36</sup> Emphasising the contribution that development cooperation makes to combating climate change and the causes of refugee movements appears to have an unintended negative effect. A possible reason for this could be that those surveyed do not attribute the stated contribution to development cooperation or that they react to the challenge mentioned with pessimism or become overwhelmed and therefore express lower support for development cooperation. All other groups' level of support for development cooperation lies between these two groups and does not differ significantly from the control group.

<sup>35</sup> The same applies to the group that received information on corruption (M: 3.06; SD: 0.90). However, with a p-value of 0.104, it narrowly misses the ten-percent significance level. According to common significance levels, this is therefore no longer considered significant or more than statistically coincidental.

<sup>36</sup> In the case of the "Corruption" and "Global challenges" groups, the difference between the control and experimental group is only significant at the 10-percent level and is therefore subject to greater statistical uncertainty.

**Figure 19** Impact of budget information and arguments for and against development cooperation on general support for development cooperation



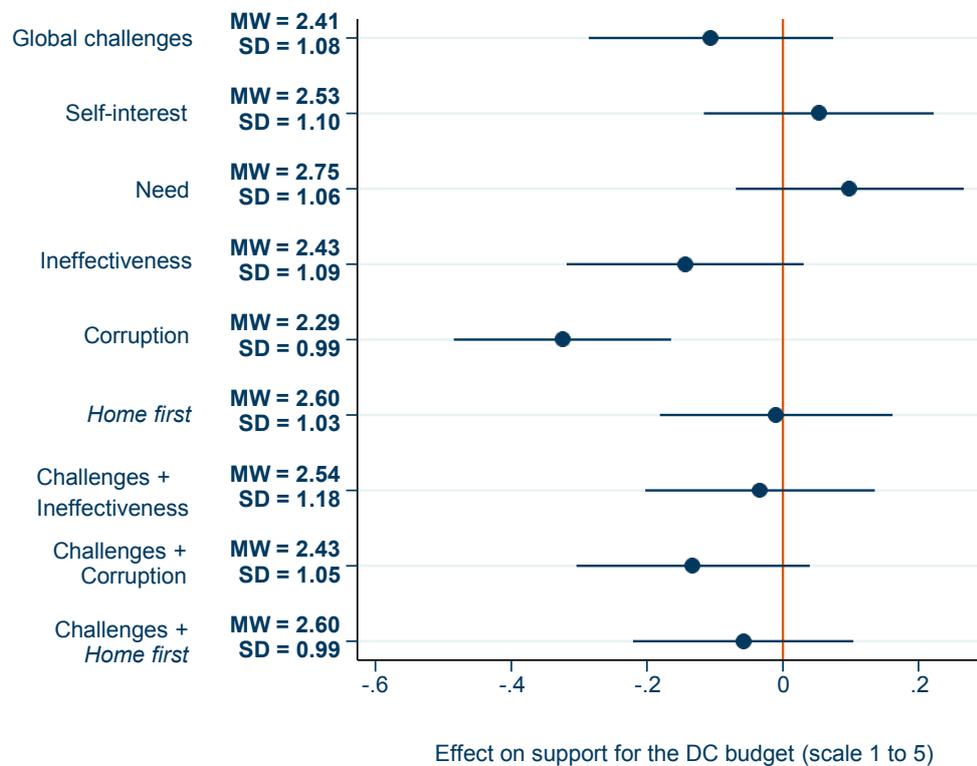
Source: own visualisation; data basis: Respondi survey from 4–10 September 2020.  $N = 3,008$ . The figure shows non-standardised coefficients of an OLS (ordinary least squares) regression with robust standard errors (type “HC3”) and 95-percent confidence intervals. Dependent variable: index of support for development cooperation (3 items; Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.77$ ). Age, education, gender, support for development cooperation, perceived effectiveness of development cooperation, interest in development cooperation and political orientation (right–left scale) are also included. Due to respondents with missing values, the number of observations reduces to  $N = 2,311$ .  $M = \text{mean}$ ,  $SD = \text{standard deviation}$ . The regression analysis can be found in Table 12 in the online Annex.

### 3.1.1 Emphasising corruption risks reduces agreement with a budget for development cooperation within the federal budget

The survey asked those respondents who received information regarding planned expenditure for development policy and potentially an accompanying argument whether the budget specified in the newspaper article should be changed or stay the same.<sup>37</sup> Figure 20 shows how the arguments for or against development cooperation impact the assessment of the development cooperation budget. The group that only received information on the current budget for development cooperation served as the comparison group. Again, the findings show that the group that received information regarding the need for development cooperation showed the greatest support for the development cooperation budget ( $M: 2.75$ ;  $SD: 1.06$ ). The group that received information on corruption in partner countries displayed the least support ( $M: 2.29$ ;  $SD: 0.99$ ). The support for the current development cooperation budget is also considerably lower here than in the control group ( $M: 2.57$ ;  $SD: 1.05$ ).

<sup>37</sup> The consequence of this is that no true control group is available for this dependent variable, as the respondents in question all received at least the information on the budget.

**Figure 20** Impact of arguments for and against development cooperation on agreement with the development cooperation budget



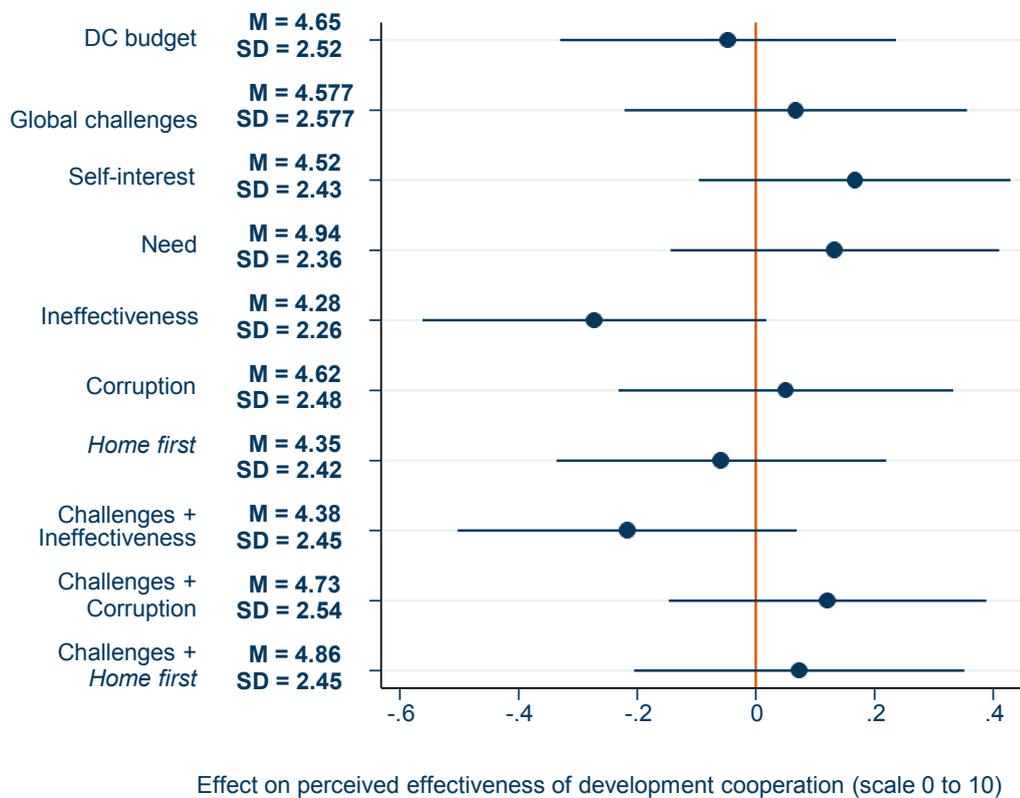
Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDI survey from 4–10 September 2020.  $N = 3,008$ . The figure shows a regression analysis with robust standard errors (type HC3). Dependent variable: Agreement with budget (5 categories). Age, education, gender, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), interest in development cooperation and political orientation (right–left scale) are also included. Due to respondents with missing values, the number of observations reduces to  $N = 1,964$ .  $M$  = mean,  $SD$  = standard deviation. The regression analysis can be found in Table 11 in the online Annex.

An interesting finding is that the negative effect of the combined argument “Challenges + Corruption” is weaker than the also negative effect of the individual argument “Corruption”; the multivariate analysis shows that the combined argument – in contrast to the argument “Corruption” alone – does not have a significant negative effect on the assessment of the development cooperation budget. This finding indicates that the negative arguments can be at least partially refuted by referencing the relevance of development cooperation in connection with global challenges. Another multivariate analysis confirms this assumption (see the right-hand column in Table 11 in the online Annex). The findings show a significant difference between the group that received information discussing corruption and the group that received information discussing corruption while also pointing out global challenges. Therefore, the negative effect can likely be mitigated by putting corruption into a thematic context.

### 3.1.2 Emphasising effectiveness issues reduces the perception of development cooperation as effective

As well as having a direct effect on support for development cooperation, the specified arguments can also indirectly influence support for development cooperation by changing people’s perception of the effectiveness of development cooperation. This, in turn, is a decisive factor in whether people support development cooperation (e.g. Burkot and Wood, 2017; Schneider and Gleser, 2018, p. 27–30).

**Figure 21** Impact of arguments for and against development cooperation on the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 4–10 September 2020. N = 3,008. Regression analysis with robust standard errors (type HC3). Dependent variable: Perceived aid effectiveness (scale 0–10). Age, education, gender, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), interest in development cooperation and political orientation (right–left scale) are also included. Due to respondents failing to provide information, the number of observations reduces to N = 2,318. M = mean value, SD = standard deviation. The regression analysis can be found in Table 13 in the online Annex.

In order to find out whether the information affects the perception of development cooperations’s effectiveness, after reading the text respondents’ were asked to state whether they think that the German Government can have any impact on poverty in poor countries and how effective the Government’s financial support of development aid is on the whole in their opinion. For this, the survey used a scale from 0 (“It cannot have any impact”) to 10 (“It can have a great impact”) or from 0 (“completely ineffective”) to 10 (“extremely effective”). The two questions were then summarised in an additive index with a value scale of 0 to 10. The more pronounced the index, the higher the perception of development cooperation’s effectiveness.

Figure 21 shows the difference in the individual groups’ perceptions of effectiveness. Again, the group that did not receive any information serves as the control group. The results show that simply pointing out the ineffectiveness of development cooperation goes hand in hand with a lower perceived effectiveness.<sup>38</sup> In all other groups, there were no noteworthy differences to the control group.

<sup>38</sup> However, the difference is only significant at the ten-percent level and therefore subject to greater statistical uncertainty.

### 3.1.3 People whose support for development cooperation is low respond negatively to arguments criticising development cooperation

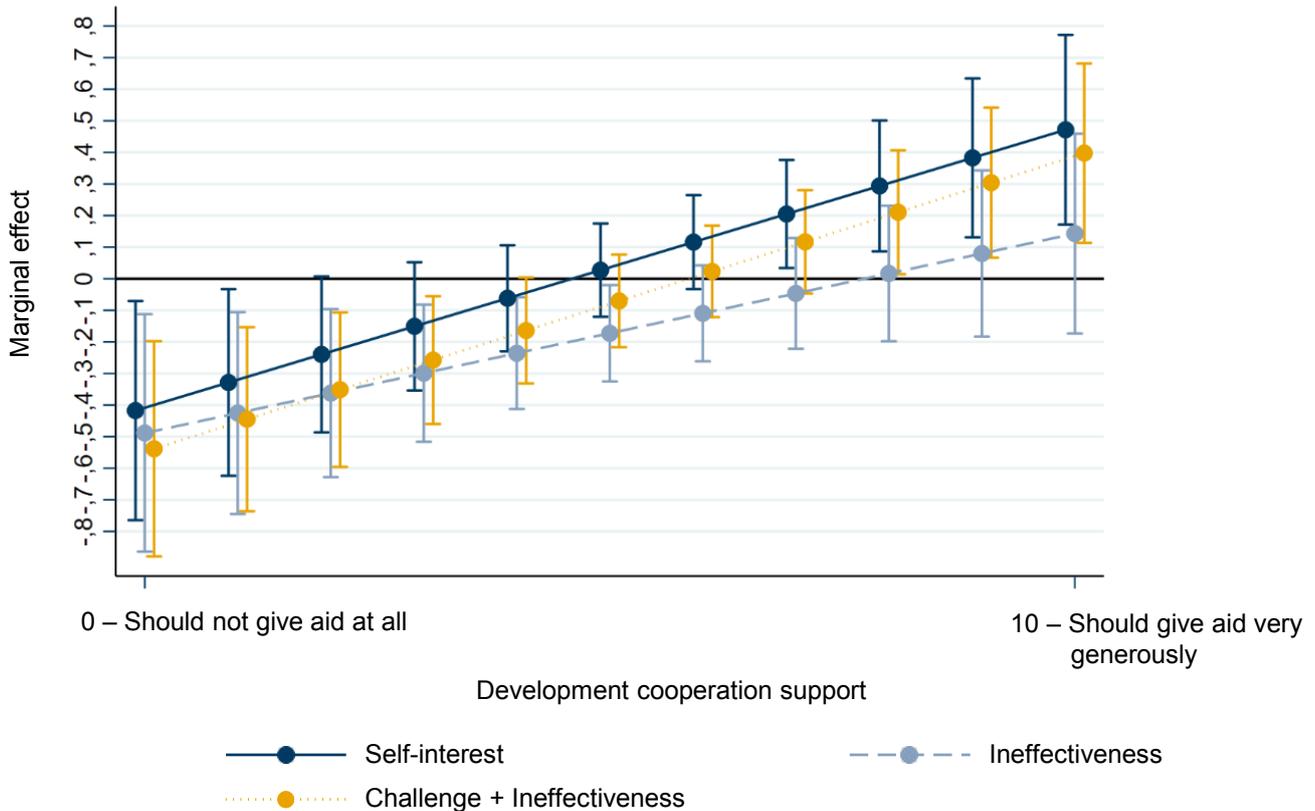
To what extent do the effects of the arguments used on agreement with the development cooperation budget depend on the respondents' general attitudes towards development cooperation?<sup>39</sup> Figure 22 shows that information that discusses „self-interest“, „ineffectiveness“ and „challenge + ineffectiveness“ has a negative influence on people who are generally less supportive of development cooperation.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the various arguments have a stronger negative impact on agreement with the development cooperation budget if people have negative pre-held beliefs regarding development cooperation than if they have positive beliefs. This means that even the argument that development cooperation is also in Germany's own interest when it comes to tackling global challenges such as climate change and refugee movements does not result in greater support for development cooperation among people who are generally critical towards the topic. At the same time, the figure shows that these negative effects decrease the greater the general support for development cooperation, plotted along the horizontal axis. In the case of „self-interest“ (dark blue dots and line) and „Challenge + Ineffectiveness“ (orange dots and line), the data even shows that the effect of these arguments is positive if people generally view development cooperation in a positive light.

The result for the effect of the topic combination „Challenge + Ineffectiveness“ (orange dots and line in Figure 22) is particularly relevant for development policy actors. This illustrates that even negative arguments can be received positively if the significance of development cooperation in mastering global challenges is adequately put into context. This is not surprising. After all, it is to be expected that people who generally support development cooperation also agree that it contributes to mastering global challenges and that this is also in Germany's own interest. At the same time, they likely attach less importance to information on the ineffectiveness of development cooperation. It is also possible that they actually appreciate a certain amount of transparency regarding the challenges and failures of development cooperation.

<sup>39</sup> These moderators or moderation variables were measured before the actual experiment so they were not influenced by the randomly presented information or arguments (treatments). The moderation analyses are documented in *Sections 3.2.2 to 3.2.4 of the online Annex*.

<sup>40</sup> The moderation effect for the „Ineffectiveness“ group is only significant at the ten-percent level and must therefore be viewed as more uncertain.

**Figure 22** Impact of arguments for and against development cooperation on agreement with the development cooperation budget depending on support for development cooperation before the experiment

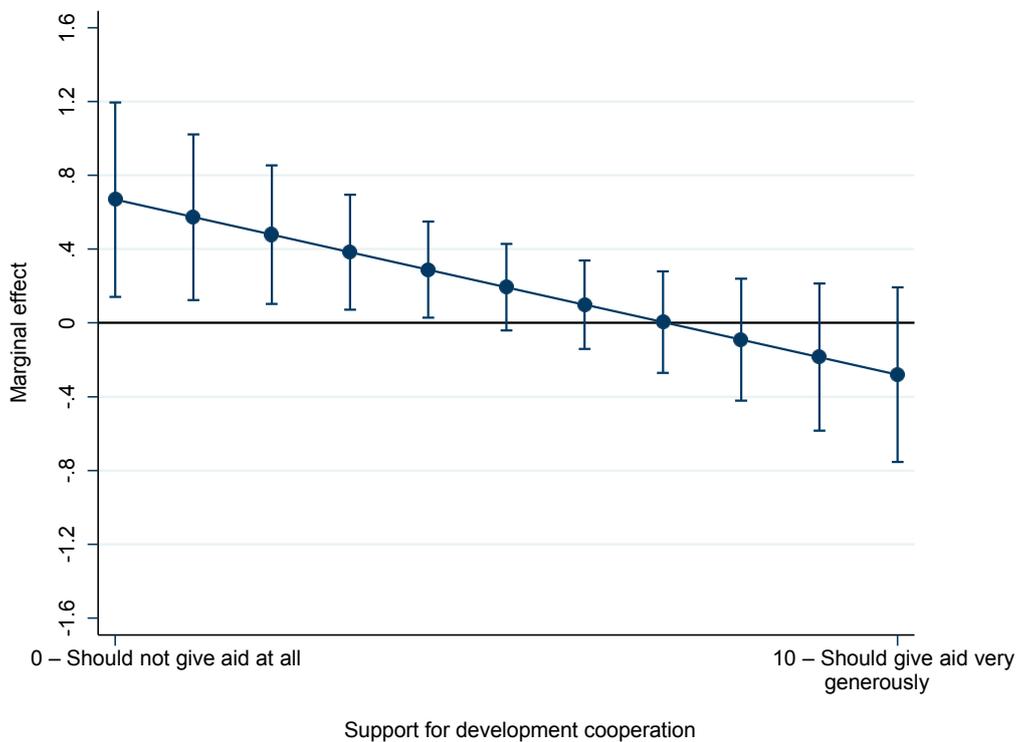


Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 4–10 September 2020. N = 3,008. The graph shows the marginal effects of the treatments on agreement with the planned expenditure for development cooperation within the federal budget (5 response categories) across the value range of the moderator “Support for development cooperation” (scale 0–10). The analyses use the same model specification and contain the same control variables as the underlying model in Figure 20 for determining the average treatment effects. Only interaction terms that are statistically significant at a level of ten percent are plotted.

Figure 23 also shows that the effect of the argument “Need” on the perception of development cooperation’s effectiveness depends on the respondents’ pre-held beliefs. People who show little or no support for development cooperation perceive the effectiveness as higher if they are told that it is necessary because of hunger, poverty and diseases in the partner country. This effect does not occur with people who show moderate to strong support for development cooperation.<sup>41</sup> It should be kept in mind that the latter are people who, on average, perceive the effectiveness of development cooperation as higher while this is not the case for those who show little support for development cooperation. Consequently, pointing out the need could increase the perception of effectiveness among people who show less support for development cooperation.

<sup>41</sup> However, the moderation effect only reaches the ten-percent significance level and is therefore subject to greater statistical uncertainty.

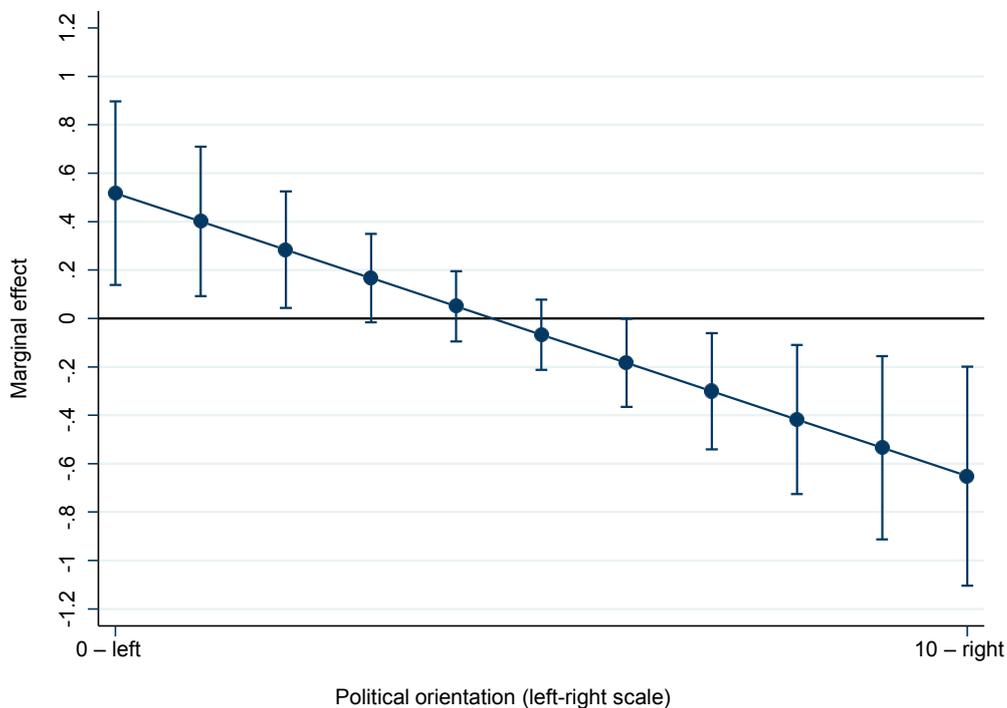
**Figure 23** Impact of the argument “Need” on perceived effectiveness of development cooperation depending on support for development cooperation before the experiment



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 4–10 September 2020. N = 3,008. The graph shows the marginal effects of the treatments on the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (index 0 = “low effectiveness” to 10 = “high effectiveness”) across the value range of the moderator “Support for development cooperation” (scale 0–10). The analyses use the same model specification and contain the same control variables as the underlying model in Figure 21 for determining the average treatment effects. Only interaction terms that are statistically significant at a level of 10 percent are plotted.

Another analysis shows that the effect of the arguments for and against development cooperation depends on the respondents’ political orientation on the traditional left-to right scale. People who position themselves further left on the political spectrum actually support development cooperation more if they receive information on “Challenges + Effectiveness”, as Figure 24 shows. By contrast, people who position themselves further to the right tend to support development cooperation less if they receive this information. This can most likely be attributed to the fact that political orientation influences how people perceive the provided information (Jost et al., 2009). While those from the left of the spectrum emphasise values such as fairness or equality and appreciate international cooperation to master global challenges, people from the right or conservative spectrum may attach more importance to efficient and economical budgetary policy and, accordingly, weight the information on ineffectiveness more highly.

**Figure 24** Impact of the argument “Challenges + Ineffectiveness” on agreement with the development cooperation budget depending on political orientation



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 4–10 September 2020.  $N = 3,008$ . The graph shows the marginal effects of the treatments on agreement with the planned expenditure for DC within the federal budget across the value range of the moderator “Political orientation” (scale 0 = “left” to 10 = “right”).

The study also analysed whether the effect of the various arguments depends on how high the respondents perceive the effectiveness of development cooperation to be or how great their interest in the topic of development cooperation is. However, no statistically significant correlations can be found. It can be assumed that the effect of the arguments does not depend on these two factors.

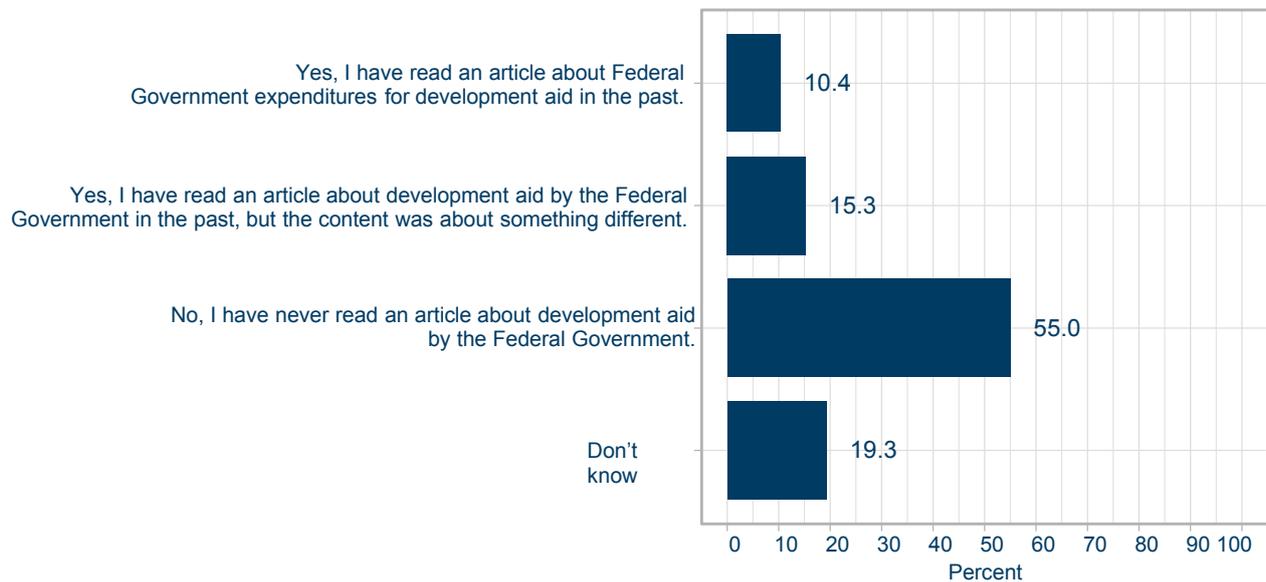
### 3.2 Excursus: Proportion of people who come into contact with the topic of development policy via the media

In order to gauge the impact of media reporting, as well as the effect of the previously discussed arguments, an important factor is whether the respondents come into contact with the topic of development policy through the media at all. Figure 25 shows how many of the respondents have read an article on the development budget in the past.<sup>42</sup> Around 25 percent of the respondents stated that they have read an article on development aid; in the case of 10 percent, the article also discussed Federal Government expenditure for development aid. By contrast, 55 percent of respondents claimed that they have never consciously read a newspaper article on this topic. Just under 19 percent do not know. This is consistent with the findings from Section 2, which show that the share of newspaper articles relating to development policy and development cooperation is low compared with the total number of published articles. Accordingly, citizens most likely rarely come across such articles by chance.

<sup>42</sup> Details on this analysis can be found in *Section 3.3 of the online Annex*. The participants who received information relating to development cooperation or an argument were asked whether they had already read similar articles to the one they were given. The respondents in the control group, who did not receive an article with information or a development cooperation-related argument, were directly asked whether they had previously read an article on the planned expenditure for development cooperation within the federal budget or at least on development cooperation in general without any reference to a certain point in the survey.

The following describes which factors play a role in whether respondents had already read an article on the development cooperation budget or development cooperation in general in the past.

**Figure 25** Share of respondents who have already read an article on development cooperation



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 4–10 September 2020. N = 3,008.

A multivariate analysis shows that the probability that a respondent has already read an article on development cooperation increases with the interest in the topic.<sup>43</sup> This is hardly surprising, but clearly shows that development cooperation-related content primarily reaches those who are interested in the topic. Interpreted somewhat more broadly, this could indicate that both arguments criticising development cooperation and those supporting it primarily reach those who have a connection to the topic anyway. In addition, the probability of having already read an article on the topic is higher for people who lean far to the left or right on the political left-right scale than for people who state that they are politically centrist. The data also indicates that people who either strongly support development cooperation or reject it have already read such articles or similar ones. In summary, the findings on political orientation and support for development cooperation indicate that people with a stronger opinion on development cooperation are more likely to take in information relating to this topic via newspapers. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the probability of having read an article relating to development cooperation is greater among people with a higher level of formal education. Taking all other factors into account, women less frequently state that they have read a corresponding article than men.

### 3.3 Summary

For most people in Germany and other development cooperation donor countries, the media is likely the most important point of contact with content relating to development policy – despite the fact that the share of reporting that relates directly to development cooperation is low (see Section 2 as well as Schneider et al., 2019). Despite the low presence of development policy content in traditional media, the question still arises as to whether reporting – or the arguments for and against development cooperation contained there – can influence public opinion. It is also important to consider that citizens can also come into contact with the

<sup>43</sup> A logistic regression was estimated for this using as the dependent variable a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if the person has already read an article on the expenditure for development policy or on development cooperation in general. If the person has not read such an article or selected the option “don't know”, the variable takes the value 0. Independent variables added to the analysis were age, gender, education level, interest in development cooperation, political orientation (left-right scale) and support for development cooperation. At this point, it must be pointed out that the results should not be interpreted causally; these are merely statistical connections. The regression analysis can be found in Table 30 in the online Annex.

arguments discussed in this section in other contexts, for example when communicating with political and civil-society actors.

The results of this section show that it is mostly arguments against development cooperation that affect public attitudes towards the topic. For example, arguments regarding corruption or ineffectiveness of development cooperation can reduce citizens' agreement with as well as their perception of the effectiveness of development cooperation. However, these negative effects cannot simply be transferred to the general population. People who support development cooperation in particular respond more weakly to critical arguments regarding its effectiveness. This means that their support for development cooperation barely declines as a result of contact with such arguments. Furthermore, critical arguments that focus on corruption, for example, can be mitigated by putting them in context. One way to do this is to emphasise the general relevance of development cooperation for mastering global challenges – such as climate change and refugee movements.

At the same time, the results illustrate that arguments that emphasise the effectiveness and relevance of development cooperation have little to no impact on attitudes towards the topic. The results clearly differ from previous studies, which attribute positive effects to the positive arguments (Hurst et al., 2017).<sup>44</sup> The results therefore show that it is difficult in Germany to convince the general public about development cooperation with the help of “pro” arguments – at least using the arguments tested in this experiment.

For development communication, the results of this study indicate that there is an area of tension. The task of development communication is to provide the public with transparent information about development cooperation and its objectives and results, but also to address failures and challenges. However, transparent communication regarding challenges and failures – for example with regard to corruption in the partner countries or the effectiveness of development cooperation – could result in declining support for development cooperation among some sections of the population. This does not or barely affects people who have a positive attitude towards development cooperation. Conversely, the findings imply that the arguments that point out the significance of development cooperation and the need in developing countries can hardly convince the public. However, the results also indicate that the negative effect that references to corruption or ineffectiveness of development cooperation can have can be at least partially mitigated by pointing out the relevance of development cooperation in overcoming global challenges. The results also suggest that people who show less support for development cooperation perceive the effectiveness of development cooperation to be more positive if they see information emphasising the need in partner countries.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the study does not make statements on the effect of repeatedly confronting people with arguments. It also did not examine what role the source of the information plays. For example, it may make a difference whether politicians, scientists or representatives of NGOs speak out for or against development cooperation.<sup>45</sup> It is not possible to come to any conclusions regarding whether and to what extent a change in attitude would occur under these conditions based on the available information; this question will have to be a task for future research.

<sup>44</sup> Hurst et al. (2017) use two different approaches. In one scenario, they present an argument and in another they present the argument supported with data (for example in the form of statistics). In their study, it becomes evident that arguments only have an impact if they are supported with data.

<sup>45</sup> For information on factors that influence the impact of information, such as arguments presented via the media, see, e.g., the overview articles by Chong and Druckman (2007) and Wood (2000).

4. WHAT IMPACT DOES INFORMATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION HAVE ON ATTITUDES TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION?

**Box 9** Key results in Section 4

- Information on the effectiveness of development cooperation projects can contribute to the general public assessing such projects more positively. Information on outputs and outcomes appears to be more important than information on inputs.
- When it comes to the perceived general effectiveness of development cooperation, the results indicate that any information on development cooperation projects can contribute to a higher belief in aid effectiveness.
- Information on inputs, outputs and outcomes has no effect on support for development cooperation.
- The public assesses information on target groups and results as particularly relevant for evaluating a development cooperation project.

Although numerous surveys and studies have revealed great public support for development cooperation, there is widespread doubt about the effectiveness of development policy measures (e.g. Eurobarometer, 2019; Riddell, 2007, Chapter 7; Schneider and Gleser, 2018). In summer 2017, around 25 percent of the German population considered development cooperation as ineffective (Schneider and Gleser, 2018, page 28). In contrast to this, only 10 percent of the population explicitly view development cooperation as effective. Added to this are worries that a large share of development cooperation funding is lost to corruption in the partner countries. At the same time, a correlation can be seen between the subjective perception of development cooperation's effectiveness and support for development cooperation (Burkot and Wood, 2017; Schneider and Gleser, 2018, page 28-30). The greater the doubts regarding the effectiveness of development cooperation, the lower the support. As a result, the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 concluded that the broad support for development policy has rather fragile foundations and it is important to address the existing doubts through transparent communication.

Since the 1990s, aid effectiveness has also played a key role in the discussion about development cooperation (Riddell, 2007). The OECD conferences (OECD High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness) in Rome (2002), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) are the most prominent examples that the development cooperation community is aware of the problems and is making the subject of effectiveness a priority. Fighting corruption is also a permanent topic in development cooperation; it entered the international agenda at the latest on adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003 and is reflected in the declarations on increasing the effectiveness of development cooperation that arose from the aforementioned conferences. Both topics were also a high priority in the scope of the "BMZ 2030" reform process (BMZ, 2020a). For example, the BMZ has a separate "Data and effectiveness" directorate and has defined corruption prevention as one of the central quality features of German development cooperation.

Criticism of development cooperation frequently refers to its effectiveness (Riddell, 2007, p. 165-166). It is therefore hardly surprising that both governmental and civil-society actors make every effort to provide the public with information about the effectiveness of development cooperation measures (see Bodem-Schrötgens and Becker, 2020; Da Costa, 2009). An example is the "Entwicklung wirkt" (development is effective) campaign launched in 2019, which BMZ supports. In the campaign various NGOs have banded together with the support of celebrities to make the topic of aid effectiveness more tangible to Germany's population and to reduce reservations regarding the effectiveness of development cooperation.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly as in other policy fields and areas of government and civil society (see, e.g., Grimmelhuijsen, 2012; Meijer et al., 2012), information on the financial resources deployed (inputs), activities carried out (outputs) and results achieved (outcomes) aims to create transparency and increase public trust in and support for development cooperation. In the case of charities, fundraising via donations is an additional topic (Bodem-Schrötgens and Becker, 2020). Viewed from a political science perspective, the basic idea is that presenting

<sup>46</sup> For further information on the "Entwicklung wirkt" campaign see [www.entwicklung-wirkt.de](http://www.entwicklung-wirkt.de) (website in German; last accessed on 2 September 2020).

evidence of effectiveness will reduce the information asymmetries between actors (government, NGOs) and the public and therefore reduce doubts about the performance of the involved actors (Bodem-Schrötgens and Becker, 2020, p. 319). Particularly in the case of donations to civil-society organisations, it is likely to be important to most donors that their own donations are linked to tangible results (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011). Even in the state sector, taxpayers probably expect measures funded through taxes to be effective.

In light of this, the question arises as to how the public responds to information on the effectiveness of development cooperation. To date, there has been little research on the influence of relevant information. Although Hurst et al. (2017) observed a positive effect on support for development cooperation in an online survey experiment, it was not statistically significant. Their study also did not distinguish between inputs, outputs and outcomes of development cooperation measures. For the United States and the United Kingdom, studies indicate a positive effect if the information emphasises the low share of development cooperation funding in state expenditures – a highly aggregated presentation of the input (Gilens, 2001; Hurst et al., 2017; Scotto et al., 2017).<sup>47</sup> However, in this case the expenditures were not related to specific results of development cooperation.

There is a higher number of studies on donation behaviour. Experimental studies have generally found that information about effectiveness increases both the willingness to donate and actual donations (Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011). Information on outcomes and on impacts increases donation activity considerably; however, this is not the case for output information (Bodem-Schrötgens and Becker, 2020).<sup>48</sup>

#### 4.1 The impact of information on effectiveness – a survey experiment

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To reduce the described research gap, another online survey experiment (see Box 7 in Section 3) was conducted. Around 4,000 survey participants were divided into groups of roughly the same size with around 250 respondents and presented then with information on the input, output or outcomes of a development cooperation project or a combination of these indicators (field time: 28 July to 11 August 2020). The information on inputs is not among traditional impact indicators but it illustrates the relevance or potential of a project. Furthermore, input-related information is important for creating transparency regarding development policy measures. Actual project descriptions from KfW Development Bank were used for the survey experiment (see KfW Development Bank, 2017, 2018). To ensure comparability, the projects came from the same regional context (East Africa). To test the effect of the development cooperation sector under discussion, the experiment used one project from the education sector and one from the health sector. To ensure that the amount of information and comprehensibility were roughly the same, the project descriptions were adapted and shortened slightly. Table 4 shows the information that was presented to the respondents during the experiment.

<sup>47</sup> This effect was not seen in an Australian sample (Wood, 2018).

<sup>48</sup> The authors write: “Outputs refer to immediate effects, outcomes reflect the intermediate effects, and impacts describe the long-term, intended and unintended effects of a program on beneficiaries and overall society” (Bodem-Schrötgens and Becker, 2020, p. 317).

**Table 4** Experimental groups for the impact of information regarding the effectiveness of development cooperation

Sector of project	Education	Health
Control group	Receives neither project description nor experimentally varied information	
Project description	<p><i>Please take your time to read the following report on a German development aid project. We will then ask you a few questions.</i></p> <p>The Federal Government is funding a development aid project in Kenya. This project supports the school system in two Kenyan refugee camps. The children in the camps are suffering from the impact of their flight and the difficult living conditions in the camps. The project aims to provide the opportunity for basic education and a regular daily routine. KfW Development Bank funds the project in the scope of financial cooperation with Kenya.</p>	<p><i>Please take your time to read the following report on a German development aid project. We will then ask you a few questions.</i></p> <p>The Federal Government is funding a development aid project in Tanzania. The project supports direct healthcare in a rural region of Tanzania. The aim of the project is to improve the health of around 1 million predominantly poor people living in the south of Tanzania. KfW Development Bank funds the project in the scope of financial cooperation with Tanzania.</p>
Input	Germany contributes around EUR 1 million to the project via KfW Development Bank.	Germany contributes around EUR 1.7 million to the project via KfW Development Bank.
Output	Over 100,000 different teaching materials such as textbooks and exercise books as well as some 10,000 school uniforms and 300 lockers were procured as part of this project.	Construction measures were carried out at four hospitals and 23 healthcare facilities as part of this project. The project also financed the building and renovation of 19 staff residences and the procurement of medication in cases of financial bottlenecks and emergency situations.
Outcome	The project contributed to 84% more children in Kenyan refugee camps achieving a school-leaving qualification. This school-leaving qualification rate is higher than the average for Kenya as a whole.	The average utilisation rate of healthcare facilities has increased by 34%. The bed occupancy rate in the district hospitals also increased by 16% and the quality of healthcare services has improved considerably.
Input + Output	[Input] + [Output]	[Input] + [Output]
Output + Outcome	[Output] + [Outcome]	[Output] + [Outcome]
Input + Outcome	[Input] + [Outcome]	[Input] + [Outcome]
Input + Output + Outcome	[Input] + [Output] + [Outcome]	[Input] + [Output] + [Outcome]

Source: own table, based on material from KfW Development Bank (2017, 2018).

The respondents were then asked about

1. the effectiveness of the described project;
2. their support for governmental development cooperation and
3. the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation as a whole.

The effect of the randomly modified information on these three characteristics is analysed below.

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were then asked to state which information they view as useful for assessing development cooperation projects regardless of whether they were supposed to evaluate a project or not.

#### 4.1.1 Information on inputs, outputs and outcomes results in better evaluation of the described project

In the total sample, the respondents assessed the impact of the described project as positive regardless of the information presented. With a mean value of 6.56 and a standard deviation of 2.35, on average all respondents perceive the described project as generally positive.

Among those respondents who received a project from the education sector, the “Outcome”, “Output + Outcome”, “Input + Outcome” and “Input + Output + Outcome” groups show statistically significant positive differences compared to the control group who only read the brief project description (Figure 26, left-hand graph).<sup>49</sup> This means that these groups assess the project more positively. By contrast, the other three groups – “Input”, “Output” and “Input + Output” – do not differ significantly from the control group.

Among the respondents who received information on a project from the health sector, all groups apart from the “Input” group exhibit a positive difference from the “project description only” control group (Figure 26, right-hand graph).<sup>50</sup> It is notable that, compared with the education project, the factor “Output” has a positive effect. This difference could be because the outputs communicated in the health sector (building hospitals) are perceived as more relevant than the outputs communicated in the education sector (provision of teaching materials and school uniforms).

The impact of the information on “input”, “output” and “outcome” only partially depends on the person’s interest in the topic of development cooperation. The *treatment effects* vary depending on the respondents’ interest only in the education project. Four out of the total of seven moderation effects are negative and statistically significant (see [Table 44 in the online Annex](#)).<sup>51</sup> This indicates that the information presented has a weaker effect on the project assessment if the person is more interested in development cooperation.

A similar relationship can be seen between the impact of the information and the respondents’ subjective knowledge of development cooperation. The results show that, in the education project, the impact of information on the “outcome” and “output + outcome” depends on the respondent’s subjective knowledge. The effect is significantly smaller for people who report their knowledge as high than for those with less knowledge ([Table 43 in the online Annex](#)).<sup>52</sup>

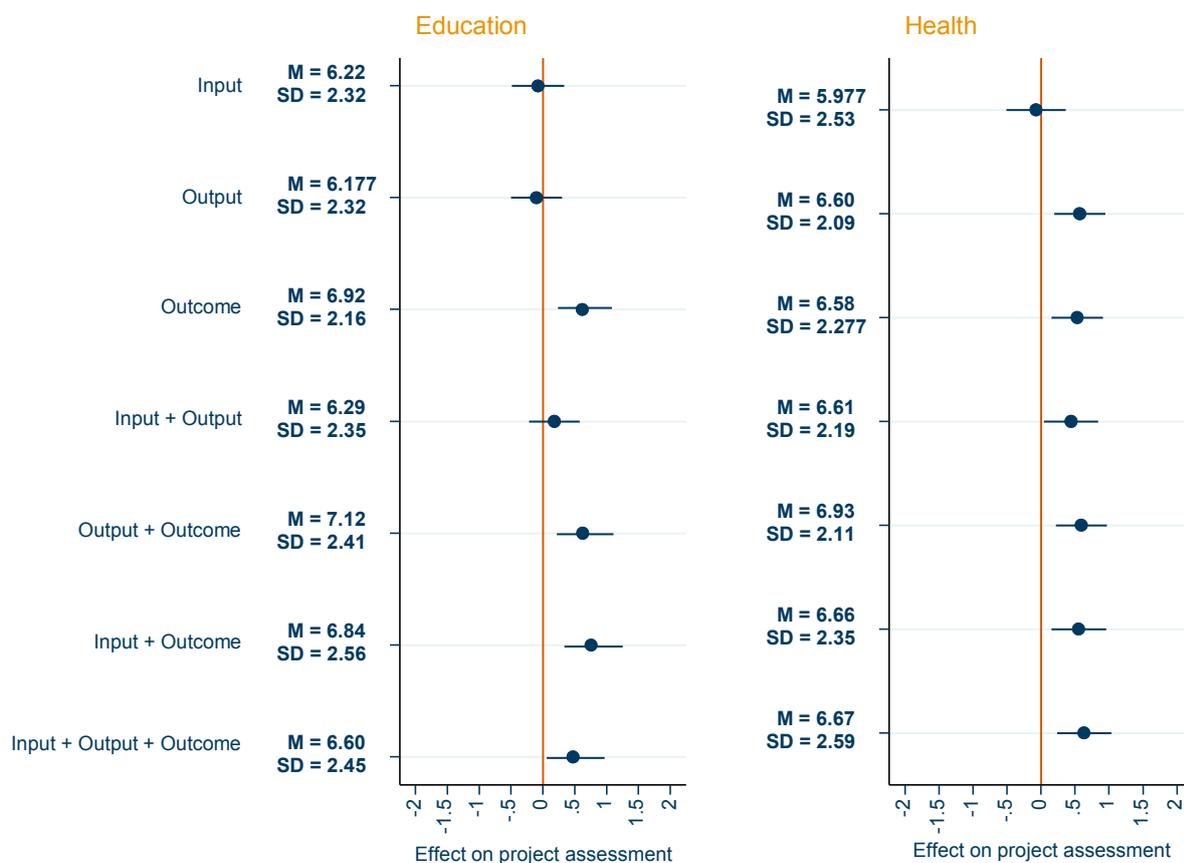
<sup>49</sup> All differences are statistically significant to at least the 5-percent level. With a difference of approximately 0.5 points or more on the scale from 0 to 10, these differences are also substantially relevant.

<sup>50</sup> With the exception of the “Input” group, all differences are also statistically significant at the five-percent level. At a size of around 0.45 and 0.60, these differences are also substantively relevant.

<sup>51</sup> Specifically, these are the “Input” ( $p < 0.05$ ), “Outcome” ( $p < 0.05$ ), “Output + Outcome” ( $p < 0.1$ ) and “Input + Output + Outcome” ( $p < 0.001$ ) groups. In the healthcare project, all coefficients are also negative. However, only the interaction term for the “Output + Outcome” group reaches the 10-percent significance level.

<sup>52</sup> The two interaction terms between the specified groups and the subjective knowledge about development cooperation are each statistically significant at the five-percent level. The other interaction terms are also all negative, which suggests a weaker impact of the information as knowledge increases. However, these moderation effects are not significant. In the healthcare project, all coefficients with the exception of “Input + Output” are also negative and not significant.

**Figure 26** Impacts of effectiveness information on project assessment



Source: own visualisation. ResponDI survey from 28 July–11 August 2020.  $N = 4,268$ . OLS regression with robust standard errors (type HC3). Dependent variable: additive index that summarises five statements regarding assessment of the project (relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, sustainability) and scales them to the value range 0–10 (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.93). The model also includes the following control variables: political orientation (left-right scale), trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), subjective knowledge about development cooperation, interest in the topic of development cooperation, education, gender and age. The graph plots the unstandardised treatment effects of the experimental groups compared with the group that only received the project description without any further information on “input”, “output” and “outcome” (95 percent confidence intervals).  $M$  = mean,  $SD$  = standard deviation. The regression analysis can be found in Table 38 in the online Annex.

By contrast, political orientation on the left-right scale, trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation measured before the experiment and the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation do not play a systematic role.

The results illustrate that providing project-specific information can improve the assessment of the project in question. Now the question arises as to whether the provided information also influences the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation in general.

#### 4.1.2 Information on inputs, outputs and outcomes leads to a higher perceived effectiveness of development cooperation

Across all groups, on average the participants assessed the effectiveness of development cooperation as average (mean value 5.15; standard deviation 2.52). The results show that all groups that received information on a project in the education sector perceived development cooperation as significantly more effective than those in the control group that did not receive any information (Figure 27).<sup>53</sup> One thing that stands out in particular is that the group that only received a project description does not differ greatly from the groups that received details on the input (“How much money was spent?”), output (“Which measures were carried out?”) and outcomes (“What impact did the measure have?”). The same picture can be seen for the groups that received information on a healthcare project. All groups that received information on “input”, “output” or “outcome” perceive the effectiveness as significantly more positive than the control group. The differences are even slightly greater on average than in the education project (Figure 27, right-hand graph).<sup>54</sup>

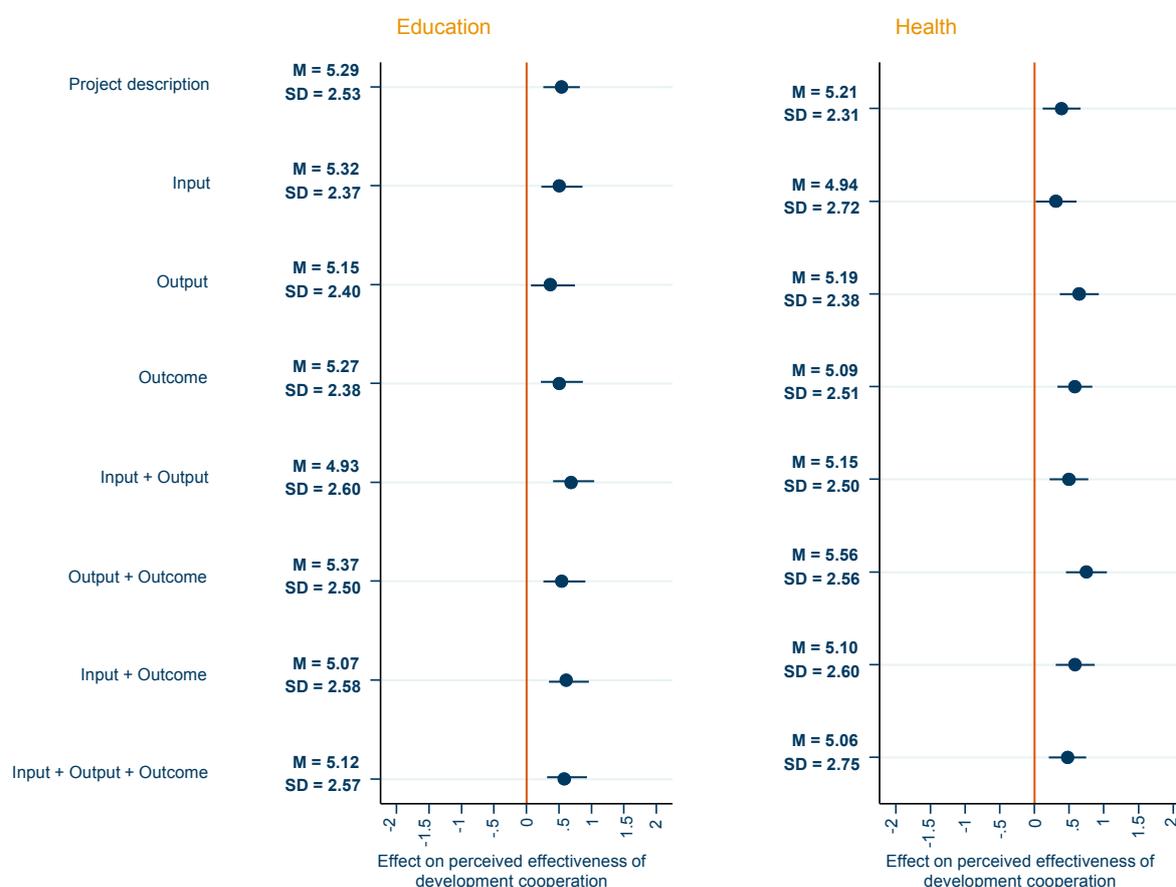
For the perception of the effectiveness of development cooperation, the pattern that was found for the project assessment is repeated in the moderation analysis. Again, the impact of the information on the healthcare project depends on the respondents’ subjectively reported knowledge about development cooperation. People who rate their subjective knowledge as high tend to respond significantly more weakly to information on the healthcare project. Five out of the eight total moderation effects are statistically significant.<sup>55</sup> This tendency can also be seen for the education project, where the impact of the information again depends on the respondents’ subjectively assessed knowledge. However, in this case only two of the moderation effects are significant.<sup>56</sup> No moderation effects can be found for political orientation (left-right scale), trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation measured before the experiment and the interest in development cooperation (see *Tables 46 to 51 in the online Annex*).

<sup>53</sup> The coefficients are in the range between 0.5 and 0.7 and are statistically significant on at least the five-percent level. Only the “output” group shows a slightly lower difference at 0.37. The latter, in turn, may be because the outputs in the education project (teaching materials, school uniforms) are perceived as less tangible than the outputs in the healthcare project.

<sup>54</sup> Generally speaking, the coefficients have values between 0.50 and 0.75. They are only lower for “Project description only” and “Input” with values of 0.39 and 0.31 respectively. All differences reach a significance level of at least 5 percent.

<sup>55</sup> Specifically, these are the “Project description only” ( $p < 0.1$ ), “Output” ( $p < 0.05$ ), “Outcome” ( $p < 0.05$ ), “Output + Outcome” ( $p < 0.05$ ) and “Input + Outcome” ( $p < 0.1$ ) groups. All coefficients of the interaction terms between treatment groups and subjective knowledge about development cooperation to analyse the moderation effects are negative.

<sup>56</sup> Specifically, these are the “Outcome” ( $p < 0.05$ ) and “Output + Outcome” ( $p < 0.05$ ) groups. Apart from the “Input + Output + Outcome” group (coefficient: 0.00), all other coefficients of the interaction terms between treatment groups and subjective knowledge about development cooperation to investigate the moderation effects are negative.

**Figure 27** Effects of information about effectiveness on the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation

Source: own visualisation. Respondi survey from 28 July–11 August 2020.  $N = 4,268$ . OLS regression with robust standard errors (type HC3). Dependent variable: additive index that summarises two statements regarding the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation and scales them to the value range 0–10 (Pearson correlation: 0.81). The model also includes the following control variables: political orientation (left-right scale), trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), subjective knowledge about development cooperation, interest in the topic of development cooperation, education, gender and age. The graph plots the unstandardised treatment effects of the experimental groups compared with the group that did not receive any information on a development cooperation project (95 percent confidence intervals).  $M$  = mean value,  $SD$  = standard deviation. The regression analyses can be found in Table 45 in the online Annex.

#### 4.1.3 Information on inputs, outputs and outcomes do not have any relevant impact on support for development cooperation

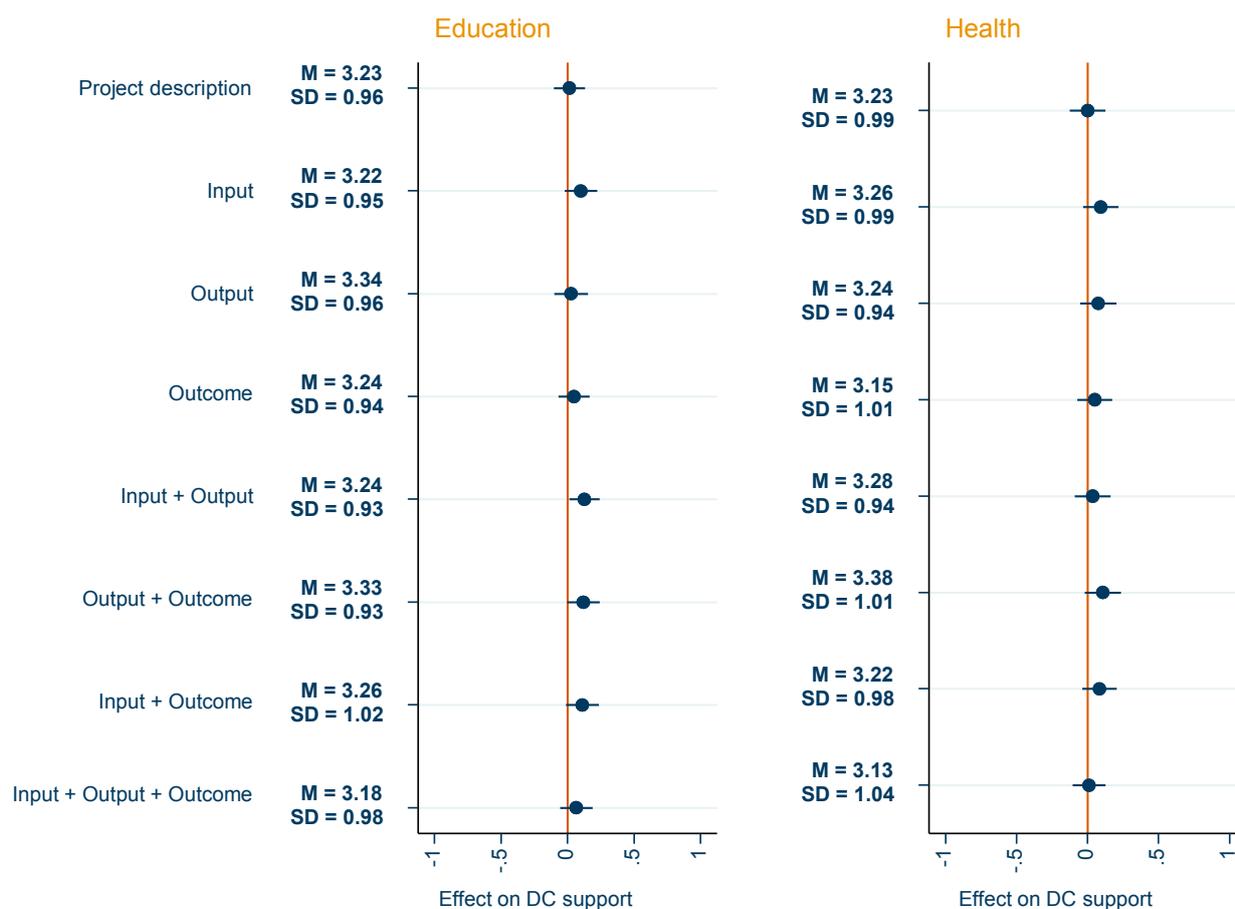
Following from the questions regarding the impacts of the presented information on the direct project assessment and the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation is the question of whether the information on “input”, “output” and “outcome” is also reflected in the respondents’ general support for development cooperation (unrelated to these projects). In the sample, support for development cooperation is moderate with a mean value of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.97 (scale of 1 = “low” to 5 = “high”).

As Figure 28 shows, for the education project only information on “input + output”, “output + outcome” and “input + outcome” has a significant positive impact on general support for development cooperation. This means that support in these groups is higher compared with the control group, who received neither a

project description nor information on input, output or outcome (Figure 28, left-hand graph).<sup>57</sup> However, the differences are small. For the healthcare project, only the “Output + Outcome” group exhibits a significant positive difference (Figure 28, right-hand graph).<sup>58</sup> The remaining information has no significant effect on support for development cooperation. Overall, the data does not indicate that the presented information substantially increases public support for development cooperation.

For development cooperation support, it was also checked whether the impact of the information offered in the experiment varies based on important factors influencing attitudes towards development cooperation. However, the analyses did not reveal any systematic patterns (see *Tables 53 to 58 in the online Annex*).

**Figure 28 Impacts of effectiveness information on support for development cooperation**



Source: own visualisation. Respondi survey from 28 July–11 August 2020. N = 4,268. OLS regression with robust standard errors (type HC3). Dependent variable: additive index that summarises three statements regarding support for development cooperation and scales them to the value range 1-5 (Cronbach’s alpha: 0.76). The model also includes the following control variables: political orientation (left-right scale), trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), subjective knowledge about development cooperation, interest in the topic of development cooperation, education, gender and age. The graph plots the unstandardised treatment effects of the experimental groups compared with the group that did not receive any information on a development cooperation project (95 percent confidence intervals). M = mean, SD = standard deviation. The regression analyses can be found in Table 52 in the online Annex.

<sup>57</sup> The difference for the group that received information on “Input + Output” for the education project reached the 5-percent significance level, while the differences for the “Output + Outcome” and “Input + Outcome” groups reached at least the 10-percent level.

<sup>58</sup> Only the difference for the “Output + Outcome” group is significant at the 10-percent level for the healthcare project.

## 4.2 Relevance of information on development projects

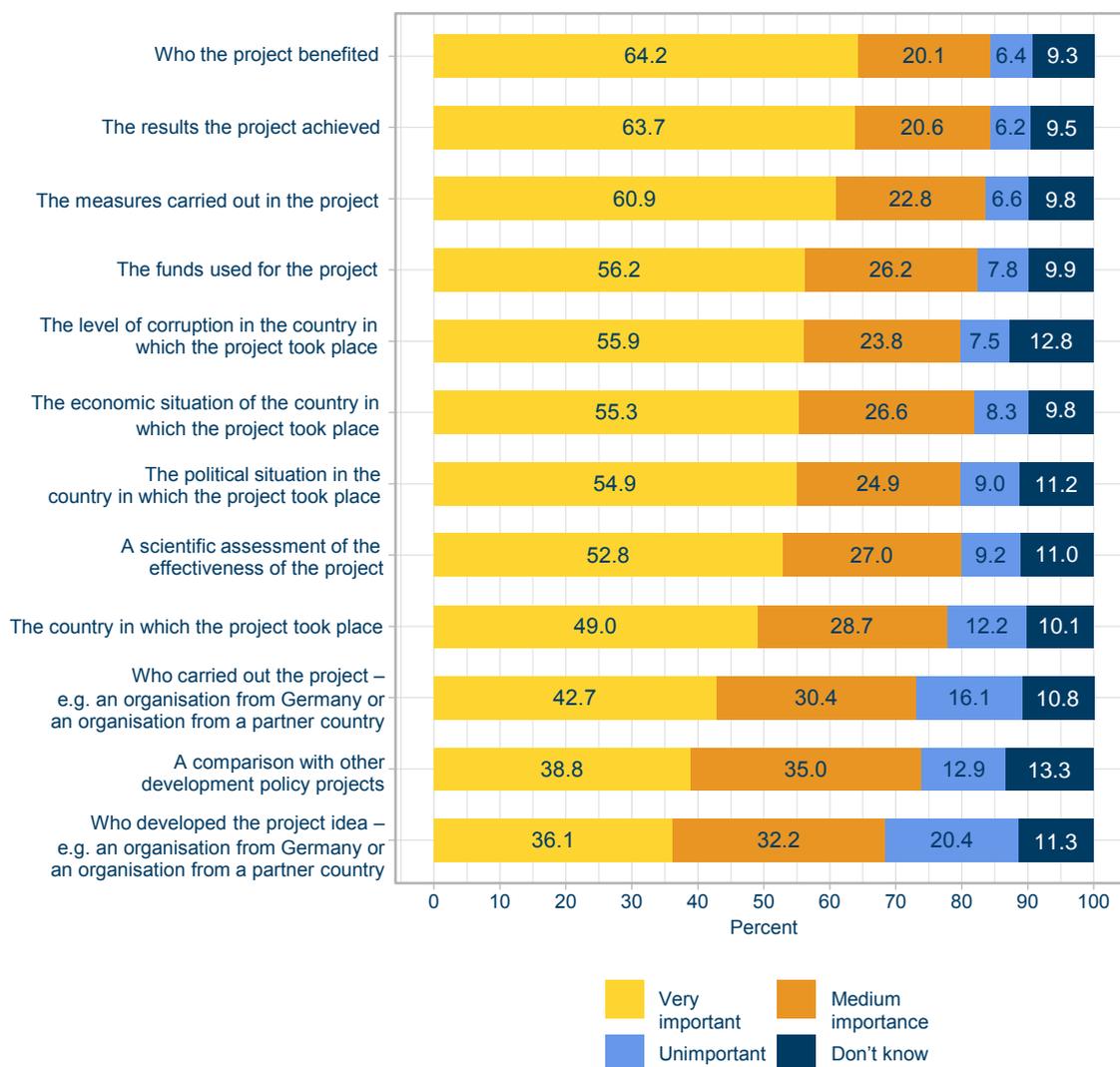
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Following the question about the effects of various information regarding the expense and results of development cooperation projects is the question as to which information the public views as important to be able to assess development policy projects. To investigate this, the survey asked the following question: “When you think about your assessment: How important is the following information for you to make your assessment? On the scale from 0 to 10, 0 means ‘not important at all’ and 10 means ‘extremely important’.”<sup>59</sup> Figure 29 provides an overview. For the sake of clarity, the answer scale has been divided into three groups. A first look at the plotted proportional values clearly shows that there is no piece of information that the majority rated as unimportant (light blue bar).

The information that was rated as most important was who the project benefited and what results the project achieved (65 percent of respondents answered “very important” for each of these). Following these criteria is information about the measures carried out in the project at approximately 61 percent. 56 percent of respondents each placed the funds used for the project and the level of corruption in the partner country in the “very important” category. By contrast, information on the organisations that developed the project idea and implemented the project were seen as less important (36 and 43 percent “very important” respectively). A comparison with other development policy projects also placed at the end of the ranking (39 percent “extremely important”). Ranked between these aspects are a scientific assessment of the effectiveness of the project and other information about the country where the project was implemented and the political and economic situation there.

<sup>59</sup> The respondents in the control group, who received neither a project description nor information on input, output and outcome, answered the following alternative version of the question: “When you think about development aid projects: How important is the following information for your assessment of these projects? On the scale from 0 to 10, 0 means ‘not important at all’ and 10 means ‘very important’.”

**Figure 29** Relevance of the information on development cooperation projects for the respondents



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 28 July–11 August 2020. N = 4,268. To make things easier to understand, the answer scale (0 = “not important at all” to 10 = “very important”) has been recoded into “unimportant” (0–3), “medium importance” (4–6) and “very important” (7–10). For details see Section 4.3 in the online Annex.

### 4.3 Summary

Due to existing reservations regarding the effectiveness of development cooperation measures, development cooperation actors face the question of how to communicate the results of development cooperation to the public or how citizens will react to information on the effectiveness of development cooperation. For this reason, a survey experiment examined how information on inputs (“How much money was spent on a project?”), outputs (“Which concrete measures were implemented in the project?”) and outcomes (“What results did a project achieve?”) of development cooperation projects influences their assessment, the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation and the support for development cooperation. The survey also asked which information on development cooperation projects is important to the public.

The results of the experiment showed the following:

1. Information on the effectiveness of development cooperation projects (outputs and outcomes) and information on financial expenses (inputs) results in the respondents giving the described project a better rating. Outputs and outcomes play a more important role than inputs.

2. Any information presented regarding inputs, outputs and outcomes results in a higher perceived effectiveness of development cooperation.
3. However, these results have barely positive or only very little effect at all on general support for development cooperation. It is likely that more fundamental factors such as political orientation, value orientations, moral convictions or long-term changes to the perception of development cooperation's effectiveness have a greater effect on the public's support (Hudson and van Heerde-Hudson, 2012; Milner and Tingley, 2013, or also refer to Section 5 of this report). However, it is important not to overlook the finding that the belief in aid effectiveness has a positive relationship with support for development cooperation: the more effective development cooperation is perceived to be, the greater the general support for development cooperation (see Burkot and Wood, 2017; Schneider and Gleser, 2018, p. 27-30). This means that information on the effectiveness of development cooperation projects could also indirectly influence support by bringing about a more positive assessments of development cooperation projects or development cooperation's effectiveness.

Similarly, the general public attaches the most value to information on the beneficiaries and results of development cooperation projects. This reinforces the current practice of communicating development cooperation results. The findings also show that solely communicating expenses (inputs) at least does not negatively impact the assessment of projects. In fact, for this case we can even observe positive effects on the perceived effectiveness of development cooperation. Information on the organisations that plan and implement these projects is rated as less important.<sup>60</sup>

Amidst all efforts to disseminate information on the effectiveness of development cooperation and create transparency about this field of activity, it is important not to forget: we cannot assume a fundamentally positive connection between the provision of information and a positive perception of development cooperation (Hudson and Heerde-Hudson, 2012, p. 18). For example, it cannot be ruled out that transparency is more likely to awaken mistrust in some sections of the population, especially if the communication work also addresses failures and challenges due to corruption or weak state structures in the partner countries (see Sections 3 and 6 of this report for more on this). However, this section did not dig deeper into the impact of such critical or negative information about development cooperation projects.

<sup>60</sup> However, a study from Great Britain points in a different direction: if citizens find out that the British Government is responsible for a project, they are more likely to have the impression that the funds for a project were spent wisely than in cases in which another organisation is responsible for the project (Dietrich et al., 2019). In addition, citizens who have a more conservative political orientation express more support for development cooperation in this case. This *aid branding* demonstrates that information on the implementing organisations should not be underestimated.

5. WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF MORAL APPEALS AND WHICH ROLE DO MORAL CONCERNS PLAY IN SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION?

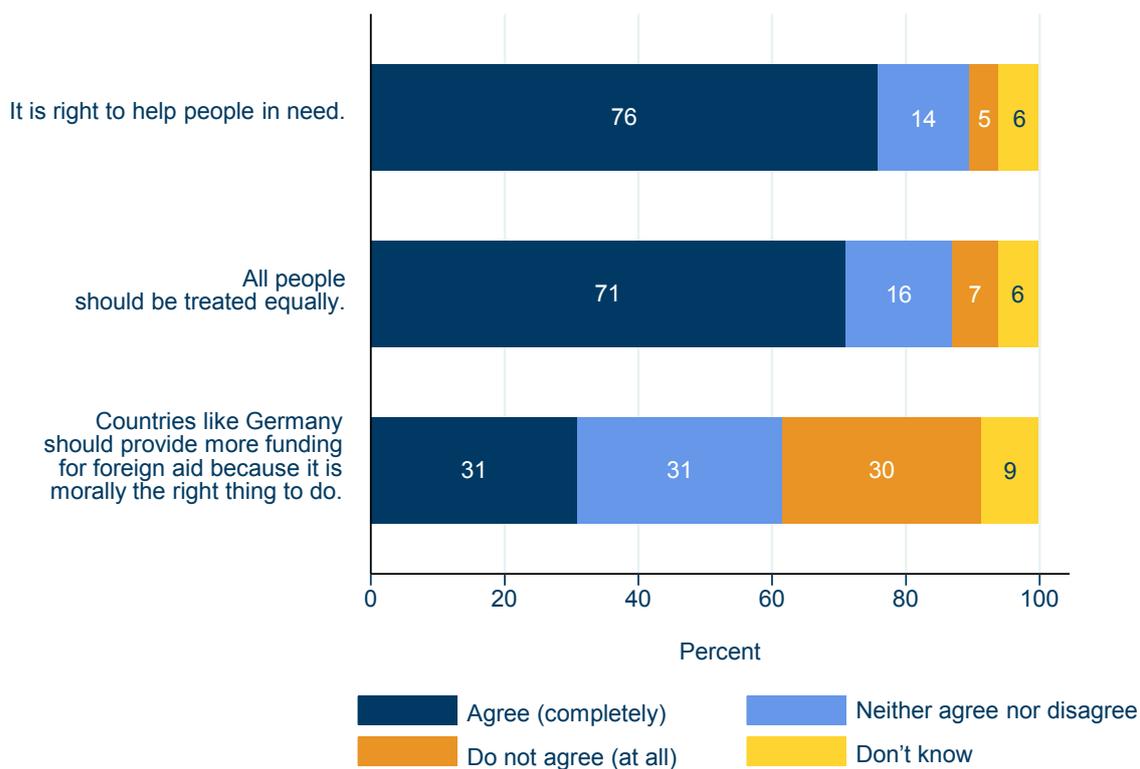
**Box 10** Key results in Section 5

- Development cooperation-related moral appeals can influence support for development cooperation. However, they also have unintended effects and should therefore only be used after careful consideration.
- Whether and how moral appeals work depends (partially) on the public's existing moral concerns.
- It is worth taking a differentiated look at the public's moral concerns. Care and fairness have a positive correlation with support for development cooperation, while authority and loyalty have more negative correlation.
- Even within the "liberal" foundations of care and fairness, there are differences: care is more closely associated with support for development cooperation than fairness.

**5.1** Morals as the foundation for support for development cooperation

The extent to which people support development cooperation is closely related to whether they feel a moral obligation towards countries in the Global South (Schneider and Gleser, 2018). This connection also applies to voluntary engagement in development cooperation, the willingness to donate to development policy NGOs and citizens' sustainable consumption – the greater the feeling of a moral obligation, the more likely citizens are to support development cooperation and personally take action to improve the situation in the Global South (Hudson et al., 2020; Schneider and Gleser, 2018).

Figure 30 examines the connection between moral concerns and support for development cooperation in more detail. It becomes apparent that the public generally supports providing aid for those in need and that a global sense of justice is widespread within the population. Around 70 percent of citizens agree with each of the statements "It is right to help people in need" and "All people should be treated equally". However, support for specific aid measures is lower. For example, only around 30 percent of citizens agree with the statement "Countries like Germany should provide more funding for foreign aid because it is morally the right thing to do". Thus, there is a discrepancy between the distinct sense of a moral obligation towards people in the Global South on the one hand and more restrained agreement to actually implement these through aid measures on the other. This could indicate that although people share abstract moral concerns, they do not necessarily want to actually carry out specific moral actions that generate associated costs themselves (Tanyi and Bruder, 2014).

**Figure 30 Agreement with moral statements relating to development cooperation**

Source: own visualisation; data basis: DEL panel, wave 1 from 4 September–10 October 2019. N = 6,004. The scale has five levels. The categories “strongly agree” and “agree” were combined and are in dark blue, “neither agree nor disagree” is shown in light blue, “disagree” and “strongly disagree” were combined and shown in orange. The category “don’t know” is shown in yellow.

Due to the discrepancy between the sense of global justice and morally founded support for development cooperation, the question arises whether people who have a distinct sense of justice but do not currently link this to support for development cooperation can also be convinced of development cooperation. Moral appeals provide the potential to directly address the public’s sense of justice in the context of development policy and thereby gain potential supporters. At the same time, it is necessary to be cautious. If moral appeals are too strong, they may overwhelm people and result in rejection and resistance (known as moral reactance; Berkowitz, 1973). Such reactions can be observed, for example, in current debates about climate and environmental protection. If the public feels overwhelmed, this may hinder solidarity in a global context because the moral appeal is seen as an attempt at external control. The accusation of an allegedly elite “do-gooders’ crusade” that encroaches on our own way of life is an example of such mechanisms.

The following therefore examines whether and how moral appeals can influence attitudes towards development cooperation. The main focus is on the relationship between the public’s moral concerns and their attitudes towards development cooperation on the one hand and potential reactance in the sense of a defence reaction on the other. Accordingly, the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy pursued the three objectives:

- To understand the impact of moral appeals;
- To develop a differentiated understanding of the relationship between moral foundations and support for development cooperation;
- To determine whether targeted moral appeals are a suitable way to address people who have not yet been reached with regard to development cooperation.

The analyses therefore contribute to an improved understanding of morals and their role in support for development cooperation.

## 5.2 The impact of moral appeals

To allow a better understanding of the impact of moral appeals and the role of moral foundations with regard to attitudes towards development cooperation, two survey experiments with 2,017 (experiment 1) and 2,030 (experiment 2) respondents were conducted.<sup>61</sup> In the first experiment, all respondents were assigned to one of six groups. Each group received information on absolute poverty or on climate change in countries of the Global South and the consequences for those affected. The information ended with a call for donations that varied depending on the group, asking them to donate either 1 percent, 20 percent or 70 percent of their income. After the participants had read the appeal, they answered questions about their judgement of the appeal. This moral judgement was measured using four questions (for example, “Do you have a moral obligation to comply with this request?”) each with four response options on a scale from 0 = “no, not at all” to 10 = “yes, definitely” (Tanyi and Bruder, 2014).<sup>62</sup> The moral judgement of the appeal differs significantly between the groups. The 1 percent appeal received an average rating of 5.06 (SD 3.82), while the 20 percent appeal was significantly more negative at 2.26 (SD 2.93); the most negative rating was for the 70 percent appeal with an average value of 1.64 (SD 2.6).

In addition to different assessments of the appeals, the results of a multivariate analysis show a parallel pattern in relation to support for development cooperation. Moreover, stronger appeals (those calling for higher donations) result in increased reactance and therefore a kind of defence reaction (see Table 5).<sup>63</sup>

**Table 5 Impact of the appeals on moral judgement, development cooperation support and reactance**

	Moral judgement	Support for development cooperation	Reactance
Independent variables	Correlation		
Appeal [20%]	Negative ***	Negative ***	Positive ***
Appeal [70%]	Negative ***	Negative *	Positive ***
Observations (N)	1,988	1,988	1,988
R <sup>2</sup>	0.218	0.044	0.103

Source: own table; data basis: Respondi survey from 23 January–6 February 2020 (experiment 1). N = 1,988. The results are based on a OLS regression analysis with robust standard errors (type HC3). The model also includes the following control variables: gender, education and age. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ .

For development policy actors, these findings mean that moral appeals with calls for financial support should be used only after careful consideration. In particular, they should choose the amount of the appeal for funds with care to avoid moral reactance.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The survey experiment corresponds to Germany’s population in terms of the distribution of age, gender, education and region.

<sup>62</sup> Cronbach’s alpha = 0.95. For further details and the operationalisation of the additive index variables, see [Section 5.1 of the online Annex](#).

<sup>63</sup> The results also show that there is a significant relationship between both the assessment of the appeal and the reactance evoked by the appeal and attitudes towards development cooperation [Table 71 in the online Annex](#).

<sup>64</sup> The donation amounts selected for the experiment are, of course, rare in reality. However, they still demonstrate the basic phenomenon of the connection between higher appeals for funds and increased reactance. In addition, in reality there is at least the possibility that people could, for example, leave charitable gifts to NGOs in their wills.

### 5.2.1 The impact of moral appeals depends on moral foundations

The results show that moral appeals do not have either a blanket positive or negative effect. Therefore, the question arises: which factors does the impact of moral appeals depend on? This section is therefore concerned with the question of whether citizens' moral foundations influence the impact of moral appeals.

According to more recent moral psychology research (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012; Haidt and Joseph, 2004), there are five different moral foundations that guide moral judgements: care, fairness, purity, authority and loyalty (see Table 6). The first two foundations correspond to the prevalent conception of morals. Accordingly, they are based particularly on empathy towards other people's suffering and considerations about justice (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt and Graham, 2007). The latter three foundations incorporate dimensions that have enjoyed little attention to date and therefore allow a differentiated view of morals (for details on the different moral foundations, see Box 11).

**Table 6 Moral foundations in Moral Foundations Theory (MFT)**

Foundation	Content
Care	The focus is on caring for those in need of protection and easing suffering.
Fairness	There is an awareness of inequality and motivation to uphold justice.
Loyalty (in-group)	Attachment to values and attitudes towards a reference person or reference population; protecting the interests of members of one's own group.
Authority	Subordination and acceptance of codes of behaviour; desire for hierarchical structures and respect for higher authorities.
Purity	Freedom from physical and psychological "impurities"; an unspoiled state.

Source: table based on Graham et al. (2011).

### Box 11 Moral Foundations Theory – a differentiated look at morals

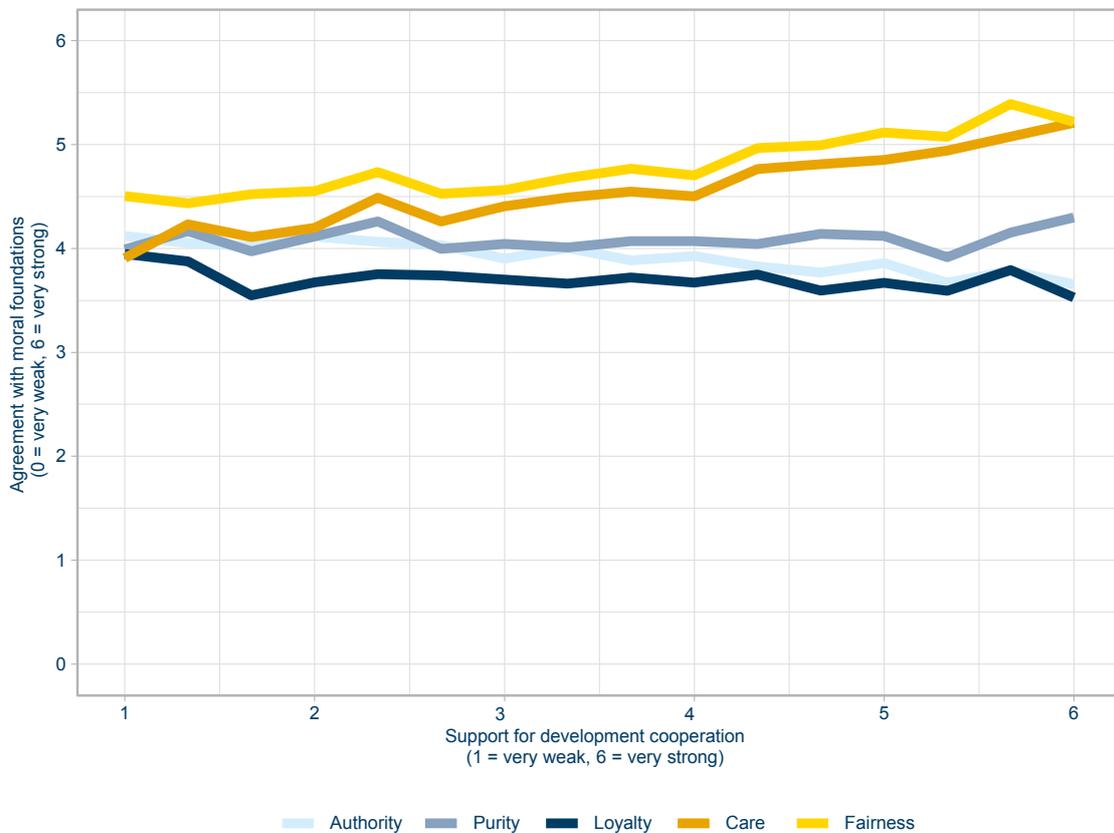
Discussions about the connection between morals and attitudes towards development cooperation rarely distinguish between the different moral foundations, which makes it impossible to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationships (Hudson and van Heerde-Hudson, 2012, p. 13). Two well-known but not always clearly separated moral foundations occur in the narrative about development cooperation. On the one hand, development cooperation is understood as “aid” to ease the suffering of the affected groups (e.g. Vossen et al., 2016); on the other hand, development cooperation is motivated by considerations about justice in view of global challenges (e.g. Kesselring, 2003). The questions in Figure 30 also reflect these different fundamental moral perceptions of development cooperation as aid (“It is right to help people in need”) and as a contribution to global justice (“All people should be treated equally”).

A well-known, more modern contribution to this debate is Moral Foundations Theory (MFT; Haidt, 2012; Graham et al., 2013; Haidt and Joseph, 2004), which is the basis for this section. As a “pluralistic” moral theory, it does not try to reduce morality to one central foundation or principle (for example justice or easing of suffering) but goes beyond the distinction between the two named foundations of care/aid and fairness/justice. The theory states that considerations of loyalty towards one’s ingroup, respect for authority and the inherent purity of people and things are key foundations for moral judgements (see Table 6). In addition to the more “liberal” foundations of care and fairness that are rooted on the left of the political spectrum, MFT argues that other, more conservative or politically “right” foundations should not be neglected when developing a comprehensive concept of human morals. MFT therefore assumes that there are both distinct foundations of moral behaviour and that these foundations can even partially be conflicting. This can give the respective other group the impression that opinions and actions are “immoral”. In reality, these differing assessments are based on different, but not per se less moral, foundations. This does not mean that moral concerns should not be included in political discourse and critically assessed. However, the theory objects to the practice of disqualifying the respective other political camp’s assessment as “amoral” or “immoral” and thus avoiding giving a justification.

Figure 31 shows the relationship between the various moral foundations and attitudes towards development cooperation. The results show a positive relationship between the moral foundations of “care” and “fairness” and support for development cooperation: the more important care and fairness are to a person, the greater the support – on average – for development cooperation. By contrast, there is a negative relationship between the moral foundations of “authority” and “loyalty” and support for development cooperation. The more important these moral foundations are to a person, the less they support development cooperation. “Purity” does not show any connection to development cooperation. If a multivariate regression is used to check these connections, it is clear that “care” has a stronger link to development cooperation than “fairness”.<sup>65</sup> “Care” is therefore the more important of the two politically “liberal” moral foundations when it comes to predicting support for development cooperation.

<sup>65</sup> However, it should be noted that there is also a connection between care and fairness. Although common multicollinearity diagnostics do not indicate any problems for the analysis, this connection should be taken into account for the interpretation. For more detailed and extensive analyses, see section 9.2 in the Annex.

**Figure 31 Support for development cooperation depending on agreement with the five moral foundations**



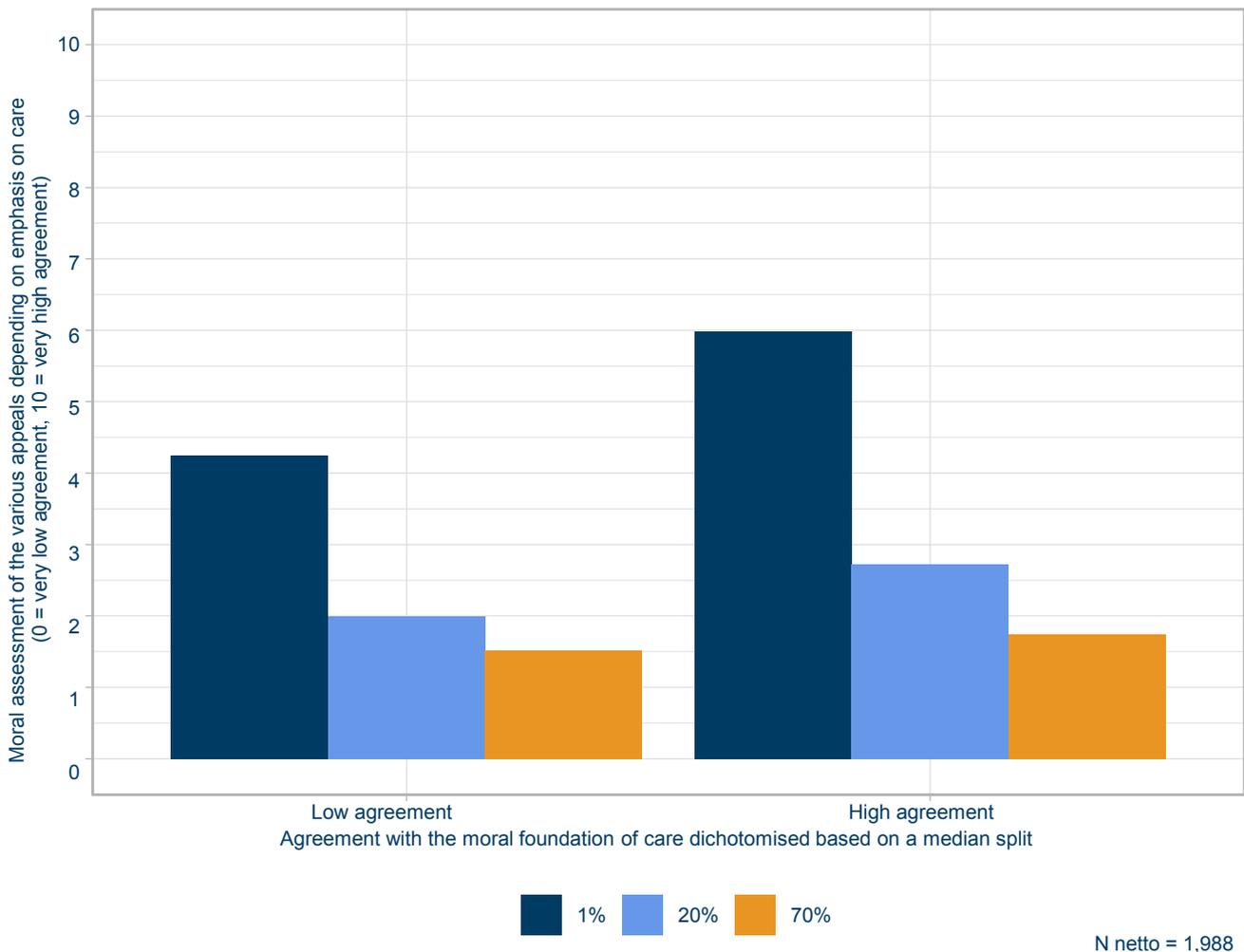
Total respondents= 2,030

Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 27 April–12 May 2020 (experiment 2). The graph shows the relationship between agreement with the various moral foundations and support for development cooperation (before the treatment). Dependent variable: index of support for development cooperation (three items; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.66). Both values represent mean values of the total sample.

Now that a connection between moral foundations and support for development cooperation was revealed, the question arises as to whether and to what extent the impact of moral appeals depends on the public’s convictions. The results of a multivariate analysis that examined this question show that care, fairness and loyalty are relevant factors affecting how the respondents react to appeals.<sup>66</sup> These three moral foundations exhibit significant interactions with the appeals. First of all, the results show that people who find care important respond significantly more positively to the 1-percent appeal than those who find care less important. The graph in Figure 32 visualises this effect (light blue bar). At the same time, the positive moderating effect of care declines significantly as the appeal increases. The assessment of moral appeals asking for donations of 20 percent and 70 percent of income is only slightly higher in the group of people who find care important than in the group that find care less important. There is a similar relationship for the moral foundation of “fairness”. People with higher levels of endorsement for fairness respond more positively to the 1-percent appeal, but this positive effect declines as the demands of the appeal increase. In the case of “loyalty”, the relationship is reversed: while those with higher loyalty tend to respond negatively to the 1-percent appeal, the results show that high approval of loyalty have a positive effect on the assessment of the 20- and 70-percent appeals.

<sup>66</sup> For the detailed analysis, see Table 74 in the online Annex.

**Figure 32** Impact of the appeals on the moral assessment of the appeals depending on how highly the respondents rate care



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Respondi survey from 23 January–6 February 2020 (experiment 1). N = 1,988. The graph shows the moral assessment depending on the appeal (dark blue = donate 1 percent, light blue = donate 20 percent, orange = donate 70 percent of income) and the respondents' agreement with the moral foundation of care. A median split was used to create one group with a low level of agreement and one with a high level of agreement.

### 5.2.2 Specific appeals are only of limited use in directly targeting the population

The results so far have shown that moral appeals can have varied and complex effects. Whether and how moral appeals work depends on the public's basic moral convictions. This gives rise to the question as to whether it is possible to address citizens – especially those who have had a negative attitude towards development cooperation to date – through specific appeals. Do only people whose morals are built on the foundations of fairness and care support development cooperation (as Figure 31 would suggest) or is it simply that people to whom this does not apply have not yet found any arguments in the development cooperation discourse that refer to their moral foundations? Will analysing the attitudes of these citizens provide an opportunity to create a better way of reaching these groups through development policy education and communication work?

A second survey experiment examined the effect of specific appeals. Once again, the survey participants were randomly assigned to one of six groups. As in the first experiment, one of the groups – the control group – received information on absolute poverty in the countries of the Global South and the consequences for those affected. The other five groups each also received the same information as the control group. They then also read texts that used a central theme of one of the five moral foundations to underline the urgency

of a donation. For example, the text on fairness emphasised that poverty is not the fault of those affected and is therefore unfair; the text on care highlighted people's suffering and their need for aid; the text on loyalty described the possible effects for Germany and national interests; the text on purity emphasised the specialness of each and every human being; and the text on authority referred to Germany's past commitments to the fight against poverty (see Table 7 for the wordings of the various appeals). In each case, the information ended in the same appeal for donations. Once they had read the appeals, the participants answered questions on their support for development cooperation, operationalised on the form of willingness to donate and donation amount.<sup>67</sup>

The results show that the willingness of the total sample to donate is high, independent of the appeals. Around 53 percent of respondents expressed high, 23 percent medium and 24 percent low willingness to donate (mean for the index variable ranging from 1 to 6: 3.60; SD: 1.32).<sup>68</sup> The average response to the question regarding how much of the 100 euros they were given they would donate to a development policy initiative was 40.20 euros.<sup>69</sup> However, the donation behaviour of the individual respondents varies widely (SD = 32.97). If we divide respondents by their donation behaviour into three groups, the first group with the lowest specified donation amount contains 49 percent of the respondents with a mean donation value of 9.54 euros (SD = 9.87). The second group contains 26 percent of the respondents with a mean donation value of 50.02 euros (SD= 5.11), and the third group contains 24 percent of respondents, who are willing to donate an average of 92.03 euros (SD = 10.76).

<sup>67</sup> In this case, support for development cooperation was operationalised based on the respondents' willingness to donate. Donating was seen as support for development cooperation at the behavioural level. This is something that the preceding moral appeal can influence. Because donations involve a financial expense, they are a more demanding form of support. There is also a statistical connection between the attitude dimension "support for state development cooperation" and the willingness to donate or amount of a donation. This reinforces the argument that these are two closely linked ways of expressing support for development cooperation.

<sup>68</sup> For clarity reasons, the index variables to determine the willingness to donate (1 = "do not agree at all" to 6 = "agree completely") were divided into three groups:  $\leq 2.5$  "low",  $> 2.5$  and  $\leq 3.5$  "medium",  $> 3.5$  "high". For information on the operationalisation of the index variables, see [Section 5.1 in the online Annex](#).

<sup>69</sup> The variables to determine the donation amount asked how much of the 100 euros provided the person would donate to combat extreme poverty and how much they would keep for themselves. To ensure clarity, the respondents were again divided into three groups based on the following threshold values:  $\leq 33$  euros,  $> 33$  and  $\leq 66$  euros,  $> 66$  euros. For information on the exact operationalisation of the index variables, see [Section 5.1 in the online Annex](#).

**Table 7** Wordings of the survey experiment regarding the impact of moral appeals

Group	Treatment wording
Control group	Approx. 10% of the world's population live in extreme poverty. People living in extreme poverty have to live on less than USD 1.90 per day. This means they are unable to buy the required daily quantity of wares and goods, which would cost the equivalent of USD 1.90 in their local currency. People living in extreme poverty lack food, drinking water and sanitation facilities. Often, poverty also means poor education opportunities, no adequate healthcare and experiences of violence.
At the end of each appeal	To date, there is a lack of sufficient funds to fight extreme poverty. Please donate to help the fight against extreme poverty!
Loyalty	It is in Germany's interests to combat poverty and hunger. (Control group text). The fact that people elsewhere are living in extreme poverty is also a risk to our prosperity in the medium term – be it due to flight and migration, social unrest or diseases that could spread in poor regions. We must therefore take action against extreme poverty, for the sake of Germany and our families.
Care	Some people are suffering greatly and rely on aid. (Control group text). We must care for people living in extreme poverty and ease their suffering.
Fairness	We cannot choose the country we are born in. For this reason, many people are much worse off than us through no fault of their own. (Control group text). It is unfair and unjust that people have to live in extreme poverty through no fault of their own. We must at least reduce this injustice.
Purity	Every person is something special and wonderful. Every individual is unique. However, poverty and hunger make living up to this uniqueness impossible. (Control group text). We must respect the specialness of human life and prevent extreme poverty from destroying people's lives.
Authority	German governments to date have clearly pledged their commitment to the fight against poverty and hunger. (Control group text). Germany's various government coalitions have agreed that Germany will fulfil its international responsibilities in the fight against extreme poverty. We must deliver on these commitments and take appropriate action.

Source: own table.

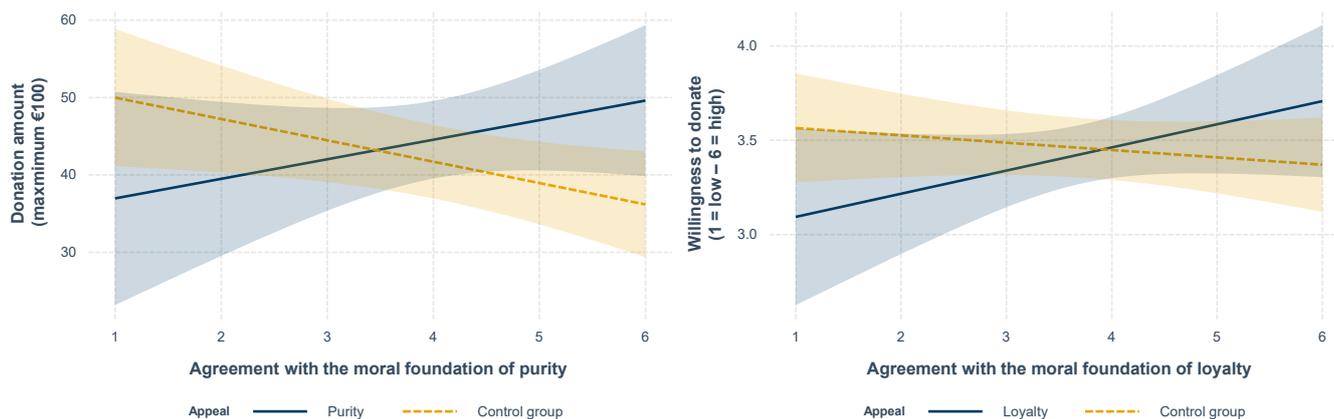
Now the question is whether people who have strong convictions relating to one of the five moral foundations react more strongly to the respective appeal. For example, a person for whom loyalty is very important may be motivated to greater development cooperation support if an appeal addresses this conviction. By contrast, a person for whom care is particularly important may react only a little or not at all to an appeal to loyalty. Although the results of the survey experiment do not reveal any consistent, across-the-board pattern, they do show that, as a general tendency, in some cases the respective appeals can particularly address specific moral foundations. This means that some moral appeals have an impact on willingness to donate and the donation amount depending on the person's moral foundations. Figure 33 shows that, for example, the effect of the appeal that focuses on loyalty tends to depend on how important loyalty is to the respondent.<sup>70</sup> Respondents who view loyalty as important tend to respond more positively to this moral appeal than those who view loyalty as less important. A parallel pattern can be seen for the effect of the appeal that focuses on the moral dimension of purity on the donation amount. Respondents

<sup>70</sup> For further analyses and the precise p values see *Table 75 in the online Annex*.

who view purity as important respond significantly more positively to this moral appeal than those for whom this moral foundation is less important. No significant relationship emerged for the other four appeals.

Therefore, regardless of the specific appeal, higher values in the foundations “care” and “fairness” go hand in hand with greater support for development cooperation. On the other hand, the respective appeal generally tends to result in greater support than the general appeal in the case of the foundations “loyalty” and “purity” – even though loyalty has a negative relationship with support for development cooperation and purity has neither a positive nor a negative relationship with support (see Figure 31 and Figure 32).

**Figure 33 Influence of moral foundations on the impact of the respective moral appeal**



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Respondi survey from 27 April–12 May 2020 (experiment 2).  $N = 2,030$ . Based on a regression analysis with robust standard errors (type HC3). Left-hand graph: This shows the connection between donation amount and agreement with the moral foundation of purity for the groups that read the purity appeal (blue line) or the control appeal (dashed line). Right-hand graph: This shows the connection between donation amount and agreement with the moral foundation of loyalty for the groups that read the loyalty appeal (blue line) or the control appeal (dashed line). The regression model controlled for the other appeals and the other moral foundations as well as the control variables education, age and gender. The fact that the lines cross shows that people for whom purity (or loyalty) is important respond positively to the purity appeal (loyalty appeal). In other words, they donate more (show a greater willingness to donate) than people who read the control appeal. The opposite holds true for lower agreement with purity (loyalty). This means that those who read the purity appeal (loyalty appeal) donate less (show a lower willingness to donate) than those who read the control appeal.

An additional challenge is that targeted moral appeals can also have unintended effects. For example, the fairness appeal has a negative impact on people for whom authority is important – they donate less. On the other hand, the purity appeal had a positive impact on people for whom authority is important, leading to more donations.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, even if moral appeals that attempt to address certain moral foundations reach the addressed group, they can also have positive or negative effects on people for whom a different moral foundation is particularly important.

<sup>71</sup> For further analyses and the precise p values see [Table 76 in the online Annex](#).

### 5.3 Summary

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The results of this section show that it is worth taking a differentiated look at the public's moral foundations and the impact of moral appeals. Moral appeals have the potential to influence attitudes relating to development cooperation. However, they should be handled with some caution. For example, although the appeal to donate 1 percent of income to combat poverty or climate change receives a relatively positive reception, donation appeals that refer to 20 or 70 percent of income meet with relatively strong rejection.

In terms of general support for development cooperation, the results illustrate the high relevance of moral foundations that are significantly linked to support for development cooperation. There is a positive relationship between care and fairness and support for development cooperation, while loyalty and authority have a negative relationship with development cooperation support. There is no significant relationship for purity. The differentiated consideration helps us better understand the moral basis of the public's attitudes. The data indicates that care is most relevant for attitudes towards development cooperation. Therefore, despite content-related issues, the significance of the moral foundation of care for development cooperation support should not be underestimated.

Ultimately, the experiments show that the impact of moral appeals also depends on the respondents' moral convictions – whereby the moral foundations of fairness, care and loyalty influence this impact. However, directly addressing these dimensions in development communication is difficult. There are only isolated indications that this could be successful and that targeted appeals could reverse the negative relationship between, for example, loyalty and support for development cooperation. Therefore, when addressing new target groups in development cooperation, it may be worth approaching “atypical target groups” in a more creative manner than was possible in this experiment. However, it is important to consider that while specifically addressing one sub-group can meet with a positive reception in the intended group, it may also lead to negative reactions in other groups.

6. WHAT DOES THE GENERAL PUBLIC EXPECT FROM DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION?

**Box 12 Key results in Section 6**

- High poverty, low corruption and a predominantly Christian population in the partner country are decisive factors in determining whether the public supports cooperation with this country.
- The public perceives Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Republic of the Congo as particularly worthy of support. It views Saudi Arabia, Iraq, China and Ukraine as the least worthy of support.
- Food security and agriculture as well as peace and security are sectors that are seen as particularly worthy of support. Climate change and promoting the economy are the least worthy.
- People who are interested in or support development cooperation particularly value needs rather than self-interest.
- With regard to the provision of services, fragile states are seen as particularly worthy of support. On the other hand, the fact that the population does not recognise the government and the lack of a state monopoly on the use of force reduce the willingness to provide support.

Development policy decision makers require precise knowledge of public expectations to be able to take public opinion into account during planning and decision-making processes and therefore ensure public acceptance and support for public decisions (see, e.g., Dahl, 1998; Easton, 1975). However, this presents a particular challenge because development policy and development cooperation do not generally receive much public attention and there is therefore little public consideration of these topics (see Section 2 in this report and 7 in Riddell, 2007). Decision-makers are thus likely to receive little or no direct feedback on individual policy decisions from the general public. For development policy, it is therefore particularly important to systematically assess what citizens actually expect from development policy.

A central element of development policy is selecting and cooperating with partner countries in the Global South. There are some controversial opinions on this. For example, in summer 2019 the BMZ was strongly criticised in the media for paying development funds to China, although these payments were mostly low-interest loans (see, e.g., Focus 2019). Similar criticism arose in autumn 2011, when funds from development cooperation continued to flow into Syria despite the commencing civil war (see, e.g., Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2011).

This leads to the question of which partner countries the public perceives as particularly worthy of support, which criteria they use to determine how worthy partner countries are of support and what role the perceived socio-political situation in these countries plays. The results of the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 showed that support for development cooperation is particularly high if the funding provided is perceived as effective (Schneider and Gleser 2018, p. 27–30). At the same time, there is a fear that development cooperation funds may be lost due to corruption in the partner countries. Efficient use of funding cannot always be guaranteed, particularly in fragile states (Zürcher, 2012).<sup>72</sup> The question of what the public expects from development cooperation in the context of fragile states is therefore highly relevant when it comes to the use of development cooperation funds and the associated communication. Should fragile states be considered in a particular way that takes into account the fragility and associated specific needs? Or should these countries be given less consideration to avoid endangering the efficient use of the funds?

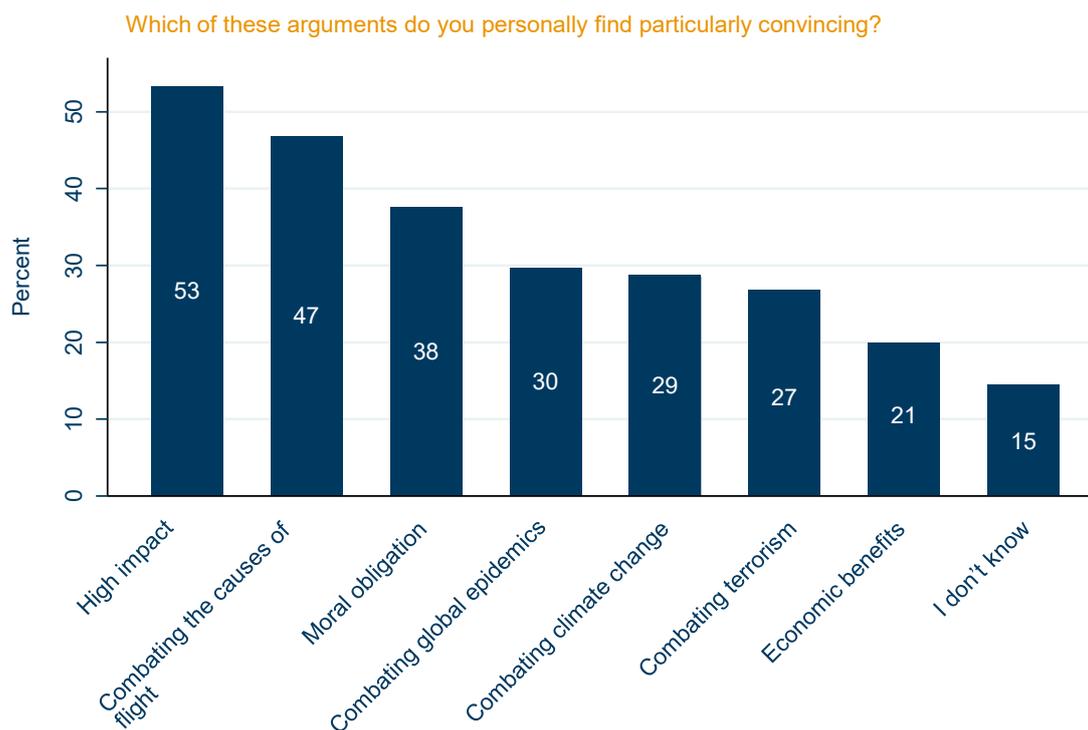
<sup>72</sup> Zürcher (2012) identifies three central problems in cooperation with fragile states. First, in fragile contexts the donor and partner country rarely pursue the same interests, for example the intention to implement reforms. Second, a lack of basic security is one of the main obstacles to the effectiveness of development cooperation, and projects that aim to increase security generally have little effect. Third, Zürcher argues that funding in fragile states is often lost to corruption and therefore achieves few results.

## 6.1 High impact and development cooperation as a means of combating the causes of flight are convincing arguments for development cooperation

To understand the public's expectations of development cooperation, it is first necessary to determine what the population believes is the basic function of development cooperation other than improving the socioeconomic situation in the partner countries. The DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 (Schneider and Gleser, 2018) identified four central motives for public support of development cooperation. These are development cooperation as an instrument to promote the economy (in Germany), development cooperation as a means of combating the causes of flight, development cooperation as a moral obligation, and development cooperation as a security policy instrument.

Figure 34 visualises this breakdown and provides a more sophisticated picture of the motives for supporting development cooperation. The results show that the high impact of development cooperation and its contribution to combating the causes of flight – each with an agreement rate of around 50 percent – are convincing arguments for development cooperation. The moral obligation to help (38% agreement) is also perceived as a convincing argument. Development cooperation as a means of combating global epidemics (30% agreement), development cooperation to combat climate change (29%), development cooperation to promote the German economy (21%) and development cooperation to combat terrorism (27%) were viewed as less convincing.

**Figure 34 Agreement with the motives of development cooperation**



Source: own visualisation; data basis: DEL tracker, wave 2 (3–7 June 2020). N = 1,025. The graph shows the agreement with each motive.

Although the results show that some arguments for development cooperation meet with greater agreement than others, they highlight that there are very different and sometimes even contradictory reasons for supporting development cooperation. For example, support for development cooperation due to a feeling of moral obligation indicates a high level of poverty orientation in development cooperation. This is because the feeling of moral obligation arises in particular from a perception that people in the partner country are in need (care motive) and that there is injustice between the donor and partner country (justice motive) (Hudson and van Heerde-Hudson, 2012; Lumsdaine, 1993; see Section 5 in this report on the role of morals in support for development cooperation). Support based on high impact, on the other hand, signifies that

the public wants to be sure that tax-funded measures are carried out effectively and efficiently. However, this impact orientation contradicts a comprehensive poverty orientation since in especially poor countries state structures frequently hinder the efficient use of funds and corruption is often widespread (Bauhr et al., 2013).

This conflict of objectives gives rise to two questions: Which countries does the public view as particularly worthy of support? And how does Germany's public strike a balance between the presumed need of the partner countries, the socio-political context in these countries and national self-interest in such situations?

## 6.2 The public's expectations of development cooperations – a conjoint experiment

Money is a scarce resource. The Federal Government and the BMZ as well as all church-based and civil-society development cooperation organisations have a budget that must be divided between potential partner countries and various development cooperation sectors. The selection of the partner countries is a key challenge, which also plays a decisive role in the "BMZ 2030" reform concept (BMZ, 2020a). Through a targeted and selective approach to making this choice, the BMZ aims to ensure that development policy funds are used effectively and efficiently. The selection of partner countries is also a subject of political and parliamentary discourse. For example, in summer 2020, the political party AfD carried out a minor inquiry with the title "Partner states for German development cooperation 2020" that questioned the criteria for selecting the partner countries (Deutscher Bundestag, 2020a; for the Federal Government's response, see Deutscher Bundestag 2020b).

From the donor perspective, the important question is in which countries the financial resources are particularly necessary and, simultaneously, can be used particularly effectively and efficiently. At the same time, civil-society organisations rely on public support.<sup>73</sup> In addition to state funds, NGOs in particular often receive a large part of their funding from donations (see Dreher et al., 2012a; Verbrugge and Huyse, 2020) and make use of volunteers. Against this background, NGOs are highly interested in whether potential donors support development policy measures in partner countries and view them as worthy of support.

Previous studies have shown that a partner country's capacity to deploy the development aid effectively has a greater impact on whether the public supports development cooperation than the countries' needs (Feeny et al., 2019). The donor country's self-interest in relation to development cooperation also plays less of a role for the public (Hansen et al., 2014). Countries that have both great need and are certain to be able to use the funds effectively receive the most support (Cunningham et al., 2017). The public is more likely to perceive a country with a poor health situation as having a great need for development cooperation than a country with high poverty levels (Grépin et al., 2018).

### Box 13 Structure of the conjoint experiment

Choice-based conjoint experiments allow us to map how people weigh up decisions by asking them to choose between different countries with different characteristics (Raghavarao et al., 2011; for an application in political science, see Hainmueller et al., 2014). In this way, we can determine which countries are perceived as particularly worthy of support and which socio-political country factors influence this support. At the same time, conjoint experiments also replicate the reality of political decision-making, in which limited resources force the actors to choose between individual options.<sup>74</sup>

In this experiment, the respondents first answered a few general sociodemographic questions about themselves as well as their general attitudes towards development policy (for example, support for development cooperation, perceived effectiveness of development cooperation, knowledge about and

<sup>73</sup> The Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 provides a detailed explanation of the relevance of public opinion for development cooperation (Schneider and Gleser, 2018, p. 2–3).

<sup>74</sup> This is a decisive advantage over recording preferences using rating scales. If, for example, a range of sectors is presented, in principle all sectors could be considered important using such scales; there is no need to weigh them up against each other.

interest in development cooperation). The respondents were then asked to evaluate two countries based on different characteristics, in other words to select the country that they viewed as more worthy of support. They did this five times. The descriptions of the countries each contained six (out of a total of ten) randomly selected characteristics. Section 6.2.2 contains a description of the individual characteristics. Following this, the respondents had to state which of two randomly selected countries they perceived as the partner country most worthy of support. They did this once again five times.

The experiment consciously avoided the response options “neither of the two” and “both equally”, as these two evasive options would mean that minor differences in preferences would not be visible in the event of narrow decisions.

**Figure 35** Example of the conjoint experiment performed

**Which of the described countries should the Federal Government support with development aid?**

	Country 1	Country 2
Political partner	Key political partner of Germany	Not a political partner of Germany
Corruption in the country	High corruption level	Low corruption level
State authority	State can largely ensure law and order	State can only ensure law and order to a limited extent
Trade with Germany	Low trade volume	High trade volume
Thematic focus of the cooperation	Climate change	Food security and agriculture
Religion of the population	Majority Muslim	Majority Christian
<b>Support for:</b>	Country A	Country B

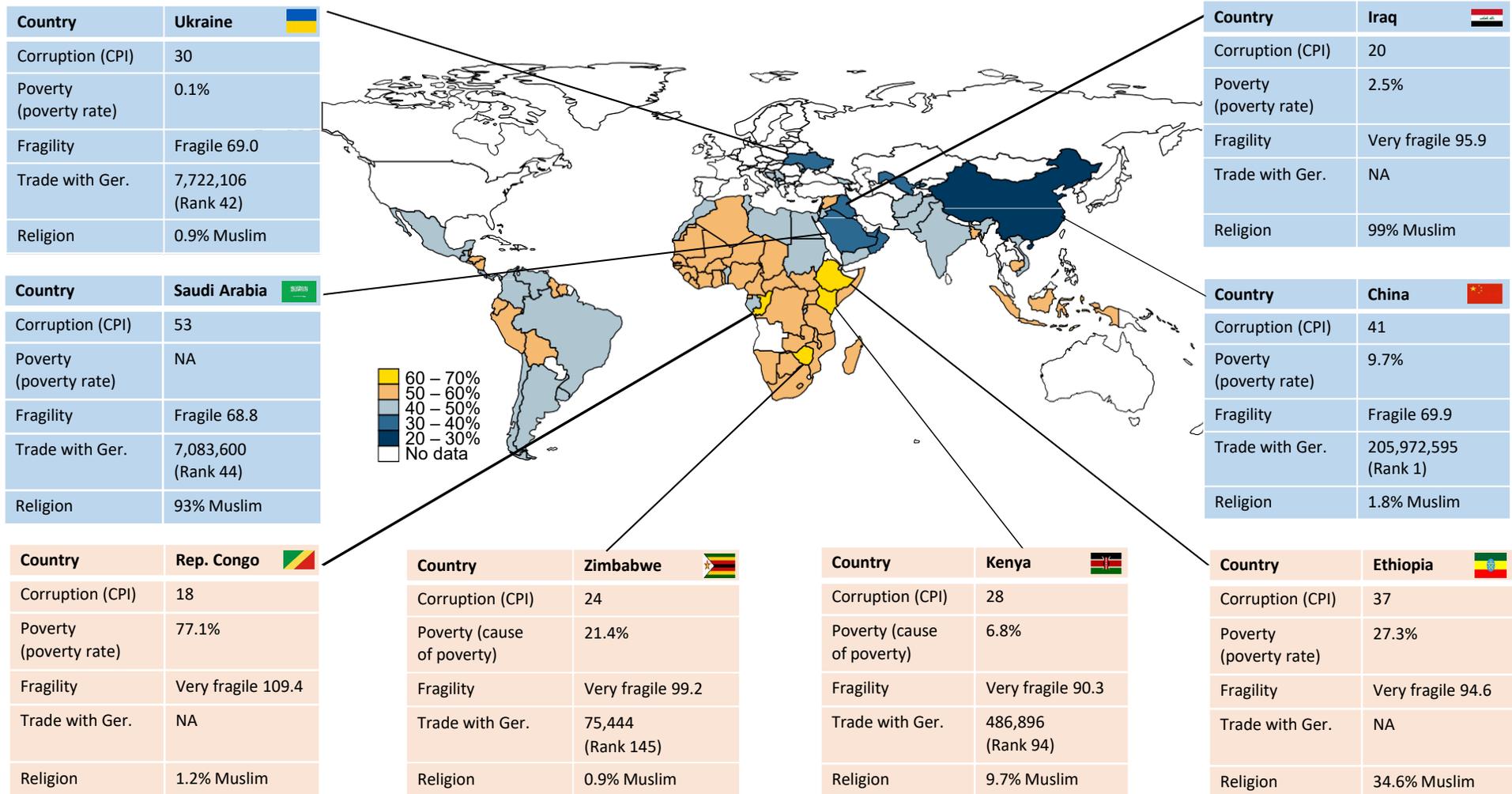
Source: own visualisation. The figure shows the first component of the conjoint experiment. The respondents each saw five of these pairs.

Existing studies concentrated only on partial aspects of support and therefore only measured the preferences for need, impact orientation and self-interest in an unlinked way. The objective of this study is to allow development policy actors a more differentiated picture of the public’s preferences and expectations by carrying out a choice-based conjoint study (see Box 13 for information). This study also allows a comparison between country preferences (the estimation of which specific countries are particularly worthy of support) and the preferences for individual country characteristics (such as the levels of poverty and corruption). In this way, it is possible to determine whether individual countries are assessed differently, meaning whether they receive more or less support based on their name than based on their specific country characteristics (level of poverty and corruption, fragility, etc.). This allows information gaps and false perceptions to be identified and then closed or corrected through targeted information work.

**6.2.1 Country preferences – Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Republic of the Congo are considered particularly worthy of support; Saudi Arabia, Iraq, China and Ukraine are least worthy of support**

The results of the survey show that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are perceived as particularly worthy of support (see Figure 36). Partner countries in Eastern Europe and Asia, on the other hand, are assessed as being least worthy of support. South American countries are somewhere in between.

**Figure 36 World map of support for development cooperation with partner countries**



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Respondi survey from 24 August–2 September 2020. N = 3,001. The figure shows how often the individual countries were selected as being more worthy of support than a randomly selected second country in a choice-based conjoint experiment. A value of 50 percent is the average and therefore the expected value. Countries that were selected in more than 50 percent of cases are shown in orange or yellow. Countries that were selected less often are shown in a shade of blue. The image also shows profiles of the four countries that were selected most often (yellow) and least often (blue). The information in the profiles was compiled from various sources, including the Corruption Perception Index for information on corruption, the World Bank on the poverty rate, the Fragile States Index (FSI) on fragility, Destatis on trade with Germany and the Pew Forum on religion. Details of this can be found in Section 6 of the online Annex.

At the country level, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Republic of the Congo were perceived as particularly worthy of support – they were chosen over a second, randomly selected country in more than 60 percent of cases. By contrast, China, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and Iraq were perceived as the least worthy of support. These countries were each chosen in less than 40 percent of cases. When comparing these two groups, it becomes apparent that the countries that are perceived as worthy of support have much higher poverty rates – and therefore a greater need for financial support – than the countries that are perceived as less worthy of support (see profiles in Figure 36). The trade volume of the countries considered “worthy of support” is also significantly less than those that are “less worthy of support”. The country profiles presented in Figure 36 also show that the majority of the population in the “worthy of support” countries is Christian. On the other hand, in two of the “less worthy of support” countries (Saudi Arabia and Iraq), the majority of the population is of the Muslim faith. All the other categories show no conspicuous differences.

### 6.2.2 High poverty, low corruption and a predominantly Christian population are decisive factors in determining whether the public supports cooperation with a country

Based on these results, the question arises why individual countries are assessed as being more worthy of support and others as less worthy of support. To explore this question, an additional choice-based conjoint experiment examined the influence of various characteristics – known from the literature on the allocation of development funding (Berthélemy and Tichit, 2004; Neumayer, 2003) – on support for development cooperation with a country. For this purpose, respondents were each presented with two descriptions of countries whose characteristics were randomly varied. Previous studies also used conjoint experiments to assess which country characteristics respondents perceive as particularly worthy of support (Blackman, 2018; Doherty et al., 2020; Feeny et al., 2019). However, these experiments either concentrated on individual country characteristics (see Blackman, 2018) or portrayed the individual country characteristics in the form of concepts (for example, the ability to use development cooperation productively; Feeny et al., 2019) rather than as concrete characteristics. For the present study, a more comprehensive approach was taken to address the complexity of the choice of countries that development policy is confronted with. For this reason, in each choice task six of the following ten characteristics have been considered:

1. Thematic focus of the cooperation
2. Poverty in the country
3. Performance capacity of the state (fragility dimension I)<sup>75</sup>
4. Legitimacy of the government (fragility dimension II)
5. State authority (fragility dimension III)
6. Corruption in the country
7. Number of refugees from the country
8. Trade with Germany
9. Religion of the population
10. Political partnership with Germany

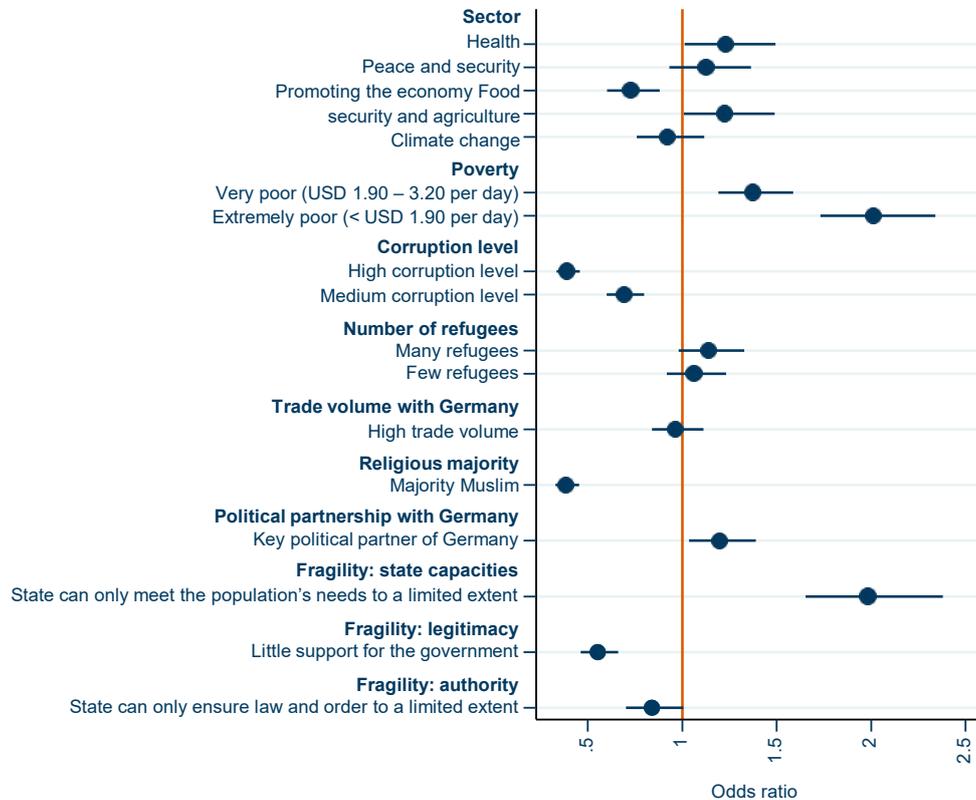
The poverty level varies between, for example, “extremely poor” (< USD 1.90 per day) “very poor” (USD 1.90-3.20 per day) and “poor” (USD 3.20-5.50 per day).<sup>76</sup> The other factors vary between, for example, countries with (a) a low, medium or high level of corruption, (b) many, few or no refugees from the country in question, (c) a high or low level of trade with Germany and (d) important and less important political partner of Germany. The respondents had to decide which country they would choose – and thus which project they would implement.

<sup>75</sup> See Box 14 for detailed information on the various fragility dimensions.

<sup>76</sup> Section 6.1 of the online Annex contains a detailed description of the experiment.

Following this, based on the respondents' decisions and the variation of the individual factors, it was possible to determine how relevant the individual factors are for the perception that a country is worthy of support.

**Figure 37** Impact of information about a partner country on the support for development cooperation with this country



Source: own visualisation. Data basis: Respondi survey from 24 August–2 September 2020.  $N = 3,001$ . The figure shows the odds ratio and the respective confidence intervals of the individual factors of a logistic regression. An odds ratio describes the chances that an option will be selected – in comparison to the reference group – if the variable matches the displayed characteristic. For example, a value of approx. 2.4 for extremely poor (< USD 1.90 per day) reveals that it is more than twice as likely that a hypothetical country will be chosen (or supported) if it is extremely poor (< USD 1.90 per day) compared with the reference category “poor” (USD 3.20–5.50 per day). Values over 1 thus indicate a higher probability and values under 1 a lower probability that the country in question will be chosen. The following reference categories were used (not shown in the figure): thematic focus of the cooperation: education; poverty: poor (USD 3.20–5.50 per day); corruption: low level of corruption; flight: no refugees; trade: low trade volume; religion: predominantly Christian; political partner: not a key political partner of Germany; state capacities: state can reliably meet the population's basic needs; legitimacy: high level of trust in the government; authority: state can largely ensure law and order. The model also includes the following control variables: political orientation (left-right scale), trust in the Federal Government, support for development cooperation (measured before the experiment), perceived effectiveness of development cooperation (measured before the experiment), subjective estimation of knowledge about development cooperation and interest in the topic of development cooperation.

The results in Figure 37 show that the level of poverty and corruption in particular is a key factor in whether respondents perceive a country as worthy of support. The probability that extremely poor countries (<USD 1.90 per day) will receive support is more than twice as high in comparison to poor countries (USD 3.20–5.50 per day) (odds ratio of 2.4). For countries with a high level of corruption, on the other hand, the probability of receiving support is less than half as high (odds ratio of 0.35) as for countries with a low level of corruption.

The graph shows a somewhat weaker – but still statistically significant – positive relationship between a lack of state capacities and support for development cooperation. Countries in which the government does not have the capacities to meet the population's basic needs are perceived as more worthy of support. The results also show that the respondents perceive countries where the population has little trust in their own

government and countries in which the state has a limited ability to ensure law and order as less worthy of support.

#### Box 14 Dimensions of fragility

This examination pays particular attention to the role of fragility in the partner country. This is operationalised based on three fragility dimensions (Grävingsholt et al., 2015) and also varied at random. The **capacity dimension** (performance capacity of the state) measures the state's ability to provide its population with basic public services – such as a working healthcare and education system. A distinction is made between (a) states that can reliably meet their population's basic needs and (b) states that can meet their population's basic needs only to a limited extent. The **legitimacy dimension** denotes the ability of the state to obtain the consent of the population to the state's dominance. A distinction is made between (a) governments that receive a high degree of trust from their own population and (b) governments that receive little trust. The **authority dimension** measures the ability of the state to control the use of physical violence within its territory. A distinction is made between (a) states that can largely ensure law and order and (b) states that have only a limited ability to ensure law and order.

Germany's self-interests play only a secondary role for citizens when choosing a partner country that is worthy of support. Germany's political partners are slightly less frequently perceived as worthy of support. By contrast, the trade volume with the hypothetical country does not play a role. Whether and how many refugees come from the country in question also plays only a minor role, although countries with more refugees are supported slightly less frequently.

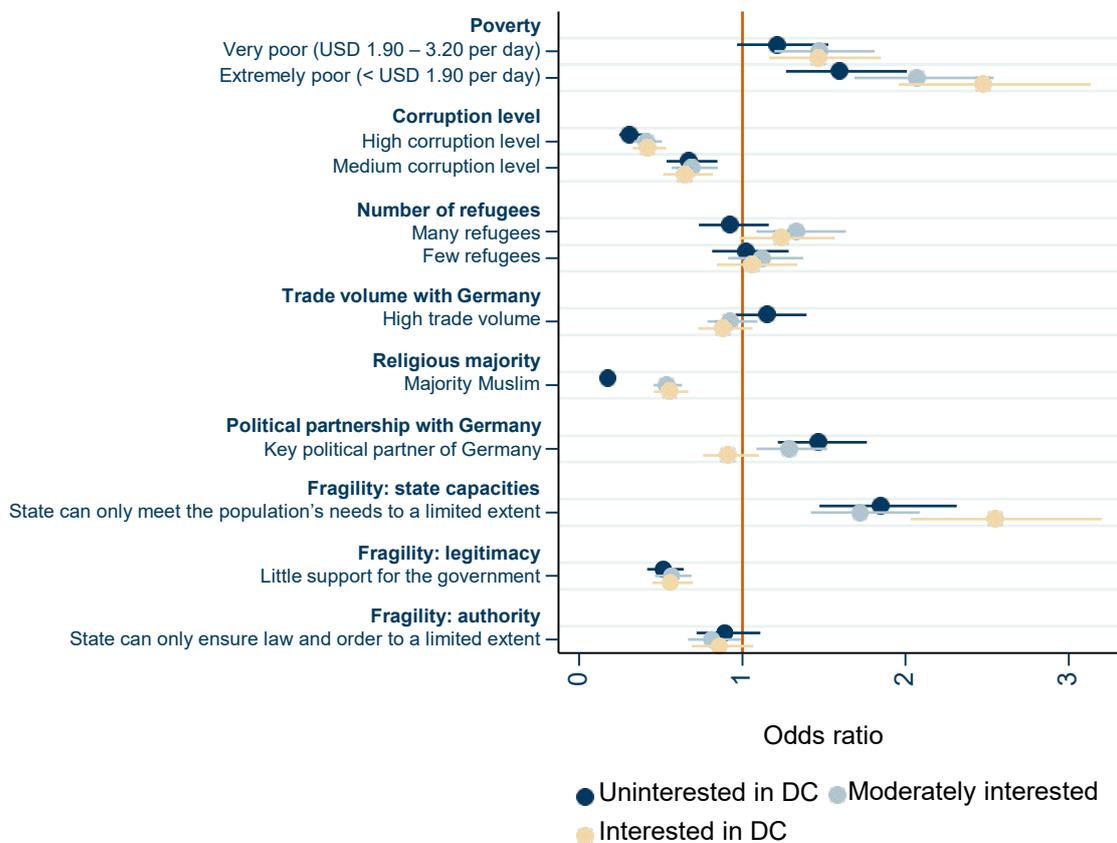
What is known as a *Muslim bias* has also emerged: the results show a negative relationship between the country characteristic "Majority of the population are Muslim" and the selection of the country in question. Countries in which the majority of the population are Muslim are only supported in one third of cases compared with countries with a Christian majority (odds ratio of 0.34). The Muslim bias also plays a role for the attitudes towards receiving refugees (Bansak et al., 2016) and is also found in studies of development cooperation preferences in the United States (Blackman, 2018).

#### 6.2.3 Those who are interested in and support development cooperation particularly value needs orientation and relegate self-interest to the background

For many development cooperation actors, development communication does not aim to address the entire population; often communication concepts are specifically aimed at individual target groups (see Section 3.1.3). In light of this, the following analysis provides a differentiated picture of the preferences depending on the level of interest in development cooperation and general support for development cooperation.

The results show that those who are interested in development cooperation attach particular importance to the existing need for development cooperation (Figure 38). This is clear from the fact that this group has slightly larger coefficients for "extremely poor" and "very poor". Corruption, on the other hand, plays a similarly strong role for all citizens. In this case, no significant differences can be seen between the observed groups. The same applies to the three examined dimensions of fragility. Again, there are no significant differences between the observed groups, although the partner country's state capacities play a slightly greater role for those who are interested in development cooperation.

**Figure 38** Impact of information about a partner country on the support for development cooperation in this country – a sub-group analysis based on interest in development cooperation



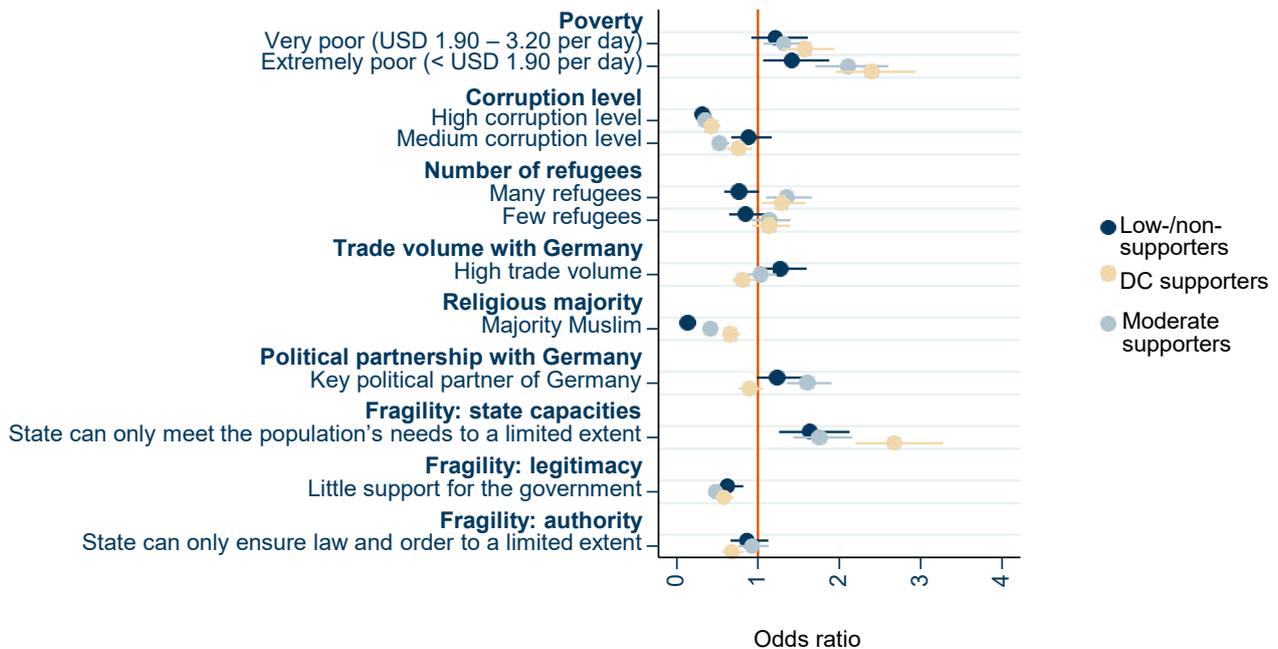
Source: own visualisation. Data basis: Respondi survey from 24 August–2 September 2020.  $N = 3,001$ . Yellow represents the odds ratios for the group who are interested in development cooperation, grey those who are moderately interested and blue those who have no interest in development cooperation. The categorisation is based on the question “How interested are you personally in development aid, development policy and global poverty?”, with answers on the scale 0 = “I am not at all interested in this topic” to 10 = “I am very interested in this topic”. People who gave an answer between 7 and 10 were categorised as interested in development cooperation while people who gave an answer between 0 and 3 are categorised as uninterested in development cooperation. People with an answer between 4 and 6 were categorised as moderately interested. For further information on the displayed coefficients, the various reference categories and the control variables in the model, see Figure 37.

The results show more prominent differences in the relevance of self-interest for support for a partner country. For those who are interested in development cooperation, this criterion plays only a secondary role. Especially in comparison to those who are uninterested in development cooperation, it is notable that the trade volume and level of political partnership are of little relevance. On the other hand, people who are interested in development cooperation more frequently support countries from which many refugees originate than those who are not interested in development cooperation. Of particular note is that all respondents are less supportive of cooperation with Muslim countries regardless of their interest in development cooperation. However, this negative effect is significantly less among people who are interested in the topic area.

There are even clearer differences between those who generally support development cooperation and those who tend not to support it as much (see Figure 39). The need for development cooperation in the partner country is very important to people who generally support development cooperation (yellow). This can be seen in the somewhat greater effect in the “extremely poor” and “very poor” categories. These people also express slightly more support for countries with many refugees than for countries from which few or no refugees originate. By contrast, people who are generally less supportive of development cooperation perceive countries from which refugees originate as less worthy of support than countries where refugees

do not come from. There are also significant differences in the relevance of trade volumes. Development cooperation supporters prefer countries that have a low trade volume with Germany, while those who are less supportive of development cooperation prefer countries that have a higher trade volume with Germany. In other words, Germany’s self-interests are more important to the latter group.

**Figure 39 Impact of information about a partner country on the support for development cooperation in this country – a sub-group analysis based on support for development cooperation**



Source: own visualisation. Data basis: ResponDI survey from 24 August–2 September 2020. N = 3,001. Yellow represents the odds ratios for the group of development cooperation supporters, grey those who show moderate support and blue those who support development cooperation only a little or not at all. The categorisation is based on the question “Thinking about development aid for poor countries – in your opinion, to what extent should the Federal Government provide financial support if 0 on the following scale means ‘Should not provide any support at all’ and 10 means ‘Should provide very generous support’? Where would you place your opinion on this scale?” People who gave an answer between 7 and 10 were categorised as development cooperation supporters, while people who gave an answer between 0 and 3 were categorised as not supporting development cooperation. People with an answer between 4 and 6 were categorised as moderately supportive. For further information on the displayed coefficients and the various reference categories, see Figure 37.

Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the support for development cooperation with countries that are predominantly Muslim. Regardless of the general level of support for development cooperation, the results show that, on average, all groups support countries with a Muslim majority less than countries with a Christian majority. However, this negative effect is significantly less among people who generally support development cooperation.

The capacities of states that can meet their population’s basic needs also plays a greater role for development cooperation supporters than for other groups.

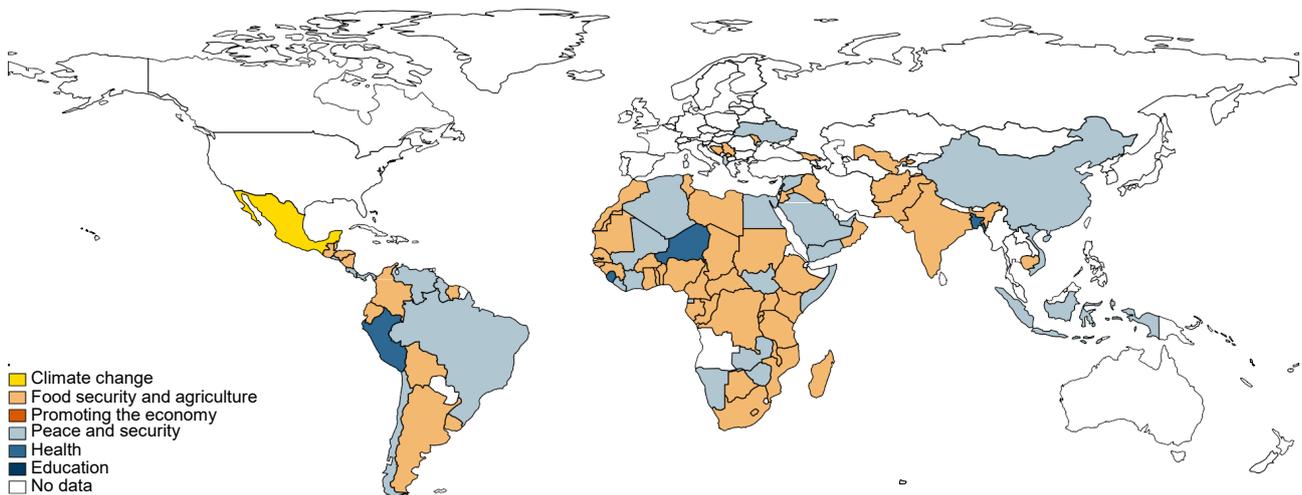
The results show no significant differences for the remaining factors. In other words, there is no or very little difference in the preferences of the three groups.

### 6.2.4 Food security, agriculture and peace and security are the sectors that are perceived as most worthy of support

In addition to the decision as to which a country should receive support, a second development policy question with regard to the distribution of financial resources is what the thematic focus of the cooperation should be. This decision is closely linked to the selection of the partner countries and aligned to the country-specific needs and conditions. Again, an analysis of public attitudes can provide important orientational knowledge for governmental and non-governmental actors. In particular, information on which sectors in which countries are perceived as particularly worthy of support allows the various actors to assess which country-specific needs should be communicated more strongly or where information deficits and false perceptions could arise and should be addressed, if necessary.

The survey revealed that development policy measures in the food security and agriculture (63.5%) and peace and security (58.7%) sectors met with a particularly high level of agreement. Measures in the promoting the economy (35.9%) and climate change (42.5%) sectors, on the other hand, are perceived as significantly less worthy of support.

**Figure 40** World map of support for development cooperation in individual sectors based on partner countries



Source: own visualisation. Data basis: ResponDi survey from 24 August–2 September 2020. N = 3,001. The graphic shows (highlighted in colour) the sector with the highest agreement rate for each country. Table 8 in the Annex shows the exact agreement rates.

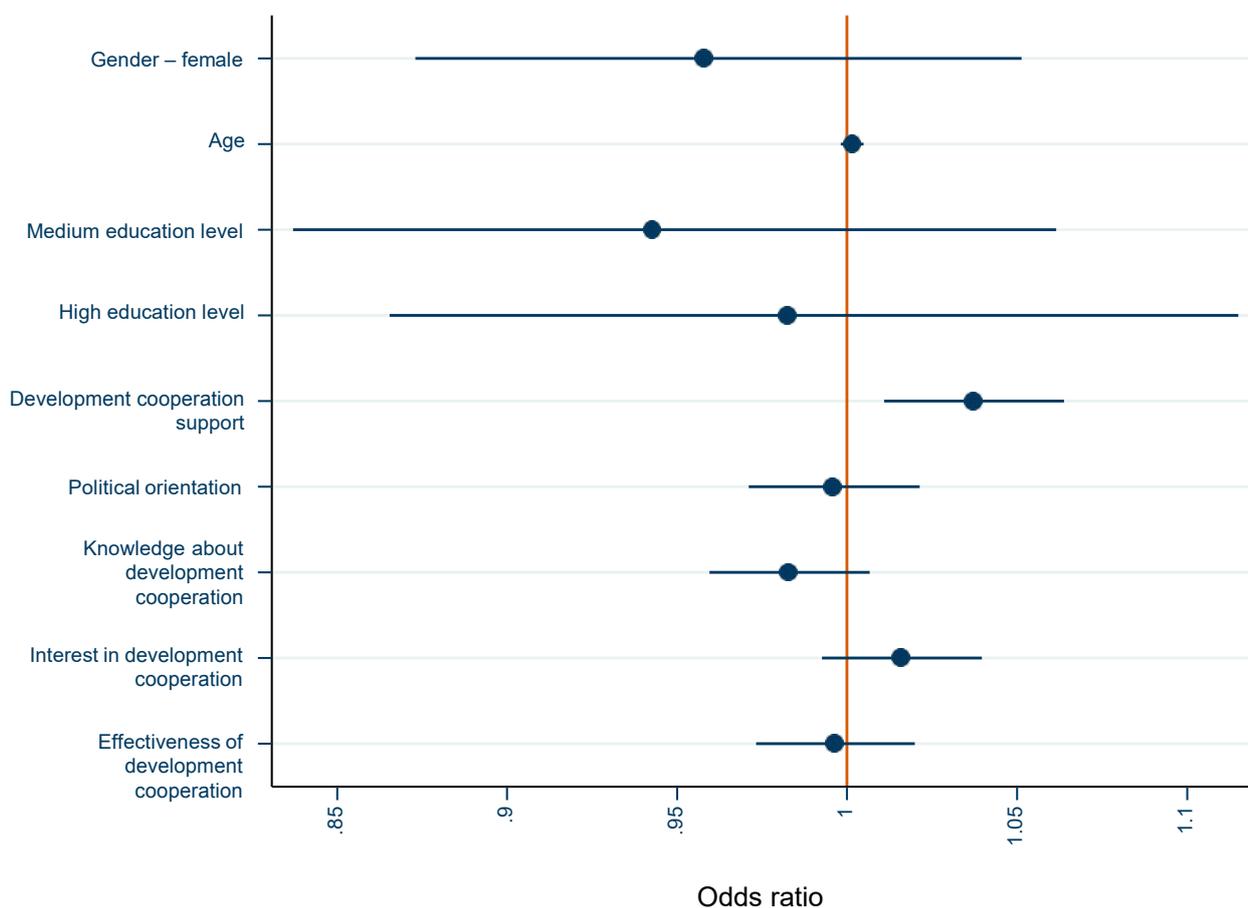
Figure 40 shows that the preferences for a thematic focus of the development policy cooperation differ depending on the country context. In most countries, the respondents most frequently supported the “peace and security” or “food security and agriculture” sectors. In a few countries, health was seen as the most important sector (Niger, Peru and Bangladesh). Climate change is only identified as the most important sector in Mexico.

### 6.2.5 Fragile states are considered particularly worthy of support

Development cooperation operates in an area of tension between various principles. For one thing, the 2030 Agenda includes a central promise to “leave no one behind”. The intention is to reduce poverty in all its forms and eventually eradicate it completely (United Nations, 2015). At the same time, existing funds should be deployed as effectively as possible. In fragile contexts in particular, these two concepts contradict one another. On the one hand, poverty is often widespread in fragile states because, for example, there are no social welfare systems to absorb poverty. On the other hand, weak governance structures hinder the effective deployment of development funds (Zürcher, 2012).

Against this backdrop, the question arises whether and to what extent the public views fragile states as worthy of support. To examine this question, Table 8 in the Annex divides all countries into the categories “very fragile”, “fragile” and “stable” based on the *Fragile State Index* (FSI, 2019). The results show that respondents slightly prefer very fragile states (53%) over fragile (49%) and stable (44%) states.

**Figure 41 Relationship between personal characteristics of the respondents and support for development cooperation with fragile states**



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 24 August–2 September 2020. N = 7,642. The figure shows the effect of the plotted variables on support for states that are classified as fragile. The analysis contains only countries that are classified as very fragile and records the effect of the observed choice for or against a country that is classified as very fragile. For further information on the displayed coefficients, the various reference categories and the control variables in the model, see Table 90 in the online Annex.

It is notable that support for the development cooperation sector “peace and security” is very high for countries like South Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Liberia and Venezuela in particular, which the public perceives as extremely fragile. However, the same does not apply to all countries that are categorised as very fragile. The results in Table 8 also show that the development cooperation sector “peace and security” also receives the highest support in some countries that are classified as not fragile or only a little fragile.

Furthermore, the results of a multivariate analysis (Figure 41) show that support for development cooperation in fragile states (compared with less fragile states) is higher the more the person generally supports development cooperation. This is shown by the significantly positive effect of support for development cooperation on the selection of a fragile country – the confidence interval does not cross the vertical orange zero line.

By contrast, knowledge about development cooperation, perceived effectiveness of development cooperation and interest in development cooperation do not directly affect support for fragile states. The political orientation and various other sociodemographic factors (age, gender, education and place of residence) do not influence support for fragile states either.

### 6.3 Summary

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The results show that the public has different preferences for individual partner countries. Levels of poverty and corruption are the decisive factors when it comes to support for partner countries, which is consistent with previous studies (see, e.g., Blackman, 2018; Doherty et al., 2020; Feeny et al., 2019). At the same time, development cooperation with countries in which a high percentage of the population belong to the Muslim faith receives less support. This Muslim bias is already known from previous studies in the US (Blackman, 2018). However, the results of this survey show that the negative effect is much less among people who are interested in development policy than those with little interest in development policy. The fragility level in partner countries is also a decisive factor in whether the public supports development cooperation with partner countries. The results go beyond those of previous studies which revealed, for example, that a partner country's ability to use development cooperation effectively is a key factor in support for development cooperation (Feeny et al., 2019). While fragility in the form of weak state capacities to satisfy the basic needs of the population make public support for development cooperation with the respective partner countries more likely, there is a negative effect if the population of the partner country does not trust its government (lack of government legitimacy) or if the government does not have a monopoly on the use of force (lack of authority).

When looking at specific partner countries for development cooperation, the countries with which the public is most in favour of cooperation include Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Republic of the Congo. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, China and Ukraine are the countries that experience the least support. In terms of sectors, food security and agriculture and peace and security are considered the most worthy of support. Promoting the economy and climate change are the sectors that are perceived as least worthy of support. The results additionally show that the respondents more frequently support development cooperation with very fragile states than with less fragile states.

**7. WHAT DO THE FINDINGS  
IMPLY FOR DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION?**

The findings of this report give development policy decision-makers feedback and orientational knowledge regarding public attitudes to development policy. So what do the results of the empirical analyses now mean for the strategic orientation of development policy and development cooperation as well as for government and civil society actors' communication and education work? What conclusions for relevant action can be drawn from these results? This section attempts to interpret the findings and provides four possible implications for action as a contribution to (self-)critical discourse among development cooperation actors regarding development policy and practical development cooperation in a complex society.

## 7.1 Implications

### Implication 1:

Development policy has comparatively low visibility in the media and people's day-to-day lives. As long as this is the case, it seems unlikely that existing attitudes will change in either a positive or negative direction. However, there are promising ways to increase the visibility of development policy in everyday life, and development actors already use these to varying degrees. Possible methods include (1) increased cooperation with influencers, (2) linking development cooperation to "mega topics" such as climate change, flight or COVID-19, (3) greater linking of the population's buying behaviour to development cooperation topics relating to sustainable consumption and (4) development cooperation communication that, above all, relates information about the scope and effectiveness of development cooperation projects to personal experiences in its education work.

The results of the media content analysis in Section 2 show that development policy is a niche topic in media reporting. This is also consistent with previous studies (Bieth, 2012; Brunswick Consulting, 2018; Fohrbeck et al., 1983). The intensity of media reporting is permanently below the threshold of public attention (for information on the relationship between media reporting and public attention, see, e.g., Neuman, 1990). If development cooperation actors want to make development policy topics more visible, there are various possible starting points.

First of all, the analyses of the short message service Twitter in Section 2 show that the channels with the greatest reach can occasionally create high visibility for development policy-related content even if the accounts themselves have no direct link to the topic. Admittedly, this is often targeted criticism of development cooperation by political actors. Such tweets rarely present development policy, development cooperation and sustainable development in a positive context. However, there are also positive examples of far-reaching and therefore potentially effective contributions. Examples include the BMZ campaign with fashion bloggers for fair production conditions in the textile industry, BMZ's cooperation with actor Tom Wlaschiha, the BMZ-funded campaign "Entwicklung wirkt" with various German civil-society organisations and the cooperation between Unicef and the South Korean boy band BTS.<sup>77</sup> The latter reached a number of people in the millions with their contributions to a Unicef campaign against violence towards children ("LOVE MYSELF Global Campaign"). As a result, this campaign was able to reach an audience that would otherwise rarely come into contact with development policy topics.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, gaining trustworthy actors with a high reach on social media as possible long-term partners for joint information campaigns appears to be a promising strategy for drawing attention to development policy.

<sup>77</sup> For information on the "Entwicklung wirkt" campaign (in German only) see <https://www.entwicklung-wirkt.de/home>.

<sup>78</sup> For information on the campaign with BTS see <https://www.love-myself.org/eng/home/>. The band shares campaign information using various platforms – including YouTube and Instagram.

Secondly, there is a possibility to align communication to the global challenges that are the subject of intense discussion at the particularly time, for example flight and migration, climate change or even the coronavirus pandemic (known as mega topics). These themes provide a suitable mechanism for informing the public about the relevance of development policy to address these challenges. However, the current coronavirus pandemic highlights that the topic of development policy retreats even further into the background as the media increasingly focuses on the current situation in Germany.<sup>79</sup> In this situation, too, it is important to point out international interdependencies and emphasise what development policy and development cooperation contribute to global development. Following such a strategy also gives rise to two risks. For one thing, actors that have a critical stance towards development policy and development cooperation can also pick up on “mega topics”. This could result in development policy actors being drawn into controversial and polarising public debates (for example about migration). Thus, it is important to assess to what extent a contribution serves to objectify the discussion and has the potential to be heard. For another thing, actors should not lose sight of the overarching development policy goals of the 2030 Agenda. A one-sided focus on the currently popular mega topic can result in a distorted perception of the contribution and the overarching role of development policy and development cooperation. Consequently, the public may increasingly measure development cooperation based on short-term successes relating to the relevant mega topic instead of its long-term and sustainable contributions.

Thirdly, a promising and increasingly used approach to communication and education work on development policy involves highlighting the relevance of the public’s day-to-day consumption behaviour for sustainable global development and thus encouraging reflection, attitude changes and, ultimately, a change in consumption behaviour. There is at least the potential to not only address consumption-specific attitudes in the narrowest sense in this way, but to also increasingly bring general attitudes towards sustainable global development into the spotlight – even if the public is not familiar with the SDGs as such (Schneider and Gleser, 2018, p. 50). The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) initiative “Green Button” – the label for fairly produced clothing – is a visible example of a development cooperation approach that aims to strengthen sustainable consumption. Increasing global sales of fair trade products also show the growing relevance of this approach (see, e.g., Forum Fairer Handel e.V., 2020). However, there may be a risk of moral reactance if the encouraged behavioural changes are perceived as going too far and therefore as “invasive”. The question of which capacities and resources the respective population groups require to be able to afford sustainable consumption should also be considered in advance.

Fourthly and finally, it may make sense for development communication and, in particular, education to not focus solely on the scope and effectiveness of development cooperation but to embed this information in strong personalised reports (for information on the effectiveness of development education, see Bergmüller et al., 2019; for information on the significance of messenger traits in development communication, see Hudson et al., 2020). This is an approach that NGOs, for example, frequently use in communication with (potential) donors (most notably in the scope of sponsorship programmes; see, e.g., Orgad and Vella, 2012). Ultimately, strongly personalised reporting also has the potential to make development policy more tangible and therefore more relevant to everyday life. However, this should only be part of a communication strategy – otherwise actors run the risk of not conveying the structural aspects of development policy and development cooperation and therefore reinforcing public perception of development cooperation as individual “aid”.

<sup>79</sup> News generally tends to focus more on Germany. According to older studies, foreign affairs reporting already focuses on European countries and the US, while Africa and Latin America receive little attention (Maurer and Reinemann, 2006, p. 144-151). This focus could intensify even further in national crisis situations.

**Implication 2:**

Arguments of corruption and low effectiveness of development cooperation can reduce support for development cooperation. On the other hand, positive arguments, information and moral appeals show barely any potential to increase general support for development cooperation. If development cooperation actors are to have the chance to increase support in the medium term and prevent counterarguments as far as possible, it appears reasonable to focus on communication work that places the effectiveness of development cooperation in the foreground and highlights its contribution to resolving global challenges. This includes combating climate change, an issue that receives less support from the public. At the same time, the risks and challenges of development cooperation should be named transparently – overall and in more detail in development education.

One focus of this report was on examining how the public reacts to development cooperation-related information that is, for example, conveyed via the media or development cooperation actors. The analyses in this report indicate that arguments for development cooperation (Section 3), information on inputs, outputs and outcomes of development cooperation projects (Section 4) or moral appeals (Section 5) conveyed via the media do not increase basic support for development cooperation, or do so only in individual cases. At the same time, analyses of the effectiveness of arguments conveyed in the media (Section 3) and the public's expectations (Section 6) show that the public generally reacts sensitively to information on corruption, ineffectiveness of development cooperation, individual dimensions of state fragility and the religious majority in partner countries. Generally, the analyses show that basic convictions (political orientation, moral concerns) influence support for development cooperation much more strongly than selectively provided information. It is therefore unlikely that people will change their attitudes based on information that is provided as a one-off. As in every other policy field, attitude changes are a long-term process.

However, the analyses also reveal that information on inputs ("What is spent on a measure?"), outputs ("What was implemented in the scope of an measure?") and outcomes ("What did a measure achieve?") can result in a more positive assessment of specific development cooperation measures and a better perception of the effectiveness of development cooperation (Section 4). Moreover, the analyses show that the public has great interest in information about which measures were carried out for which target group and with what results.

It may therefore be possible to at least confront sceptical perceptions of development cooperation's effectiveness using well-founded and credible information on the effectiveness of development cooperation that is also made accessible to a wider population in understandable language. This could potentially also increase general support for development cooperation in the medium term. The fact that BMZ's realignment in the scope of the "BMZ 2030" strategy (BMZ 2020a) is concentrating on effectiveness aspects is already a step in this direction, as is civil society's focus on the effectiveness of project work (VENRO, 2019).

However, communication on the effectiveness of development cooperation should not only mention its successes. Failures and challenges in the partner countries (such as corruption, fragile statehood) should also be transparently communicated. Not least because this allows development cooperation actors to address counterarguments that could alter opinions in advance (see Sections 3 and 4). However, in order for actors to avoid provoking public criticism themselves through this transparent handling of failures (see Hudson and van Heerde-Hudson, 2012, p. 18), this information should be linked with details of the dimensions and urgency of global challenges and categorised accordingly. The analyses in this study indicate that the negative impacts of critical information can be mitigated by pointing out the complex role of development cooperation in these challenging contexts (see Section 3). Development education involves much more intense interaction with the target groups compared with media communication and therefore offers extraordinary

opportunities to convey a realistic picture of development cooperation and the conditions in the partner countries (see, e.g., Yanguas, 2018).<sup>80</sup>

### Implication 3:

There is an area of tension between the general public's expectations of development cooperation, which are characterised by a narrative of care and aid, and the self-image of development cooperation actors, in which the focus is on partnership-based global development and resolving global problems. The challenge is now to create connections to the existing narrative without neglecting the objectives that are linked to their own self-image. Consistently emphasising the interrelationships between fighting poverty on the one hand and mastering global challenges and creating stable governmental structures on the other could contribute to this in the medium term.

Overall, the population has an image of development cooperation as “development aid” that primarily involves caring for poor and suffering people and has little to do with considerations of sustainable global development or global justice (see Section 5). Public expectations of the active development cooperation actors are in line with this view (see Section 6). The public draws on the extent of poverty in the partner countries as a key criterion when it comes to the question with which countries development cooperation should be conducted. People are also more likely to endorse development policy engagement in the food security and agriculture or peace and security sectors than, for example, in promoting the economy or combating climate change. At the same time, the analysis highlights that the existing risks to the effectiveness of development cooperation reduce acceptance. The public has reservations towards development cooperation measures if these are carried out in countries with a high level of corruption, a lack of government legitimacy or a limited state monopoly on the use of force (this means the state has low authority). There are also reservations regarding cooperation with countries in which the majority of the population is Muslim.

Many development cooperation actors understand development cooperation as a contribution to mastering global challenges and to partnership-based sustainable development (see, e.g. BMZ, 2020a). The main focus is not on caring for people in the partner countries but above all on cooperation with equal partners and supporting them with mastering the challenges in their countries independently. In practice, topics like climate change mitigation and adaptation, promoting the economy in partner countries or supporting state structures are therefore also important tasks of development cooperation. With regard to the risks that the public views as critical, development cooperation often acts under complex conditions, which include corruption, fragile statehood or conflicts within and between states.

When it comes to strategic planning for development cooperation, the result of this area of tension is that measures to tackle corruption are often a high priority. The same is true of measures that to help ensure that the intended results can be achieved and demonstrated even in difficult contexts. The current focus on using evidence and carrying out rigorous impact evaluations, particularly in the field of transitional aid, is therefore an effective approach (see, e.g., Faust, 2020).

For development education in particular, these results imply that actors should consistently convey the current self-image of development cooperation without ignoring the public's existing prior assumptions. In doing so, they should illustrate the connections between global challenges such as flight, migration and climate change on the one hand and poverty and malnutrition on the other. The same applies to the connections between local or global challenges and the structural problems in the partner countries. For example, climate change could permanently worsen hunger and poverty. It therefore seems sensible – although difficult to communicate – to convey that development cooperation can help the partner countries create robust state structures that enable them to effectively curb corruption and increase state performance

<sup>80</sup> Yanguas (2018) argues that development cooperation should not be understood and communicated as a kind of machine into which inputs are fed and that outputs “development” at the other end that can then be assessed based on simple metrics.

capacities (see Bauhr et al., 2013, p. 577-587). The partner countries will then be in a position to fulfil their duty of care towards their population, at least in the medium term.

The same applies to development communication. Actors should always emphasize the contribution of development cooperation to overcoming global challenges. At the same time, it is important to break development policy content down into easily understandable connections; however, this comes against limitations in practice.

#### **Box 15 Roles and limitations of findings on public opinion**

The explanatory power of opinion polls with regard to causal relationships is limited. For example, it is impossible to clarify using cross-sectional data whether development cooperation receives less support because people doubt its effectiveness or whether those who support development cooperation doubt its effectiveness to a lesser extent. However, these relationships are relevant for deriving potential communication and education strategies. For this reason, this report contains a number of survey experiments that aim to examine the causal relationships using “rigorous” experimental methods and, through this, enable reliable statements on the factors influencing attitudes and the underlying psychological mechanisms. Nonetheless, this method also has limitations. For example, an experiment that examines how selected information about the effectiveness of development cooperation projects influences support for development cooperation cannot rule out that different information that is not tested in the experiment may have a weaker or stronger effect on the shaping of opinions. It is also unclear how long the various effects last. In addition, in the real world people first have to notice certain information offerings before the provided information can influence their attitudes and behaviour. Thus, it is important to consider that there are numerous sources of information all competing for the public’s attention. With regard to this complex context, in the medium term it may be possible to better understand the impact of information on development policy opinions by looking at numerous studies together. However, such systematic reviews are not yet available for the questions dealt with in this report.

Possible alternatives – for example “expert opinions” or one’s own intuition – may subjectively convey a greater sense of security and reduce the impression that the topic area is too complex; however, there is no evidence that their results are superior to those of serious and critical consideration of the empirical findings of social-scientific work. In this respect, the application of the findings presented in this study fits into a wider discussion of the role of (applied) science in societal discourse and decision-making processes, which has become particularly prominent in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. Especially during the course of the pandemic, it became clear that scientific evidence is contradictory, complex and of limited informative value. At the same time, the intense societal discourse on measures to tackle the pandemic illustrates that alternatives to evidence-based societal decision-making processes do not contribute to a more appropriate reaction to existing challenges.

**Implication 4:**

Information on development policy, development cooperation and sustainable global development frequently has different effects on different population groups. Something that has the desired effect for one population group may produce unintended effects in another group. Quantitative and qualitative empirical data can help us to avoid mistakes and increase the effectiveness of development policy communication and education work.

The findings of this report repeatedly provide evidence that information about development policy and development cooperation does not have the same effect on all groups in the population (Sections 3, 4, 5, 6). Even where information has no effect at all on average, it is possible that it will increase some population group's support for development cooperation while causing others to distance themselves from development cooperation. There often simply is no one effective communication strategy. The same most likely applies to development education.

The impact of development communication and education is dependent on existing attitude patterns and individual characteristics. For example, for people who position themselves on the "right" of the political spectrum, criticism of the effectiveness of development cooperation in the context of global challenges results in a more critical perception of the development cooperation budget. On the other hand, for people on the "left" of the political spectrum, this results in increased support for the development cooperation budget (Section 3). When it comes to moral appeals, an appeal that addresses the moral foundation of loyalty – and so ultimately emphasises how Germany benefits from development cooperation – tends to result in greater support for development cooperation the more important loyalty is in general for a person's moral judgements (Section 5).

For practitioners in development communication and education, these findings reveal an important aspect – when specifically addressing certain sections of the population, they should do their best to consider what unintended impact the measure in question could have on other target groups. By way of illustration: Actors may wish to reach the group of development cooperation supporters through transparent information on corruption and how it is being fought. This aims to strengthen them in their role as multipliers who reinforce a more realistic image of development cooperation in society. On the other hand, people who have reservations towards development cooperation relating to corruption may see this as confirmation of their negative pre-held beliefs. Added to this is the fact that addressing a particular target group through communication in mass media is difficult in itself. However, development education offers major potential.

To avoid or correct the aforementioned unintended impacts as far as possible, actors in development policy communication and education work – particularly when talking about high-cost measures – should check in advance how the target group in question reacts to the planned measures and whether the reaction varies between different target groups. Both quantitative (for example survey experiments) and qualitative (for example focus group interviews) methods are appropriate to improve the empirical basis for the assessment of relevant measures in a diverse target-group environment.

Finally, it is important to consider that development cooperation actors can hardly satisfy the opinions of every population group with their communication work. They will likely find staunch development cooperation opponents in particular difficult or impossible to convince. In light of this, it seems sensible to attempt to identify severe "side effects" of communication measures in advance and thereby avoid major public reputation risks. However, the development cooperation actors' own convictions or own self-image should still form the basis for communication work.

## 7.2 Outlook

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The coronavirus pandemic will significantly impact development cooperation donor states' financial situations over the coming years and also present major challenges for developing and emerging countries. At the same time, in addition to the related topics of public health and economic recovery, other issues such as climate change, flight and migration, war and conflict, deficiencies of democracy and rule of law, and hunger and poverty will continue to be acute challenges. Not only that, but the pandemic itself is also influencing and, in many cases, worsening these problems. Development cooperation will still be required to play its part in resolving these global challenges. In this respect, it remains important that the actors involved do not lose sight of the population and its attitudes towards development policy, development cooperation and sustainable global development. The DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy will therefore continue to inform governmental and civil-society development cooperation actors about public opinion on this topic. The next report is planned for 2022.

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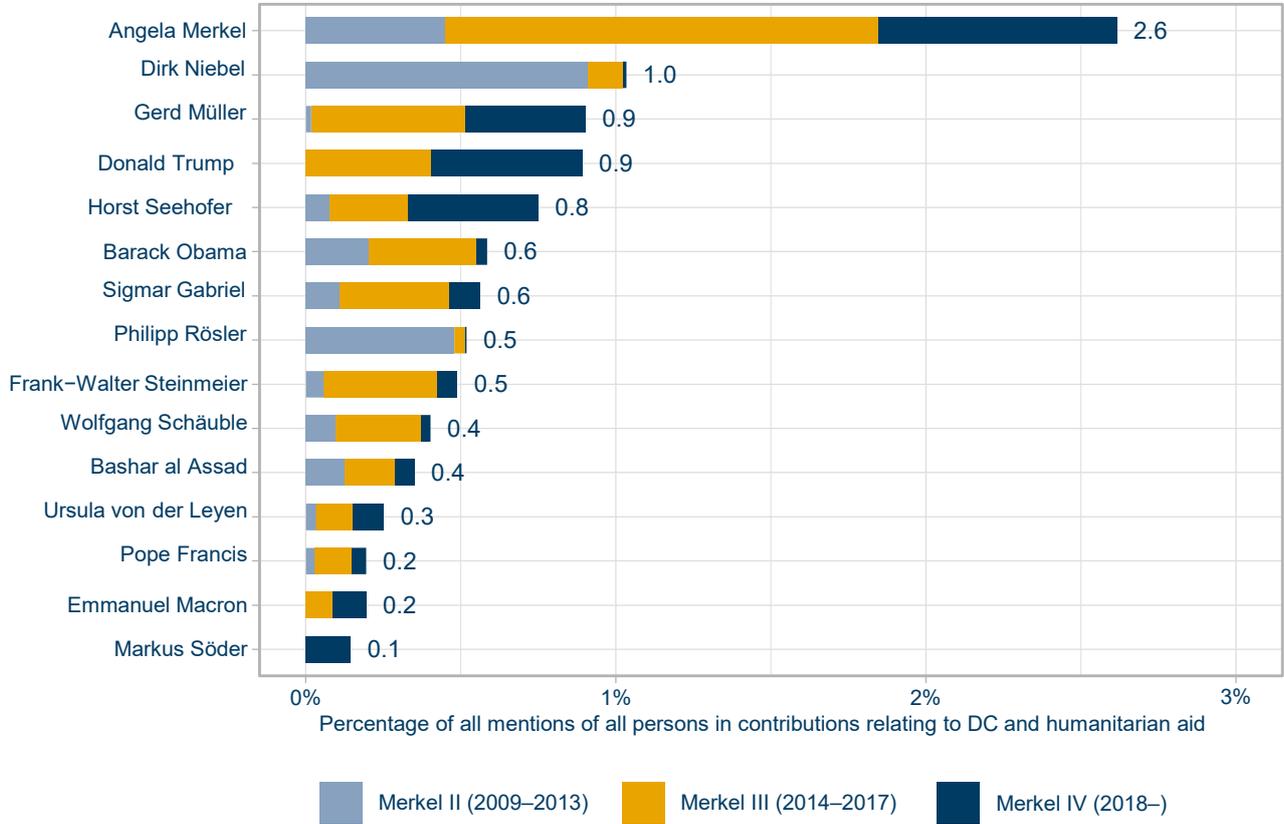
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## 9. ANNEX

9.1 Annex Section 2

Figure 42 People in print media reporting



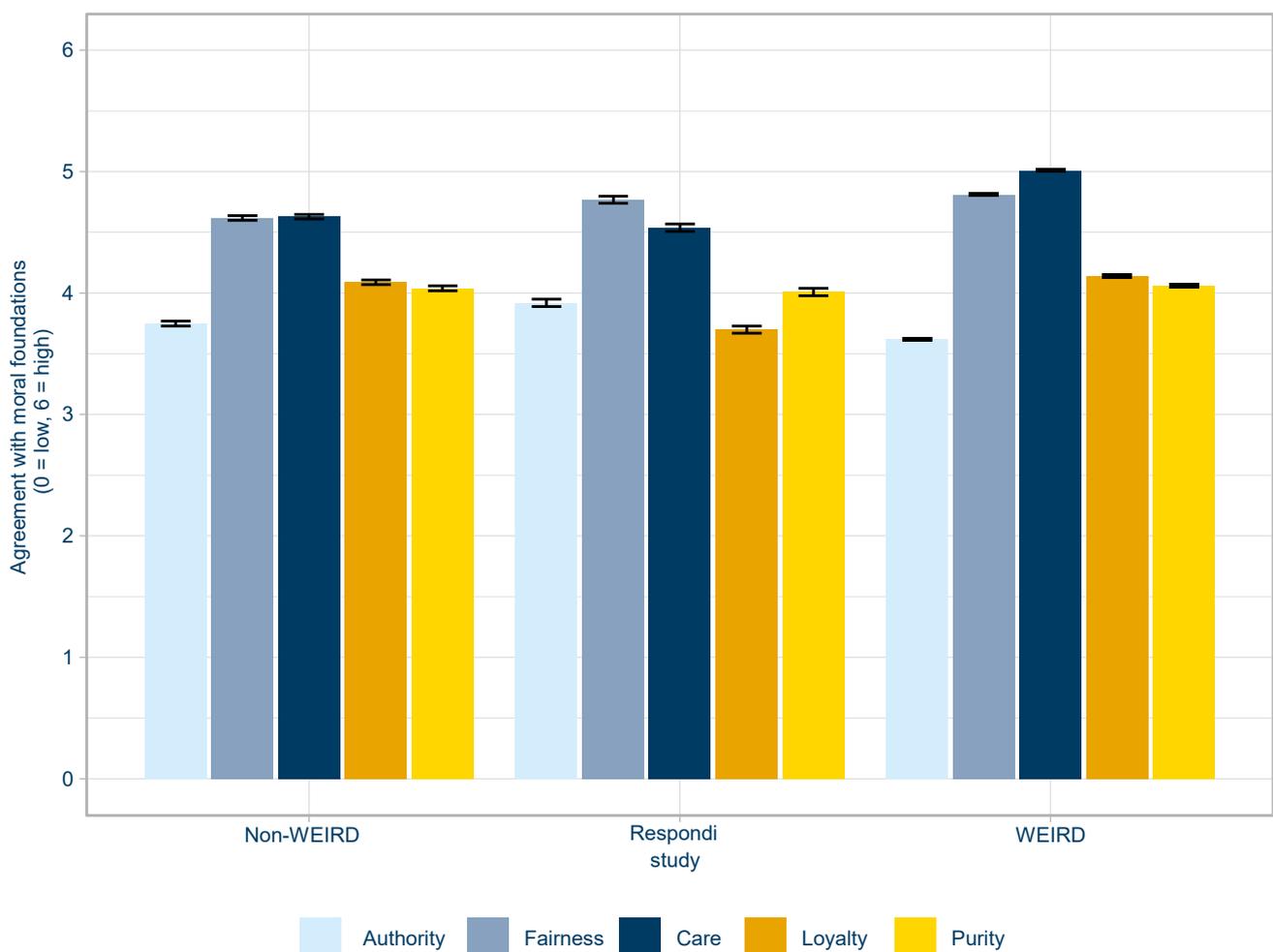
Source: own visualisation; data basis: search-term supported query of the LexisNexis press database for the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2020. The people were extracted from the identified articles in the topic area of development policy/development cooperation using the spacyR package in the software environment R. For details on the print media included, the time periods available for them and the search terms used, see Section 2 in the online Annex. To make the differing prominence of the actors over time visible, the legislation periods of the German Federal Government under the leadership of Angela Merkel are marked in colour.

## 9.2 Annex Section 5

### 9.2.1 The German public's moral foundations

Figure 43 shows the German public's agreement with the five moral foundations. For example, on average the respondents had higher agreement values for the foundations "care" and "fairness" and slightly lower, but consistently above the average rating of 3.5, agreement values for the foundations "authority", "loyalty" and "purity". The moral foundations appear to be universal. There are no major differences between western industrialised states – also known as WEIRD countries ("western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic") – and those states that do not belong to this group – the non-WEIRD countries (Doğruyol et al., 2019). The WEIRD countries include Germany and the United States, while India and Brazil are examples of non-WEIRD countries. A closer look at the differences reveals that the German public attaches less weight to the foundations of loyalty and care than other WEIRD-countries. Instead, the foundation of authority is slightly more pronounced.

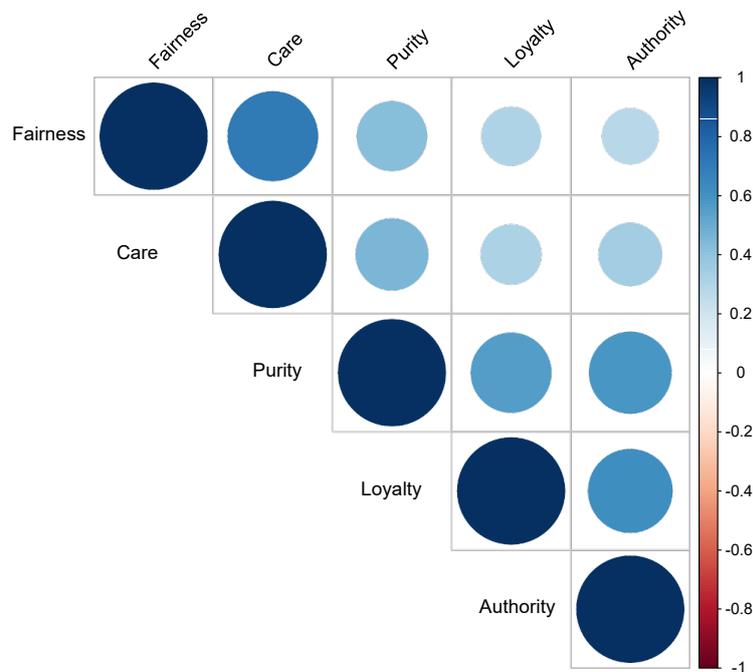
**Figure 43** The German public's moral foundations compared to other countries around the world



Source: own visualisation; data basis: Respondi survey from 27 April–12 May 2020 (experiment 2) and data from a meta-analysis by Doğruyol et al. (2019). The mean values from the total sample are plotted.

Figure 44 shows an overall positive correlation between the individual foundations. This could indicate that some people strongly advocate for moral concerns in all foundations. At the same time, there are differences in the relationships between the various foundations. People who agree with fairness aspects are also very highly likely to agree with care aspects; people who agree with authority also agree particularly strongly with loyalty and purity.

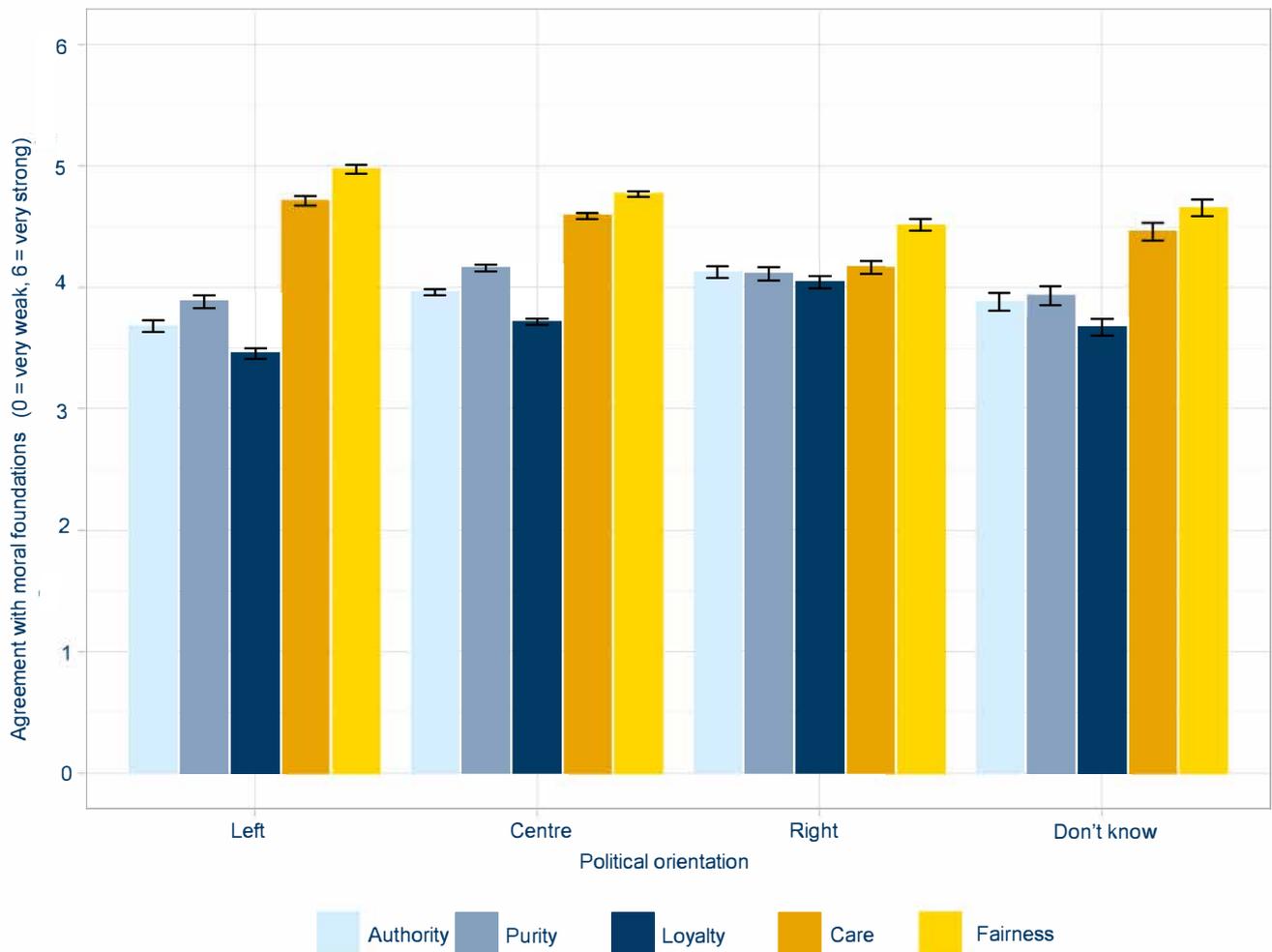
**Figure 44** Intercorrelation of the individual moral foundations



Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 27 April–12 May 2020 (experiment 2). The graph shows the correlation of the individual moral foundations with one another. A correlation describes the relationship between variables. The correlation coefficient is plotted on the right: 0 stands for no relationship between the foundations; blue stands for a positive relationship, meaning when agreement with one foundation rises it also rises for the other. Red stands for a negative relationship, meaning when agreement with one foundation rises, it falls for the other dimension. The darker the blue (red) and the larger the circle, the stronger the positive (negative) relationship.

With regard to political orientation (self-identification as more right or more left on the political spectrum), the results in Figure 45 shows the expected differences between the moral foundations. The graph illustrates that, for those on the left of the political spectrum, the foundations of care and fairness are decisive when it comes to making a moral assessment. By contrast, those on the right of the political spectrum view moral considerations relating to loyalty, authority and purity as equally important. As a result, the perception of what is morally necessary can vary depending on whether a person places themselves more to the left or more to the right on the political spectrum.

**Figure 45** Agreement with the five moral foundations according to political orientation



N = 2,030

Source: own visualisation; data basis: ResponDi survey from 27 April–12 May 2020 (experiment 2). On the scale from 0 = left to 10 = right, the values 0-3 have been summarised as “left”, 4-6 as “centre” and 7-10 as “right”.

## 9.3 Annex section 6

**Table 8** Expectations of development cooperation in the context of fragile states – agreement values

Fragility Level	Country	Average All sectors	Education	Health	Peace and security	Promoting the economy	Food security and agriculture	Climate change
	<b>Average – All</b>	<b>50,0</b>	<b>44,9</b>	<b>54,2</b>	<b>58,7</b>	<b>35,9</b>	<b>63,5</b>	<b>42,5</b>
	<b>Average – Extremely fragile</b>	<b>53,2</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>57,6</b>	<b>62,9</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>67,3</b>	<b>43,2</b>
4 – extremely fragile	Sudan	48,9	45,6	48,3	53,8	39,3	70	38,8
	Ethiopia	63,6	60,4	68,4	68,3	51,2	77,8	52,5
	Mozambique	59,7	45,3	62,1	62,2	55,4	80,3	52,4
	Central African Republic	59,2	53,2	68,6	61,8	43,1	77,5	44,8
	South Sudan	57,2	59,7	58,9	74,1	45,3	72,5	32,6
	Somalia	59,9	46,3	69,5	75,5	47,4	70,9	50,8
	Kenya	60,3	49,1	66,7	66,1	43,2	80,7	50,8
	Guinea	54,3	49,2	64,8	65,2	32	66	47,4
	Libya	47,3	53,1	49,2	55,2	44,8	57,7	24,1
	Yemen	48	44,9	48,3	66,7	34,3	50,7	42,6
	Pakistan	44,1	41	51,7	50,8	28,3	60	30,4
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	51,6	50	50	62,5	36,5	66,7	43,1
	Nigeria	54,9	48,1	64,3	58,9	36	78,8	40,4
	Iraq	38,7	26,7	33,3	49,3	26,4	56,1	37,3
	Republic of the Congo	60,7	55,6	70,8	68,8	46,6	71,4	50,8
	Guinea-Bissau	52,2	42,9	51,1	68,5	35,8	78,6	40,4
	Liberia	50,5	49,1	57,8	66,1	26	61	40,4
	Syria	50,7	39,7	54	67,8	36,2	66,7	34,8
	Mali	51,3	39,1	54	62,1	39,3	60,6	49,2
	Burundi	50	49,1	50,8	54,5	27,1	67,2	52,5
	Zimbabwe	60,6	49	65,1	74,5	53,2	62,1	57,1
	Chad	51,6	50,9	47,7	57,6	36,7	65,8	43,5
Uganda	55,3	51,7	67,3	61	32,1	68,9	55,6	
Cameroon	58,7	52,6	65,1	58,8	59,2	77,2	39,1	
Afghanistan	44,3	50,8	40,4	51,7	32,8	56,4	35,4	
Niger	56,6	55,1	72,9	68,9	41,5	61,9	39,1	
Venezuela	47	39	53,2	68	24,4	53,7	41,4	
	<b>Average – Fragile</b>	<b>49,5</b>	<b>44,6</b>	<b>53,8</b>	<b>57,4</b>	<b>35,6</b>	<b>62,5</b>	<b>43,1</b>

Fragility Level	Country	Average All sectors	Education	Health	Peace and security	Promoting the economy	Food security and agriculture	Climate change
3 - fragile	Ecuador	53,9	50,9	54,2	53,4	42,9	63	60
	Indonesia	50,4	42,9	62,3	66,7	40,7	58,1	29,8
	Madagascar	52,4	50,9	63,5	52,7	26,9	73,8	57,4
	Zambia	57,1	63,6	53,3	68,3	35,2	66,7	53,6
	Tanzania	57,6	53,6	61,8	59,4	46,6	78,9	47,4
	Morocco	42,5	36,5	36,2	53,7	27	60	42,6
	Algeria	50,3	50,9	56,1	57,7	44,4	57,4	34
	Ghana	55,8	63,6	56,4	69,4	44,8	72,5	33,3
	Namibia	59,2	55,7	52,7	76,5	39	74,5	52,5
	Rwanda	56,1	62,2	58,9	62,1	41,3	65,7	47,3
	Cambodia	52,7	37,5	63	61,8	36,2	69,8	49,2
	Lebanon	47,6	43,2	60,7	58,6	32,9	56,9	31,8
	Guyana	51,2	41,5	62,3	66	27,7	65,1	45,1
	Surinam	55,1	52,5	62,3	56,9	39,7	77,8	46,7
	Ukraine	37,3	25,8	38,8	53,5	34	44,1	32,7
	Bangladesh	53,6	50	66,1	57,6	38,2	62,8	47,5
	Tunisia	40,6	35,8	41,2	49,1	30,8	56,6	31,7
	Egypt	45,3	37,2	35	55,2	38,9	54,3	50,9
	Sierra Leone	54,5	44,4	72,6	62,7	33,3	67,3	43,2
	Mauritania	52,8	47,5	51,9	59	23,9	67,1	58,2
	India	49,6	33,3	59,6	57,4	38,2	62,9	43,6
	Togo	54,4	51,6	49,1	68,4	41,8	73,3	41,7
	South Africa	51,3	46,2	60,3	50	43,4	70,2	36,4
	Peru	53,4	57,1	66,1	64	32,9	63,6	46
	Saudi Arabia	31	14,9	34,5	42,9	13,7	40	40,4
	Mexico	42,7	37,5	43,9	46,7	36,2	46,7	46,8
	Columbia	48	40,4	57,4	50	22	71,2	40,6
	Burkina Faso	55,6	52,6	61,2	58,9	45,1	62,5	50,9
	Moldova	44,5	28,6	45,3	55,9	31,9	66	42,4
	Nicaragua	55,5	50,8	60,7	56,9	45,1	70,5	47,4
	Brazil	47,6	45,3	57,1	64,3	39,3	51,9	29,8
	El Salvador	52,2	47,7	46,4	67,2	38,1	66,7	42,3
	Honduras	57,7	54,2	64,4	62,3	39,7	69,6	56
	Bolivia	54,3	54,9	57,6	51,1	45,5	67,2	51
Guatemala	50	47	52,4	54,1	35,2	64,5	45,5	
Benin	49	55,2	48	58,5	32,4	61,4	42,6	
Jordan	44,5	48,1	50	56,9	27,6	58,1	27,4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	42,4	36,5	50,9	40	30,5	60	40,3	
Malawi	55,5	45,7	56,6	60	40,7	82,8	47,6	
Côte d'Ivoire	53	45,5	57,8	66,7	32,6	62,3	52	

Fragility Level	Country	Average All sectors	Education	Health	Peace and security	Promoting the economy	Food security and agriculture	Climate change
	Uzbekistan	37,6	37,7	41,5	42,9	28,1	43,3	31,7
	Serbia	40,7	34	40	56,7	31,4	56,9	24,5
	Equatorial Guinea	55,3	45,9	66,1	67,2	39	60,4	50
	Gabon	49,7	36,9	53,1	51,1	52,2	69,5	35,8
	Vietnam	41,4	32,7	44,8	50,8	28,3	49,1	40,3
	China	24,3	19,4	24,1	33,3	15,1	27,5	26,8
	Senegal	59,1	61,1	68,2	69,1	35	76,4	41,7
	Georgia	45,5	34,8	51,8	50,7	40	53,3	44,3
	Belize	52,6	45,5	58,8	57,1	41,5	64,2	53,8
	<b>Average – Stable</b>	<b>44,5</b>	<b>38,4</b>	<b>48,6</b>	<b>55,3</b>	<b>29,3</b>	<b>57,6</b>	<b>37,7</b>
2 – stable	Albania	44,9	32,1	46,7	62,9	26	61	34,7
	Uruguay	46,4	45,8	53,6	49,3	32,1	60,9	33,3
	Botswana	56,5	46,8	55,8	72,5	38,9	75	51
	Argentina	41,5	40,3	39	56,9	20,4	57,8	36,2
	Costa Rica	49,4	50,7	54	63,3	28,6	57,1	43,1
	United Arab Emirates	30	26,6	34,9	38,6	24,5	37	21,3
	Oman	39,2	38,6	44,1	32,1	34,6	51,5	32,3
	Panama	45,9	36,5	52,1	55,9	28,3	53,8	47,6
	Chile	46,8	27,9	57,6	66,7	30,8	64,2	39,6

**9.4 Study team and contributors**

<b>Core team</b>	<b>Role</b>
Jens Eger	Evaluator
Caroline Orth	Project Administrator
Nora Sassenhagen	Evaluator
Dr Sebastian H. Schneider	Evaluator and Team Leader

<b>Contributors</b>	<b>Role</b>
Prof. Dr. Jörg Faust	Internal Peer Reviewer
Luisa Sarro	Student Assistant
Prof Dr Bernd Schlipphak	External Peer Reviewer
Jonas Volle	Student Assistant
Line Winterhoff	Internal Peer Reviewer

## 9.5 Schedule of the study

Time frame	Tasks
December 2018– February 2019	Drawing up the study concept for the Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2019 and 2021
March 2019	1st reference group meeting to discuss the study concept
April 2019	Revision and finalisation of the study concept
May 2019	Preparation of the media usage study
June 2019– August 2019	Analysis and writing, peer review
September 2019	2nd reference group meeting to discuss the draft of the media usage study
December 2019	Completion of media usage study after layout and printing
January 2020– September 2020	Work on study report “Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2021”
March 2020	Publication of “Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2019” (media usage study)
April 2020– September 2020	Contributions of the Opinion Monitor team on the topic of “Attitudes of the general public to development cooperation during the coronavirus pandemic”
October 2020	Peer review of “Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2021”
November 2020	3rd reference group meeting
December 2020– March 2021	Revision of the draft report, editing, layout