

portant that elites remain in the country. While probably, the underlying argument is a stable formal labour market, this is not made explicit.

The common lack of further elaborations of the interlinkages of science and development points at a phenomenon of *black boxing*. In constantly repeating an abstract idea of interlinked science and development processes, the BMBF presents the connection as a given fact which does not require further explanation. As a natural fact, there is no need to expose *why* science is important for the partner countries – its role is apparently self-evident: Science inevitably leads to economic development. This strategy narrows the room for questioning if the BMBF funds cooperation with developing countries and emerging economies in the most promising mode, on the most relevant topics.

In conclusion, although the BMBF points at development aspects as a positive side effect of concrete funding initiatives for cooperation with developing countries and emerging economies in sustainability research, social and economic development in the partner countries is rather an add on, not a core part of the BMBF rationale. A broader and deeper reflection on development does not fit the ministry's storyline on cooperation. I argue that this is also a result of the separation of sustainability and development into two concepts and the exclusion of social and ecologic dimensions of development from sustainability research funding (ch. 10). As the sections above show, development abroad serves as an add-on to the primary arguments of German interests, but it does not function as a rationale on its own. Even contributions to the MDGs are portrayed in lines of German indirect benefits. Thus, although BMBF activities are listed as expenditure as Official Development Aid (ODA), and although cooperation between Germany and developing countries and emerging economies is sometimes backed up through drawing on developmental aspects, development is never used as an outstanding primary argument.

## 8.4 Policy rationales as elements of political identity and symbols of difference

In view of an overarching rationale for the field of cooperation with developing countries and emerging economies, an unease can be perceived among the BMBF staff. It seems as if the ministry was struggling to find a shared conceptualisation of its endeavours, which at the same time would allow the BMBF to clearly delimit itself from other ministries:

“We haven't really answered the question for the ministry as a whole – why, what for, and how – the cooperation with developing countries. We also enter the territory of a different ministry that we are not as familiar with. And we don't want to

do development aid. And we don't want to be taken over by the BMZ or by the GIZ. Currently, that is a difficult institutional question." (PA09)

On the one hand, the quote illustrates that strategies often follow practice rather than practice being guided by strategical thinking (ch. 6); and that the BMBF's relation to the BMZ is coined by rivalry (ch. 7). On the other hand, the quote also pinpoints an essential characteristic of cooperation funded through the BMBF: It is not envisaged as a twin to development cooperation. On the contrary, the BMBF repeatedly and explicitly stresses that it does not have developmental objectives. The ministry states that "in its cooperation with such countries, the BMBF does not provide development aid, and it expects its partners to assume responsibility in the form of 'ownership'" (BMBF 2014e: 24). According to BMBF staff, the approaches to cooperation differ in view of their motivation: "Our research programme is motivated by science and research and has got nothing to do with development cooperation. Development cooperation is no decisive driver for our policies." (PA07)

While the BMBF is rather not driven by science, but rather by objectives beyond it, such as economic wellbeing, the ministry is very open and clear about not primarily pursuing developmental objectives in partner countries. Not acting out of altruistic intentions is frequently repeated in the BMBF. Most interviewees are quick to mention that the BMBF's policies and funding measures are not motivated by selfless notions, as the following quote depicts: "This is not selfless, I have to tell you straight away. We don't do that because we act altruistically. There are several motivations for it." (PA08) Altruism and acting out of a rationale that does not enhance German economic interest seem to be unacceptable and illegitimate in the common BMBF discourse:

"We are not only do-gooders [*In the German original, "Gutmenschen" is used, a term with a pejorative inkling*]. Well we are do-gooders, but not only. We spend German tax money, and therefore we aspire an advantage for this country. That's legitimate and not to be criticized. We want to improve local conditions through German technologies, which the countries shall buy from our businesses. That's the context, in a simplified nutshell." (PA02)

As in the quote above, some interviewees put strong emphasis on the need and legitimacy of safeguarding German interests – to an extend that almost seems like an instance of offense as the best form of defence in justifying the own rationale. In more neutral statements, the mutual benefit for both sides is stressed:

"Scientific and technological cooperation with Germany broadens the range of research options in the interest of both sides, improves international networking and facilitates collaborations with companies in order to enhance the transfer of technology from research into practical application." (BMBF 2008a: 17)

The BMBF's perceived need to delimit itself from any intentions in the interest of partner countries is noteworthy also in view of the institutional relations with the BMZ. As I have shown ch. 7, the relation between the BMBF and the BMZ is coined by competition. This also is reflected in the BMBF's policies and their underlying rationales. In view of the institutional competition, it seems that the BMBF tries to set itself off from any rationales that might be associated with the BMZ's rationale of development cooperation – even more so as both ministries have funded research-based, large-scale applied research/tertiary education projects already (ch. 5).<sup>5</sup>

The BMBF successfully established and maintained a discursive storyline on research and education as important factors of German wellbeing in the Federal Government. This secures its own funding, but at the same time bears the danger of other ministries, such as BMZ and AA, appropriating the topic as well in an attempt to benefit from the topic's catchiness. The BMBF therefore fears that other ministries might appropriate fields of responsibility which traditionally belong to a science ministry (ch. 7). At the same time, the BMBF is aware that by funding cooperation with developing countries and emerging economies, they enter classical BMZ terrains. To avoid becoming appropriated by a development-oriented BMZ rationale, the BMBF tries to clearly demarcate the differences between its policies and others (interviews with PA07, PA09). From the BMBF's perspective, a further reason to differentiate itself, rather than to complement the BMZ's objectives, might be the BMZ's minor role, lack of budget and power in the federal government. Development-related issues are of little relevance for the overall public German (self-)perception, discourse as well as in other fields of public policy (Maihöld 2010).

*Development* thus is not part of the BMBF's discourse and as such, some arguments that potentially might be used to document development as a rationale are *not* taken up – they are not considered as valid knowledge or useful legitimization. The BMBF's relation to ODA exemplifies this. The BMZ encourages all German ministries to contribute to fulfilling the German ODA quota, and the BMBF

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5 In this respect, it is interesting to note that research on development policy rationales argues that despite of a shifting discourse towards partner-driven demands, mutual interest has always been a rationale of development cooperation. However, due to restrictions in declaring actions as ODA, donor interests needed to be declared as secondary next to the main objective of developing country benefits, which is why self-interest was likely downplayed in the past. Nevertheless, in development cooperation – as in science policy – manifold legitimizing arguments co-exist, and altruism is rarely the only reason provided. Framing development cooperation as mutual interest may be a strategy of increasing the social acceptance of international cooperation in times of global economic crisis, restricted public budgets and *aid fatigue* within donor countries (Carbone 2014; Keijzer and Lundsgaarde 2017).

indeed reports some of its funding activities as such (Maihold 2010). With its programmes for cooperation with developing countries – or more precisely with the programmes BMBF reports as such – the BMBF contributed 1.1% of the German ODA, amounting to EUR 112.7 million in 2012, thus ranked 4th after BMZ, AA, and BMU (BMZ 2013). The OECD is quite critical about German policy coherence and suggests stronger efforts to align policies:

“There is considerable scope for the German government to deepen its commitment to the MDGs by making international development a more tangible goal of other government policy areas [...] Awareness of and expertise in development issues should be strengthened in other German ministries.” (OECD 2010b: 15)

Nevertheless, the BMBF’s legitimations hardly draw on development-related discourses such as policy coherence. The OECD provides a perfect template for a usable, rational legitimization – which is not taken up as such, however. Instead, even the contribution to Germany’s share of ODA is conceptualized as an indirect benefit for Germany:

“Germany benefits as well. Indirectly, because Germany is obliged to invest 0.75% of its GDP into development cooperation. And the BMBF has to contribute its share. That is done exactly through those measures in which responsibility for the MDGs is taken over by the BMBF. That’s an indirect benefit.” (PT04)

The example of ODA – and in extension the same holds true for ODA in the context of the SDGs – once again demonstrates that policy making is not based on rational facts or needs but is inherently value-laden.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to demarcations from the BMZ, the BMBF does not feel the need to set off its ideas and actions from the BMWi. No interviewee mentioned rivalries or overlapping competencies with the BMWi as a problem; nobody tried to delimit the BMBF’s from the BMWi’s innovation policies. This is remarkable, as the BMBF only lost its official responsibility for technology to the BMWi in 1998 (BMWi 2015). Despite having similar objectives and mission in view of innovation and technology policy, economic rationales seem to be broad enough to span both ministries’ objectives. While altruism does not serve to justify policies, the capitalist discourse of economic wellbeing for Germany is deeply rooted in society and policy and therefore may function as an overarching umbrella for several ministries.

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<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the BMBF rarely sets its policies for international cooperation into the context of science diplomacy, while the German Foreign Affairs Ministry (*Auswärtiges Amt*), explicitly draws on peace-building arguments in its initiative on external science policy (*Auswärtiges Amt* 2013). As in case of development-related rationales, not making use of plausible rationales is a way of distinguishing oneself from others.