

Europe first? Between vaccine nationalism and Team Europe: EU's Global Response to COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, most countries turned inward. Countries have increasingly committed to global cooperation, with the European Union (EU) taking a leading role. However, analysts have doubted whether this commitment is sincere or if self-interest takes precedence over the common good. This question is central to the *Great Debate* of international relations: realism, liberalism and constructivism. This thesis analyses the EU global response to COVID-19, with a focus on EU policymaking around vaccines and the resources spend on aid and other support of individual member states. Using a congruence analysis approach, propositions from each of the theories are tested to the two within cases. The thesis argues that realism is, surprisingly, the most congruent with the evidence. However, liberalism provides valuable insights into preference formation, while constructivism provides best explanations of aid donors. The finding that realism is applicable indicates that the EU is indeed becoming more geopolitical in its external action, be it specifically in times of crisis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CON</i>	Congruence Analysis
<i>COV</i>	Co-variation design
<i>Council</i>	Council of the European Union
<i>DAC</i>	Development Assistance Committee
<i>DG</i>	Directorate General (EC)
<i>EBRD</i>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<i>EC</i>	European Commission
<i>ECFIN, DG</i>	Economic and Financial Affairs
<i>ECHO</i>	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<i>EIB</i>	European Investment Bank
<i>EP</i>	European Parliament
<i>EU</i>	European Union
<i>GDP</i>	Gross Domestic Product
<i>GNI</i>	Gross National Income
<i>GPG</i>	Global Public Good
<i>HIC</i>	High Income Country
<i>HR/VP</i>	High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the Commission
<i>INTPA, DG</i>	International Partnerships
<i>LIC</i>	Low Income Country
<i>LMIC</i>	Low Middle Income Country
<i>MS</i>	Member States (EU)
<i>NDICI</i>	Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
<i>NEAR, DG</i>	European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
<i>ODA</i>	Official Development Assistance
<i>OECD</i>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<i>TRIPS</i>	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

<i>UK</i>	United Kingdom
<i>UMIC</i>	Upper Middle Income Country
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>UNICEF</i>	United Nations Children's Fund
<i>US</i>	United States
<i>WB</i>	World Bank
<i>WHO</i>	World Health Organization
<i>WTO</i>	World Trade Organization

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“Nous voici donc encore à un moment existentiel pour l’Union Européenne.”

Josep Borrell (2020)

“Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises.”

Jean Monnet (1978)

“We’re all nationalists now.”

Nigel Farage (2020)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) has been through numerous crises over the past decade and as a result had to face a set of unprecedented challenges. The corona crisis that hit the European continent in March 2020 came on top of issues like the Brexit vote, aggression by Russia and growing populism, illiberalism, and anti-EU sentiment (Riddervold et al., 2021). In the words of Monnet, cited above, the EU is shaped by crises. Crises can lead to further integration and commitment to core EU values, but they can also lead to disintegration and nationalism (Riddervold et al., 2021).. Crises can be seen as existential moments for regional and international cooperation, a topic central to the academic debate within international relations.

This research will apply theories from the ‘Great Debate’ of international relations, realism, liberalism and constructivism, to the case of EU external action during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lake, 2013). Specifically it will focus on the *external solidarity* of EU institutions and -member states (MS) towards third countries (Debuysere, 2020). This includes the financial support, in the form of foreign aid or contributions to multilateral cooperation, as well as different other policy choices that affect third countries, such as trade policy. Specifically, the focus is placed upon the strategy and policies around the global distribution of vaccines. Vaccines are central to the strategy of the EU: they are developed through global cooperation but at the same time scarce and an area for fierce competition between countries.

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, many countries panicked. With the absence of United States’ (US) leadership and with China preoccupied with the domestic effects of the virus, the EU took a leading role in promoting multilateral action. Internally, however, the EU has been criticized for its absence and inability to stop unilateral and uncoordinated action by MS. The EU and its member states have contributed to multilateral efforts like the COVAX initiative – that aims to advance the production, procurement and global distribution of vaccines. However, it has simultaneously been accused of ‘vaccine nationalism’ as it hoarded most of the vaccine doses to be produced while leaving almost nothing to less wealthy countries (Egbunike, 2021). This idea of nationalism fits into a shift in the narrative of the European Commission (EC) to become a ‘geopolitical union’ (Youngs, 2020). Thereby, the EU is taking on different roles in its external action: a promotor of the multilateral system – like liberals or constructivists expect – and a more inward looking and geopolitical actor – like realists expect (Youngs, 2020).

With more than a year since the outbreak, the EU response to COVID-19 has changed. Internally, scholars have argued that EU institutions have been able to secure a more central role and to coordinate the actions of MS (Allemanno, 2020). However, its external actions have not been systematically assessed. The three international relations theories all provide a distinct lens to explain the motivations of the EU and MS, important actors in decision making and to explain the existence or absence of cooperation. This thesis will

make use of a CON approach to test the explanatory power of the theories and will conclude that realism is the most relevant theory to study EU foreign policy during COVID-19. Two within-cases illustrate this argument. The first case focuses on decision making around vaccine distribution in the EU global response to COVID-19. Second, the financial support of individual MS in the form of COVID-19 related development aid, financial resources for multilateral action and the donation of vaccine doses is analyzed.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

Is the theory of realism, liberalism or constructivism best able to explain the EU Global Response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.2 THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

This thesis contributes to the theoretical discourse, both regarding the theories on foreign aid and to theories of European (foreign) policy. The theoretical aim of this research is twofold: first it is to apply a theory to a new empirical domain (Lehnert, Miller & Wonka, 2007). This contributes to the generalizability of the theory. Second, the study will provide alternative explanations by integrating or eliminating theoretical explanations (Lehnert, miller & Wonka, 2007; 25). This is the central aim of the CON approach used in this thesis: if the alternative explanations are conflicting it becomes possible to argue one approach more congruent than the other. However, if they complement each other, it is valuable to integrate the different theoretical perspectives in analyses.

The focus on EU external action is in itself theoretically relevant. Although many studies focus on internal EU policies and integration, using mid-ranged liberal theories such as liberal intergovernmentalism, external policies are analyzed less. Since the EU only has limited competences in the field, these theories are not always able to explain the complexity of fields like development cooperation (Delputte & Orbie, 2016). The other IR theories, specifically realism, are rarely applied to studying the EU (Reichwein, 2021). Constructivism is often applied to studying development policy, but has been largely disregarded within the theoretical debate (Malalcalza, 2019). However, human rights form the core of EU's narrative around humanitarian and foreign aid, which makes it relevant to test whether this narrative translates to action. The application of a CON analysis to the case – where theories are compared for their explanatory power – could thereby contribute to assess whether this negligence of these theories is deserved.

1.3 SOCIAL RELEVANCE

The study of the EU global response is socially relevant as it is affecting people within the EU and around the world. First of all, the pandemic constitutes a global problem. It is thereby in everyone's interest to

effectively tackle the spread of the virus. Furthermore, scholars have argued that the pandemic is leading to greater global inequality and poverty as well as a risk of state fragility and conflict (Neat & Desmidt, 2021; Deaton, 2021). The EU, one of the largest economies and biggest aid donor in the world, has a large potential role to play in mitigating the effects of the crisis.

The social relevance is not only reflective of the number of people affected, but also towards the evaluative standard of legitimacy, accountability and transparency. These standards are all related to each other: explaining EU action is useful for increasing transparency of the EU. Although most of the data is publicly available, there have not been many explanatory studies. The research increases citizens' political knowledge and awareness of EU efforts (Lehnert, Miller & Wonka, 2007). This is helpful for increasing accountability. Once citizens know what the EU is doing, they can hold their leaders accountable. Realism, liberalism and constructivism are particularly helpful for this as they explain what the EU and its MS are doing and why as well as which actors are relevant in decision-making. Finally, increased transparency and accountability facilitate the assessment of how legitimate the actions are. If actions are largely influenced by non-elected actors such as interest groups, or different from the preferences of the electorate, policies might be seen as less legitimate in terms of input-legitimacy (Schmidt, 2013).

The practical relevance of the study includes that it helps to understand which actor is most important in decision-making. Citizens and politicians can use this in their choice who to lobby or negotiate with. Second, the research has implications for evaluation. Effectiveness can be assessed in the light of the established motivations and preferences behind the policy (Pauselli, 2019).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The EU global response to COVID-19 and the distribution of vaccines relates to the question of why states come to help- or cooperate with other countries. This topic is central to the academic debate of international relations, specifically focused on foreign aid (Apodaca, 2017)., Although the debate exists for long, there has not been consensus or a definitive answer to this question, mainly because motivations often are multiple and variate (Pauselli, 2019). The debate is mainly structured around the ideas of realism, originally the dominant approach, and those of liberalism and constructivism. While these three theories mainly focus on the international system, other scholars have focused on the domestic level as unit of analysis for preference formation. Following, this chapter will discuss debates around EU development policy and the literature around the empirical case.

The primary divide in the debate is focused on the motivations and preferences of states, the question whether states give aid for selfish or humanitarian reasons. Within the context of the Cold War, realists argued that foreign aid was driven by the security interests of great powers resulting from competition between the US and Russia (Malalcalza, 2019). Aid is treated by realists as an instrument of foreign policy, similar to diplomacy or military action (Baldwin, 1966). Scholars have described aid as a tool to secure United Nations (UN) votes, to consolidate influence in former colonies or to support allied regimes (Malalcalza, 2019). Realists are thereby skeptical about the actual effects of aid on economic development (Morgenthau, 1962).

At the other side, constructivists argue that humanitarian motivations play a role in the aid policies of states (Pauselli, 2019). Rich countries accept a moral obligation to poorer states and strive for a more equitable world. Specifically smaller donor states are likely to adhere to normative values, and to allocate their aid at those most in need (Pauselli, 2019). The debate between selfish and altruistic motivations inspired multiple studies, primarily providing evidence in favor of realism (Pauselli, 2019). However, realists have not been able to explain the policies of small donors, such as the Scandinavian countries or the cooperation between developing countries (Stokke, 1989; Pauselli, 2019). Moreover, they have not been able to capture the non-monolithic nature of states, where different actors have the power to shape interests (Malalcalza, 2019).

Liberals have positioned themselves between the two sides of the debate. Although liberals view states as rational, self-interested actors, this does not necessarily mean that aid is not beneficial to recipients. States are interested in the stability of the international system, in promoting democratization and economic development of states. The increased interdependence between states has led to common challenges, leading to a need for global cooperation. Central to liberalism are the roles of institutions and norms, which are further visible in the literature around global public goods (GPGs). Within this literature, aid is part of a

commitment to provide ‘goods whose benefits or costs are of nearly universal reach’ (Kaul, Grunberg & Stern, 1999, pp 2-3). These GPGs include amongst others the containment of pandemics, fighting climate change or peace and security (Malalcalza, 2019).

The second divide in the debate focuses on preference formation. Realists argue that interests are fixed, and policy preferences are reactive to changes in the international system. Constructivists and liberals argue that preferences are changeable. Constructivists argue that preferences are shaped by norms and interaction within global civil society. Liberals likewise point at the impact of international norms and interaction, but further focus on domestic politics. Within this line, recent debates around development aid focus on the domestic level as the main unit of analysis. The international political economy perspective argues that aid policies result of the ‘aggregation of rational actors preferences’ (Pauselli, 2019, pp. 41). An example of this is the selectorate theory, where a donor’s willingness to grant aid depends on the size of the government’s support coalition, where larger coalitions give more aid (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2009). Others have pointed at the political ideology and the economic characteristics of these coalitions influence aid giving (Milner & Tingley, 2010). The behavioural school focuses on the support for aid by individuals, using survey experiments and models of psychology. Scholars in this tradition have noted that the public opinion on foreign aid matters for governments, and that these preferences are not necessarily humanitarian like previous research assumed (Heinrich & Kobayashi, 2018). However, it remains difficult to establish whether these individual preferences are significant and related to other factors that shape the amount and allocation of aid (Pauselli, 2019).

The theoretical perspectives all have something to add to understanding the politics and the motivations behind aid giving. Assessing and comparing the explanatory power of theories is therefore valuable for the debate. For comparative purposes the focus will be placed on theories with a similar level of analysis: realism, liberalism and constructivism.

2.1 THEORIZING EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY

EU development policy is a complex research area, leading to the fact that existing literature is relatively limited and mainly empirical instead of explanatory (Delputte & Orbie, 2016). The complexities of the policy are resulting from the fact that development policy is a shared competence, where the EU is both a coordinator of member states’ policies and a donor in itself. However, MS also have their own development policies, and studies have shown that Europeanization is limited (Orbie & Carbone, 2016). Moreover, the EU is not the only actor involved in multilateral coordination. Member states are part of international institutions such as the OECD-DAC, United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) (Delputte & Orbie, 2016). Theories of European integration, that are often applied to studying EU policy-making, are more focused on the internal development of the EU instead of its external relations (Tonra & Christiansen, 2018)

International relations theories, that are more abstract than the mid-ranged variants, are therefore chosen in this study as they can be applied to both explaining the foreign policies of member states and the role of the EU in the field of foreign policy.

2.2 COVID-19 AND DEVELOPMENT AID

Few scholars have started analyzing the effects of COVID-19 on development aid and global cooperation. Whereas most of these studies are mainly descriptive in nature (Schmucker, 2020; Lavallée, 2021), explanatory research predominantly focuses on its effects of the pandemic on public opinion of citizens (Dolan & Nguyen, 2020; Kobayashi, Heinrich & Bryant, 2021; Schneider et al., 2021). Dolan and Nguyen (2020) were the first to theorize the link between COVID-19 and support for development aid within the United States. They find that support for aid can be mainly explained through partisanship and exposure to the virus. Within an experimental study, Kobayashi, Heinrich and Bryant (2021) predicted the effects of COVID-19 on US public opinion on foreign aid. They find that citizens' concerns about the economic impact of the pandemic reduce their support for general development aid. Schneider et al. (2021) did a similar study in Germany, but find that the public is mainly motivated by humanitarianism.

2.3 THE EU AND COVID-19

A large group of scholars has sought to explain the EU internal response to COVID. These studies focus on solidarity between member states, in the form of 'Eurobonds' or fiscal governance (Ferrera, Miró & Ronchi, 2021; Genschel & Jachtenfuchs, 2021; Sharma, 2021; Tesche, 2021), on integration of EU health policies (Brooks & Geyer, 2020; Sharma, 2021) or on other policies such as competition (Meunir & Mickus, 2020), cyber security (Carrapico & Farrand, 2020), and climate policy (Dupont, Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2020). Further, Schmidt (2020) provides an overview of how different EU integration and governance theories would approach EU's internal response to COVID-19. However, no study has focused on EU's foreign policies, with the exception being descriptive in nature (van Schaik et al., 2020). This article analyses the EU's approach to the multilateral system and positioning in global health. Using the 'exit, voice and loyalty framework' (Hirschman, 1970), it touches upon the global vaccine race between May 2020 to August 2020 as a case study. It analyses the official discourses and strategies and mainly offered predictions about potential political tensions when vaccines became available.

To conclude, this thesis fills gaps identified both in the theoretical and empirical literature. There is no true consensus in the literature on the politics of foreign aid and there is a need for theory-driven research in the field of EU foreign- and development policy. Within the empirical debate, the relationship between COVID-19 and development aid and EU external policies have not been explored comprehensively.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The debate between realism, liberalism and constructivism is often referred to as the ‘Great Debate’ of international relations (Lake, 2013). The theories each provide a distinct worldview that still inspires many scholars. Liberalism is traditionally the theory most applied to the study of EU policy-making, but realism has become prominent in discussions EU action around COVID-19 (Karčić, 2020; Drexler, 2020; Beeson, 2020; Kliem, 2020). Moreover, the constructivist focus on humanitarianism is visible in official EU narratives around humanitarian relief and external solidarity (EC, 2021b). This chapter outlines the basic assumptions of the theories as well as their application to the study of the EU. For each theory, propositions are formulated and compared in the last section.

3.1 REALISM: BASICS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Realism views international relations as driven by power. It is based on the assumption that groups, currently states, operate in an anarchical world where no higher authority can enforce rules or order (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). States are thereby the main actors in international relations and power is the currency with which these states do business in the international system (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). Second, these states are rational actors that are able to recognize the international circumstances in which they operate and react to the risks and opportunities in the international domain (Ripsman et al., 2016) The central problem in international politics is security, which leads states to pursue a maximization of power and influence. This pursuit of security is further competitive, which leads to the assumption that competition and conflict are inherent to world politics (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). Power is further relational: more power to one state necessarily means less power to another. This implies that preferences are calculated upon a relative cost-benefit analysis.

Realism is not a unitary theory, but has multiple branches of which a common denominator is the logic of survival driving states’ foreign policies. States strive to preserve their capacity for autonomous action, which implies that cooperation is not likely to be permanent and intrusive on states’ sovereignty (Zimmerman, 2021). In classic realism, preferences of states are fixed and policy responses follow logically from systemic stimuli (Ripsman et al., 2016). Although realists are pessimistic about the prospects for international cooperation between states, neorealist have theorized the emergence of alliances and cooperative behavior between states. As power is distributed asymmetrically within the international system, it is in the interest of weaker states to cooperate with others. In the face of threat, these states may either cooperate with other (small) powers to balance against a threatening other- or bandwagon with the threatening state (Walt, 1987).

3.1.2 Realism and the EU

Realism is not often applied to European Integration and policymaking, as the EU is often perceived as capable of transcending power politics (Reichwein, 2021). According to realists, European integration is a secondary phenomenon in international politics because they expect it not to matter or to be durable in areas of foreign and security policy – or high politics (Waltz, 2000; Reichwein, 2021). Revisionist accounts of realism admit that EU member states can act together as an alliance or common actor in foreign policy. However, this only happens as a reaction to other global powers or to face challenges or threats. Within a neo-realist dual-balancing hypothesis, European states simultaneously balance against states internally and externally. The internal dimension implies that smaller member states balance against Germany or France in trying to influence the EU agenda or acting unilaterally at the expense of EU interests (Reichwein, 2021). European cooperation is expected to be successful when there is a clear distribution of power among member states, a degree of unity in interests regarding foreign policies and it is reactive to relations with third countries, such as the US (Morgenthau, 1954). Change and continuity in EU's reaction to crisis can be explained by the configuration of global power asymmetries and the EU's role in it.

3.1.3 Propositions Realism:

R1: The state is a rational, self-interested actor responding to a logic of consequence. Preferences of states are fixed: they seek to increase their security or power and therefore relative gains. Foreign aid is a tool of foreign policy.

R2: In an anarchic international system, states are the only actors that matter. States with larger material power have more influence in this system.

R3: Cooperation between states only occurs when it is relatively beneficial to a state: when it increases security or power of a state. It only occurs in the forms of loose alliances.

R3.1 In the face of an external, larger power, weaker states might cooperate as a form of balancing to or bandwagon with the external power.

3.2 LIBERALISM: BASICS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In general, liberalism can be defined as those theories that focus on institutions, interdependence and democracy as explanatory factors for cooperation between states. The theory is based upon a set of assumptions about the state and the international system that are different from realism. First, although the state is – like in realism – expected to be a rational, self-interested actor, its main interest is economic instead of power or security (Beach, 2015). This preference results in economic interdependence between states, where states have shared interests, can pursue joint gains and thereby have incentives for international

cooperation. In effect, liberalism assumes that states pursue *absolute*- instead of relative gains (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). A second assumption of liberalism is that the most important feature of international relations is the internal character of a state. The basic actors in the global system are individuals and groups: societal groups, businesses, associations and individuals all operate within and between states (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). On the national level, and specifically within democratic states, they have the power to influence state positions. Liberalists specifically attribute influence to economic interests groups who have the largest incentives and power to push for global cooperation to meet their interest in trade relations and cooperation (Moravcsik, 1992). Different from realists, liberals therefore open the ‘black box’ of the state by using Putnam’s ‘two-level-game theory’. This theory argues that leaders negotiate both at the national and international level, where private actors determine their bargaining mandate on an international stage that in turn constraints possible actions. Similarly to realism, liberals view international cooperation as functional and beneficial to states. It can create mutual benefits for participants as it helpful to reduce transaction costs, overcome certain cooperation problems. Institutions are viewed as tools that allow states to overcome anarchy.

3.2.1 Liberalism and the EU

Liberalism is the paradigm most used for explaining European Integration. Specifically, its mid-range theories, liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, are often applied to studying the EU. In times of crisis, the first one is most often privileged, particularly when it comes to foreign policy of the EU, a largely intergovernmental field (Schimmelfennig, 2021).

Liberal intergovernmentalism offers a three stage explanatory model consisting out of national preferences, international bargaining outcomes and institutional choice (Schimmelfennig, 2015). In a crisis, the EU or an EU policy is threatened by disintegration as the status quo is not viable anymore. Faced with the choice of either integrating/ cooperating or not, there are several hypotheses on the conditions that shape the choices of governments. First, national preferences here are shaped by the extent of international interdependence and how the crisis affects member states or powerful interest groups in these states. While states generally seek to protect national autonomy and resources, they can agree to delegation to supranational institutions when this is considered beneficial (Schimmelfennig, 2021). This would either be the case if national capacity to manage the crisis is weak or when the costs of disintegration are high. Second, negotiations reflect intergovernmental constellations of national preferences and bargaining power. This bargaining power results from asymmetrical interdependence; those states less vulnerable to interdependence gain less from this integration and thereby have a stronger position in the negotiation (Schimmelfennig, 2021).

Liberal intergovernmentalism provides the building blocks to explain crises politics. Each international crisis leads to negotiation and decision-making situations, which are the focus of

intergovernmentalism. Crises are considered to emerge exogenously, but they have distributional implications for states (Moravcsik, 1993). As the burdens of a crisis are likely to be unequally distributed, this has an impact on what states have to lose or gain from cooperation. Moreover, in times of crises, decision-making often tends to be centralized and limited to core decision-makers, such as heads of state (Schimmelfenning, 2021).

3.2.2 Propositions Liberalism:

L1: States are rational, self-interested actors responding to a logic of consequence. Each state aims to increase its wealth and absolute benefits.

L1.2: Foreign aid is a tool for expanding the free market or to provide for global public goods.

L2: Individuals and groups are important actors in international relations, specifically economic interest groups.

L2.1 State preferences are formed through a two-level game: state leaders negotiate at the domestic and international level.

L3: Due to increased interdependence between states and institutional cooperation, states are able to transcend anarchic international relations and cooperate when it is functional.

L4: Interdependence is asymmetric: some states have more to gain from cooperation than others, which means that they have a weaker bargaining position.

3.3 CONSTRUCTIVISM: BASICS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Constructivism is one of the newer theories in IR, and emerged after the end of the Cold War. It disputes the assumption of realism and liberalism that states are rational, self-interested actors that compete for power or wealth. Its core assumption is that the social world is constructed by actors that shape and reshape the nature of international relations through interaction and discourse (Theys, 2017). The structure of a given social system contains ‘material conditions, interests and ideas’ (Wendt, 1999, p. 139). A shared culture produces norms and institutions, constitutes agents perceptions, identities and interests’ (Wendt, 1999, p.104). States can perceive each other either as friends or enemies and this social relationship, based on shared understandings, forms the basis of interactions between states.

Central to constructivism are therefore the concepts of identities, interests and norms. An identity is defined as actors understanding of who they are (Theys, 2017). A social or group identity, such as one of a state, is highly relational and both determined by individual self-perception as well as externally ascribed (Demmers, 2016). It is made up out of certain shared characteristics – such as nationality, membership of

international organizations or certain norms – and of boundaries that determine who is and who is not part of the group (Demmers, 2016). Identities signal and constitute interests and actions (Theys, 2017). A state is not expected to act contrary to its identity, because this will call into question the validity of this identity as a whole (Theys, 2017).

The core assumptions of constructivism are that ideational factors and interaction matter: identities and preferences are not set in stone but are changeable. This happens within interaction between elites and networks in which they operate. In times of crisis or critical historical moments, such as the COVID-19 crisis in this case, elites communicate and build consensus on who they are as a group and how they perceive certain problems (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). Second, it is not only states that shape international relations, but also elite individuals in society that have the power to shape the discourse around a policy (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). Third, state action is shaped by social norms that exist within societies and a certain strategic culture that shapes the foreign policy choices of state (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). A social norm can be defined as ‘a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity’ (Katzenstein 1996: 5). These norms thereby indicate the types of action that are deemed more acceptable than others, a process referred to as ‘the logic of appropriateness’ (March & Olsen, 1998: 951).

Internal to the constructivist debate is the question whether causal relationships can be established. On the one side, there are conventional constructivists which argue that it is possible to use positivist methods for constructivist research. This group is interested in the causal effects of identities on action, or when an identity is changing to answer what factors caused this change (Theys, 2017). On the other side, there are interpretivist constructivists that are focused on reconstructing certain identities and asking ‘how-type’ questions (Theys, 2017). This thesis makes use of the positivist approach to constructivism.

3.3.1 Constructivism and the EU

Constructivist studies of the EU mainly focus on the emergence of a European identity among member states. Through repeated interaction between state elites in Brussels, the preferences of these elites, and therefore countries, are likely to converge. This results in the fact that states do not only act out of the national, but also out of the ‘EU-interest’. Although constructivists do not claim a European Identity has transcended national identities has become as important as the national identity, EU interests are more likely to matter compared to the other theories (Castiglione, 2009). The EU is defined, by constructivists, as a ‘community of values’, based on a set of explicitly stated principles’ (Tanil, 2012, p.2). These principles include respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The process by which states’ preferences, norms and practices change through interaction in the EU is called ‘Europeanization’. Although development policy is predominantly a competence of member states in the EU, there has been a degree of convergence in the policies due to European rules and norms (Orbie & Carbone, 2016). Europeanization is

argued to have occurred in newer member states, who started to adopt aid policies during their accession into the EU (Timofejevs Henrikson, 2014).

3.3.2 Propositions constructivism

C1: Norms are the driving force in international relations, states operate according to a logic of appropriateness. Foreign aid is a practice reflecting the norm that richer states should help poorer states.

C1.2: (State) identities are molded by factors such as culture and normative beliefs.

C2 Elite individuals in society and the state are the most important actors in the international system.

C3: Communication is important in shaping and changing identities and norms through a process of socialization. This normative change can occur when there is interaction and processes of socialization within a global civil society.

C3.1: Through interaction and cooperation, state' preferences can transcend the national interest and become more similar to each other.

3.4 PROPOSITIONS COMPARED

The propositions, as presented in previous sections, at some points conflict each other while other points are similar or complementary, as visible in Table 1. First, both liberalism and realism expect states to be rational, self-interested actors while constructivism argues states to be social actors. As argued before, constructivists predict that states in the EU will not only act in their own interest, but also in the European Interest and according to European values such as human rights. Realism and liberalism disagree about the preferences of states. Whereas the former believes a state is interested in power or security, relative benefits, the latter argues economic preferences to be most important, absolute benefits. These interests can also be translated in assumptions about the purpose of foreign aid. It is either a tool of diplomacy, a functional need to provide global public goods or to benefit the global economy or an expression of humanitarianism and solidarity.

The three theories further disagree about the actors that are most important in international relations. Whereas realism argues states are the only important actors, liberalism includes (economic) interest groups. According to constructivism, important actors are not fixed, but are potentially all types of elite individuals within global civil society that are able to spread norms and ideas. Finally, the theories disagree about the likelihood of international cooperation and the role of international institutions in it. Realism is most skeptical, arguing that cooperation will only happen when it is beneficial for a state and IOs are only tools to secure these benefits. Liberalism is more optimistic about cooperation, although it still perceives it as functional. IOs have no independent interests, but do constrain state action. Constructivists are most

optimistic about cooperation – specifically in the current order. Once state elites interact frequently, their interest converge. Moreover, International Organizations are actors in their own right with preferences and identities separate from their member states.

Table 1 Propositions compared.

Category	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
Preferences	Relative gains	Absolute gains	Humanitarian
Foreign aid	Tool of diplomacy	Functional to increase global wealth and provide global public goods	Reflective of a norm that rich states distribute their wealth to poorer ones
Important actors in international relations	States, big powers	The state, (economic) interest groups and international regimes	Individual elites inside and outside the state, global civil society
International organizations	Means by which states can secure their goals	Arenas of cooperation, set rules and norms that limit state action	Operate in relative independence from states, have their own identity and interests; arenas of socialization
Cooperation	Not likely, only when it is relatively beneficial in terms of influence or security	Likely when functional to states. Liberal democracies are more likely to prefer cooperation	Likely, because (EU-Member) states have been socialized to think from a common interest.

Source: Authors own creation, adapted from Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to explain EU foreign policymaking in response to COVID-19, this thesis applies a CON approach. This chapter first analyses the methods available for the research, and argues why these are less useful for the purpose of this research. This research will be qualitative in nature because it is more suitable to the aim of the research than quantitative methods. This research is theory focused and aims to systematically test explanatory theories to two within case studies. Quantitative research is better equipped to account for the impact of factors, rather than complex theories, on a dependent variable. While this is useful for theory development, it is less suitable for comparing the different theories comprehensively.

4.1 QUALITATIVE DESIGN

This thesis applies a case study design, a non-experimental small-N design that is characterized a large number and highly diverse set of empirical observations for each case, and intensive reflection on the relationship between theory and observation (Blatter, 2012). For the purpose of this research, a case study design is most suitable for various reasons. First, small-N research makes it possible to increase the number of observations per variable and to reflect on the relationship between empirical observations and abstract concepts (Blatter, 2012). Different from a quantitative design, qualitative research is case-centered instead of variable centered (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). It assumes that next to causal factors, contexts and specific factors matter for explanatory research, and as such they need to be considered (Blatter, 2012). This makes it possible to select cases without clear-cut boundaries, that can better be delineated and specified on the basis of abstract theoretical concepts (Blatter, 2012). Therefore, the design is suitable for investigating new, complex or abstract phenomena (Blatter, 2012). Finally, the design is chosen because it allows for the use of a broad set of theories within analysis (Blatter, 2012).

Alternative choices include the co-variation design (COV) and causal process tracing (CPT). The first design focuses on the effect of a specific causal factor on a specific outcome, and is thereby not suitable for testing multiple factors or complex theories (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). CPT focuses on the causal mechanisms within cases, and is better able to capture complex theories. However, due to high analytical intensity it is difficult to apply multiple theories (Wauters & Beach, 2018).

4.2 CONGRUENCE ANALYSIS

A congruence analysis is a small-N research design in which the relative explanatory strength of theories are tested using case studies (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). A CON design is suitable for in-depth studies of theoretically interesting cases, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Sager et al., 2014). This approach implies that concepts can have different meanings within different, rival, theories. Instead of focusing on single

observations, clusters of observations are used to derive a meaningful picture in the light of a complex theoretical framework (Sager et al, 2014). After testing whether the empirical evidence is congruent with expectations from theories, the level of congruence is compared between the theories in order to determine which theory is strongest (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). This comparison and contrasting in turn reduce the risk of a confirmation bias (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). The research is factor centric, it is interested in the explanatory factor of causal factors, in this case the three theories (Gschwend & Schimmelfenning, 2007).

4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Different from other forms of explanatory research, the goal of a CON approach is not to proof causal relationships using measurement tools. It is intended to test the relative strength of theoretical approaches through finding congruence between empirical evidence and abstract claims (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). The internal validity of the research is ensured by using two dimensions of control. First, there is a vertical element of control where propositions are tested to empirical data. Before starting the empirical research, this thesis has drafted testable and falsifiable propositions derived from theory. Each proposition specifies abstract concepts and formulates causal connections. These propositions should be made as specific as possible and indicate what type of concrete observations either confirm or falsify the theory (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). The internal validity is further increased by employing context-specific indicators for concepts (Blatter, 2012). The second element of control is horizontal, where the theories are compared to each other. In order to do so, it is important that the theories contain propositions that are conflicting. Such a competing theories approach leads to the most valuable results (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). However, theories do not always focus on similar units of analysis, which makes it possible that elements from theory complement instead of conflict each other.

The external validity, the possibility of generalizing results beyond the case study, is directed at the broader theoretical discourse (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). Instead of claiming that findings can be generalized to a population of similar cases, generalizing conclusions are provided for the set of theories that are relevant in the academic debate (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 197). In order to make strong claims to the theoretical discourse, it is important to pick ‘crucial cases’, those that are most-likely cases with respect to a dominant theory in the scientific discourse and simultaneously least-likely cases with respect to a peripheral theory in the debate (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). The strongest claim is then one that disproves the dominant theory.

In order to increase reliability, this research will be explicit about the method of data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003). Moreover, this thesis will add a reference to each claim made so that readers can retrieve information and possible replicate research. In order to do so, this thesis makes use of open source data and will reflect on the possible limitations and biases of the sources and the analysis itself.

4.4 THEORY SELECTION

The theories for the CON analysis are selected based upon their position within the academic debate as well as their likeliness towards the case study. In order to increase the impact on the theoretical debate, more than one theory is needed in a congruence analysis. However, the selection of theories should also not be too large as this limits the amount of expectations and observations that can be made per theory (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, pp. 174-175). Therefore, this research focuses on three theories: realism, liberalism and constructivism. These theories are chosen due to their position within the field of international relations as they are the most established and provide for distinctively different worldviews. However, the theories – with the exception of liberalism, are not often applied to the study of EU policy making. Specifically realism is often disregarded in the study of the EU, as it is more used for explaining disintegration (Reichwein, 2021). The theories provide distinct and competing expectations for phenomena such as international cooperation and foreign aid, which makes them suitable for the case study. However, realism, liberalism and constructivism are metatheories, which implies that they contain a set of assumptions and abstract concepts (Blatter & Haverland, 2014, p. 173). This thesis has therefore additionally used literature with more concrete explanatory frameworks in order to deduce specific propositions.

4.5 CASE SELECTION

Case selection in congruence analyses is based upon theory. However, this thesis started from a case that is considered socially relevant. The selection of within-case studies is, however, driven by theory, as the cases focus on the areas where theoretical propositions conflict. This thesis focuses on the case of EU-policy making with regards to the global distribution of vaccines and the case of development aid and other support around COVID-19 and specifically vaccines. The focus on vaccines is interesting as the three theories have diverging expectations about it. Realists could view vaccines as a resource for which there is high global competition as well as a tool for diplomacy. Liberalists would view vaccines as a global public good, something that is produced in cooperation and used to tackle global problems. Constructivists would view vaccine sharing as a form of solidarity as well as a tool to protect human lives around the world. The question of who gives what in terms of aid and support is then interesting as it shows how the words of individual actors translate towards action, for which the theories provide different predictions as well.

A crucial case needs to be highly likely in respect to the dominant theory and least-likely for an alternative theory (Blatter, 2012). In the study of the EU, liberal theories are most commonly used, while realism is dominant in the theoretical debate around development aid (Blatter, 2012).

4.6 OPERATIONALIZATION OF THEORY

The propositions presented in the theoretical chapter first have to be translated to empirical observations that are testable and falsifiable. The three theories used are large meta-theories with for each many sub-theories that nuance claims and make them more complex and detailed. Instead, this thesis makes use of ‘ideal-types’ of the theories as this is necessary for them to be contradicting and testable against each other.

4.6.1 Operationalization of realism

Realists view the world as driven by power, where states are rational and unitary actors that aim to maximize their influence relative to others. This implies that countries with more material power have the largest impact in international relations. Material power refers to the size of a state and its economy, but can also refer to the size of the military of a country (van der Veen, 2011). The countries with large material power seek to protect- or improve their place in the global balance of power. They are likely to react defensively in the face of threats, or offensively in reaction to opportunities in the international system. Cooperation through alliances, what realists would call the EU, is a way to maximize power in order to balance or bandwagon with external powers. This implies that they might bandwagon, or cooperate, with countries like the United States. However, EU member states might also collectively balance to countries like China, Russia or the United States, thereby competing with them (Waltz, 2000).

Foreign aid, according to realism, is a tool of diplomacy or foreign policy and serves the interests of the donor. The bigger powers are most interested in providing aid, as this can be seen as a tool for influence or maintaining the stability in the balance of power. This aid is likely to be allocated bilaterally and centralized to maximize the visibility and influence of the donor country. The allocation of this aid is further strategic, and often directed at – potential – allies or potential threats. In the EU, the aid would likely go to the direct neighborhood or to countries encircling enemies (van der Veen, 2011). Moreover, when other powers increase their aid to certain countries, big powers within the EU are likely to do the same to compete for influence (Morgenthau, 1954).

4.6.1.1 Operationalized hypotheses realism

Table 2 Hypotheses and expectations realism

Propositions	Expectations
R1: The state is a rational, self-interested actor, responding to a logic of consequence and aiming to increase security or power.	R1: States’ policies primarily reflect nationalism and self-interest. When states have to make the choice, they make choices leading to zero-sum outcomes over positive sum ones. R1.2: Foreign aid is a tool of foreign policy and diplomacy; States allocate their aid, mainly bilaterally and centralized, to (potential) allies or threats.
R2: In an anarchic international system, states are the only actors that matter	R2: No other actor than the state is expected to influence international relations and states’ policies. International institutions and civil society have no formal power.

R2.1: The more powerful a state, the more it is interested in gaining influence or protection the balance of power	R2.1: Regional hegemony in the EU care most for geopolitics: Bigger states spend relatively more on aid and foreign policy compared to smaller states.
R3: Cooperation only occurs when it is functional to the state, in the form of alliances	R3: The EU is a tool for cooperation, led by big regional powers; EU policies are formed by- and reflective of the interests of France and Germany
R3.1 In the face of a larger power, smaller states can choose to balance to or bandwagon with those powers.	R3.1 EU member states are likely to cooperate when they face an external threat or competition from larger powers.

Source: Authors' own creation, adapted from section 4.6.1

4.6.2 Operationalization Liberalism

Liberalists view international cooperation and interdependence as the force that drives international relations. A state is interested in increasing its absolute, instead of relative, wealth, and responds to the preferences of economic interest groups. This implies that states are likely to prefer cooperation when it is in beneficial for its economy. The more interdependent a state is, which is measured by its orientation on trade, the more likely it is to prefer cooperation (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). The rules, norms and institutions in the international system provide relative stability, and enable positive sum outcomes. Liberals thereby expect that states, and specifically liberal democracies, prefer to act cooperatively and to protect free trade (Grieco & Ikenberry, 2015). Moreover, international organizations can help states overcome cooperation problems, by increasing trust and facilitating communication between states. They are functional to decrease transaction costs, enable burden sharing and facilitating the provision of public goods (Paxton & Youde, 2018). While, similar to realism, institutions are tools for states to realize their interests, states give up some of their room for action as they have to adhere to the rules and procedures of the organizations.

The more trade oriented liberal democracies are also likely to have large aid budgets, support international organizations and prefer multilateral action. Different from realism, medium-sized powers can therefore also be influential in the international system. These states are likely to prefer burden sharing and cooperation in the development of vaccines. Moreover, they would seek to allocate vaccines in the most effective way to mitigate the impact on its economies.

4.6.2.1 Operationalized hypotheses liberalism

Table 3 Hypotheses and expectations liberalism

Propositions	Expectations
L1: The state is a rational, self-interested actor responding to a logic of consequence	L1.1 : States are interested in increasing absolute gains in terms of wealth, therefore states' policies are likely to reflect economic preferences and states are likely to increase their wealth regardless of whether it will be more beneficial to others.
	L1.2. Foreign aid is a tool to promote free trade and economic interests; In order to protect the global market, states with larger trade ties are more likely to have a large aid budget.

	L1.3: States are likely to allocate their aid towards trade partners in the most effective way
L2: Individuals and groups are important actors in international relations	L2.1: Interest groups mobilize at the national and transnational level and have an impact on the preferences of decision makers.
	L2.2: Multilateral organizations and the EU influence state policies. The rules (voting procedures, regulations and agreements) limit the freedom of action of states.
	L2.3: The more dependent on international cooperation a state is, the weaker its bargaining position in negotiations.
L3: Due to increased interdependence between states and institutional cooperation, states are able to transcend anarchic international relations; Cooperation occurs when it is functional to states	L3.1 : Liberal democratic states, engaged in international institutions, are more likely to show cooperative behavior.
	L3.2: If states' preferences are similar, international cooperation will occur when it decreases transaction costs, increases trust or facilitates burden sharing.

Source: authors' own creation, adapted from section 4.6.2

4.6.3 Operationalization constructivism

Constructivists view norms and interaction as vital to international relations. The interaction takes place within global civil society, where elite individuals are socialized to adhere to certain norms and practices. Within the EU, the preferences of state leaders might thereby converge and turn in a common EU interest. Foreign aid reflects a global norm that richer countries should help the poorer ones, specifically in times of humanitarian crisis like the pandemic. Domestic conceptions can further influence foreign aid practices (Malalcalza, 2019). Countries that value equality and income distribution, social justice and human rights more, are more likely to be generous aid donors (Lumsdaine, 1992; Noel & Therien, 1995). Scholars have thereby argued that countries with a strong domestic social welfare state or a left-wing government are more responsive to the needs of developing countries. Since respect for human rights is considered a core value of the EU, the EU institutions and all member states are likely to prefer giving support. When states violate a norm, they are expected to be condemned by the international community (Paxton & Youde, 2018). Because a state wants to preserve its reputation and identity, it is also likely to respond to normative pressures and change its policy.

The allocation of aid by these states is expected to be directed at those most in need (Malalcalza, 2019). In normal times, this would imply that it aims to reduce poverty. In times of humanitarian crisis, aid would be distributed among those that are hardest hit. States further prefer to give aid multilaterally, both because it is perceived as the most legitimate and interest free mechanism of aid provision and because it is established to be most efficient and effective.

4.6.3.1 Operationalized hypotheses constructivism

Table 4 Hypotheses and expectations constructivism

Propositions	Expectations
C1: Norms are the driving force in international relations, states operate	C1: The EU, which views itself as a normative actor and values human rights, acts in a way to maximize the protection of human rights. This is visible in the volume, allocation and form of global support.

according to a logic of appropriateness	
C1.2: Identities and norms are molded by factors such as culture and normative beliefs	C1.2: Foreign aid is the expression of a norm that rich countries should provide assistance to the poor to increase their quality of life. If a humanitarian crisis occurs states increase their total aid budgets.
C2: Elite individuals in society and the state are the most important actors	C1.3: Political traditions at the domestic level matter for states' foreign policy choices.
C2.2: Communication is important in shaping and changing identities (socialization)	C2.1: Any actor able to spread norms and ideas has an impact on international relations. Besides state actors, the media, NGO's and international organizations influence policies and relations between states.
	C2.2: EU cooperation has created a sense of 'European Identity' among states' elites. EU member states have similar preferences and act out of the 'EU-interest'
	C2.2: States are likely to respond to normative pressure. If states are 'named or shamed' by elite individuals, they are likely to change their behavior.
C3: Cooperation occurs when it is considered the appropriate thing to do	C3: More likely among friendly regimes and when it helps in the protection of human rights.

Source: authors' own creation, adapted from section 4.6.3.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

The benefit of a qualitative case study design is that the accuracy of measurement can be increased by the collection of observations from multiple sources (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). Therefore, this thesis has aimed to make use of a diverse set of sources. Data collection is theory driven and thereby mainly focuses on the information that helps confirm or disconfirm the propositions (Blatter & Haverland, 2014). Whereas the first case study focuses more on the policy process and textual sources, the second case study focuses on resource flows and numerical data. However, in both cases the other type of data is used to supplement the findings, specifically because some data is still preliminary. The sources for the data used in figures and resource flows are summarized in Appendix 1, while the other sources are referred to in-text.

The policy process has been analyzed using policy documents, official communications of EU institutions and governments. Moreover, it includes secondary sources such as think tank reports, databases like the transparency watch and academic articles. Because the study is contemporary, this thesis also makes use of news articles where possible from recognized websites that are as objective as possible. This is established by the level of factual reporting, for which sources like Reuters, EU Observer and Euractiv score high (Media Bias, 2020a; 2020b; 2021). In other cases, when there is no alternative available, the sources are reflected upon and used for empirical facts instead of normative arguments made.

The data on Gross National Income (GNI), aid, trade partners are adapted from similar and established sources for all countries in order to ensure accurate comparison. One exception to this is that the non-DAC countries, such as Cyprus, Malta, Romania and Latvia, are not included in the dataset used. Although the aid for these countries is reported to the OECD, the numbers for GNI were not included. Thereby, that data is collected from the World Bank. Although this might distort the calculation a little,

these countries are not pivotal to the propositions and thereby the choice was made for the best available alternative.

One of the strengths of using documents as empirical data is that it is reusable and stable. In future research, the sources can be reviewed, making scholars able to falsify or confirm the conclusions drawn (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, the risk of bias is low because the data has been created before- and independent from the case study (Yin, 2003). The thesis deems it less suitable to collect interview data or observational data because the study is mainly on systems level. Further, this would be time-intensive, meaning that the research focus can be less broad and holistic.

4.7.1 Foreign aid and COVID-19

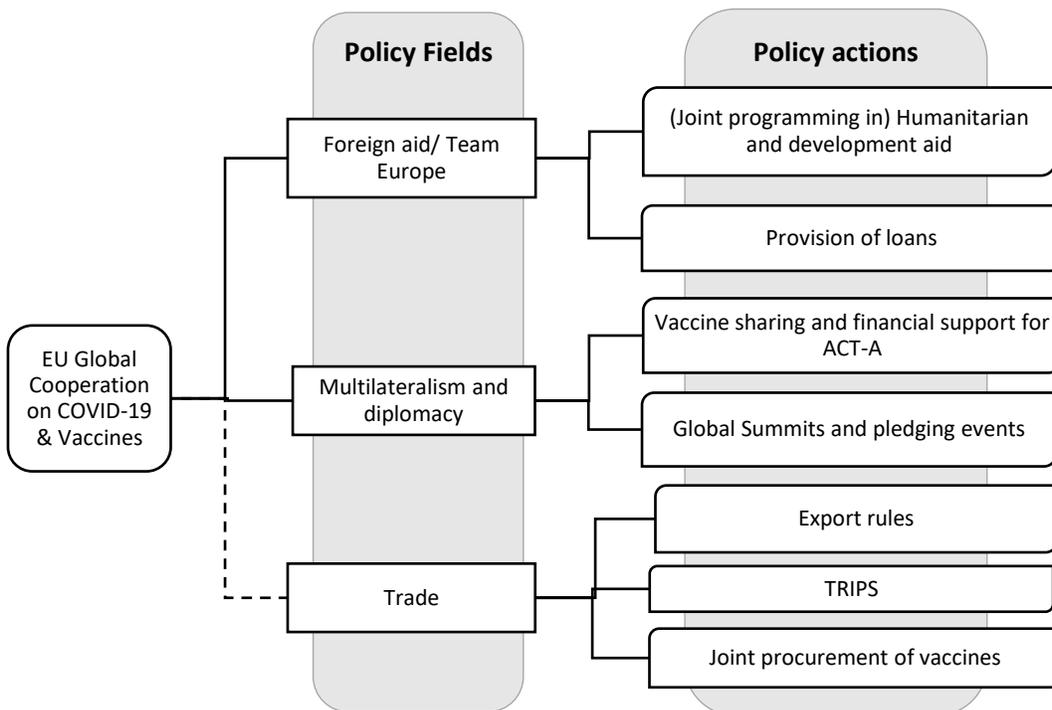
In order to measure aid spending, the focus of the second case study, this section first defines what aid is and what types of COVID-19 related support is- and is not considered aid. Aid can be defined, following the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as ‘resource flows provided by official agencies with the intent to promote economic development’ and is often referred to as Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Apodaca, 2017). ODA includes the official financing reported to the DAC with the aim of promoting the economic development and welfare of countries, with a grant element of at least 25% (IMF,2003). According to the OECD, not all COVID-19 related funding for third countries can be counted as ODA (OECD, 2021a). In preliminary figures for aid in 2020, thereby include a separate section for COVID-19 related ODA. This includes all direct support to countries on the DAC list of ODA recipients to help mitigating the effect of the pandemic (OECD 2021a). The COVAX facility is not considered ODA because it can also benefit the donor countries themselves. However, the Advanced Market Commitment (AMC), through which donors finance developing countries, and direct vaccine sharing is considered ODA (OECD, 2021a). These multilateral efforts will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Due to the fact that the economies of EU member states differ, the ODA of countries is compared by using relative instead of absolute numbers. This spending will thereby be presented as a percentage of GNI. This ratio is officially to measure whether a country meets the DAC standard of 0.7% (OECD, 2021c). The latest available data for ODA is from 2020 and is still preliminary, yet it indicates general trends. The data used for the COVID-19 related ODA is based upon a special OECD Survey from September 2020 (DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics, 2020). These numbers are non-conclusive, but indicate the intention and planned budget. It thereby does not include the ad-hoc pledges during summits or for COVAX, that are thereby discussed separately. For 2021, at the time of writing there is no data available for the purpose of comparison, but there is data on the spending towards the multilateral institutions and on pledges to share vaccine doses. The data on ACT-A funding is derived from the official WHO tracker, updated every two weeks, with the used data uploaded at the 4th of June 2021.

CHAPTER 5: EU’S GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The EU Global Response to COVID-19 is a complex, comprehensive and sector-transcending field including a diverse set of actors. This chapter gives an overview of the policy context in which the EU and MS have operated and of the different actors involved. Figure 1 shows the policy fields and related policy actions that are related to global cooperation to tackle the virus and its effects and the distribution of vaccines.

Figure 1 EU Global Strategy on COVID-19 and cooperation on vaccines



Source: Authors own creation, Data adapted from EC (n.d.)

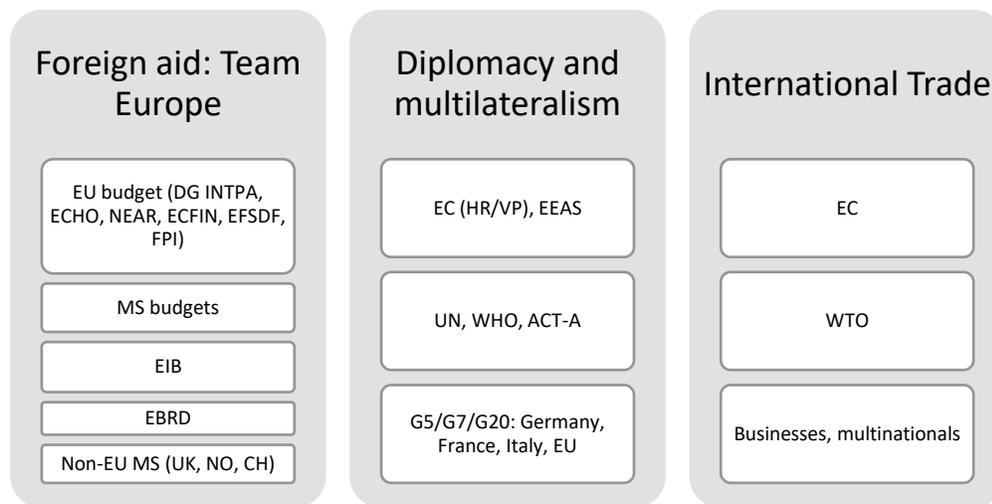
5.1 The EU global response to COVID-19

As visible in Figure 1, the strategy on global cooperation includes the fields of foreign aid, multilateralism and trade. The first field, foreign aid, is traditionally led by the Directorate General (DG) International Partnerships (INTPA). The EU has a shared competence and coordinative role the field as well as an own budget (Hix & Hoyland, 2011). The Team Europe approach was initiated in April 2020, and promotes joint programming between different EU bodies, states and financial institutions. The actors involved, presented in Figure 2, have their own policies but cooperate in so called ‘Team Europe Initiatives’ (TEI) (EEAS, n.d.). The Team Europe unit focuses on the ‘coordination, preparation and monitoring of EU development policy’ (Päivärinta, 2020). It pools the budgets from different DGs within the EU. This includes the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), directed at developing countries and crisis response,

DG Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiation (NEAR) focused on the region. Moreover it used resources for macro-economic support (DG ECFIN) and the budget from DG INTPA (EC, 2021c). Team Europe has provided aid to developing countries to cope with the humanitarian and economic effects of the pandemic, and has further donated to the ‘Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator’ (ACT-A) (Bilal, 2020). This ties into the second field of policy related to global cooperation and multilateralism.

Separate from the Team Europe approach, the EU has taken an early leading role in the establishment of the ACT-A, which is discussed later. Next to providing resources, the EU has also organized and participated in different summits in which it has called on other states to support the global efforts. The EU has cooperated with international organizations, such as the WHO and UN, and civil society organizations, such as Global Citizen (EC, 2021a). Finally, international trade policies have an impact on global cooperation around COVID-19 and the distribution of vaccines. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the EU has been involved in joint procurement, has restricted exports and protected Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

Figure 2 Actors involved in policy fields



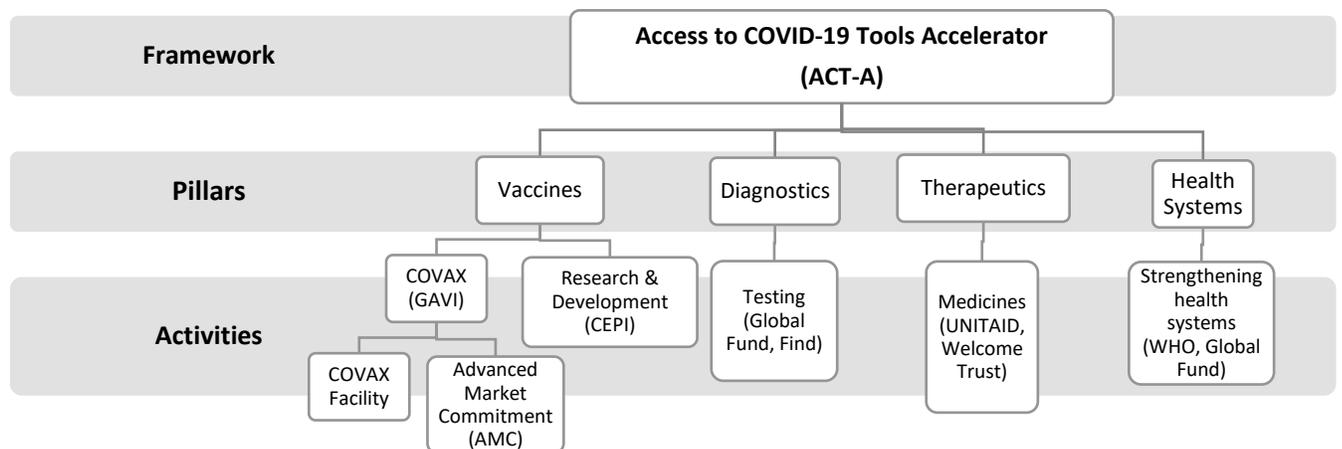
Source: Authors own creation, adapted from EC (n.d.)

The strategy thereby not a formal and centralized policy but rather an assemblage of different policies and actors. Instead, the EU states that it is ‘leading international efforts, both through its own efforts and through bringing the key players together’ (European Commission, 2021d). Although MS cooperate within the EU, they have their own autonomous foreign policies that cannot be discussed under the umbrella of EU action. The first case study focuses on the EU policy process while the second zooms in on the actions of individual member states.

5.2 THE ACCESS TO COVID-19 TOOLS ACCELERATOR

In April 2020, the EU committed to join the ‘Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), a multilateral effort designed for international cooperation and coordination of the international response to COVID-19. As visible in Figure 3, the ACT-A contains four pillars of which ‘vaccines’ is the focus of this research (Eccleston-Turner & Upton, 2021). In the early days of the pandemic, the vaccines pillar was mainly focused on research and development. COVAX is a pooling mechanism for funding for development, manufacturing capacity and the COVAX Facility. The latter focuses on the procurement, allocation and deployment of vaccine doses for developing countries (Eccleston-Turner & Upton, 2021). This facility has the aim to allocate doses equally among participating countries, guaranteeing enough doses to vaccinate 20% of countries’ populations. This also includes a group of ‘self-funded’ countries, HICs and UMICs, both fund the facility and commit to pay for doses once they are available. Low Income Countries (LICs) and Low Middle Income Countries (LMICs) are ‘funded’, meaning their share of vaccines is financed by the GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) (Eccleston-Turner & Upton, 2021). This financing instrument is dependent on donations from the international community as well as availability of vaccines on the global market to procure.

Figure 3 ACT-A pillars



Source; Authors own creation, adapted from WHO (n.d)

CHAPTER 6: EU POLICYMAKING

– THE CASE OF GLOBAL VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

Commitment to global multilateralism is central in communications of the EU and its member states. This first case study focuses on the policymaking process around a vaccines within the EU global response to COVID-19. This case is interesting for the theories as it is a case of a resource that is particularly scarce, which makes it a question of competition and is being used in diplomatic ways. At the same time, disease eradication, through vaccination, is argued to be a global public good (GAVI, 2020). Finally, the virus leads to humanitarian crises around the world, making the vaccines a form of humanitarian or emergency aid. This chapter therefore uses EU action as a case study to test the propositions of the three theories. First, the expectations from the theory are briefly summarized in Table 5. Afterwards, EU external action will be discussed and analyzed. The three theories have different ideas about the likelihood of global cooperation and influence of multilateral actors. They all acknowledge the existence of cooperation and international organizations (IOs). However, they disagree about the influence of the IOs, such as the EU as well as about the influential actors within these organizations and the international system. The theories also have different ideas about the interests of states and the circumstances in which cooperation is likely to occur or not.

Table 5: IR theories on cooperation and policymaking

Expectation	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
Important actors in IR	The state, big powers	(Economic) interest groups	Elite individuals within global civil society
The role of the EU/ International organizations	No influence: tool to secure the interests of France and Germany; policies are reflective of interests	Institution that provides the rules and constrains the space for state action and negotiation	Actor in itself, independent preferences and identity from that of the member states
Preferences of EU member states	National interest, zero-sum. States pursue relative gains to other powers (third countries or other MS)	National interest, reflective of domestic and transnational societal interests, specifically economic.	Similar: the EU interest based on common values.
Strongest bargaining position	The biggest powers	Those with least dependence on a particular outcome	Actors that are most persuasive
Changes in preferences and action happen...	Due to changes in the global balance power, threats and opportunities	When interest groups lobby at the domestic or regional level.	When actors are socialized or 'persuaded' into acting differently.
Global cooperation	Not preferred, only when relatively beneficial to states in the form of an alliance against or with other powers.	Preferred by- and between liberal democracies, to solve common problems (global public goods)	Preferred if states perceive it to be an effective and legitimate way to maximize human rights protection.

Source: Authors own creation, adapted from Chapter 3 and 4.

As visible in Table 5, realism is the most pessimistic about cooperation and support between states in times of external shocks such as COVID-19. In the early days, around spring and summer 2020, most states took such a national self-help strategy (Basrur & Kliem, 2021). EU member states closed their borders, violating

the principle of freedom of movement, and led to regulations such as the single-market rules and fiscal discipline and started banning the export of medical equipment (Basrur & Kliem, 2021). Moreover, while they committed to joining COVAX in September 2020 and pledged large sums of money to it, they did not actually join the COVAX-facility but started to make bilateral advance purchase agreements (Eccleston-Turner & Upton, 2021). In effect, the EU member states together with other HICs and UMICs scrambled most of the available doses, and have secured over 85% of doses administered up to May 2021 (Cohen & Kupferschmidt, 2021). This left COVAX with money, but no actual doses to procure. However, the EU member states did give the European Commission the competence to negotiate these advance purchase agreements and to share the doses equally among member states. Moreover, it were EU officials that initially advised states against joining the facility. The internal dose sharing first started in June 2020 through an alliance between France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, called the 'Inclusive Vaccine Alliance' (IVA). The IVA negotiated an agreement with AstraZeneca to supply all member states willing to participate in return for large investments in research and development. The initiative was first taken by the two regional hegemonies, and later included the four countries with largest absolute trade and largest economies – excluding Spain (Statista, 2021a; Eurostat, 2021). According to liberalism, these states have the most to lose from the collapse of economic relations and interdependence between states. Shortly after, the IVA was included within broader EU efforts.

The large procurement was a form of insurance in order to vaccinate the full population as soon as possible, but countries bought more vaccines than necessary to protect the most vulnerable. The race to reach herd immunity can thereby also be seen as a race for countries to quickly re-launch the national economies. However, this is also not purely an economic interest in the liberalist conception of it (Errighi, 2021). The re-opening of the economy provides a competitive advantage in the short term, but the actual containment of the virus could – according to virologists – be achieved far more effectively when vaccines are distributed equally (Errighi, 2021). This in turn would be beneficial to the world as well as to the individual economies of EU member states (OECD, 2021e). With the emergence of new variants of the virus the economies of vaccinated countries could be hurt again. The equal distribution of vaccines, instead, would have fitted both the liberalist and constructivist propositions. It provides for positive-sum cooperation, benefitting all countries, as well as being the more humanitarian thing to do, protecting as many lives as possible.

Moreover, economic preferences have not been the priority in the early months of the pandemic. The most visible example is that the EU started to ban exports to third countries. The global distribution of vaccines is limited by the fact that manufacturing is centralized in a few High Income Countries (HICs). Specifically new technologies such as the mRNA used by Pfizer and Moderna are only produced within a few HICs. This centralization resulted out of barriers from intellectual property (IP) rights as well as

manufacturing capacity (Eccleston-Turner & Upton, 2021). As a result, producing countries hold a power over the global distribution of vaccines. A number of countries – such as the US and later India – have introduced export bans on domestically produced vaccine doses. In January 2021, the EU similarly limited the export of vaccines to countries with a better record than the EU in vaccinating its population and to those that restrict export of vaccines (Boffey, 2021). This resulted from a production shortfall of the AstraZeneca vaccine, that delivered all its doses to the UK instead of the EU. The decision by the EC was supported by France, Spain and Italy but criticized by the Netherlands Belgium, Sweden and Ireland (Boffey, 2021; Fortuna, 2021). All countries opposed - but Sweden - are the most trade oriented in the EU and have the United Kingdom as a relatively large partner.

The temporary export blocking of the EU was highly criticized and can be perceived as a form of nationalism (Evenett, 2021). However, the EU has argued that it exported over 50% of its produced doses – although most of them to HICs (Reuters, 2021b). This is more than countries like the US, that exported nothing before it lifted its export ban in May 2021 (Source. While at first the EU protected free trade by exporting, in reaction to other countries limiting the export, it thereby quickly responded by doing the same. While this response to changes in the international system is thereby reflective of realist predictions, it could also fit the liberalist idea. While the states most dependent on trade did not support the export restrictions, they also did not succeed in stopping it. This could indicate their weaker bargaining position due to higher dependence.

A further pivotal moment in EU decision-making focused around the possible abandonment of COVID-19 vaccine patents. In May 2021, President Biden announced that the US would back a temporary waiver on TRIPS (Sánchez Nicolas, 2021a). This measure, proposed by the WTO, would allow member countries and companies to produce COVID-19 vaccines by granting them access to vaccine ingredients and manufacturing processes. Although the effect of releasing the patent waiver can be disputed, the discussion surrounding it revealed a conflict between the EU and the US. The EU has been reserved to the idea of licensing the patents as Council president Michel argued ‘we don’t think in the short term that it’s the magic bullet’ (European Council, 2021). While stating that all manufacturing capacity is already in use, the EU pointed at the US and UK export blocks. The EU’s counter proposal included to limit export restrictions on vaccines and its ingredients as well as on treatments. Further, the EU called on governments ‘to encourage vaccine-makers and developers to enter licensing and manufacturing partnerships with producers in developing countries’ (Sánchez Nicolás, 2021a). The EU supported voluntary licensing agreements and argued that the WTO rules already contain sufficient flexibilities (Peseckyte, 2021). Pharmaceutical firms have further been urged to increase supplies for developing countries. Finally, the EU called for extra support for COVAX (European Council, 2021). Within this debate, the opposition came from those countries earlier opposing the export restrictions. Germany has been the largest opponent

together with Portugal, Estonia, Belgium and the Netherlands. After first supporting the German position, France changed its position to become one of the supporters of the TRIPS waiver together with Greece, Spain and Italy (Sánchez Nicholas, 2021a). Despite the divergence of preferences, the EU and MS still holds a common position at the level of the WTO. Although the EC follows Germany, which partially confirms realist expectations, in case of divergent preferences between big powers a common position is not expected by realists. Countering the proposal for a TRIPS waiver, the EU has called for free trade through the removal of export blocks (Peseckyte, 2021). While this fits the expectations of liberalism, it can also be seen as a strategic move to protect the TRIPS. Beyond limiting the global distribution of vaccines, the EU has also championed multilateralism. It has become one of the biggest donors to COVAX, as well as investing in the development of vaccines. However, this case of foreign support will be further discussed in chapter seven.

5.1 IMPORTANT ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

As shown in Table 5, the three theories have different expectations about the most important actors in international relations. Realism would point at powerful states, and views other actors as less relevant. Liberalism argues (economic) interest groups are vital for the formation of preferences, and that international institutions provide the rules for state action. Constructivism applies the most comprehensive view of important actors as it includes all elite individuals with the power to persuade decision-makers. This further has implications for the importance attributed to the EU. For realism it is only a tool, while for liberalism it clearly impacts the room for maneuver of member states. Constructivists treat the EU as an actor in itself, with preferences and action separately from the member states.

5.1.1 The role of the EU

First, the role of big powers has been visible within summits of the G7 and G20 as well as that of the European Council (Council). Many of the big decisions have been made or announced within summits and tops instead of the European level. The Council, representing the EU MS, likewise has been pivotal in the big decisions such as mandating the European Commission to develop a recovery plan (Lavallée, 2020).

The EU has sought to present itself as a united front in the field of global cooperation on COVID-19. In the early months, the EU had a slow and disorganized response. EU member states were taking unilateral action, such as closing borders, and were late to focus on global support. In order to increase visibility and a public image, the EU rebranded itself as ‘Team Europe’ (Jones & Teevan, 2021). The European Commission (EC) played a pivotal role in creating this approach. The approach was first agreed upon during informal meetings between the EC director generals (DGs) together with member states. Official Council working parties were bypassed, but later included when more actors became involved (Jones & Teevan, 2021). The Team Europe approach initially only ‘rebranded’ activities of member states, by using similar logos and the hashtag Team Europe in its communications. The approach was also used to

position the EU as a unitary actor in multilateral fora, such as a global pledging events. At the Global Health Summit, for example, Team Europe pledged to donate 100 million vaccine doses, while not stating which member state contributed what. The vaccines, that are all owned by the member states, are given to COVAX multilaterally. Still, some countries - Denmark, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Belgium - pledged to donate extra doses bilaterally on top of Team Europe (Culbertson, 2021).

This quest for visibility and unitary action fits each of the IR theories accounts of cooperation to some extent. Realists would argue that the EU is threatened by the influence of Chinese efforts, leading them to balance against this power. The quest for visibility is in this sense a quest for influence under the larger project of strategic autonomy (Maher, 2021). Moreover, TEI's are largely funded by France and Germany, which indicates their interest in it (Gavas & Pleeck, 2021). However, realism would not predict that the EC would play a leading role in foreign or development policy and it would also argue that member states would be interested in keeping control over policies and promoting their own visibility. The latter is partially the case as some countries pledged bilaterally. However, most of these pledges still went to a multilateral institution, which would surprise realists. Liberals would argue that the cooperation could be seen as a functional necessity: the resource pooling would make aid giving more effective and would serve as a way to share burdens between states. The EC functions as an institution that makes cooperation possible in this regard. Liberalism would view the commitment to multilateral action as a way to protect the liberal international order, specifically in times when its threatened by Chinese-US rivalry.

Constructivism, finally, would perceive the move as an indication of an emerging European foreign policy identity. The Team Europe brand, more than anything, is a shift in the narrative and meaning given to development cooperation. It would further point at the fact that cooperation only happens because member states' and EU institutions preferences converged. Moreover, the quest to increase visibility and influence could also be interpret as a way to effectively promote human rights around the world. Constructivists would argue that there is a new strategic culture emerging within the EU, as visible in the 2016 global strategy and communications by Commissioner Borrell (Borrell, 2021). However, constructivists would expect that the funding for projects would be more evenly shared among member states.

5.1.2 THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC INTEREST GROUPS AND OTHER ACTORS

Although the pandemic made lobbying difficult in the early months of the pandemic, interest groups have held more formal meetings in 2020 with the EC than the years since 2015 (Bayer, 2021). According to the transparency register, there have been as many meetings with NGO's and think tanks compared to business associations (Integrity Watch, 2021). However, access to meetings does not necessarily indicate influence, specifically because phone calls have not been registered. Thereby the preferences of interest groups are

compared to actions taken by the EU and member states.

Pharmaceutical interest groups have lobbied against both common procurement and the release of TRIPS rights. This both includes the actions of individual companies and from transnational associations: the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and on the global level the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) (IFPMA, 2021). Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), a transparency watch dog, obtained minutes from a call between Health- and the Internal Market Commissioners and EFPIA. The latter had argued that it ‘would like to continue supplying these treatments through their usual channels’ instead of through joint procurement (Tansey, 2020). However, the EC proceeded with joint procurement, implying that the lobby has not been successful for the internal vaccine strategy.

Within the debate on IP rights, the IFPMA argued that IP rights should be protected as they have enabled investment in the rapid development of vaccines (IFPMA, 2021). However, most of the costs of development have been publicly funded – in the case of AstraZeneca constituting about 97%. The IFPMA further argued that IPs have not been a barrier to global access as only a few countries have the capacity to manufacture and copy these vaccines in a safe way. The vaccine manufacturers itself have also voiced their opposition to the release of IP rights separately from the association. Pfizer called it ‘dangerous’ and AstraZeneca argued that companies should ‘volunteer to provide their products at no profit’ (Tansey, 2020). As argued before, this reasoning is reflected in communications of the European Commission and opposing member states. Germany, which is the country where Pfizer is located and where the mRNA technology was developed, has been the most vocal opponent.

The EU has been committed to support multilateral organizations, but the question is whether these are only an instrument for cooperation or an actor in itself. These multilateral organizations have no formal power to change EU policies. However, following constructivist propositions, they might exert influence through persuasion and normative pressure on leaders. Organizations such as the WHO and Oxfam have accused the EU of vaccine nationalism. Still the EU kept justifying its policy choices and there was no change (Fenton-Harvey, 2021). The EU has responded to calls for multilateral action. Different from many other bilateral donors, most EU vaccine donations and financial support are given through COVAX (Global health Centre, 2021). Moreover, the EU has cooperated with the WHO and NGO’s in organizing global pledging events. However, when choices had to be made, self- or EU interest takes precedence over the common, global, interest. The total pledges to COVAX are not enough for what the WHO assessed to be needed. Moreover, the EU did not join the COVAX Facility and started securing vaccines for its own population first. Finally, the EU planned to set up a ‘Vaccine Sharing Mechanism’ similar to that of COVAX but sidelining the WHO. Finally, the EU is opposing the TRIPS waiver proposed by the WTO. These

examples show that the multilateral institutions are mainly a forum for action when interests converge while their influence on EU action is limited.

5.2 ASSESSMENT

The analysis of EU decision making around the global distribution of vaccines shows how each of the theories provides relevant propositions. The role of Germany and France in decision making has been large, confirming the proposition of realism. Although there is cooperation on vaccines internally to the EU, however in its external actions the EU actions take precedence over that of third countries. Although realists would not predict countries to act in the EU interest, the unitary approach can be seen as a form of balancing to external powers. The EU has strongly focused on increasing its influence and visibility in the world and within multilateral fora. Moreover, although member states' preferences diverged, the negotiations around the export restrictions and the TRIPS show the power of Germany and to a lesser extent France. Both France and Germany were in favor of export restrictions, while of the two only Germany was opposed to the TRIPS waiver. However, not all realist predictions can be confirmed. Realists would not predict that the European Commission would have a leading role and that donations would be given multilaterally instead of bilaterally.

This global cooperation and commitment to multilateralism is more congruent with liberal predictions. Liberalism argues that multilateral cooperation is in the interest of EU member states because of interdependence between countries. The commitment of EU MS to share vaccines equally on a global level can be disputed, as they did not join the facility but opted for advance purchasing. However, they did prefer to cooperate within the EU, which is also where the biggest trade ties are located. In terms of negotiations, it can be confirmed that most trade oriented states – except for Germany and France – preferred to preserve the free market rules over export restrictions. However, these countries were not able to stop it, indicating a possible weaker bargaining position. Within the discussion on TRIPS, economic interest groups were highly influential on the EU position. However, the EU did not always pursue economic interests. The export restrictions and joint procurement were not in the interest of businesses. Furthermore, according to macroeconomic prognoses, it is likely that the EU will not benefit economically from the limited global vaccination tempo. This could have been accelerated by quicker vaccine sharing and releasing the patents for TRIPS. Finally, the EU institutions facilitated and led EU actions, which also fits the liberalist idea.

Most of the constructivist propositions can be disconfirmed. Although the EU has been committed to multilateral action and it has donated much, the distribution of vaccines has demonstrated global inequality. While Western countries have started vaccinating those that are not at risk, some countries in the developing world are only expected to vaccinate their population in 2023. The influence of NGOs and multilateral institutions have been limited, as it did not lead to changes in EU action. Within negotiations

at pivotal moments, EU interests diverged greatly. However, the EU did present itself as a unitary actor abroad and coordination increased between member states.

Table 6 shows which propositions, presented in Table 5, can be confirmed. Four out of the five propositions can be confirmed for liberalism and realism, while constructivism proves least explanatory. The role of the EU is the only proposition that can be confirmed for all three theories, although each would provide different explanations for the choice.

Table 6:(Dis)confirmation of propositions

Expectation	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
State preferences	V	X	X
Negotiation outcomes	V	V	X
Important actors in IR	V	V	X
The role of the EU	V	V	V
Global cooperation	X	V	V

CHAPTER 7: COVID-19 RELATED AID

Within the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were fears that foreign aid budgets would decrease like in the economic crisis (Morozkina, 2020). The pandemic affects the people and economies of both developing countries and developed donor countries, which means that leaders have to set priorities on how to spend resources. This second case study thereby analyzes the spending and resource allocation of individual member states during the pandemic. First, the focus is placed on changes in general ODA during the pandemic, after which the focus will be placed on COVID-19 related ODA. Second, the chapter analyzes the funding for the multilateral initiatives to tackle COVID-19 (ACT-A), and the allocation of vaccine doses. Resource spending forms a concrete indication of the preferences and interests of states, for which the three theories have different expectations. Specifically, the theories produced expectations on the volume of aid, the form of donation and the allocation of the different donor countries, as given in Table 7.

According to realism, the biggest donors are the larger powers, the ‘hegemons’. Liberalism expects that interdependence determines the aid budget, therefore the countries with larger trade ties are expected to be large donors. Constructivists argue that values matter for countries’ volume of aid, which implies that countries with left-wing governments and large welfare states are expected to have the largest aid budgets. A global crisis, such as the pandemic, is considered by realists as an external threat that needs to be tackled, where big powers are expected to take the lead. Realists expect that these powers would increase their foreign policy spending to either increase influence or security, while smaller states are more likely to free ride on the efforts of bigger powers. In terms of allocation, the spending is likely to be centralized on a few allies or potential threats. Liberals would view the pandemic as a problem resulting out of the interdependence of states, meaning that it is a common problem that needs to be tackled as effectively as possible. The allocation of aid would be based on the locations where it would solve the problem most effectively and efficiently. Constructivists consider the pandemic as a humanitarian crisis, a reason for increasing aid to protect people. The allocation of the aid can both be multilateral or bilateral, as long as it reaches those most in need. The theoretical expectations on the volume and allocation of aid for each of the theories are presented in table 5.

Table 7 Expectations COVID-19 related aid

Expectation	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
Largest aid budget?	Hegemons	Countries with large trade ties	Countries with left-wing government and a large welfare state
Will EU aid increase in crisis?	No, only for big powers	Yes, in the form of providing global public goods	Yes, most countries increase their aid for humanitarian reasons

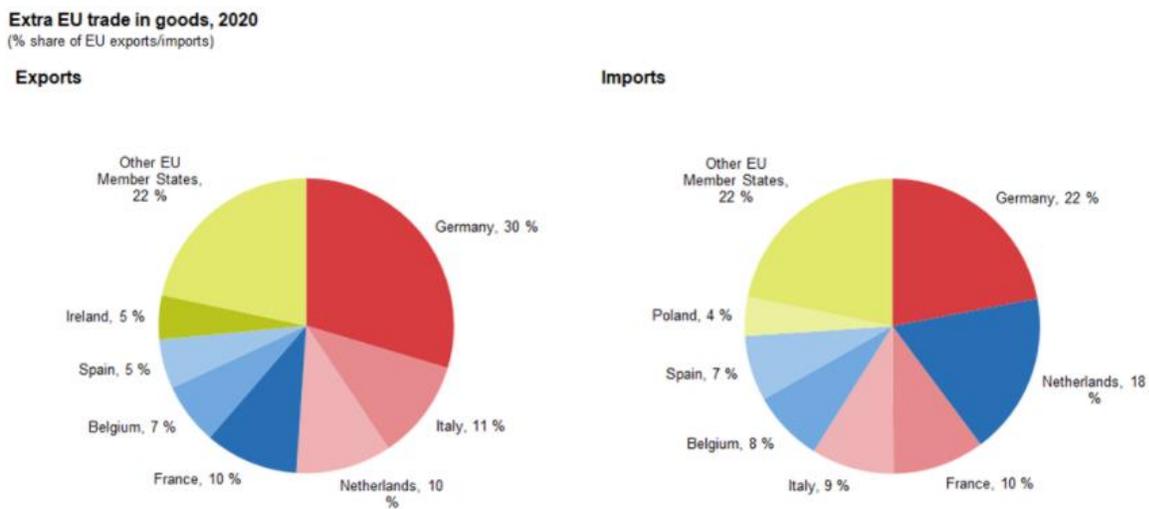
Allocation	Bilateral, centralized	Multilateral, decentralized	Multilateral or bilateral; directed at those most in need
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Source: Authors own creation, adapted from chapter 3 and 7

Germany and France are the countries that realists expect to have the largest interest in providing aid. These countries are generally considered (regional) hegemon, as they have the largest populations and economies in the EU. Scholars have referred to these countries as part of the ‘big three’ of the EU, previously including the UK before Brexit (Krotz & Maher, 2016). Although Italy is currently the third largest country, it is generally not considered a big power within the EU (Cladi & Locatelli, 2020). Instead, scholars focus on leadership of the ‘German-French cooperative hegemony’ (Reichwein, 2021, p. 90). France and Germany are therefore expected to be large donors, while other countries tend to free ride on the efforts of the hegemon and therefore have smaller aid budgets (Martin, 1992).

Liberals would also expect France and Germany to be large donors of aid, but they also consider the Netherlands, Spain and Italy to be interested in donating resources. These countries are selected as they have the largest absolute and relative share of extra-EU trade focused on developing countries. The absolute share, visible in figure 2, is largest in Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, France, Belgium and Spain (Eurostat, 2020a).

Figure 4: Absolute share of extra-EU trade (Eurostat, 2020a)

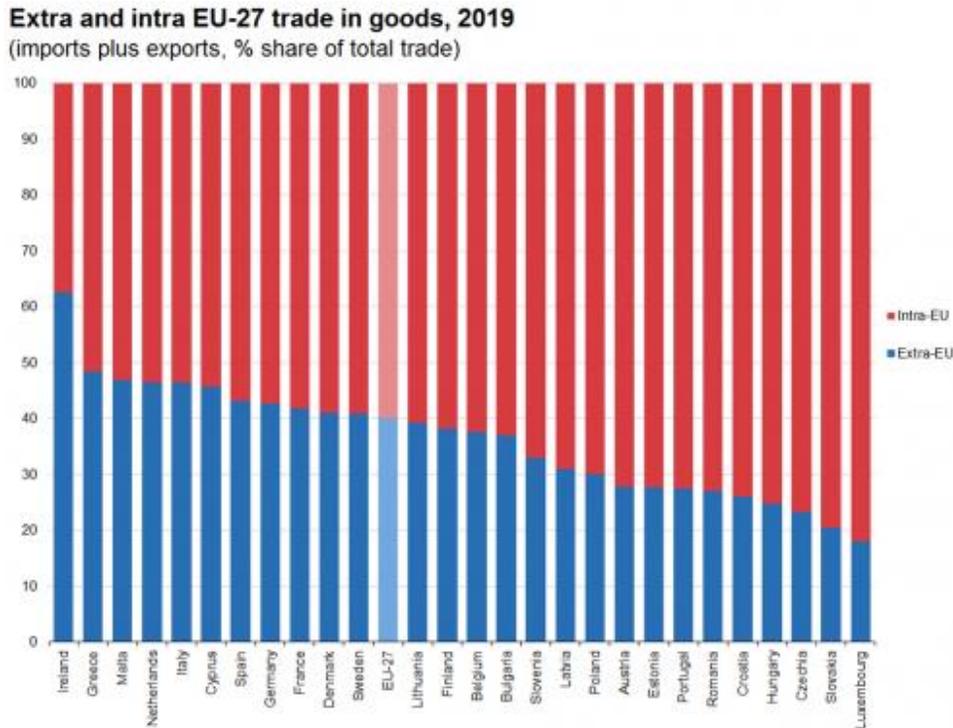


Note: this figure was reprinted from the open source database of the EU. By Eurostat (2021a) Euro Area International Trade in Goods surplus 15.8 bn. European Commission.

Excluding Belgium, the countries with the highest absolute share of extra-EU trade similarly have an above average relative share of extra-EU trade, visible in figure 3 (Eurostat, 2019). The relative share shows the importance of extra-EU trade for the member states themselves. As visible, apart from Ireland, all countries

trade more inside- than outside of the EU, which means that they might prioritize the internal EU interest over that of third countries.

Figure 5: Extra and intra EU-27 trade in goods.



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext_it_intratrd)

Note: this graph was reprinted from the open source database of the EU. By Eurostat (2021a) Euro Area International Trade in Goods surplus 15.8 bn. European Commission.

However, this does not immediately indicate that they are dependent on developing countries, as many countries trade mainly with HICs. Considering the share of import and export to developing countries, Ireland can be excluded as they mainly trade with the UK (Appendix 1). Greece, Malta and Cyprus further score high on relative extra-EU trade, however they are considered less suitable case studies. Malta and Cyprus are not formal members of the OECD-DAC committee, and their resources are limited. Greece mainly spends its ODA on the large presence of refugees within the country, and even receives ODA from other EU member states (OECD, 2020d).

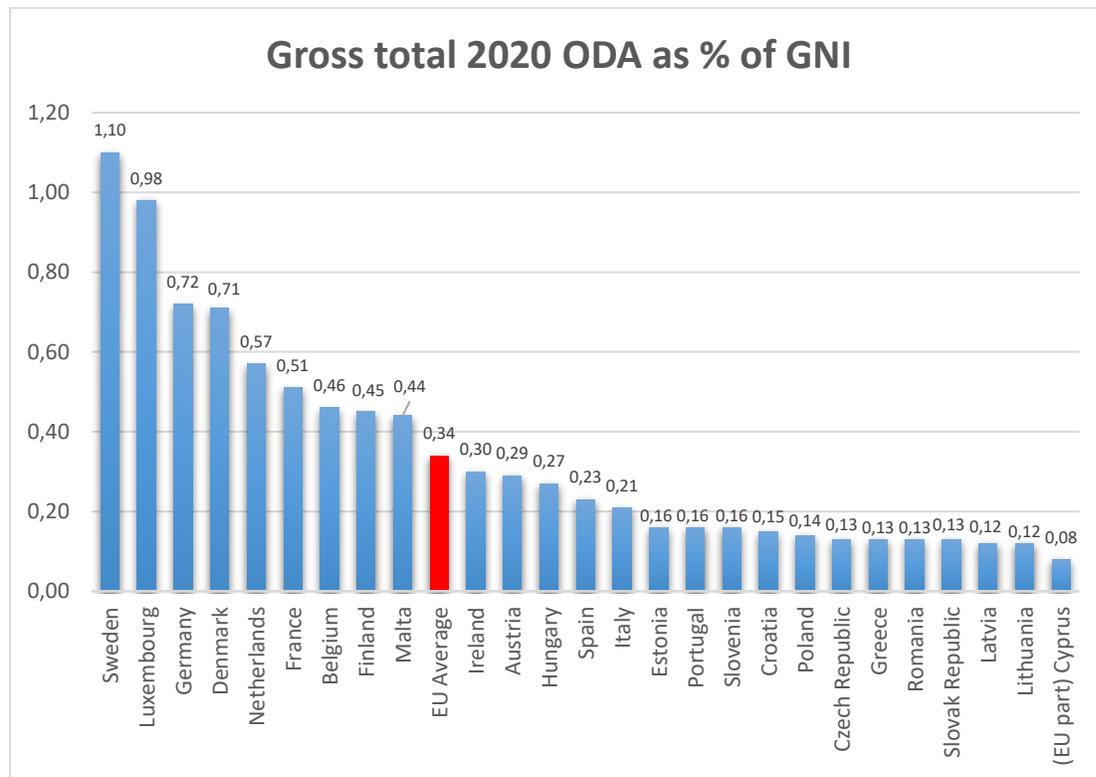
Constructivists would argue that Sweden, Finland and Denmark should have the largest aid budget, while all EU member states would be interested in providing aid in times of humanitarian crisis. Constructivist scholars have used both the size of the welfare state as well as the political ideology of the government as indicators for the relative importance states give on helping those in need (Lumsdaine, 1993; Noel & Therien, 1995). In the EU, the countries with the largest social protection as a percentage of GDP

are Finland (24%), France (23,9%), Denmark (21,4), Italy (21,1%), Austria (20.1%), Greece (19.8%), Germany (19.7%) Belgium (19.4%) and Sweden (19.0%) (Buchholz, 2021). Countries that currently have left-wing parties in power are Portugal, Denmark, Spain, Sweden and Finland. Thereby, Sweden, Denmark and Finland are considered pivotal for constructivism, because they fulfill both criteria.

7.1 ODA OF EU MEMBER STATES IN 2020

First, this thesis looks at total ODA as a percentage of GNI to determine which countries spend most on ODA. Second, the absolute increase or decrease of the ODA budget is analyzed to indicate how countries responded to the crisis. The absolute number is taken as reference, because there might have been changes in GNI due to the economic recession following the pandemic, which in turn might distort the picture of actual increases. Third, there is a focus on COVID-19 related ODA in percentage of GNI to indicate the relative importance countries place on tackling the crisis. Countries might have made ODA-commitments over multiple years, making the total ODA budget relatively stable. However, the COVID-19 ODA is a new type of spending and thereby helps to assess the relative importance that countries place on helping LICs and LMICs in coping with the pandemic.

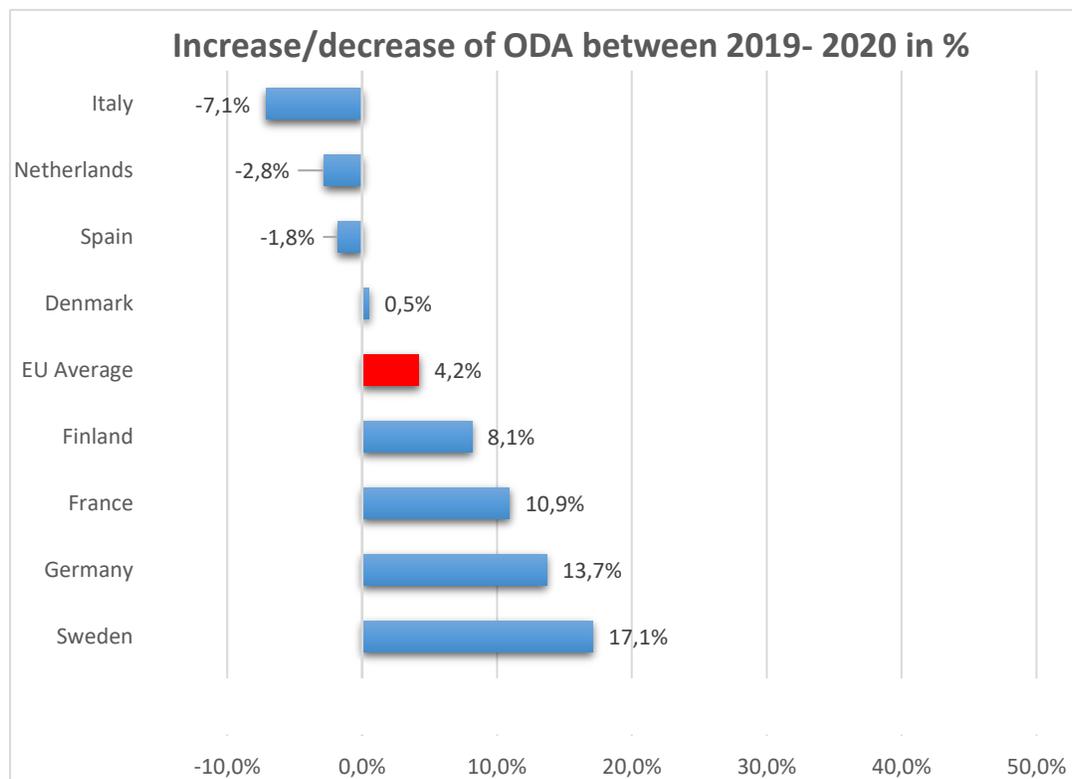
Figure 6 Gross total 2020 ODA as % of GNI



Source: Authors own creation (Table in Appendix 1) Data adapted from OECD (2021f).

The largest absolute donor of aid is Germany, however in terms of ratio to GNI its visible that Sweden is the largest donor. Further, Luxembourg, Germany and Denmark score above the 0,7% norm of the OECD-DAC. Compared to the average of EU member states, The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Finland and Malta score higher. In the light of realist hypotheses, Germany and France score relatively high while Italy scores below average. However, none of the three countries score highest in the EU, as Sweden and Luxembourg score higher than Germany while Denmark and the Netherlands score higher than France. This confirms constructivist hypothesis about countries with a large welfare state and a left wing government: Sweden, Denmark and Finland all score high. From the countries expected to score high in the liberalist propositions only Germany scores high. France and the Netherlands score slightly above the average while Italy and Spain score relatively low. Therefore, the evidence is indecisive about which of the three theories is most congruent. Therefore, this thesis also looks at how countries have responded to crisis: whether they have increased their overall aid and the amount they spend on COVID-19 related activities.

Figure 7 Absolute increases and decreases of ODA between 2019-2020)



Note 1 Changes are calculated in 2019 prices, in terms of absolute budgets (See Appendix 1) Source: Authors own creation (Table in Appendix 1) Data adapted from OECD (2021f)

Figure 2 shows the development of ODA budgets of the EU member states. Similar to the previous analysis, in terms of the realist propositions, both Germany and France increase their aid budget. However, a large part of EU countries, beyond the regional hegemons, increased their ODA budget. This disconfirms the

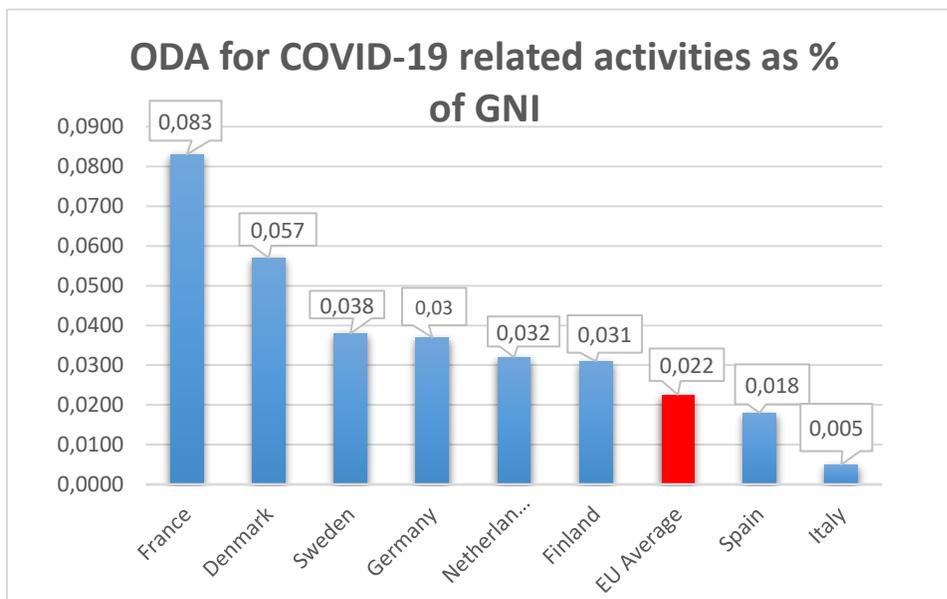
assumption that smaller countries have no interest in spending aid in crisis. The explanation, according to realism, could be that these countries bandwagon with the regional hegemons. The constructivist propositions are largely confirmed, as Sweden, Denmark and Finland all increase their aid budget. The countries of the liberal propositions, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy have all decreased their ODA budget.

7.1.1 COVID-19 Related ODA

Next to general aid spending, the ODA directed at pandemic response provides an interesting indicator for the effect of crises on aid. This includes all aid given to developing countries with aims such as tackling the economic shocks of the pandemic, development of health care systems as well as donations to the COVAX AMC (DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics, 2020). Although the data is still preliminary, the DAC 2020 survey indicates the relative importance countries have attributed to tackling COVID in 2020. The COVID-19 related ODA is interesting as it is a new type of spending – it has not been committed earlier – and directly related to tackling the crisis. It aggregates all spending directed at developing countries for 2020.

As visible in Figure 6, the largest donor is France (0,083%), followed by Denmark, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands. Finland further scores above the EU average, while Spain and Malta score low (DAC, 2020). Luxembourg provides largest COVID-19 related aid per GNI (0,179%), but is not included in the table as it is not theoretically relevant. Compared with figure 5, France, Sweden, Germany and Finland have allocated new resources towards tackling the pandemic, while Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy have mainly redirected existing funding towards tackling COVID-19.

Figure 8 ODA for COVID-19-related activities as % of GNI.



Source: Authors own creation (Table in Appendix 1) Data adapted from OECD (2021f).

7.2 GLOBAL COOPERATION AND THE ALLOCATION OF VACCINES

Realists, liberals and constructivists disagree about whether states would prefer cooperation, which states would be most interested in it and when cooperation occurs. The resources allocated towards global efforts, such as the ACT-A, are used in this chapter as an indicator for the commitment states have to global cooperation. This chapter further distinguishes between the different types of funding. The resources used for the development of vaccines, directed at CEPI, are not only directly beneficial to developing countries but also to the donors themselves. It is a form of burden and risk sharing fitting to liberal proposition. The COVAX Facility is more beneficial to developing countries, specifically because as argued before EU member states do not receive vaccines from it.

Realists would argue that states generally would not prefer to join the ACT-A, as they prioritize their self-interest and providing bilateral aid over multilateral efforts. However, states might join the effort in the face of an external threat, in this case the virus, as a form of security alliance (Paxton & Youde, 2018). Mainly the hegemons France and Germany should be interested in providing these public goods, specifically because of the lack of leadership of the US and China in the early months. Realists would further expect that states would provide more resources to CEPI, as this is functional to them, compared to the global sharing mechanism, which is relatively less beneficial. Liberals would argue that all EU member states would be interested in burden sharing and cooperation through the ACT-A, but specifically the states that are more dependent on international trade. Therefore they expect Germany, France, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain to be the largest donors. Liberals would expect that states contribute both to the development and the distribution of the vaccines, because both are beneficial to them in the long run. Moreover, liberals expect that EU member states would spend more on the multilateral efforts compared to non-democratic states. Constructivists similarly argue that all EU member states would be interested in spending many resources on the ACT-A pillars. However, they again point at Sweden, Finland and Denmark as the biggest donors. While realists and liberals would argue that global cooperation occurs because it is functional in this context, constructivists view cooperation as the appropriate thing to do.

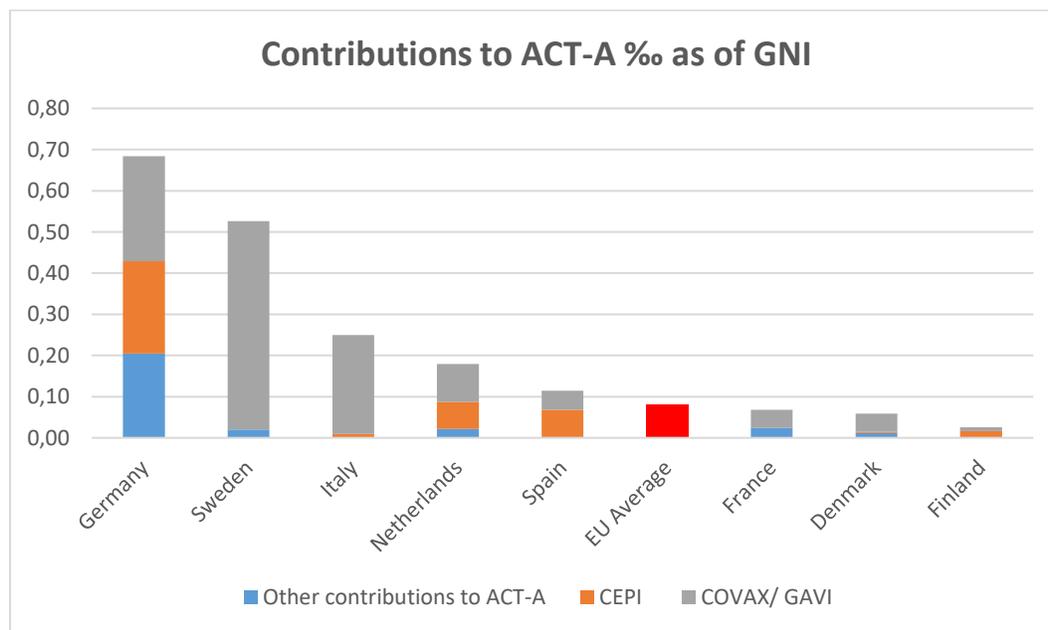
7.2.1 Contributions to the ACT-A pillars

As argued before, EU member states were early supporters of the WHO-led initiative, which was first led by France and the EC. However, France is not the biggest donor, as visible in figure 6. Figure 6 shows the resources that the EU member states have allocated to the ACT-A. The COVAX part includes all funding to GAVI and some to UNICEF, directed at the distribution of vaccines. The donations to CEPI are directed at research and development of vaccines. The other support for the ACT-A includes funding for the therapeutics, health care systems and diagnostics pillars (WHO, 2021). The donations are given as a percentile of GNI, to make the donations comparable across countries.

Germany is the biggest donor to the total ACT-A efforts, while Sweden allocates most to COVAX

(0,05%). Although France took the initiative for the ACT-A, it is a relatively small donor. Although France pledged to double its funding during the COVAX AMC Summit on the 2nd of June it still remains a relatively small donor (Gavi, 2021b).¹ However, this does not necessarily contradict realist predictions. France has focused more on bilateral aid, specifically to Africa (Ministère de L'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, 2020; Sauvage, 2021). However, realists would not predict that other states would be equally interested in contributing. Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, have further all contributed above average, confirming the liberal predictions. However, Italy has invested less in vaccine development. Sweden is the biggest donor to COVAX as a percentage of GNI, which is congruent with the constructivist hypotheses. However, Denmark and Finland are relatively small donors, thereby partially disconfirming the expectations.

Figure 9 Contributions to ACT-A in ‰ of GNI



Note: snapshot of 11 June 2021. Table in Appendix 1. Data adapted from: WHO (2021).

Next to the amount of funding, timing also matters for analyzing the preferences behind the allocation. The contributors to CEPI were early donors, with Germany being the first of the member states to start. The Netherlands, Spain, France and Finland followed quickly. Sweden and Italy, that donate most of its funding to COVAX, are both relatively late donors. This focus on COVAX is thereby not necessarily a confirmation of the constructivist propositions. Moreover, there are also many EU member states that have little to nothing to the ACT-A. Apart from Germany, none of the EU member states have reached the benchmark

¹ Not visible in the figure, as the numbers (at the time of writing) have not been officially administered.

set by the ACT-A to pay their 'fair share' (WHO, 2021). This disconfirms the constructivist proposition that member states would all contribute due to socialization. Therefore, the evidence is least congruent with constructivism. Although the evidence is relatively inconclusive, it is most congruent with the liberalist propositions, due to the fact that not only hegemons are donors.

7.2.2 Vaccine pledges and allocation

While pledging money to the global multilateral organizations started early in the pandemic, the pledges to donate vaccines took longer. This is partially a result of the late approval and accessibility of the vaccines, but most countries did not indicate any intention of sharing the doses until April 2021. The first EU member state that pledged to donate doses was France, which simultaneously lobbied other member states to do the same. The first commitment made was to allocate 4-5% of vaccine supplies from January 2021 (Reuters, 2021c). President Macron advocated other countries to do the same during a G20 top in February, calling for global burden-sharing. While France was supported by Merkel, Germany only started to pledge donating 30 million doses at the end of May. Sweden pledged its first doses at the start of May, committing to 1 million doses, which they later increased to three million (Reuters, 2021d). At the Global Health Summit at the 25th of May, EU member states started making large pledges. Under Team Europe they committed to donate 1.3 billion doses to LIC and LMICs by the end of 2021. At the time, only the contributions of Germany (30 million), France (30 million) and Italy (15 million) were publicly announced. In June, Belgium (4 million) and Denmark (3 million) announced their first contributions while Sweden and Spain announced to increase their commitments. During the G7-summit, France finally pledged to increase its donation to sixty million (Macron, 2021).

While most EU member states focus on COVAX in their global response, some countries have donated vaccines bilaterally. France has pledged most its vaccines to COVAX, but has also donated five million directly to the African Union (Macron, 2021). In April, Spain pledged to donate 7.5 million doses to Latin American and Caribbean countries once 50% of Spanish population would be vaccinated (Reuters, 2021a). At the start of June, this commitment was raised with 15 million, resulting in a total of 22.5 million doses pledged (GAVI, 2021). Denmark, while committing doses to COVAX, announced to share the jabs with Kenya (Wagemaker, 2021). Through the 'vaccine sharing mechanism' the Netherlands shared doses with Aruba, Curacao, St Maarten, part of the Dutch Kingdom (European Commission, 2021e). The Netherlands has not shared any other doses (van Klundert, 2021).

In both contributions to ACT-A and vaccine pledges, it is mainly liberal democratic states that have committed to multilateralism (WHO, 2021). Team Europe has been the biggest donor up until the United States overtook them recently. In the allocation of vaccines, the EU has committed most of its donations to COVAX, while other states, such as China have donated most of their vaccines bilaterally (UNICEF, 2021).

7.3 ASSESSMENT

As is visible in the results, the countries scoring high diverge per factor. The realist propositions would argue that the big hegemons would be the largest donors of aid, which is true for France and Germany. It would also argue that these countries would increase their aid in the face of crises, while other countries would be less willing to do so. While Germany and France increased their ODA, their increases were not the largest and the aid of EU member states on average increased as well. This is the same regarding the COVID-19 related aid. While Germany is the biggest supporter of multilateral institutions, France has spent less despite its leading role in establishing the ACT-A. They are further both the largest absolute donors of vaccine doses, and have taken a leading role in promoting donation. However, they allocate it through COVAX which deviates from realist predictions.

The Netherlands, Spain and Italy show diverging trends towards the indicators. All three countries decreased their aid in 2020, while spending much on the ACT-A. However, the Netherlands is the only country with relatively high ODA and COVID-19 related ODA, as well as the only country that has not donated vaccine doses. The interdependent countries thereby all value global cooperation and burden sharing, but this is not translated within foreign aid. Moreover, their economies and budgets seem volatile to economic recession, which is not surprising given their trade orientation. However, the findings are in general thereby not fully congruent with the expectations of liberalism.

Sweden, Finland and Denmark score high on all ODA related indicators. In terms of support for the ACT-A, Sweden scores high while Denmark and Finland score low. Finally, of the three only Finland has not pledged to donate any vaccine doses. Thereby, constructivist propositions seem to be most congruent with empirical evidence, followed by realism and least of all liberalism.

Table 8: (Dis)confirmation of propositions COVID-19 related aid

Expectation	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
ODA/GNI	Partially confirmed	Partially confirmed: excluding Spain	Confirmed
Increases in ODA	Partially confirmed	Disconfirmed	Confirmed
COVID-19 related ODA	Partially confirmed.	Disconfirmed (apart from the Netherlands)	Confirmed
Support for multilateral organizations	Partially confirmed (Excluding France)	Confirmed (excluding France)	Disconfirmed
Vaccine donations	Confirmed	Partially confirmed (excluding the Netherlands)	Partially confirmed (excluding Finland)

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND HORIZONTAL CONTROL

The two within cases show different images of which theory is most congruent with the evidence. Within the first case on policymaking, liberalism and realism score high while constructivism scores low. However, the second case of covid-19 related aid of individual member states, liberalism scores lowest while constructivism scores high. Overall, realism is considered most congruent with the evidence presented, as visible in Table 9. However, none of the theories confirm or explain all propositions, while some propositions fit with each of the theories. This implies that the theories are not only conflicting but in some ways also complementary.

Table 9 Assessment of propositions (authors own creation)

Proposition	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
P1) Preferences of MS and the EU	<i>Relative gains</i> Confirmed	<i>Absolute gains</i> Disconfirmed	<i>Humanitarianism</i> Disconfirmed
P1) Foreign aid donors	<i>Hegemons</i> Disconfirmed	<i>Interdependent states</i> Disconfirmed	<i>Left wing, large welfare states</i> Confirmed
P2) Preference/ policy formation	<i>Reaction to external developments</i> Confirmed	<i>Impact interest groups and institutions</i> Confirmed	<i>Normative pressure</i> Disconfirmed
P3) Common EU position	<i>When French and German preferences converge and/or when its strategic.</i> Partially confirmed	<i>Reached through negotiation, weaker power of interdependent states</i> Confirmed	<i>Convergence between states interests through socialization; EU is an independent actor</i> Partially confirmed.
P3) Global Cooperation	<i>Only preferred by hegemons if functional for influence or security.</i> Partially confirmed for policymaking, confirmed for resources	<i>Preferred when functional to states, interdependent states have more interest in it.</i> Confirmed	<i>Preferred by all MS when considered appropriate thing to do.</i> Disconfirmed
Overall	Most congruent	Second most congruent	Least congruent

The preferences of member states and the EU in their external policies are most congruent with realism. The absolute gains, following liberalism, have not always been the priority. This is illustrated within both case studies. First, the EU and member states have not adopted policies that are considered most beneficial economically. It would have been in their economic interest to equally divide vaccines and treatments around the world. The EU has this hindered through the export restrictions, insufficient donation and blocking the TRIPS waiver. The effect of the latter, however, is disputable because protecting the TRIPS benefits the industry as well as possible future gains from the mRNA technology. Nonetheless, the policies have not maximized the most equal or effective global distribution of vaccines (Eccleston-Turner, 2021). Second, the most interdependent countries are not the largest donors of foreign aid as expected by liberalism.

They are, however, big donors to multilateral efforts and Spain and Italy have also donated vaccine doses.

Similarly, constructivist propositions on preferences are not fully confirmed. Since the most effective way of tackling the virus is also the most humanitarian thing to do, a similar analysis can be applied. However, preferences on foreign aid are most congruent with constructivism. Not only are Sweden, Denmark and Finland large aid donors, the EU average has also increased during the pandemic. Thereby, not only hegemons are interested in aid giving, nor are the most interdependent states the largest donors. While constructivism provides the best prediction for foreign aid, realism is most congruent in terms of policy preferences. The EU and member states have pursued options that increase relative gains, such as the advance procurement agreements and protecting TRIPS. These choices do not only increase relative benefits for the EU, the choices and narratives around regional and global cooperation can also be seen as strategic, as discussed below.

The formation of policy preferences is most congruent with liberal explanations. However, realism likewise provides explanatory power for the actions of the EU, as these have been reactive to external opportunities and threats. The early absence of both China and the US presented the EU with an opportunity to take a leading role at the international stage. Furthermore, increases in the donation of vaccines and other efforts have often followed the donation of China and Russia. However, states are not the only actors important for international relations, but also businesses and interest groups. Not only is the EU dependent on companies for procuring and distributing vaccine doses, the preferences and rhetoric of pharmaceutical companies are visible within the policy positions of the EU. Although the international community exerted normative pressure, this only marginally had an influence on the actions of the EU.

Finally, global cooperation and the establishment of a common EU position is most congruent with liberalism. The EU position was congruent with all theories, with a different explanation for each. This is possible because the explanations focus on different units of analysis: the international system, negotiation or socialization and a European identity. However, it can be argued that liberalism is most congruent, since they reached this position even when preferences diverged. Furthermore, the most interdependent states were not able to form this common position, indicating a weaker bargaining position. The EU has cooperated globally in the development of vaccines and states have shared most doses through COVAX. This can, according to liberalism, be seen as proof that they prefer burden and risk sharing in the provision of public goods. Realists would argue that cooperation occurs through an alliance against the external threat of the virus or to balance Chinese bilateral actions. However, realism cannot explain that a common position would be reached when French and German interests diverge. Nonetheless, the larger economies have provided most resources, with France donates most bilaterally and Germany one of the biggest supporters of COVAX. While cooperation and a common position would fit the constructivist propositions, however, the EU mainly cooperated globally when it was functional.

8.1 DISCUSSION

The finding that realism provides most explanatory power within the two cases shows that geopolitical preferences have become prominent within the foreign policy of the EU and member states. However, not all realist propositions have been fulfilled. The picture is somewhat mixed: on the one hand states have committed to global cooperation, considerably more than some other non-democratic states. Under Team Europe, the EU presented itself as a unitary actor with a common external position. However, it is questionable whether this commitment to cooperation is genuine or if self-interest takes precedence. The latter seems to be the case, and in fact mirrors the pattern seen internal to the EU. In the face of crisis and external threat, specifically an unprecedented one, states and even regional multilaterals like the EU, turn inwards. The fact that realism is most congruent is particularly interesting because the dominant approach in studying EU policies is liberalism (Reichwein, 2021).

Realism is able to explain most of the developments around the vaccine doses, but not around the resources allocated. In terms of foreign aid, constructivism is most congruent, while resources for the ACT-A follow the liberal expectations. The finding that constructivism predicts the patterns of foreign aid best is in turn interesting in the light of the realist dominance, of the three theories, in the literature around aid (Pauselli, 2019). The hesitance of countries to share vaccines might indicate the high competition and relative benefits of keeping the doses, like realism would expect. However, it is surprising to note that countries have not decreased their funding for aid and have spent much on the ACT-A. Specifically considering that in the 2008 crisis, many countries opted for austerity and decreased their aid, this seems like a change in approach (OECD, 2012). This might indicate that countries have learned from the economic crisis, or that the nature of the COVID-19 crisis is too different to compare the two.

Liberalism complements realism in explaining the formation of domestic preferences with the help of interest groups and the negotiation to a common position. Except for liberalism, the theories used focus little on the domestic factors. Theories such as international political economy or the behavioural school could be of value here. Keeping vaccine doses could also result from domestic pressures. Within several EU member states, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, there have been large protests over lockdown measures (van Schaik et. al., 2020). Instead of preferring relative gains, like realism expected, state leaders could also pursue political gains with their policies.

Although constructivism is considered the least congruent, this thesis has used a somewhat static approach to the theory. In the words of Wendt (1992), 'Anarchy is what states make of it', which implies that the policy choices might result from a rising realist thought structure (Basrur & Kliem, 2021). Within a global system with more great power rivalry, the norms and foreign policy identity of the EU might have changed. The uncooperative behavior of other states might have changed the relations between countries into more enmity. This could be studied within a more in depth by both positivist and interpretivist accounts

of constructivism. The propositions are established as ideal types, however there are multiple differences and debates within the theoretical schools. The theories have been adapted and there is currently more overlap between the theories than presented in this thesis. Examples are the liberalism inspired commercial realism or combinations of constructivism and realism such as realist constructivism or securitization theory (Barkin, 2003; Balzacq, 2009). Moreover, mid-level theories, that explore specific causal mechanisms or concepts, are often eclectic and transcend the boundaries in the Great Debate (Lake, 2013). Therefore, it might be the case that specific theories are better able to explain the nuance and details of the case studies discussed. The analysis in this thesis has at points been quite general and broad instead of detailed. However, it helps guides the selection of these specific theories by indicating which elements are interesting for further research, discussed below.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that realism has the most explanatory power in the case of EU's global response to COVID-19. The theories were operationalized and applied to two socially important case study. They were tested using a congruence analysis, using vertical and horizontal control. The EU has behaved strategically and has at times placed relative gains over absolute gains and the common good. The findings confirm the early analysis of van Schaick et al (2020), that predicted and worried the EU a strategic actor and not fully committed to multilateralism in the WHO. Although the EU has often been regarded as a normative power, it appears that in times of crisis material interest take precedence. However, the analysis has shown that although Germany and France have taken a leading role in policy making, they are not the only actors that matter. Instead, economic interest groups, the EU and smaller countries had an impact on international relations. This new geopolitical, strategic behavior of the EU fits a larger trend. The EC declared to 'be a geopolitical commission' (Urpilainen, 2021), and the international system has increasingly become a stage for great power rivalry. It therefore makes sense to further explore EU policymaking through the lens of realism. However, this does not mean that the other theories should be discarded. Instead, they prove to be complementary to realism. Liberalism is useful for studying domestic and EU preference and policy formation, while constructivism could focus on norm-changes. The following section will discuss the limitations to the study and sets out practical recommendations.

9.1 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the contemporary nature of the case, there is much work to be done in future research. The findings and limitations of the study provide for a set of interesting avenues for further research. First of all, the research focuses on the EU only, and not on other countries. It would be interesting to compare the findings about the EU to the actions of other countries during the pandemic. This would benefit theoretical assessment because the differences between countries can be larger, such as between democratic and non-democratic regimes. Moreover, it would be generally interesting to gain a broader picture about the global trends. Second, the study could have been more detailed and focus on one country or within case only. Finally, the data used within this study is at some points preliminary due to the contemporary nature of the topic and the fact that the pandemic is still ongoing. The policy around vaccines might change in the future, leading to different results. Future researchers could thereby test whether in hindsight the findings still hold, or possibly find more details and information about the case. Some data was not accessible that could have been interesting for the analysis, such as data on bilateral allocation of aid or details from negotiations between EU member states. The former will become available in 2022, while the other information could be derived from interviews or evaluations.

The finding that both realism and liberalism can be applied to the case provides for interesting avenues for research. Within both theoretical schools, many mid-range theories or more specific theoretical frameworks have been developed. This could supplement the analysis with more detailed information about the domestic politics surrounding development aid.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Next to providing avenues for further research, the findings also lead to practical implications. The EU has become more strategic in its foreign policy, but a common position is reached. This means that both states and EU bodies can be held accountable for policy choices. Still, with France and Germany providing a leading role, other states could focus on them when they seek to influence EU policy. Moreover, it implies that the focus should be placed on material arguments instead of on values. It also means that the effectiveness of the policy should be assessed and evaluated according to the relative gains reached. It appears to be different in the case of development aid, where values play a larger role and where more states have large budgets. In this field, there might be a larger role for civil society in persuading countries to do what they believe is right. Finally, economic interest groups have influence on policy. There should be more transparency and communication about their role in policymaking.

It remains to be seen whether this realist position remains after the crisis. Specifically because the internal solidarity between EU MS has increased during the crisis, this might be expected to happen in foreign policy more. With the US taking a more cooperative and internationally oriented stance, the prospects for global cooperation are getting better. EU institutions, MS, and citizens should discuss whether this type of action is preferred and whether a geopolitical union should be consolidated as the new foreign policy identity of the EU.

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APPENDIX 1: DATA COLLECTION

Table 10 Data Collection

Data	Source
EU Global Strategy on COVID-19 (Figure 1 & 2)	European Commission (2021b) EU Global Response to COVID-19.
Share of Extra EU trade (Figure 4 and 5)	Eurostat (2021a) Euro Area International Trade in Goods surplus 15.8 bn.
ODA in 2020 (Figure 6 and 7)	OECD (2021f) <i>ODA in 2020 – preliminary data</i> [Table].
COVID-19 related ODA 2020 (Figure 8)	DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (2020) COVID-19 Survey – Main Findings. DCD/DAC/STAT(2020)35
Donation to ACT-A (Figure 9)	WHO (2021) <i>The ACT Accelerator funding tracker</i> [Table].
Trade partners of EU member states (Table 12)	World Bank
Donation of Vaccines (Text)	WHO (2021) <i>The ACT Accelerator funding tracker</i> [Table].
GNI of EU member states (Appendix 2)	WorldBank (2019) <i>GNI, Atlas method (current US\$)</i> .

APPENDIX 2: DATA USED IN FIGURES

Table 11 Data used in figures

	AT	BE	HR	CY	CZ	DK	EE	FI	FR	DE	GR	HU
GNI (2020) (Mln US\$) (Eurostat)	431,094	489,970	60936	24,629	231064	362932	30856	273574	2657913	3805577	184,620	154,200
Total net ODA, constant 2019 prices (2020) (Mln US\$) (OECD)	1237	2235	82	20	293	2567	49	1223	13545	27511	235	424
Total net ODA constant 2019 prices (2019) (MlnUS\$) (OECD)	1230	2175	72	20	309	2554	48	1131	12211	24198	368	312
Increase/decrease of ODA between 2019-2020 in %	1%	3%	14%	0%	-5%	1%	2%	8%	11%	14%	-36%	36%
Gross total 2020 ODA, % of GNI	0,29	0,46	0,13	0,08	0,13	0,71	0,16	0,45	0,51	0,72	0,13	0,27
Total ODA for COVID-19 activities (Mln US\$)	29,08	129,23	9,85	0,56	6,49	206,27	3,86	84,68	2205,72	1421,93	0	40,8
Total ODA for COVID-19 activities as % of GNI	0,007	0,026	0,016	0,002	0,003	0,057	0,013	0,031	0,083	0,037	0,000	0,026
Total contributions to ACT-A (Mln US\$) (WHO)	5,248	10,145	0,59	0	0,456	21,366	0,0853	6,904	181,44	2603,371	3,47	0,8426
Total contributions to ACT-A Vaccines (Mln US\$) (WHO)	5,25	10,15	0,59	0	0,46	17,00	0,09	6,90	118,00	1822,72	3,47	0,84
Other contributions to ACT-A, % of GNI	0	0	0	0	0	0,012	0	0	0,024	0,205	0	0
CEPI % of GNI	0,005	0,011	0	0	0,002	0,003	0	0,016	0	0,224	0,008	0,005
Contributions to COVAX (Mln US\$) (WHO, 24-06-2021)	2,9	4,7	0,59	0	0	15,9	0,0853	2,4	118	970,7	1,92333	0
COVAX % of GNI	0,007	0,010	0,010	0	0	0,044	0,003	0,009	0,044	0,255	0,010	0
Vaccine doses (pledged) (mln US\$) (EC, 24-06-2021)	0	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	30	30	0	0

Table 11 Data used in figures (Continued)

	IE	IT	LV	LT	LU	NL	MT	PL	PT	RO	SK	SI	ES	SE
GNI (2020) in mln US\$ (Eurostat)	315081	1.905.282	33932	53162	43897	904693	14090	576024	224986	24443	102020	54047	1262969	554438
Total net ODA, constant 2019 prices (2020) Mln US\$ (OECD)	933	4062	39	65	428	5143	57	785	367	298	135	86	2891	6095
Total net ODA constant 2019 prices (2019) (Mln US\$) (OECD)	973	4373	34	68	472	5292	41	777	410	254	116	88	2944	5205
Increase/decrease of ODA between 2019- 2020 in %	-4%	-7%	15%	-4%	-9%	-3%	39%	1%	-10%	17%	16%	-2%	-2%	17%
Gross total 2020 ODA as % of GNI	0,30	0,21	0,11	0,12	0,98	0,57	0,40	0,14	0,16	0,12	0,13	0,16	0,23	1,10
Total ODA for COVID-19 activities (million dollars)	25,54	97,55	6,46	0,45	78,5	289,2	0	10,86	0,8	0,22	3,78	1,39	231,07	208,2
Total ODA for COVID-19 activities as % of GNI	0,008	0,005	0,019	0,001	0,179	0,032	0	0,002	0	0	0,004	0,003	0,018	0,038
Total contributions to ACT-A (Mln US\$) (WHO)	4,77	475,71	0	0,115	3,11	162,29	0,0577	0	1,16	0,23	0	0	145	292
Total contributions to ACT-A Vaccines in mln US\$ (WHO)	4,77	475,10	0	0,12	2,14	141,96	0,06	0	0,80	0,23	0	0	145,00	281,00
Other contributions to ACT-A % of GNI	0	0	0	0	0,022	0,022	0	0	0,002	0	0	0	0	0,020
CEPI % of GNI	0,000	0,009	0	0,002	0,021	0,065	0,004	0	0	0,001	0	0	0,068	0
Contributions to COVAX (Mln US\$) (WHO, 24-06-2021)	4,772	457	0	0	1,2	82,9	0	0	0,8	0	0	0	59	281
COVAX % of GNI	0,015	0,240	0	0	0,027	0,092	0	0	0,004	0	0	0	0,047	0,507
Vaccine doses (pledged) (Mln US\$) (EC, 24-06-2021)	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,5	3

APPENDIX 3: SHARE OF IMPORT AND EXPORT WITH ODA ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

The following table focuses on the trade partners of the countries that are relatively dependent on Extra-EU trade. It includes the accumulative share of the top ten trade partners that are ODA eligible, as indicated in the OECD DAC 2021 list. Although this is not a definitive overview of all trade with ODA countries, it is used for comparative purposes to show which countries are relatively dependent on ODA countries..

Table 12 Share of import and export with ODA Eligible countries.

EU Member State	Share of total Import for top 10	Share of total export to top 10
The Netherlands	16,96 %	7,13%
Germany	17%	13,39%
Belgium	10,72%	8,05%
France	16,68%	11,48%
Greece	27,62%	24,32%
Italy	17,29%	10,16%
Spain	20,73%	12,51%
Malta	13,88%	15,21%

Source: Authors own creation, adapted from World Bank (2020).