

Achieving Policy Coherence for Development –
A Matter of Coalition Resources?

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master's degree in International Development and Globalization

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Abstract

Policy coherence for development (PCD) has risen on the donor community's agenda over the years as globalization makes it impossible to ignore non-aid policies' impact on development. Although straightforward in theory, PCD has proven much more difficult to achieve in practice. Policy incoherence remains commonplace, even as the number of guidelines and best practices for avoiding it increase. This thesis used the Advocacy Coalition Framework to analyze two cases of policy change in Sweden and Germany, namely the adoption of the democracy criterion for arms exports and the coal phase-out respectively. The findings suggest that the current discourse about PCD among donors and donor institutions – that PCD can be achieved through better evidence and greater policy coordination – requires careful scrutiny. The Swedish and German case studies strongly suggest that bureaucratic mechanisms for PCD are insufficient to make the significant political trade-offs PCD typically demands. This analysis argues that achieving policy coherence, especially where there are significant conflicts between development and self-interest, requires political direction catalyzed by an external event. This event, or series of events, must be disruptive and focus significant public attention on the policy issue, to trigger a redistribution of power in the policy subsystem. A combination of other necessary and sufficient factors is also needed for successful policy change in favour of PCD. Institutional mechanisms cannot substitute for political will, and the current move towards a de-politicized treatment of PCD – as something that can be achieved through technocratic means – should be re-examined.

Keywords: policy coherence for development, advocacy coalition framework, policy change

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List of Abbreviations

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
BMU	Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany
BMWi	Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology of Germany
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDI	Commitment to Development Index
CDU	Christian Democratic Union party of Germany
CSU	Christian Social Union party of Germany
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EU	European Union
GSDS	German Sustainable Development Strategy
IA	Impact Assessment
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KEX	<i>Krigsmaterielexportöversynskommittén</i>
KRUT	<i>Krigsmaterielutredningen</i>
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
PGD	Policy for Global Development
QCA	Qualitative comparative analysis
RWE	Rhenish-Westphalian Power Plant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Social Democratic Party of Sweden
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The genesis of policy coherence for development (PCD) as a concept is difficult to pinpoint because it emerged organically over time. However, one set of antecedents can be identified in the influential campaigns of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s, which exposed the incoherence of European Union (EU) agricultural subsidies and development aid policies (OECD 2015a). The subsidies, amounting to 10 billion euros a year, encouraged the dumping of agricultural surpluses in low- and middle-income countries at artificially low prices, putting downward pressure on world market prices and allowing EU exporters to compete unfairly with local producers in developing countries. European development NGOs such as Oxfam and Action Aid published numerous reports highlighting the damage being done to the livelihoods of farmers and the food security of developing countries – the very people and countries EU aid policies were supposed to help. Thus, broadly conceived, PCD stems from the realization that non-aid policies can have equally, if not more, powerful effects on the development outcomes of low- and middle-income countries than aid policies. PCD therefore calls for non-aid policies such as trade, migration and security to be adjusted, so as to reduce or eliminate negative side effects on development.

Although a relatively straightforward concept in theory, PCD has proven much more difficult to achieve in practice. At the heart of the issue is the fact that non-aid policies are governed not by development objectives, but by interests such as trade and security, and backed by powerful domestic constituencies. It is politically difficult to de-prioritize these interests in favour of broad development goals, which are generally perceived to work solely for the benefit of other countries,

and even potentially at the expense of the donor country's population. PCD has nonetheless risen on the donor community's agenda over the years as globalization makes it impossible to ignore non-aid policies' impact on development. The EU and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) have led the push for PCD, carrying out numerous case studies and creating comprehensive guidelines on bureaucratic mechanisms for donor countries to implement.

Yet, policy incoherence remains commonplace, even as the number of guidelines and best practices for avoiding it increase. The problem can be summed up by the following excerpt from an OECD review of PCD in 2016: "a quick look at the trends in DAC peer reviews over the last ten years shows an increasing number of institutional mechanisms in place to promote PCD. In general, the experience has shown that these mechanisms have been instrumental to raise awareness and build commitment but are not sufficient to achieve results... Progress has been limited over the last decade in terms of policy efforts or changes ... OECD countries' policies in seven key areas that affect poor countries, notably aid, finance, technology, environment, trade, security, and migration [have] not change[d] much in the ten years between 2003 and 2013" (OECD 2016, p. 20).

This thesis contends that the current discourse about PCD among donors, and donor institutions like the EU and the OECD DAC, requires careful scrutiny. The contention that PCD can be achieved through better evidence and greater policy coordination appears to be overstated. It rests on the implicit assumption that, when conflicting goals and interests are weighed against each other in a bureaucratic exercise designed to achieve PCD, development goals will prevail

because that is the *raison d'être* of the exercise. However, an examination of cases in Sweden and Germany strongly suggest that bureaucratic mechanisms for PCD are insufficient to make the significant political trade-offs PCD typically demands. This analysis argues that achieving policy coherence, especially where there are significant conflicts between development and self-interest, requires political direction catalyzed by an external event. This event, or a series of events, must be disruptive and focus significant public attention on the policy issue, in order to trigger a redistribution of power in the policy subsystem. A combination of other necessary and sufficient factors – namely: (i) the opening of a new policy venue with an explicit mandate and diverse composition; (ii) mobilizable supporters; (iii) public opinion; and (iv) formal legal authority and/or financial incentives – is also needed for successful policy change in favour of PCD. Institutional mechanisms cannot substitute for political will, and the current move towards a de-politicized treatment of PCD – as something that can be achieved through technocratic means – should be re-examined.

1.1 Policy Coherence for Development

The international donor community has recognized the need for PCD since the early 1990s, when it became apparent that non-aid policies such as trade, finance, agriculture, migration and investment often have larger consequences for development goals than do aid policies. The importance of policy coherence for development – which at the minimum requires that a country's non-aid policies not undermine its international development goals (Brown 2015) – has arguably increased over the years, as countries become more interdependent and the relative importance of official development assistance (ODA) vis-à-vis other financial flows declines. The realization

that greater attention needed to be paid to non-aid policies was driven home by the fact that the Millennium Development Goals were not adequately met, despite annual ODA flows increasing from US\$72 billion in 2000 to US\$133 billion in 2015 (Carbone 2008; Addis Ababa Action Agenda 2015; OECD 2019). In September 2015, all UN member states formally committed to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG target 17.14). The key difference between PCD and PCSD is that the requirements of the latter are broader: whereas PCD focuses on coherence among all policies with impacts abroad, PCSD aims to achieve “universal” coherence – meaning a country’s domestic and foreign policies should *all* be coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals. As PCSD is a relatively new concept and more time is needed to evaluate its success, this research will focus on the traditional concept of PCD.

To achieve PCD, much work to date has centred on improving bureaucratic processes and procedures. The European Commission implemented an Impact Assessment (IA) system in 2002, which it called a “powerful mechanism” for achieving PCD (European Commission, 2009). The premise was that IAs would enable informed judgements and “improve the quality and coherence of the policy process” (European Commission 2002, p. 2). The OECD DAC has likewise emphasized bureaucratic arrangements with its eight-stage “PCD Cycle” (OECD 2017). However, these bureaucratic procedures have failed to produce greater PCD. Scholarly and NGO reviews of IAs in the EU have found that they usually do not take into account policy impacts on developing countries (Adelle et. al 2006, CONCORD 2011), while the OECD’s analysis of DAC members’ peer reviews from 2000 to 2013 revealed that its process-focused “PCD Cycle” did not translate into greater policy coherence (OECD 2014). Numerous case studies highlight how the non-aid

policies of many donor countries, particularly in trade and investment, continue to undermine development objectives.

Some scholars have observed that coordination – which is primarily the objective of bureaucratic procedures such as IAs – does not automatically lead to coherence for development (Carbone and Keijzer 2016). This is not surprising. According to Brown (2015, p. 485), policy coherence is a “profoundly political endeavour.” Yet, efforts to achieve policy coherence have thus far framed the issue as a technical and managerial one, instead of a political endeavour involving trade-offs between policy interests. Bureaucratic procedures alone cannot guarantee that policymakers, when confronted with competing objectives and complex policy outcomes, will choose to prioritize development objectives over others, particularly when the development constituency is often weaker than, and subordinate to, other organized interest groups. Yet, the literature on PCD reveals that little is understood about the dynamics of the policy process that enable successful policy coherence, beyond the technocratic “best practice” prescriptions of institutional mechanisms for coordination. Although there is a vast literature on public policy processes, including on how policy change is achieved at the subsystem level, none of the theoretical frameworks has been applied to PCD in scholarly inquiry.

1.2 Understanding Political Pathways to Change

To better understand the dynamics of PCD as a political endeavour, analysis needs to occur at the policy subsystem level – defined as the “set of actors who are involved in dealing with a policy problem” (Sabatier 1988, p. 138), and which is the “the primary unit of analysis for

understanding policy processes” (Jenkins-Smith et. al 2018, p. 139). This is because achieving policy coherence depends on whether, in the process of managing trade-offs between competing interests at the policy subsystem level, development interests prevail. As Forster and Stokke (1999) observe, although policy decisions are supposed to be driven by a “rational-choice” logic from the centre of any political system, the competing logic of subsystems may lead to different outcomes (Forster and Stokke 1999, p. 3). This premise is particularly relevant for studying policy coherence, since scholars have observed that PCD has been endorsed by many EU and OECD donor countries at the highest levels; yet outcomes have been disappointing and very uneven (Barry et al. 2010; Koch 2017; Carbone and Keijzer 2016; O’Connor et al. 2016).

Using two instances of recent successful policy change in Sweden and Germany, where, after years of incoherence, broader development goals were prioritized over self-interest, this research seeks to apply policy process theory to address the question: *What are the factors – especially at the policy subsystem level – that enable development objectives to prevail over conflicting interests, in order to achieve better PCD?* According to the Commitment to Development Index (CDI), the most widely used systematic measure of donor countries’ policy coherence for development (Sianes 2017), both Sweden and Germany are “good” donors and generally rank highly overall in terms of the quality of their policies. Yet there are particular issues on which they consistently score poorly, Sweden on security, for example, and Germany on the environment. In the case of Sweden, the Democracy Criterion bill, which would limit arms exports to non-democracies, was passed in December 2017 – after a six-year political and legislative process and more than 14 years after such a criterion was first proposed by civil society. In the case of Germany, the government-sanctioned Coal Commission reached a hard-fought consensus

in January 2019 on phasing out coal mining by 2038 at the latest – after a 40-year public debate on the structure of the country’s electricity supply and three years after the signing of the Paris Climate Accord.

Drawing on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), which assumes that political resources (or “coalition resources”) are key to the success of “advocacy coalitions” in achieving policy outputs (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018), this research examines the role of coalition resources in the policy process for PCD. Given that development considerations are often structurally weaker than self-interest (Ashoff 2005), the lessons learned from success stories can shed light on how development advocacy coalitions can instigate policy change more broadly. The pathways to successful PCD will inevitably vary depending on the country context and the issue at hand, but identifying factors that brought about policy change can serve as a useful reference for both advocacy actors, policymakers and scholars. Although the ACF points to resources as a central feature of advocacy coalitions and their success, relatively little work has been done to clarify the types of resources required, or how they are mobilized and exploited by advocacy coalitions (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018). Therefore, this thesis research aims to address the gaps in the literature on PCD as well as the literature on the ACF more broadly.

This thesis begins by examining the academic and practitioner literature on PCD and proposing a suitable theoretical framework. It then presents two case studies of policy-incoherence-turned-policy-coherence – the first in Sweden and second in Germany – to identify and analyze factors for success. Finally, it re-examines the current prescriptions and proposes ways

to improve the utility of PCD as a concept, as well as general guidelines for achieving better policy coherence.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Many academics and practitioners have critically examined PCD as a concept, the practices that surround it and the challenges that stand in the way of achieving it. This section will first describe why and how PCD became a priority on the international donor community's agenda, followed by a synthesis of the literature on the inherent challenges of PCD and the shortcomings in bureaucratic processes. This chapter also summarizes the prescriptions for success in the literature to date.

2.1 The Rise of PCD on the Donor Community's Agenda

There are several reasons for pursuing policy coherence for development: from an aid effectiveness perspective, policy coherence is a means to ensure that non-aid policies do not undermine development objectives (Bülles and Kindornay 2013). The moral perspective, often invoked by NGOs when exposing cases of incoherent policymaking, holds that it is unjust to give with one hand and take away with the other (Carbone and Keijzer 2016). But most importantly, advocates for PCD consider its norm-setting power necessary to achieve the SDGs, since transformational development as envisioned in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development requires a fundamental change in countries' behaviour and priorities. Koff and Maganda (2016)

note that PCD is a normative statement, since it prioritizes development cooperation above other goals, which is a significant addition to foreign policy thinking.

Accordingly, donor countries in the EU and the OECD have recognized the need for policy coherence to achieve the global development goals. Notably, policy coherence was included – albeit in a diluted form – in the EU’s founding Treaty, in which Article 208 states that “the Union shall take account of the [development] objectives ... in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries” (Treaty on the European Union 1992, p. 549). The principle of policy coherence was strengthened in 2005 with the adoption of the first European Consensus on Development, which contained an explicit commitment to advance policy coherence in the areas of trade, environment, climate change, security, agriculture, fisheries, the social dimension of globalization, employment and decent work, migration, research and innovation, information society, and transport and energy (European Commission 2006, p. 22). In response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the new European Consensus on Development, entitled “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future” and adopted in June 2017, reiterated EU Member States’ commitment to applying the principle of PCD, which constitutes “a fundamental part of the EU’s contribution to achieving the SDGs” (European Commission 2017, p. 52).

The OECD adopted PCD in response to the 2002 OECD Ministerial Statement “Action for a Shared Development Agenda,” which called on the OECD to “enhance understanding of the development dimensions of member country policies and their impacts on developing countries. Analysis should consider trade-offs and potential synergies across such areas as trade, investment, agriculture, health, education, the environment and development co-operation, to encourage

greater policy coherence in support of the internationally agreed development goals” (OECD 2002, n.p.). Policy coherence is now one of the criteria in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)’s peer review process, and the OECD has made significant research contributions to the PCD agenda through its institutional “building blocks” approach and facilitation of best practice sharing among member countries.

However, the path towards coherence for development is not an easy one, especially from the perspective of donor countries trying to achieve what is termed “intra-country coherence”: the consistency among aid and non-aid policies of an OECD government in terms of their combined impact on development (Picciotto 2005, p. 312). A fundamental problem is that Northern governments often view development goals as secondary to other interests, such as security or commercial objectives. Furthermore, the development constituency, comprising aid bureaucracies and NGOs, is usually significantly weaker and smaller than the array of agriculture, business, and other domestic interest groups opposing it (Carbone 2008). This means that when confronted with conflicts between aid and non-aid policies, policymakers can, and usually do, sacrifice development considerations for other imperatives such as economic ones. This leads to what is termed “intended incoherence” in the policymaking process (Forster and Stokke 1999, p. 25).

Secondly, the development landscape is becoming increasingly complicated, and it is not easy for policymakers to discern the effects of non-aid policies on development holistically. The heterogeneity between low- and middle-income countries, as well as rising within-country inequality, mean that policies can have both positive and negative effects. For example, Barry et al (2016) note that the EU’s reform of its Common Agricultural Policy had conflicting effects on

low- and middle-income countries, as well as different impacts on different segments of the population within individual countries: the resulting rise in food prices benefitted the middle-income countries which could compete in international markets, but hurt the world's poorest countries which no longer enjoyed preferential prices. Even within net food-exporting countries, some population segments – such as urban dwellers or the landless poor – suffered from the increase in food prices. Policymakers are therefore likely to commit at least some degree of “unintended incoherence” (Forster and Stokke 1999, p. 25) whatever they do, given the practical challenges of foreseeing, evaluating and quantifying all possible policy effects.

A review of the literature reveals common threads in the analyses of why policy coherence is difficult to achieve, and why the focus on bureaucratic mechanisms has produced disappointing and uneven results. Scholars acknowledge the political nature of policy coherence and the structural weakness of the development constituency vis-à-vis other domestic interests, and demonstrate how bureaucratic processes are often turned into symbolic, box-ticking exercises. However, despite the literature's consistent framing of policy coherence as a failing proposition, it has not generated many concrete prescriptions for successful implementation, beyond those that continue to focus on the role of bureaucratic mechanisms and evidence, essentially contending that better mechanisms and more evidence will lead to greater coherence.

2.2 Inherent Challenges in Achieving PCD

Focusing on the political nature of policy coherence for development, Barry et al. (2010) describe five inherent challenges to achieving it: (i) conflicting domestic and international

development goals, where trade-offs are necessary and the development constituency is weak; (ii) conflicts within development goals themselves, where, for example, the goal of industrialization for economic development contradicts the global goal of reducing carbon emissions; (iii) lack of expert consensus on the best path to development, where disagreements exist on specific points such as the design of monetary policy as well as on broad principles such as liberalization versus privatization; (iv) the difficulties of ascertaining whether developing countries' policies are compatible with pro-poor growth or merely an expression of elite interests, and how to deal with such political-economic considerations; and (v) the growing heterogeneity within and between developing countries, which makes it more challenging to ascertain whether a particular policy is a net benefit or loss to global development goals, and make the appropriate trade-offs. Brown (2015) notes that donor countries are generally unwilling to consider the interests of developing countries, and aid is usually subordinated to security or commercial self-interest. This leads to coherence, but not for development. Politicians are likewise reluctant to take any measures that could harm their votes, eliminating agricultural subsidies for example.

Other scholars continue to focus on the role of bureaucratic/institutional mechanisms when assessing the challenges of policy coherence. Although they acknowledge the political trade-offs required and the weakness of the development constituency vis-à-vis other interest groups, they continue to emphasize the need for more or better evidence and better bureaucratic processes to ensure the right outcomes. Ashoff (2005) argues that there are four key obstacles to achieving coherence, namely: (i) the plurality of societal and political norms, where coherence for development is not necessarily viewed as a priority; (ii) the complexity of the political decision-making process due to globalization, and the structural weakness of the development constituency;

(iii) flawed policy formulation and coordination processes, where inadequate institutional mechanisms and lack of evidence lead to incoherence; and (iv) conceptual-level shortcomings, where gaps in knowledge lead to incoherent outcomes. Carbone and Keijzer (2016) likewise highlight the political decision-making process and lack of evidence-based analysis as key reasons for policy incoherence. They note that politicians and policymakers in the EU are confronted with difficult trade-offs, and the argument that more development-friendly policies would benefit the EU in the long run does not necessarily resonate with voters and decision-makers when economies and livelihoods are perceived to be under stress. Meanwhile, the lack of evidence-based analysis means that institutional mechanisms to ensure coherence dwindle to symbolic exercises, since the development impact of policies disappears from the deliberation process.

2.3 Shortcomings in the Bureaucratic Processes

Although the EU and the OECD view improving bureaucratic processes and procedures as the most practical means of demonstrating progress in policy coherence (Carbone and Keijzer 2016), there is a consensus among scholars that the results have been lacklustre. They challenge the underlying assumption of such rationalistic efforts towards PCD, which is that bureaucratic procedures can create “new opportunity structures” that enhance the rationality of decision-making (Adelle and Jordan 2014). Broadly speaking, the literature proposes two reasons the bureaucratic approach has fallen short of expectations. The first is the lack of consideration of political aspects of PCD, given that policy coherence is first and foremost a political undertaking. The second is that the lack of research and evidence on policy impacts has undermined the institutional approach.

In their analysis of the 2006 and 2013 reforms of the EU's sugar policy, Adelle and Jordan (2014) found that the EU's Impact Assessments simply reinforced power inequalities and entrenched the power of dominant interest groups. The IAs failed to improve PCD because developing countries' concerns were either not considered at all, or inadequately addressed. They outline the following conditions where IAs fail: (i) when there is an existing group of powerful actors with interests that run counter to international development goals; (ii) when there are significant trade-offs between competing interests; and (iii) when the problem is highly complex. These conditions speak to the political nature of policy coherence, where power imbalances between development and competing objectives cannot be resolved through the mere implementation of bureaucratic procedures.

Similarly, in their study of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy reform process, Carbone and Keijzer (2016) found that the key IA report did not articulate the effects of the CAP on third countries. Instead, it stated that "the effects on developing markets would be limited under all scenarios considered" (European Commission 2011, p. 77, cited in Carbone and Keijzer 2016, p. 38). Of the 12 annexes to the report, only one contained any reference to developing markets and it simply noted that the impact of the CAP would differ according to the trade profile of the country (Carbone and Keijzer 2016, p. 38). Likewise, Keijzer (2011) found that the main IA report in the Common Fisheries Policy reform failed to assess the likely effects of reform on development. Therefore, there are instances in which IAs do not serve as technocratic tools but are instead instrumentalized to support the reforms proposed by the European Commission and its preferred stakeholder groups. Carbone and Keijzer (2016) also conclude that the lack of evidence-based analysis means that institutional mechanisms become largely symbolic, since the development

impact of policies on developing countries cannot be considered if they are not assessed. Notably, they view the evolution of policy coherence in the EU – from a political and issue-driven agenda to a more generalist and horizontal treatment – as a compromise between EU member states advocating for policy coherence and those that resist it (Carbone and Keijzer 2016).

An outlier in the academic literature assessing the shortcomings of the institutional approach to coherence is Prontera (2016), who highlights the importance of subsystem level politics, namely paradigm clashes and organizational bargaining. He notes how different ways of thinking and incongruent policy frames (paradigm clashes) within government departments make collaboration and goal-sharing challenging, while uneven power dynamics between departments (organizational bargaining) lead to incoherent outcomes for development. While Prontera acknowledges that innovative institutional mechanisms have been successful in setting the policy coherence agenda in countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands, as well as promoting a limited redistribution of resources towards the policy actors pushing for coherence, the structural weakness of the development constituency remains a key reason for policy incoherence (Prontera 2016).

2.4 Prescriptions for Success

Despite acknowledgement that the bureaucratic approach to policy coherence has not been successful, there are few concrete prescriptions – beyond those that continue to centre on bureaucratic processes – for improving outcomes. Ashoff (2005) argues that policy coherence requires more and better evidence, political support, and an increased integration of policy coherence into other policy areas. Picciotto (2005) cites “rational ignorance” as a reason

implementation of policy coherence falls short, noting that information asymmetries, data processing costs, and a bureaucratic resistance to risk-taking lead to incoherent outcomes. He argues that given the “imponderables” of implementation in a highly complex global landscape, monitoring mechanisms are just as necessary as evaluation in order to facilitate social learning in policy implementation (p. 324). He adds that policy coherence requires: (i) a precise delineation of policy goals; (ii) an objective assessment of available options; (iii) and effective management of policy execution. In addition, Mendoza (2007) concludes that coherence cannot be achieved without the meaningful inclusion of the developing countries and their perspectives in the policy process.

In a comprehensive study of the state of the UK’s policy coherence efforts, Lockwood et al (2010) conclude that the main obstacle to coherence was not a lack of bureaucratic mechanisms – given the number of them at senior and operational levels – but a lack of appropriate incentives in the civil service. The authors argue that the key factors for successful policy coherence are: (i) an agreed joint strategy based on shared analysis; (ii) clear political leadership; and (iii) an effective case made to the public (p. 11). They call for joint strategies for whole-of-government on coherence, supported by clear political mandates, in order to address the political tensions that exist between competing policy interests.

Notably, Koff and Maganda (2016) call for more work on the norm-setting power of policy coherence for development, highlighting that it is not simply a policy tool. While it is useful for improving the effectiveness and efficacy of development programs, the greatest significance of policy coherence for development is its normative value in prioritizing commitments for

transformative development. The authors assert that the relationship between policy coherence and the Sustainable Development Goals has not been adequately addressed and should be a priority for both academics and practitioners. However, they do not elaborate on the means by which greater normative significance can be achieved, and how it would overcome the various shortcomings of attempts at policy coherence to date.

Overall, scholars have analyzed the policy process for PCD on the premise that it is a function of bureaucratic mechanisms, with the implicit assumption that the policy process is largely rational. In this narrative, more evidence and better bureaucratic mechanisms for coordination increase the probability of successful policy coherence for development. However, as noted by many, the process of managing trade-offs between competing policy objectives is highly political. Uneven power dynamics between government departments and political factions, as well as governments' tendency to prioritize domestic interests, mean that development objectives are often subservient to other interests. With the current state of research, it is unclear whether the solutions often suggested by scholars to improve PCD will translate into the appropriate policy trade-offs in favour of coherence for development. Missing from the literature is analysis of factors enabling development objectives to prevail over competing interests, especially at the policy subsystem level where the bargaining between departments occurs. In the next section, I examine how the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) can be applied to PCD to better explain the policy process.

Chapter 3 – The Advocacy Coalition Framework

Although there is a vast literature on public policy processes, including agenda-setting, policy change and decision-making, none of these theoretical frameworks has been applied to policy coherence for development in scholarly inquiry. The ACF, created by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith in the 1980s and recently refined by Jenkins-Smith et al. (2018), has the potential to shed light on the topic. It has become one of the most frequently used frameworks of the policy process and seeks to provide “a comprehensive approach to understanding politics and policy change” (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018, p. 136), acknowledging that there are multiple pathways to achieving policy change.

3.1 Choice of ACF as a theoretical framework

Within the realm of public policy literature, the ACF was formulated as an alternative to the institutional rational choice models that dominate policy scholarship, and provides novel perspectives on the policy process in a number of ways: First, it challenges the traditional ‘iron triangle’ image of policy subsystems where small numbers of government actors control the policy process by excluding others, and identifies a wider set of policy actors across society and different levels of government. The ACF focuses less on competition and exclusion within insulated policy communities, and instead pays attention to *between* different coalitions. Second, it rejects the analytical distinctions between the traditional stages heuristic of the policy cycle and the debate between top-down and bottom-up approaches in policy implementation literature. Instead, the ACF looks at the policy process over a number of years and includes all actors involved in the

wider subsystem. Third, although the ACF is similar to other policy models, such as the punctuated equilibrium model and the multiple streams framework, in that it considers the role of ‘external shocks’ as a crucial impetus for policy change, it does not view this process as inevitable. Rather, it proposes that the minority coalition has to successfully harness the perturbation, in order to redistribute power and enact change. Finally, the ACF differs from other policy frameworks by considering the role of ideas, beliefs and technical information (Cairney 2012, p. 218).

For the purpose of understanding the policy process that leads to PCD, the ACF is a suitable framework since it theorizes that access to, and exploitation of, political resources in the wake of a major perturbation are crucial for the success of advocacy coalitions in influencing public policy. The ACF therefore allows an analysis of the crux of the policy coherence challenge, namely the factors that enable a minority and structurally weak coalition – comprising actors from civil society and academics outside of government – to prevail over competing objectives. Systematically examining the factors that enable successful policy coherence can help scholars develop a greater understanding of how development objectives can be strengthened in the political bargaining process between competing policy interests. Furthermore, the ACF’s emphasis on the role of ideas and beliefs in holding advocacy coalition actors together is important for examining PCD, which is a value-driven concept. Although policy debates involve the exercise of power, they are also driven by what the ACF terms “deep beliefs” about how to interpret and address a policy problem. Such examination will add to the current literature on policy coherence and provide refinement to the technical and institutional approaches so heavily emphasized by donor countries and multilateral organizations.

3.2 Explaining Policy Change Using the ACF

The purpose of the ACF is to explain policy change in what it calls “wicked problems,” namely policy areas that involve highly significant goal conflicts and disputes between different coalitions of actors in the policy subsystem (Sabatier and Weible 2009, p. 189). The actors considered relevant to a subsystem by the ACF extend beyond traditional actors such as legislators, agency officials and interest group leaders, to also include researchers, journalists, judicial officials and any person who regularly attempts to influence a policy subsystem (Sabatier and Weible 2009, p. 192; see also Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018, p. 139). The ACF assumes that it is usually very difficult to change coalition actors’ normative beliefs, because their “deep core” and “policy core” beliefs, which shape their fundamental policy choices and preferences, also create perceptual filters that cause them to perceive information differently from one another (Sabatier and Weible 2009, p. 194). Due to these filters, actors in different coalitions downplay or disregard information that conflicts with their policy core beliefs, therefore making internal belief change leading to major policy change highly unlikely. In contrast, “secondary” beliefs are much narrower in scope and pertain to less fundamental policy aspects, for example the budgetary applications of a specific program, and are easier to change because they do not necessarily affect coalition actors’ deep core and policy core beliefs (Sabatier and Weible 2009). Therefore, minor policy changes – such as tweaks to administrative rules and statutory interpretations – are easier to achieve and happen relatively frequently, because they require neither dominant coalition actors to change their deep or policy core beliefs, nor a redistribution of power towards a minority coalition (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018). Conversely, because deep and policy core beliefs are very entrenched, major policy

change is unlikely to occur for as long as the coalition that instituted the program remains in power (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018).

In keeping with the above assumptions, the ACF has identified four primary conceptual sources of policy change, namely: (i) significant perturbations external to the subsystem, (ii) significant perturbations internal to the subsystem, (iii) policy-oriented learning, and (iv) negotiated agreements (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018). The first two sources of policy change – external and internal perturbations – are most likely to lead to major policy change. Policy learning is more likely to result in minor policy change, while negotiated agreements only happen when the status quo is equally unsatisfactory to opposing coalitions. Internal and external perturbations – sometimes termed shocks or focusing events – increase the likelihood of policy change by redistributing resources and power within a policy subsystem (Sabatier and Weible, 2009). Shocks can also open or close policy venues, granting or limiting access to authoritative policymaking to different coalition actors (Sabatier and Weible, 2009). However, evidence to date shows that these sources of policy change, either individually or in some kind of combination, are necessary but usually insufficient to result in policy change. A major caveat identified by scholars is that in order for external and internal perturbations to result in policy change, they need to be “skillfully exploited” by minority coalitions seeking it (Nohrstedt 2011, p. 463). As Nohrstedt notes, what is required is a minority advocacy coalition that “seizes the moment and mobilizes political resources” (Nohrstedt 2011, p. 463).

3.3 The Role of Advocacy Coalition Resources and Strategies

ACF scholarship has not yet thoroughly explored the causal mechanisms by which a shock or focusing event successfully leads to policy change. So far, the ACF theorizes that political resources are key to advocacy coalitions' success at exploiting a shock or focusing (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018). These resources include, but are not limited to:

- Formal legal authority – Coalition members in positions of legal authority, or support from actors with legal authority, provide decision-making power that leads to policy change (Sabatier and Weible 2009, p. 203);
- Public opinion – A public in strong support of a particular course of action will likely sway elected officials, so coalition members usually try to influence public opinion (ibid);
- Information – When coalition members succeed in using information about a problem's severity, causes, costs and solutions strategically to form convincing narratives, they can win political battles against competing coalitions by attracting more supporters (ibid);
- Mobilizable supporters – The greater the size of a coalition's support base, which is expanded through political activities such as public demonstrations, the more power it has (ibid); and

- Skillful leadership – Entrepreneurial political leaders are an important resource because they can develop and pursue coalition narratives, as well as mobilize and exploit other political resources to win political battles (ibid).

There has so far been relatively little research on coalition resources specifically, and they remain an “underspecified aspect” in the ACF (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018). However, two notable studies by Albright (2011) and Nohrstedt (2011) support the ACF’s hypothesis that political resources – in particular their redistribution amongst dominant and minority coalitions due to the latter’s skillful exploitation of a shock or focusing event – are indeed key to policy change in favour of hitherto minority advocacy coalitions. Albright’s examination of the response to the Tisza floods in Hungary from 1998 to 2001 demonstrated that a minority coalition’s exploitation of extreme flood events led to a redistribution of political resources between the two opposing advocacy coalitions, culminating in significant policy change. The crucial resources that worked in favour of the minority coalition were: (i) skillful leadership by a policy entrepreneur; (ii) acquisition of new financial resources; and (iii) the opening of a new policy venue (Albright 2011).

Nohrstedt’s analysis of Sweden’s adoption of legislation to expand the mandate for signals intelligence-gathering showed that it was the refinement of policy narratives by the minority coalition that enabled an external perturbation to lead to policy change. Skillful leadership by an entrepreneurial political leader, namely the Defence Minister, was another crucial resource that enabled policy change (Nohrstedt 2011). Nohrstedt’s study further highlighted the importance of a research agenda that includes a hierarchy of resources, as “some political resources are clearly more important than others” in order for a coalition to achieve influence and change in the policy

process (Nohrstedt 2011, p. 480). He posited that formal legal authority should enjoy greater status compared to other political resources, “because legislators are veto players whose agreement is needed for policy change to happen” (Nohrstedt 2011, p. 480).

3.4 Applying the ACF to PCD

The ACF, which to date has been most often applied to environmental and energy issues, public health and education (Pierce et al. 2016), is a suitable framework for studying how successful policy change can be achieved for greater PCD. Its focus on how policy change can be attained by a minority coalition, as well as on “wicked problems” involving significant goal conflicts between opposing coalitions, makes it suitable to study particularly intractable clashes between development and economic self-interest. As scholars such as Brown (2015) have noted, development goals are typically subordinated to self-interest, and the development constituency is usually the minority in the policy subsystem. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of PCD are typically outside the domestic population, which makes it even more challenging to achieve policy change, especially when doing so would compromise commercial or economic self-interest. The most egregious and persistent cases of “intended” policy incoherence for development, such as the continued export of arms to non-democracies and countries with human rights abuses, usually contain the hallmarks of wicked problems – where knowledge and information about the problem (i.e. greater evidence and bureaucratic mechanisms) are insufficient to overcome strong and entrenched opposing interests. Through case studies of wicked problems in Sweden and Germany – which are otherwise well-regarded OECD donor countries in terms of the quality of their aid

policies – and examining how policy change was successfully achieved after years of failure, this research sheds light on potential pathways for PCD in other donor countries.

Chapter 4 – Research Design and Methodology

Before presenting the Swedish and German cases in detail, this section outlines the research design and methodology I undertook, the data sources used and the limitations I encountered while carrying out my research.

4.1 Case Study Selection and Methodology

To examine and compare the political resources that enable PCD, I used a case study methodology, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), to conduct hypothesis- and theory-testing of the ACF via analytic induction. Analytic induction involves “looking for common features and major dimensions of variation among instances of a phenomenon, developing an explanation accounting for these features and dimensions, and seeking disconfirming evidence to test and refine or limit the developing explanation” (Schwandt and Gates 2018, p. 349). The QCA method requires the selection of a specific set of cases and use of a theoretical framework as a guide, with the aim of identifying configurations of causal factors that are sufficient for the occurrence of an outcome (Schwandt and Gates 2018, p. 350). By choosing cases across different countries, I can identify configurations of causal factors sufficient for the occurrence of an outcome and distinguish between necessary and sufficient causes, which is a key feature of the QCA method (Schwandt and Gates 2018).

In order to examine and challenge the dominant and technocratic focus of PCD literature, I selected two cases from Sweden and Germany which represent successful policy change after years of failure, and where development objectives were prioritized over competing and contradictory domestic interests. In both cases, widespread knowledge about the problem and years of advocacy by civil society organizations had failed to lead to policy change. More importantly, both Sweden and Germany have consistently been favorably assessed for many years by the OECD in terms of their institutional mechanisms to achieve PCD. Furthermore, Sweden ranks first and Germany ranks third on the 2018 Commitment to Development Index, which is the most widely used systematic measure of policy coherence for development (Sianes 2017). Yet, Sweden continued to export arms to non-democratic countries and Germany continued to subsidize and support its most polluting lignite mines and power generators. The years of failure by both countries to address egregious cases of policy incoherence for development, despite having in place the institutional mechanisms and adequate state capacity to use those mechanisms, make them appropriate case studies to challenge the technocratic prescriptions that dominate the PCD landscape. In both Sweden and Germany, the presence and level of institutional mechanisms, as well as evidence of how those policies were incoherent and incompatible with global development goals, remained the same before and after the policy changes occurred. Therefore, they are ideal case studies for examining and challenging the dominant policy prescriptions for PCD that focus on bureaucratic mechanisms and better evidence.

In addition to QCA, I used process tracing to perform within-case analysis in order to identify the streams of political resources that exist in each case. As Schwandt and Gates (2018)

observed, process tracing can be used to identify and assess the causal chain and mechanisms between potential causes and effects and is a means of testing a hypothesis of the form “X was a cause of Y in case Z” (p. 349). The aim is to provide a thorough narrative account including evidence of its truthfulness, while considering alternative explanations and providing evidence that dispute these alternatives. Combining within-case analysis with QCA provides a holistic view of the case studies and sheds light on whether some combinations of advocacy resources are more effective than others. This will add not just to the literature on PCD but to the literature on the ACF as well, since there is little scholarly work to date on the typology and hierarchy of coalition resources (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018).

4.2 Data Sources and Limitations

Data sources included: (i) primary data from official documents and semi-structured Skype interviews with key advocacy coalition actors in Sweden and Germany, and (ii) secondary data from media reports, NGO reports, academic papers, OECD DAC peer review reports, and independent external reviews. I conducted content analysis on the primary and secondary data as a means of process tracing, in order to reconstruct a thorough narrative of the policy process. A key challenge with the data analysis was the fact that the majority of official documents were in either Swedish or German, which increased the difficulty of locating the right documents using word-search and vastly increased the time required to read them since they had to be translated section by section using online translation software. With the ACF in mind, I identified key coalition resources and reconstructed the timeline of events, paying particular attention to factors that key advocacy coalition actors indicated had brought about significant developments in the

process. Information from secondary data sources provided useful historical context to each case study, and also revealed possible sources of coalition resources. For example, media reports may attribute a particular policy stance or change to a political party and the demands of its domestic constituency, suggesting that leadership and public opinion were the advocacy coalition resources leading to successful PCD, which could then be verified through interviews.

While my content analysis on secondary documents contributed significantly to the case study narratives, primary data gathered from interviews was the crucial piece, as key coalition actors who were part of the policy process could validate or refute the presence and significance of specific coalition resources from their first-hand experience. I identified key PCD coalition actors through secondary data research. For the Swedish case study, I located the list of members on the Parliamentary commission of inquiry on export controls of military equipment, which played a decisive role in the policy process, and contacted them via email where possible. I also contacted the NGOs that were most active on the policy debate, for example *Svenska Freds*, which is the largest peace organization in Sweden. For Germany, I located the list of members who were on the Coal Commission, which played a crucial role in the policy process for the phasing out of coal. I also undertook snowball sampling to expand the pool of interviewees where possible, which was advantageous as only one strong point of contact was needed to penetrate the network of actors with first-hand knowledge (Morgan 2018). Two or three key interviews were carried out for each case study (a total of five), and all interviewees had first-hand knowledge of the policy process. Even though my objective was to carry out at least three interviews per case study, a limitation was the fact that I did not have initial contact points in either Germany or Sweden, which meant that all my emails were essentially “cold calls”. This led to the low response rate of one in seven,

despite my consistent follow-ups to initial attempts. Nevertheless, the quality of my interviewees – all of them were personally involved in the policy process – meant that I obtained quality first-hand accounts. I also verified, where possible, the facts interviewees gave, either by cross-referencing, either with other interviewees' remarks or with secondary data sources like media reports.

Prior to contacting potential interviewees, I received ethics clearance from the University of Ottawa's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board, which ensured that my research methods were in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2. After obtaining the names and contact details of the relevant people, I sent them via email a brief description of my research project and a request for a 40-minute interview, usually over Skype. Since videoconferencing allows for interviews that most closely resemble face-to-face communication, including verbal and nonverbal signals, I carried out Skype video interviews whenever in-person interviews were not possible. Only one interviewee chose to be interviewed over email, due to his limitations in spoken English. One interview was conducted in person, since the interviewee was on post in Ottawa. Although it would have been ideal to carry out all the interviews in person, I did not have the financial resources to travel for my research. It has also been shown that using Skype as a qualitative research tool allows researchers to transcend boundaries, break down the barrier of time and space and overcome budgetary constraints (Lo Iacono et al. 2016). With the use of voice-over-internet-protocol technologies such as Skype videoconferencing for interviews, flexibility can be built around the needs of participants while retaining synchronicity with the interviewer (Lo Iacono et al. 2016). A potential drawback of Skype interviews is that it may be more difficult to build the same level of

rapport as in-person interviews (Lo Iacono et al. 2016). However, Seitz (2015) suggests that “emailing several times before Skyping might... strengthen rapport” (p. 233). I therefore corresponded over email with each interviewee, for example to provide the list of interview questions and obtain a sense of his/her relevant experience with the case study, before the Skype interview.

The interviews were in a semi-structured format. In accordance with my research ethics proposal, I made sure I obtained and documented explicit consent from each interviewee prior to the interviews and clarified with each interviewee how he/she wished to be quoted. To guide the process tracing method, I compiled a list of potential advocacy coalition resources identified to date in scholarly literature and cross-referenced them with secondary documents for each case study. This allowed me to establish a comprehensive list of likely resources for each case study and raise them during the interview as part of the probing process. According to process tracing theory, it is necessary to test alternative hypotheses and provide evidence that dispute these alternatives, in order to provide evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative account (Schwandt and Gates 2018). The interviews allowed me to test alternative explanations for each policy process, as I systematically raised alternative coalition resources with each interviewee and cross-referenced each person’s narrative account with other interviewees on the same topic. I made sure to raise alternative explanations and coalition resources only after the interviewees described the policy process in an open-ended manner, so as to allow them the opportunity to raise issues beyond those appearing in secondary data. For both case studies, the combination of primary research and secondary source analysis was sufficient for me to carry out process-tracing and establish a truthful narrative of each policy process. As the next two chapters on the case studies show, the level of

detail provided by interviewees allowed me to reconstruct the policy process in a more comprehensive manner than if I had only had secondary sources, as well as obtain an accurate sense of which factors were consequential for the decision-making process.

As a former government official in the Singaporean Foreign Ministry beginning a second career in international development, my choice of research topic reflects my interest in policy processes and my belief that politics and power play an especially important role in policy processes. My experience working in an advocacy NGO in Canada has also strengthened my belief that the process of enacting policy change in favour of development goals requires more than political declarations of intent. My first-hand experience of policymaking processes and international development advocacy helped me to understand the processes described to me by interviewees and to relate to their experiences, and my research benefitted from this aspect of my positionality. However, my identity as a master's student appeared to have a negative effect on my ability to get interviews, as suggested by the low response rate of one in seven, despite my consistent follow-ups to initial attempts. Moreover, given that the potential pool of respondents had significant responsibilities in their respective organizations – be it in an international NGO or a political party or the government – and hence my emails requesting interviews were often ignored.

Chapter 5 – Case Study 1: Sweden

This chapter presents a detailed case study of the adoption of a democracy criterion for arms exports in Sweden. I first examine how the concept of PCD is regarded by the Swedish government, the institutional mechanisms put in place to achieve it, and the results to date. I then discuss the democracy criterion and how it would contribute to PCD, before describing in detail the policy process that led to the adoption of the democracy criterion. Finally, I analyze the policy process using the lens of the ACF to identify the factors that led to successful PCD.

5.1 Policy Coherence for Development in Sweden

The Government of Sweden formally placed policy coherence for development on its agenda for the first time in 1999, when it created a Parliamentary Committee on Swedish Global Development Policy (“*Globkom*”). The objective of the *Globkom* was to study how Sweden could contribute to global development through not just its development aid policies, but also through policy coherence for development (Government of Sweden 2001). The *Globkom* report, published in 2001, highlighted the importance of policy coherence in achieving global development goals in a globalized world. Citing the EU’s agriculture and trade policies as “clear instances of deficient coherence...that undermine the goals” of development cooperation, the *Globkom* noted that it was “essential to get all policy and implementing instruments to work in the same direction, but also to set clear objectives that are in alignment with one another” (Government of Sweden 2001, p. 60). It therefore recommended that the Swedish Policy for Global Development (PGD) comprise three main parts, namely: policy coherence for development across all relevant policy areas;

cooperation in promoting global public goods; and development cooperation (Government of Sweden 2001).

Following the report by the *Globkom*, the *Riksdag* (Swedish parliament) in 2003 adopted the bill “Shared Responsibility – Sweden’s Policy for Global Development (PGD)” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2003) proposed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) government. The PGD was, at the time, lauded as visionary in the field of international development, and the Swedish government was viewed as a pioneer in the field of PCD (Fellesson and Román 2016), both amongst the OECD-DAC members and the EU (OECD 2013). The stated goal of the PGD was to “contribute to equitable and sustainable development... [in] all policy areas” including “trade, agriculture, environment, security, migration and economic policy” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2003, p. 1). PCD was therefore the core of the PGD. Notably, the bill proposed that the PGD be guided by two perspectives, namely a rights-based perspective and a perspective of the poor (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2003). This meant that all policies relevant to the PGD would have to be compatible with respect for human rights and consider the needs and interests of poor people (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2003).

Although the PGD has enjoyed broad, cross-party support throughout the years, its results have been uneven at best (Fellesson and Román 2016). In response to criticism, the government revitalized the policy through a couple of re-launches, first in 2008, to focus on six global challenges and then again in 2014, against the backdrop of the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda. The second re-launch was prompted by an evaluation of the PGD by the Swedish Agency for Public Management (“*Statskontoret*”), which concluded that the PGD required greater clarification

in terms of outcomes and responsibilities (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017). The 2014 re-launch positioned the PGD as a crucial tool in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the government addressed concerns raised by the *Statskontoret*'s report by formulating concrete goals and clarifying lines of responsibility for the PGD's implementation. In 2015, all government ministries created internal action plans that articulated how their work contributed to the PGD and Agenda 2030 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017), which was intended to improve cross-departmental policy coordination and integration.

5.2 Institutional Mechanisms for Achieving PCD

The government most recently outlined its institutional mechanisms for implementing the PGD in its report to the EU (European Commission 2018) and a communication to the *Riksdag* in 2017 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for international SDG implementation, under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate. The PCD coordination team, situated within the MFA, provides guidance, when necessary, to various ministerial departments by assessing whether documents and decisions are coherent with PCD and the 2030 sustainable development agenda. However, the government notes that each ministry retains responsibility for its policy domain, and decision-making power continues to reside within each ministry. Each ministry is therefore responsible for raising “potential conflicts,” presumably between policy decisions and PCD, to the “political level” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017, p.149).

During the PGD's re-launch in 2014, the government created a new interdepartmental working group comprising unit head representatives from all ministries responsible for PGD work. This group is led by the Director-General for International Development Cooperation in the MFA. The government also established a consultation group for the 2030 Agenda, comprising state secretaries from the Ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Environment and Energy, Health and Social Affairs, and Enterprise and Innovation (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017). The PGD coordination team reports to the *Riksdag* every two years. This monitoring mechanism is intended to increase transparency in the handling of conflicts of interest, build cross-party and long-term support for the broader PGD agenda, as well as strengthen coordination for policy coherence (OECD 2018, p. 149). In terms of establishing dedicated institutional mechanisms for achieving PCD, Sweden is well ahead of other DAC members (OECD 2013). However, as the next section demonstrates, the results have been mixed.

5.3 Results to Date

According to a recent peer review by the OECD, Sweden has implemented all three prescribed PCD building blocks, namely (i) policy statements, (ii) coordination mechanisms; and (iii) reporting systems (OECD 2013). However, the review notes that “these processes do not necessarily ensure that development considerations always take precedence” (OECD 2013, p.26). It cites the 2012 Barometer report by the umbrella grouping of Swedish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which argues that PCD is “largely absent from the daily political agenda,” and issues such as arms exports lack adequate leadership (CONCORD 2012). The OECD peer review further notes that it is difficult for conflicts of interests between development and other

goals – again citing arms exports to non-democratic countries – to be adequately addressed by Sweden’s coordination mechanisms. The Swedish government has also acknowledged its deficiencies in implementing the PGD policy: in its 2011 report to the *Riksdag* on the PGD, it evaluated its own performance on coordination and cooperation and concluded that improvements needed to be made, for example in addressing the “territorial thinking between ministries” that obstructed meaningful coordination on global policy issues (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2012b).

The CDI ranks 27 of the world’s richest countries on their policies that affect people living in poorer nations, namely aid, finance, technology, environment, trade, security and migration. Although Sweden has consistently ranked among the top three in terms of overall policy coherence for development since 2008 – including being the first-ranked donor country in 2018 – it has also consistently fared poorly on the security dimension, due to its prolific export of arms to non-democratic countries (Center for Global Development 2018). In fact, Sweden has regularly ranked in the bottom third for its security policy, in stark contrast to its performance on all other measures (Center for Global Development 2018). This illustrates how, even for a well-regarded donor country like Sweden, it is difficult to achieve coherence between aid policy on one hand, and security and trade policy on the other.

Nevertheless, in December 2017, the *Riksdag* achieved something remarkable: despite deep-seated opposition, it passed a bill that put the demands of a comparatively weak advocacy coalition before the long-standing interests of a dominant coalition in a policy domain central to Swedish national interests: arms exporting. That bill, Government Bill 2017/18: 23, introduced the

so-called democracy criterion for arms exports and, in the process, scored a major victory for PCD in Sweden.

5.4. Democracy Criterion for Arms Exports

Under the “democracy criterion,” which came into effect in April 2018, the democratic status of a recipient country constitutes a “key factor” in the granting of export licenses for military equipment. The lower the democratic status of the recipient, the narrower the scope for granting the license (*Regeringens proposition* 2017/18:23). The process by which the democracy criterion came to be legislated is an interesting case study for PCD because it involved overcoming what the ACF calls a “wicked problem”: arms exports are a policy area that involves significant goal conflicts between opposing coalitions in the policy subsystem.

On one hand, pro-development and human rights advocacy coalition actors have long believed that exporting arms to undemocratic regimes not only contradicts Sweden’s stated goal of contributing to global development and harms human rights, but, equally importantly, legitimizes those regimes and undermines democracy. By the time the democracy criterion bill was passed in 2017, these actors had been attempting to put the brakes on Swedish arms exports for the better part of two decades. In fact, the democracy criterion had been formally proposed as early as 2002, when the Foreign Affairs Committee, in its annual report on Export Control Policy and Exports of Military Equipment, had called on the government to investigate whether a democracy criterion should be included in Sweden’s export control guidelines (Foreign Affairs Committee Report 2002). However, the investigative committee (*Krigsmaterielutredningen* or

KRUT) rejected the proposal for a democracy criterion, citing the difficulties of implementing it, as well as the damage it would cause to the Swedish arms industry (*Krigsmaterielutredningen* 2003, p. 189-190).

On the other hand, pro-industry advocacy coalition actors – who have traditionally been dominant in the policy subsystem – staunchly opposed restrictions on arms exports due to the belief that it would harm the defence industry and jobs, as well as Sweden’s own defence capabilities, because it would no longer have a viable local arms industry on which to depend. In 2017, Swedish arms exports accounted for SEK 11.38 billion (US\$1.2 billion) of revenue (Inspectorate of Strategic Products 2017), representing more than half of the overall revenue for the defence industry (Béraud-Sudreau 2017) and over 33,000 jobs (Swedish Security and Defense Industry Association 2017). Apart from the economic imperative, arms exports were also viewed as integral to Sweden’s foreign, security and defence policy (Foreign Affairs Committee Report 2010). Sweden’s drastically reduced defence spending post-Cold War, coupled with the rapid globalization of defence materiel manufacturing chains, meant that the defence industry had to begin exporting to sustain itself, despite its origins as a purely domestic enterprise nurtured to support Sweden’s neutrality (Ikegami 2013). The Government Commission on Military Equipment Supplies explicitly stated that exports of military equipment were important to Sweden’s security and defence policy, since they contributed to maintaining the domestic enterprises’ capability and capacity (Ministry of Defence 2001). For these reasons, the Swedish Security and Defence Industry Association, representing over 100 member companies, including powerful advocacy coalition actors, strongly opposed the proposed democracy criterion (*Regeringens proposition* 2017/18:23, p. 37).

This deeply rooted and powerful opposition to policy change in favour of global development goals, for reasons of national economic and foreign policy interests, represents a classic case of why policy coherence is so difficult to achieve – development goals are viewed as secondary to self-interest, leading to “intended incoherence” in the policy-making process (Forster and Stokke 1999, p. 25). Yet, and remarkably, despite years of opposition by dominant coalition actors, the new legislation on implementing a democracy criterion was passed in April 2018 with broad cross-party support from the governing Social Democrat-Green coalition, as well as center-right opposition parties (Perlo-Freeman 2017). Sweden now has arms exporting restrictions that, albeit imperfect, are far more progressive than any other arms-exporting donor country. This makes it an ideal case study for policy coherence for development.

5.5 Why a Democracy Criterion Would Contribute to Sweden’s PCD

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Sweden was the fifteenth-largest arms exporter in the world, by volume of exports, from 2014 to 2018 and the seventh-largest arms exporter from 2009 to 2013 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2019a). Its top three clients in 2018 were Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Algeria, which collectively account for 40% of Sweden’s total arms exports (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2019a) and are either classified as “Not Free” or only “Partly Free” countries by the Freedom House index (Freedom House 2019). Exporting arms to Saudi Arabia and the UAE contradicts development goals for a number of reasons, including their role in perpetuating armed conflicts in Yemen, Libya and Syria. Notably, the Report of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, containing the findings of the Group of Independent Eminent International and Regional Experts on the human rights situation in Yemen, found that Saudi Arabia and the UAE had conducted attacks in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution that might amount to war crimes (Human Rights Council 2018). Yet Sweden approved a US\$1.3 billion deal in 2016 to sell Saab's Erieye Airborne Early Warning and Control systems to the UAE, which was of particular concern given the role such an advanced sensor system could play in the UAE's air strikes in Yemen (Perlo-Freeman 2017). Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also provided arms to non-state armed groups in the Middle East and North Africa (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2019b), harming prospects for peace and development in those regions. Other controversial examples of Swedish arms exports include the sales of Gripen multi-role combat aircraft to Thailand in 2008 and 2010, negotiated with the military regime that had taken power after the coup in 2006. Despite widespread criticism from NGOs, Sweden approved further export licenses for around \$100 million-worth of military equipment to Thailand again in 2016 (Perlo-Freeman 2017).

As mentioned above, given its record of exporting arms to non-democratic countries with poor human rights records, Sweden regularly fares poorly on the security dimension of the CDI despite its high ranking overall as a donor. As of 2019, it is ranked 20th out of 27 countries on the index on the security dimension. The CDI measures the ratio of arms exports to GDP, weighted by the export recipient country's level of democracy and its level of poverty. According to the CDI, supplying arms to other countries may have negative effects on peace and security, and is especially detrimental for development goals if the recipient government does not govern according to democratic principles (Center for Global Development 2018). Scholars have likewise

concluded that arms transfers undermine democratization and development, and negatively impact peace and security, human rights and stability in the Global South, because they facilitate internal repression and make conflict more likely (see Blanton 2001; Craft and Smaldone 2002; Smith and Tasiran 2005). The Swedish government itself acknowledged that “armed conflicts constitute the most serious obstacle to development in many poor countries” in its submission to the *Riksdag* on its PGD (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017). The OECD Peer Review of Sweden in 2013 deemed its arms exports to non-democratic countries a conflict of interest with its global development policies (OECD 2013) – a criticism regularly echoed by CONCORD Sverige, the umbrella grouping of civil society organizations that conducts reviews of Sweden’s policy coherence for development (CONCORD 2012, 2018). Notably, the OECD Peer Review committee noted that such conflicts of interest are “difficult to be dealt with satisfactorily” via existing coordination mechanisms in the government bureaucracy (OECD 2013, p. 28).

While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the democracy criterion in reducing or eliminating arms exports to non-democratic countries with poor human rights records, it is nonetheless a significant and unprecedented step for an arms-exporting OECD donor country. According to the new law, human rights violations or significant deficiencies in the recipient country’s democratic status will constitute an obstacle to granting an arms export license, and the licensing process has to consider whether the arms export could impede the sustainable development of the recipient country (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2017). The democracy criterion improves significantly on the EU Common Position, which does not include democracy as an assessment criterion for arms exports. The democracy criterion makes the democratic status of the recipient country – defined as the existence of democratic institutions, possibility for freedom of

expression and respect for fundamental democratic principles (*Regeringens proposition* 2017/18:23, p. 37) – an explicit condition in the assessment of export permits. Another noteworthy aspect of the new export control legislation is its inclusion of “follow-on deliveries” of spare parts or ammunition for previously supplied military equipment, which could be stopped if the recipient country’s democratic status is determined to be deficient, which again has the potential to negatively impact the defence industry (Béraud-Sudreau 2017). According to Linda Åkerstrom, Head of Disarmament at *Svenska Freds*, while many NGOs would have strongly preferred an outright ban on all arms exports to non-democratic countries, they nonetheless view the democracy criterion as a major step forward because it can be leveraged to hold the government accountable in future (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June, 2019).

Furthermore, Swedish civil society advocates view the democracy criterion bill as a significant success because it acknowledges the symbolic power of exporting arms: the bill states that “Swedish foreign policy is permeated by an endeavour to promote democracy, human rights and sustainable development...Granting exports of military equipment to a state that has severe democratic deficiencies could be regarded as legitimization of or political support to the incumbent regime in that state. This could in turn counteract the above-mentioned foreign policy objectives” (*Regeringens proposition* 2017/18:23, p. 37). Swedish civil society has long advocated for the government to recognize that exporting arms is a symbolic action that effectively legitimizes the regimes it deals with, instead of narrowly focusing on what the arms themselves are used for (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). In this regard, the democracy criterion bill is significantly more stringent than the EU Common position on arms exports, which only proposes that Member States should deny an export licence if “there is a clear risk that the military technology or

equipment to be exported might be used for internal repression; or in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law” (Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, p. 100-101). Pro-development advocacy actors often view the focus on end-use of arms as much less effective than the implementation of criteria on human rights and democracy, since the end-use of materiel is not always clear and often out of the exporting country’s control. The adoption of the democracy criterion is therefore an unambiguous, albeit imperfect, step towards policy coherence between aid and trade policy. However, the process was not easy, despite intense lobbying efforts by NGOs over the years. As the next sections will show, the dominance of industry and security interests in the policy subsystem meant that change was difficult to achieve. A significant external perturbation was required for power and resources to be redistributed among advocacy coalition actors.

5.6 Failure at First – The “Gunpowder” Committee

The democracy criterion was first formally proposed in 2002, when the Foreign Affairs Committee, in its annual report on Export Control Policy and Exports of Military Equipment, called on the government to consider appointing an independent overview authority on the export control framework and its application, as well as investigate whether a democracy criterion should be included in export control guidelines (Foreign Affairs Committee report 2002). The Left Party advocated for the adoption of a democracy criterion to determine whether a country could receive military equipment of any kind, and to prevent any export of military equipment to countries classified as dictatorships (Foreign Affairs Committee report 2002). The government agreed in July 2003 to set up a public inquiry (*Krigsmaterielutredningen* or KRUT) to review the legislation

on export control (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2004). However, the majority Social Democratic Party (SDP) government at the time appointed a committee of non-elected, pro-defence and pro-industry experts from organizations such as the Ministry of Defense, the National Defence University, the Armed Forces, the Swedish Defense Industry Association and the Defence Materiel Administration. Given the pro-labour roots of the SDP, it is not surprising that it made sure to protect industry interests by appointing actors who represented that coalition. Most notably, Peter Nordeke, an executive from Saab, the largest arms exporter in Sweden, was an expert member, while Anders Svard, a highly conservative politician known for his pro-industry and pro-defence views (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019), was appointed principal investigator.

The KRUT released the results of its review in February 2005, which rejected outright the possibility of introducing a democratic criterion for the following reasons: first, it would be difficult to adopt because it was unprecedented both in Sweden and globally, and there was no consensus on when democracy could be said to have been consolidated in a certain country; second, such a criterion would hamper the Swedish defence industry from collaborating with other countries' defence industries – for example to jointly produce military equipment – because none of Sweden's partner countries in this area had introduced, or planned to introduce, anything analogous. In this instance, economic self-interest was weighed to be more important than the human rights considerations underlying the proposed democracy criterion. According to Linda Åkerstrom – a key advocacy coalition actor in this policy process – the KRUT, which incidentally and ironically means “gunpowder” in Swedish, was viewed by political observers and civil society as highly biased in its report (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). This was corroborated by Green MEP Bodil Valero, a member of the Parliamentary commission of inquiry set up almost a

decade later – the *Krigsmaterielexportöversynskommittén* or KEX. Valero added that the KRUT’s findings were essentially shelved, with no government legislation arising from its report (interview, 17 June 2019). It is also notable that the KEX did not refer to the report of the KRUT in any substantive manner when conducting its own inquiry on the same issue (B. Valero, interview, 17 June 2019). The KRUT’s conclusion put further discussion of a democracy criterion on hold for the next decade, until an external perturbation occurred.

5.7 The Arab Spring and “Saudi Affair” Focus Swedish Minds

Discussions were only revived in 2011, when the Arab Spring led to a broad public debate on Sweden’s arms exports to regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly in light of evidence from NGO Swedish Peace that revealed Sweden had armed every other regime in the region over the years leading up to the democracy protests (*Svenska Freds* 2017). For the Swedish public, the Arab Spring and its unfolding exposed the extent of human rights abuses in the region and highlighted the hypocrisy of Swedish politicians advocating for human rights and supporting activists on the one hand, whilst arming dictatorships on the other (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). This important “external shock” to the policy subsystem was followed closely by another: an investigative report in March 2012 by *Sverige Radio* exposed a classified secret plan, *Project Simoom*, whereby the Swedish Defence Research Agency (*Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut* or FOI), a government agency, would help Saudi Arabia build an advanced arms factory for anti-tank missiles (*Sverige Radio* 2012). A public furore ensued over the “Saudi affair,” which many people perceived as an effective breach of Swedish arms trade laws. Defence Secretary Sten Tolgfors resigned weeks later. In April 2012, a broad coalition of actors comprising activists from Saudi

Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen and Sweden published an article in the Swedish press denouncing Sweden's continued and increasing volume of arms exports to dictatorships throughout the Arab Spring, as well as *Project Simoom*, in light of the role that Saudi Arabia had played in helping to crush the popular uprising in Bahrain (*The Local* 2012).

According to Åkerstrom, both the Arab Spring and the Saudi Affair were “absolutely crucial” to the policy process that resulted in the democracy criterion (interview, 7 June 2019). The Foreign Affairs Committee, which does not usually put the arms trade on its agenda, recommended shortly after the Saudi Affair that the government set up a parliamentary commission of inquiry to study the feasibility of a democracy criterion (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). This view was supported by Valero, who noted that the combination of both highly-publicized events gave weight to advocacy efforts by NGOs lobbying for the criterion and put public pressure on the government to respond effectively (interview, 17 June 2019). Ambassador to Canada and Social Democratic Party politician Urban Ahlin, who was formerly a member of the KEX and Speaker of the *Riksdag*, assessed that the Saudi Affair led to an unprecedented cross-party consensus that the issue of arms exports and democracy had to be studied more carefully (interview, 13 August 2019). As a result, in June 2012, the government appointed a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, the KEX, to investigate the future of Swedish export controls of military equipment and propose new legislation to tighten controls for non-democratic states (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2012a).

5.8 NGOs Leverage Public Opinion

In June 2014, during the KEX's deliberations, Amnesty International Sweden conducted a public poll which showed that 80% of Swedes strongly opposed exporting arms to non-democracies (*Democracy Now* 2014). According to KEX member MEP Valero, the polling results, which reflected broader public sentiment on this issue, played a “hugely important” role in the policy process (interview, 17 June 2019). This quantified public opinion, combined with pressure from NGOs, contributed to the KEX recommending the democracy criterion despite comprising mainly middle-ground pro-industry politicians from the SDP, the Moderate Party and the Liberal People's Party (B. Valero, interview, 17 June 2019). Unlike the 2005 KRUT, which had comprised non-elected officials in favour of arms exports, the members of the KEX, being elected officials, appeared to be more sensitive to public opinion.

Public opinion – and the skillful exploitation of this resource by advocacy coalition actors – also played a crucial role after the KEX made its recommendation, when the *Riksdag* had to consider, and pass, the democracy criterion bill. The SDP, which was in government as part of the ruling coalition with the Green Party, has historically been divided between its labour roots on the one hand – which entails supporting workers and industry – and its grounding in socialist solidarity on the other (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). Although a small faction within the SDP favoured curtailing arms exports to non-democracies, it was very much the minority. The party leadership tended to favour industry interests, which it viewed as the “crucial national interest” given its core as a labour party (U. Ahlin, interview, 13 August 2019). For example, SDP leader and prime minister Stefan Löfven – formerly a trade union champion of the defence sector –

reportedly favoured military trade relations with Saudi Arabia (*Guardian* 2015a). However, the strength of public opinion in favour of tightening arms exports to non-democracies as a result of the Arab Spring and the Saudi Affair allowed the minority faction to gain influence within the party and “move the needle” on this issue (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019).

Advocacy coalition actors outside the party were also active in seizing the opportunity presented by supportive public sentiment: led by *Svenska Freds*, the Swedish working group of a network of civil society human rights and peace groups, comprising Amnesty International Sweden, the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom, the Swedish Fellowship for Reconciliation, Diakonia, and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, advocated strongly for the SDP to pass the bill (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). One of its key strategies was to pressure elite politicians by mobilizing the grassroots membership of the SDP, especially its youth and women’s factions, as well as the party’s Christian solidarity branch. This strategy proved effective, with the SDP membership voting, very much against its leadership’s wishes, in the 2013 party conference in favour of introducing a democracy criterion for all Swedish weapons exports (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). In the lead-up to the party conference, the Chairman of the Swedish Social Democratic Youth League, Gabriel Wikström, publicly called for a democracy criterion for arms exports and criticized the SDP for not having distanced itself from Saudi business interests. At the same time, grassroots party districts throughout the country filed motions calling either for a halt to all arms exports, or for a tightened regulatory framework that would prevent exports to non-democracies (*Fokus* 2015). As a result, despite the party leadership’s preferences, the long-standing language in the 2013 SDP party platform program relating to the need for a robust defence industry was replaced by language on

the need for a strong democracy criterion to “prevent arms exports to dictatorships and countries that grossly and extensively violate human rights” (*Socialdemokraterna Framtidspartiet* 2013, p. 26).

5.9 Other Resources Converge to Pave the Way

In addition to the media’s crucial role in galvanizing public opinion, other factors contributed to the successful recommendation and adoption of the democracy criterion. The KEX committee, which had been formed during the centre-right Alliance for Sweden government comprising the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal People’s Party and the Christian Democrats, deliberately delayed its report until after the general elections in late 2014. This was due to an agreement between the SDP – then in opposition – and the Alliance, as the parties were keen to avoid making arms exports an election issue (B. Valero, interview, 17 June 2019). The October 2014 election saw the Green Party come into power, for the first time, as a minority coalition partner for the SDP. This was a significant outcome for the policy process, because the Greens had explicitly campaigned on abolishing arms exports to dictatorships and countries engaged in armed conflicts (Swedish Green Party 2014). As a consequence, Green MPs were able to exercise a degree of influence in lobbying for the adoption of the democracy criterion bill as it passed through the *Riksdag* (B. Valero, interview, 17 June 2019).

Another factor that was part of the policy process, and which also paved the way for the final outcome, was the non-renewal of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on military cooperation with Saudi Arabia in March 2015. Sweden and Saudi Arabia first signed the MOU,

which covered areas of cooperation such as intelligence, surveillance and weapons manufacture, in 2005. With public opinion and pressure from NGOs intensifying, several SDP MPs initiated a parliamentary debate over whether or not to renew the MOU, which had to be ratified by both countries every five years. Parliamentary opposition to the deal hardened when Saudi Arabia blocked a planned address by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström to the League of Arab States, in protest over her criticism of its human rights record (*Sverige Radio* 2015). Opposing advocacy coalition members – 31 prominent and influential Swedish business leaders from Saab, Volvo, Ericsson, H&M and others – published a strong statement in the *Dagens Nyheter* newspaper, arguing that terminating the deal would not only jeopardize Sweden’s reputation as a serious trading partner, but also its ability to maintain its generous state welfare system through international exports (*Dagens Nyheter* 2015). Although the ruling SDP remained divided on the issue – Wallström notably, and surprisingly, spoke in favour of renewing the MOU (*Guardian* 2015b) – the decision to scrap the deal was taken when the Greens took a hardline position and reportedly threatened to leave the coalition if the MOU was renewed (*Expressen* 2015). Urban Ahlin, Swedish ambassador to Canada and former foreign policy spokesperson for the SDP, acknowledged that the SDP leadership had agreed to scrap the MOU with Saudi Arabia to compromise with the Greens (interview, 13 August 2019). According to KEX member and Green MEP Bodil Valero, the scrapping of the MOU with Saudi Arabia paved the way for the KEX Committee to unambiguously recommend a democracy criterion, because it would not contradict an existing legal agreement (interview, 17 June 2019). The examination of the policy process in the next section reveals the many resources that the minority coalition had to successfully exploit, in order to bring about policy change.

5.10 Conversion of Stimuli into Response – Analysis of the Policy Process

The policy process that led to the successful adoption of the democracy criterion – in spite of deeply entrenched opposing interests – was set in motion by what the ACF terms a “significant perturbation external to the subsystem”: the combination of the Arab Spring and Sweden’s role in arming dictatorships, as well as the Saudi Affair, served to heighten awareness of the issue, expose an untenable policy position and galvanize public opinion. Without these significant external perturbations, it is highly unlikely that events would have unfolded the way they did. The first attempt at studying the democracy criterion in 2005 by the KRUT, against a “business-as-usual” background, illustrated how entrenched economic interests typically supersede developmental goals. The policy subsystem, prior to 2011, was evidently dominated by the coalition in support of economic and defense interests, and there was little opportunity for the minority coalition in support of broad developmental goals to instigate policy change. Despite best efforts by left-leaning political parties and civil society organizations, as well as sporadic media reports on Sweden’s arms exports to non-democracies, the policy subsystem at the time proved uncondusive to prioritizing development aims over self-interest.

The combination of the Arab Spring and the Saudi Affair, i.e. a significant external and internal perturbation, successfully galvanized political actors across the spectrum, as evinced by the unprecedented cross-party political support for the setting up of the KEX. This finding validates a key aspect of the ACF, which hypothesizes that perturbations increase the likelihood of policy change by redistributing resources and power within a policy subsystem. However, as Nohrstedt (2005) notes, the link between external perturbations and policy change is more complicated than

a stimuli-response sequence, and there are a variety of ways in which focusing events lead to policy change. In this case, the focusing events served as an effective stimulus, but what played a crucial role were other coalition resources, as follows:

- Information – The Swedish investigative media played a crucial role in uncovering information on the Saudi Affair, which proved to be decisive in the creation of the KEX. Although information about Sweden’s arms exports had always been readily available, the explicit and shocking knowledge that the government was going a step further in helping a repressive dictatorship manufacture arms created an immense public scandal that made it untenable for decision-makers to continue with usual policy, especially when advocacy coalition actors in civil society were crafting a convincing narrative in favour of a democracy criterion.
- Opening of a new policy venue – The fallout from the Saudi Affair led to the creation of the KEX in June 2014, comprising elected officials. This new policy venue made a crucial difference compared to the events of 2005. The KEX was sensitive to public opinion, unlike the KRUT which had been comprised of non-elected experts from the defence industry and government officials in the defence and export sectors. The composition of the KEX arguably allowed advocacy actors to pressure its members to unambiguously recommend a democracy criterion. The KEX’s recommendation served as the basis for the democracy criterion bill that was eventually passed by the *Riksdag*.

- Public opinion – Advocacy coalition actors harnessed public opinion to exert influence over decision-makers: by carrying out an opinion poll, they quantified public sentiment against arms exports to dictatorships, and used this information to lobby members of Parliament. As Valero noted, the polling results put pressure on traditionally middle-ground pro-industry politicians in the KEX to recommend the democracy criterion.
- Mobilizable supporters – The NGOs’ strategy of mobilizing the SDP’s grassroots youth and women’s factions was effective, especially in moderating the party leadership’s pro-industry stance. The party’s explicit commitment in its 2013 platform to implement a democracy criterion not only demonstrated the pressure its grassroots had placed on its leadership, but also paved the way for the eventual adoption of the democracy criterion bill after the SDP returned to power in 2014.
- Formal legal authority – The entrance of the Green Party into government for the first time in 2014 was crucial to the policy process. It was the Greens’ exertion of power, as junior coalition partners to the SDP, that led to the scrapping of the MOU with Saudi Arabia. As noted by KEX committee member Valero, this non-renewal paved the way for the KEX to unambiguously recommend a democracy criterion, since it would not contradict an existing legal agreement (interview, 17 June 2019). The Greens, once in a position of greater authority, also influenced the passage of the democracy criterion bill in the *Riksdag*.

Analysis of the policy process reveals that the major caveat identified by scholars, namely that in order for external or internal perturbations to result in policy change they need to be “skillfully

exploited” by minority coalitions (Nohrstedt 2011, p. 463), holds true in the case of the democracy criterion in Sweden. The perturbation paved the way for the opening of a new policy venue, namely the KEX, which then provided an opportunity for the minority advocacy coalition to harness public opinion in order to exert influence over decision-makers. The election of the Green Party as a junior coalition partner also proved a crucial game-changer, as the SDP had to compromise on this issue in order to maintain the stability of the coalition.

Notably, the foreign ministry had no role in the KEX Committee or its deliberations, despite having policy responsibility for arms exports and policy coherence for development (B. Valero, interview, 17 June 2019). In fact, the foreign ministry was seen as reluctant to engage on this issue and Foreign Minister Margot Wallström had claimed in an interview that the issue of arms exports was not part of Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). This is corroborated by KEX member Valero, who noted that the oversight of the KEX committee was transferred to the Ministry for Trade from the Foreign Ministry, despite protests from the committee members that this was “highly irregular” given the Foreign Ministry’s responsibility for PGD and the issue of arms exports (interview, 17 June 2019). In this instance, the existing institutional mechanisms at the bureaucratic level with responsibility for PCD played no role in the policy process that resulted in the democracy criterion.

In order to distinguish between the necessary and sufficient factors required for policy change in favour of PCD, we will next examine the case study of the coal phase-out in Germany. Comparing the two cases over time allows for conclusions to be drawn regarding which factors

and resources are necessary, and which are sufficient, for minority advocacy coalitions to prevail in the policy subsystem.

Chapter 6 – Case Study 2: Germany

This chapter takes an in-depth look at the recent phasing out of coal power generation in Germany, which is, like the Swedish case above, a good example of policy incoherence-turned-coherence. For consistency, the structure of this chapter mirrors the previous: I first examine how the concept of PCD is regarded by the German government, the institutional mechanisms put in place to achieve it, and the results to date. I then discuss the coal phase-out and how it would contribute to PCD, before describing in detail the policy process. Finally, I analyze the policy process using the lens of the ACF to identify the factors that led to successful PCD.

6.1 Policy Coherence in Germany

As consistently observed in the OECD DAC Peer Reviews of Germany every five years, the German government has long been engaged in promoting greater policy coherence for development within the EU, the OECD and other international organizations. It has encouraged the inclusion of commitments to PCD in formal documents such as the European Consensus on Development (OECD 2011). Domestically, the Federal Government explicitly endorsed PCD in 1995 in its Tenth Report to the *Bundestag* (parliament) on the Federal Government's Development Policy (BMZ 1995). Since then, it has reaffirmed its commitment to PCD numerous times, including in its Programme of Action 2015 for Poverty Reduction, which states that Germany will

promote coherence in all national policies that relate to developing countries (Federal Government 2011), and most recently in the German Sustainable Development Strategy 2018. Notably, the 2014 and 2018 coalition agreements commit the government to better cooperation across departments to make government policy more development-oriented (CDU/CSU/SPD 2014 and 2018).

PCD has gained further traction in Germany since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. Although Germany published its first national German Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) in 2002, the PCD dimension of achieving sustainable development was significantly strengthened in the 2016 version. During the process of drafting the “New Version 2016” strategy, the Federal Chancellery, which has primary responsibility for implementing the GSDS, stated that it paid particular attention to the need for “clearly outlining the global impacts of national policies through closer consideration of the international dimension,” and that the “transformative character of the SDGs calls for high levels of coherence” (Federal Government 2016a, p. 3). It explicitly highlighted that the new GSDS paid more attention to the impacts of all policies beyond national borders, and outlined measures for achieving every SDG at three levels: first, with regard to national impacts in Germany; second, with regard to impacts in other countries and on global public goods, for example global well-being; and third, with regard to supporting other countries through international cooperation (Federal Government 2016b, p. 53). The latest update to the GSDS, published in 2018, again emphasizes the importance of strengthening PCD and the need for a “coherent, coordinated deployment of all policy instruments in order to help implement the 2030 Agenda both nationally and internationally” (Federal Government 2018, p. 19).

6.2 Institutional Mechanisms for Achieving PCD

The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), a stand-alone department with representation at Cabinet level, is responsible for promoting PCD across government. The government views the designation of BMZ as a federal agency as a key institutional mechanism for achieving PCD, since the BMZ's seat in Cabinet allows it to scrutinize every policy from a development perspective (OECD 2015b). It has also gradually strengthened BMZ's mandate to scrutinize policies through formalized policy co-ordination mechanisms. Since 2000, the Joint Rules of Procedure give BMZ the right to examine the development content of all legislation planned by other government departments and the EU, and how these laws would affect developing countries. All relevant ministries are consulted when proposals for cabinet decisions are tabled, and when disagreements occur, progressively higher levels of hierarchy, up to the ministerial level, become involved. Should this fail to produce consensus, a coalition committee is then formed in order to negotiate a political basis for a solution (OECD 2011).

The OECD DAC Peer Review process concurs that the BMZ is “well-placed to ensure that development is taken into account in all areas of Germany's domestic and international policies” (OECD 2011, p. 14). It goes on to note that its status as an independent ministry with cabinet representation is an important asset for promoting PCD, since it is a permanent platform for advocating development priorities within the political sphere and the general population. The BMZ's inclusion in the cabinet and inter-ministerial committees, such as the Federal Security Council, also allows it to bring development policy considerations into cross-cutting issues (OECD 2011). However, the peer review process observes that the BMZ is small relative to other federal

ministries and suffers from a lack of specialized technical staff (OECD 2011). These shortcomings have limited the BMZ's ability to proactively influence decision-making and policy coordination processes across a wide range of issues (OECD 2011). The peer review process recommended that commitment and support for PCD be articulated at the highest political level, i.e. the Federal Chancellery, and that the concept of PCD be embedded within other government departments, with clear priorities set for making international development a more tangible goal (OECD 2011).

The government has attempted to address these concerns since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a result of the 2016 GSDS's renewed political focus on PCD, it strengthened institutional mechanisms to effectively implement PCD objectives. The government announced in the GSDS that, from 2017 onwards, each ministry would appoint a Ministry Coordinator for Sustainable Development, preferably at Director-General level. The Ministry Coordinators serve as the central point of contact for all issues relating to sustainable development and are involved at the interdepartmental level to promote the consideration of sustainable development policy objectives in legislative and regulatory processes. Under the aegis of the Federal Chancellery, all Ministry Coordinators meet regularly to improve inter-ministerial coordination on policy coherence (Federal Government of Germany 2018).

This new mechanism is in addition to other existing mechanisms for PCD, such as the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Council and the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development. The overarching and most prominent of these structures, the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development — also known as the “Green Cabinet” — was set up in 2000 and comprises state secretaries from all

ministries. It meets regularly in the Chancellor's office to coordinate all important decisions concerning the National Strategy (OECD 2015b) and is in charge of monitoring the development of the sustainability indicators and producing progress reports (Federal Government of Germany 2012). The Committee is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery at the ministerial level and is viewed by the government as a key mechanism for horizontal policy integration for policy coherence. However, as the next section demonstrates, the results to date for PCD have been lackluster in some areas.

6.3 Results to Date

As part of its overall strategy for achieving sustainable development, the government initiated an independent Peer Review of its Sustainability Strategy Report in 2018 by the International Peer Group, chaired by former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark. The review found that although the Green Cabinet secured the necessary top-level engagement for implementing the GSDS, it was an “insufficient condition for achieving coherent policies on sustainability,” as evinced by the fact that 29 out of 63 GSDS indicators were off-track. The International Peer Group recommended that the German Chancellery strengthen central coordination capacities for policy coherence, including by ensuring that there were a “strong action programme” and regular meetings for the Green Cabinet (German Council for Sustainable Development 2018).

According to the 2019 CDI, Germany currently ranks joint third (with Finland), which is the highest rank of any G7 or non-Nordic nation (Center for Global Development 2019). Although

Germany has historically placed in the middle of the table for its PCD, it rose to the top five in 2017, when it (temporarily) improved its quality of overall aid as well as coherence in its finance and migration policies. However, its environment score has been decreasing steadily since the inception of the CDI, falling from third place in 2004 to a historic low of 14th in 2018. According to the CDI, even though Germany scored well for fully complying with the reporting requirements of all the major biodiversity treaties and ratifying the Paris Agreement and the UN agreement on fish stocks, its score was significantly undermined by its efforts to combat climate change, particularly its rate of greenhouse gas emissions and coal production (Center for Global Development 2019). Germany also usually performs poorly on the security dimension of the index, given its high levels of arms exports to undemocratic countries and below-average contributions to international peacekeeping and sea lanes protection. Notably, Germany's fossil fuel production levels were also highlighted by the International Peer Group as a "long-standing area in need of improvement" (German Council for Sustainable Development 2018, p. 17). Given the longstanding incoherence of Germany's international leadership on climate issues on the one hand, and its own failure to take decisive action in phasing out highly polluting lignite-fired power generation on the other, the case study of the coal phase-out offers insightful lessons for PCD, as we will see in the rest of this chapter.

6.4 Coal Phase-Out

In June 2018, the German government set up the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment — otherwise known as the Coal Commission — with the objectives of: (i) developing a strategy to phase out coal power generation; and (ii) ensuring a just transition for

coal regions and employees. The newly elected coalition government had promised to phase out coal in order to meet the energy targets set out in its 2014 Climate Action Plan, which committed Germany to reducing carbon emissions in the energy sector by 61 to 62 percent in 2030 compared to 1990. Prior to the establishment of the Commission, the government admitted that it would miss its energy targets by 8 percentage points, due to a combination of strong economic growth, immigration pressures and high transport sector carbon emissions (BMU 2018a). It was therefore necessary to undertake new measures.

The Commission comprised 28 representatives of the country's industrial sector, trade unions, environmental associations, citizen initiatives and policymakers. In addition, representatives of the Federal States of Brandenburg, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saarland, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt — regions that would be most affected by the phasing-out of coal — also participated in the Commission meetings as non-voting members. After six months of difficult deliberation and compromise, the Commission submitted its final report to the government in February 2019, recommending a full phase-out of coal by 2038 latest, with an option to phase out earlier by 2035 (BMW_i 2019). Shortly after the report's submission, the government announced that it would implement the Commission's recommendations in 2019-20 (*Agora Energiewende und Aurora Energy Research* 2019). This was followed by the publication of the German Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMW_i)'s legislative strategy to phase out coal in July 2019 (*Euractiv* 2019).

Despite Germany's international reputation as an ecological role model — it announced an ambitious plan, the *Energiewende*, in 2010 to decarbonize its energy sector and cut emissions by

at least 80% by 2050 — coal remains the single-most important component of the country’s power supply and a crucial component for German industry (BMW 2019). Even though its last hard coal mine shut down in 2018, Germany remains the world’s largest producer of energy from brown coal, particularly lignite, which is a highly polluting fossil fuel (Clean Energy Wire 2019). Burning lignite produces 25% more carbon dioxide than hard coal and almost three times as much as natural gas (Schrader 2016). In 2018, hard coal and lignite represented 35.3% of national power production (Clean Energy Wire 2019).

According to the *Der Deutsche Braunkohlen-Industrie-Verein*, the German federal association of the lignite industry, over 20,000 people were directly employed in the lignite sector as of 2018 (*Der Deutsche Braunkohlen-Industrie-Verein* 2019). A further 32,000 jobs are estimated to be indirectly dependent on the lignite sector (Dehio & Schmidt 2018). Furthermore, the eastern German lignite mining regions suffer from low levels of industrialization, weaknesses in the service sector and low innovation levels (*RWI – Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung* 2017), making them more vulnerable to any move to shut down lignite mining. In 2018, the gross value-added of coal-fired power plants was 5.9 billion euros, of which lignite-fired power plants accounted for around 4.2 billion euros (*Agora Energiewende und Aurora Energy Research* 2019). For these reasons, over 20,000 workers demonstrated in opposition to the coal phase-out in the Rhenish mining district (*Deutsche Welle* 2018a), while the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) published an estimate of the “real cost” of the phase-out at 170 billion euros, including damages (*Handelsblatt* 2019). German utility RWE — the second-largest electricity supplier in the country — together with its workers’ council and trade unions, formally opposed the coal phase-out (*Reuters* 2018). Despite the political sensitivity of, and deep-seated

opposition to, phasing out coal, the Commission was able to reach a compromise that received cross-party government support.

Like the case of Sweden's democracy criterion, the coal phase-out in Germany is an appropriate case study for PCD because it represents a "wicked problem" that involves significant goal conflicts between opposing coalitions in the policy subsystem. According to Philipp Litz, policy manager at *Agora Energiewende* and advisor to co-chair of the Coal Commission Prof. Dr. Barbara Praetorius, pro-phase-out coalition actors strongly advocated for a 2030 end-date for coal energy production in order to bring Germany into line with its international Paris accord commitments. Meanwhile, pro-industry coalition actors did not even want a coal phase-out at all (Philipp Litz, interview, 19 August 2019). Given Germany's potential impact on global carbon emissions as Europe's largest economy, the perceived urgency of strong climate action, and public support for addressing climate change, pro-environment advocacy coalition actors were staunch in their demand that coal be phased out as soon as possible. On the other hand, pro-coal actors viewed coal as integral to the country's energy security, keeping energy prices affordable, and to job security for thousands of workers.

As is typical in many cases of policy incoherence for development, national economic self-interest was incompatible with global development goals. Furthermore, coalition actors on both sides held deep-seated core beliefs about the issue and were highly resistant to changing them. In fact, observers noted that the German debate in 2019 about phasing out coal was "unthinkable... just two short years ago" (Reitzenstein and Popp 2019 p. 8), especially since nuclear energy had also been phased out — making it more difficult to phase out coal without steep rises in energy

prices. Yet, despite years of opposition by dominant coalition actors, Germany has succeeded in brokering an agreement to phase out coal by 2038 at latest — a move that has been labelled “one of the most significant energy transformations a nation has yet attempted in the face of climate change” (*New York Times* 2019, n.p.), even if pro-environment advocacy actors have criticized the phase-out timeline as inadequate for Germany to meet its commitment to the Paris Agreement (Reitzenstein and Popp 2019). Although 30 other countries have committed to cutting carbon emissions by eliminating coal, the scale of structural change to be undertaken by Germany is unprecedented, given its heavy reliance on coal for its energy needs. In view of the larger context of climate change and the need for global sustainable development, this case study is ideal for studying policy coherence for development.

6.5 Why a Coal Phase-Out Would Contribute to Germany’s PCD

Germany remains Europe’s top greenhouse gas emitter, emitting 936 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2017, or over one-fifth of the EU’s total carbon emissions (Eurostat 2019). Coal-burning is Germany’s leading source of carbon emissions, accounting for 40% of the country’s total (Clean Energy Wire 2019a). Scientists have determined that greenhouse gases cause the atmosphere to trap heat radiating from Earth towards space, thereby causing warming of the Earth’s climate (IPCC 2014a). In particular, emissions of carbon dioxide — which is a long-lived gas that remains semi-permanently in Earth’s atmosphere and is categorized as ‘forcing’ climate change — “have made the largest contribution to the increased anthropogenic forcing in every decade since the 1960s” (Myhre et al. 2013, p. 661). In its Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — comprising 1,300 independent scientific experts from all over the

world — concluded with over 95 percent probability that human activities over the past 50 years, especially the production of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, are responsible for the global climate warming trend since the mid-20th century (IPCC 2014a).

According to the IPCC, the negative impacts of climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions are multi-fold and global in nature. After a comprehensive review of scientific evidence, the Working Group II of the IPCC identified with high confidence the following “potentially severe impacts,” among many others, of a warming climate: (i) risk of death, injury, ill-health, or disrupted livelihoods in low-lying coastal zones and small island developing states and other small islands, due to storm surges, coastal flooding, and sea level rise; (ii) risk of mortality and morbidity during periods of extreme heat, particularly for vulnerable urban and rural populations; (iii) risk of food insecurity and the breakdown of food systems; (iv) risk of loss of rural livelihoods and income due to insufficient access to drinking and irrigation water and reduced agricultural productivity; and (v) risk of loss of marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity, and the ecosystem goods, functions, and services they provide for coastal livelihoods, especially for fishing communities in the tropics and the Arctic (IPCC 2014b, p. 13).

Apart from having large-scale impacts globally, greenhouse gases are especially problematic for development because they have a disproportionate impact on low- and middle-income countries, as well as their most vulnerable populations. The IPCC notes that many of the key risks above pose particular challenges for the least developed countries and vulnerable communities, given their limited ability to cope; and that populations which are “socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially

vulnerable to climate change” (IPCC 2014b, p. 6). Climate-related hazards exacerbate existing livelihood stressors, culminating in negative outcomes especially for those living in poverty (IPCC 2014b). Likewise, the CDI notes that even though rich countries are most responsible for climate change, it is the poorer countries that will suffer more because they tend to be more vulnerable in terms of geography, have fewer resources and less state capacity to deal with the effects of climate change, and a higher proportion of their populations depend directly on the environment for sustenance (Center for Global Development 2019). This means that decreasing greenhouse gas emissions to prevent worsening climate change is a crucial step towards PCD for industrialized donor countries like Germany. Even though greenhouse gas emissions are not part of foreign aid policy, they have a significant impact on the development prospects of low- and middle-income aid recipient countries.

It is therefore no surprise that Germany’s high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly from burning coal, have negatively affected its score on the CDI. As mentioned earlier, it does not rank highly — at 14 out of 27 countries as of 2018 — on the environment dimension of the index, despite its compliance with the reporting requirements of all the major biodiversity treaties and ratification of the Paris Agreement. The CDI highlights Germany’s lacklustre efforts at combating climate change as the reason for its poor ranking, in particular its rate of greenhouse gas emissions and coal production (Center for Global Development 2019). Notably, and in contrast to the CDI, the OECD DAC peer review process has consistently praised Germany’s actions to combat climate change — both the 2010 and 2015 peer reviews assess climate change to be an area where “Germany shows constant leadership in both global and local contexts,” with a “high level of commitment to financing climate change activities in partner countries” (OECD 2015a, p.

25), even as it summarily acknowledges that Germany will miss its targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction. The 2015 peer review further highlights that Germany was the second-highest DAC provider to combatting climate change from 2011 to 2013, having committed US\$ 2.7 billion to climate change mitigation and US\$ 1.8 billion to climate change adaptation (OECD 2015a, p. 25). These glowing reviews of Germany's aid policies to combat climate change contrast starkly with its well-documented failure to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, in particular from coal-powered energy production. It can therefore be said that Germany is an illustrative example of how the good aid policies of donor countries are undermined by their non-aid policies — a classic case of policy incoherence for development.

Environmentalists argue that the 2038 coal phase-out deadline is not ambitious enough, because Germany will still miss its 2030 “below 2°C” carbon emissions target unless significant additional measures are taken in the industrial, building and transport sectors (*Agora Energiewende und Aurora Energy Research* 2019) to compensate for the 1.3 billion tonnes shortfall in carbon emissions reduction (Carbon Brief 2019). Nonetheless, it is a highly significant step towards better PCD. Analysts have concluded that the phase-out, if successfully implemented, would result in carbon emissions savings of 1.8 billion tonnes by 2038 compared to a “business as usual” scenario (Carbon Brief 2019). Furthermore, the decisive move away from coal is an important symbolic move for a country that has relied on lignite and hard coal for decades, and sends a signal to the international community that progressive climate action is possible even in the face of entrenched economic interest and the tremendous cost of doing so— the coal-phase out is expected to add 3.6 to 4.9 billion euros per year to the German federal budget, due to structural aid for the mining regions, compensation mechanisms for electricity cost increases, as well as compensation to power

plant operators and employees (*Agora Energiewende und Aurora Energy Research* 2019, p. 8). The difficulties of arriving at a coal phase-out, as detailed in the following sections, underscore the significance of the policy change in a subsystem dominated by strong industry interests.

6.6 Failure at First — “Klimabeitrag” Fails to End the Coal Addiction

In March 2015, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor and Social Democratic Party (SPD) Minister Sigmar Gabriel, proposed a National Climate Protection Contribution (“*Klimatebeitrag*” or climate levy) that would tax carbon dioxide emissions from all power plants in Germany more than 20 years old. The levy was part of the government’s wider Climate Action Programme announced in December 2014, which aimed to reduce emissions by around 70 million tonnes, or 40 percent, annually by 2020 (BMWi 2015). Notably, the proposed levy — which imposed financial penalties that increased with the age of the plant — was designed to target lignite-fired power plants, given their age as well as higher emissions (per unit of power output) than any other source. The objective was to reduce carbon emissions by 22 million tonnes in the electricity sector, which would help Germany close its climate ambition gap towards its national 2020 target. A study by the German Institute for Economic Research, commissioned by the European Climate Foundation and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, had found that such a levy would be the most cost-effective and efficient option for reducing carbon dioxide emissions (Oei et al. 2015).

However, the proposal was met with immediate and trenchant opposition from the utility companies, trade unions, as well as parliamentarians from the lignite regions, namely North Rhine-

Westphalia, Saxony and Brandenburg. Coal miners led high-profile protest rallies for two weeks, with miners' union *Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie* (IG BCE) claiming that the levy would lead to structural turmoil in the affected regions and put 100,000 jobs at risk (*Reuters* 2015) — in contrast to calculations by the Federal Environment Agency that forecast a loss of 4,700 jobs. Utility company RWE said it would be forced to close two of its three lignite mines and 17 of its 20 lignite-fired power plants (*Financial Times* 2015). Although Gabriel attempted to defend his proposal, the pressure from his party — the centre-left SPD, for which the unions are a historic constituency and the mining region of North-Rhine Westphalia is a traditional stronghold — eventually became too strong. At a press conference in June, Gabriel was forced to relent and admitted that the levy would lead to “job losses and a collapse of the industry” (*Financial Times* 2015).

Four months after the levy proposal was announced, the government scrapped it in favour of an alternative plan put forward by the IGBCE union, which was a complete reversal of the original approach: instead of fining utility companies for polluting and accelerating the phase-out of lignite, the government would pay them to keep their oldest and most inefficient lignite plants on standby as a “national capacity reserve” (*Guardian* 2015c). Energy companies RWE, Vattenfall and Mibrag would maintain their lignite coal plants in running order in case of power shortages, in return for 230 million euros per year over the next seven years. This represented a price increase for consumers of 0.05 euro cents per kilowatt hour (*Deutsche Welle* 2015). Analysts concluded that this amounted to a “golden handshake” for utilities at the expense of taxpayers and consumers (Schulz & Schwartzkopff 2015) and would only reduce carbon emissions by 11 million tonnes annually to 2020 — merely half of the original levy's aim of 22 million tonnes annually.

Furthermore, Germany's largest polluter RWE would be paid for maintaining ageing lignite plants that were already unprofitable (Schwartzkopff, Schulz & Littlecott 2015).

The aggressive and effective pushback against the climate levy highlighted the strength of vested interests and the dominance of utility companies and labour unions in the policy subsystem. Despite the German Renewable Energy Act's entry into force in 2000, which was intended to encourage renewable energy generation and shape the future of Germany's energy landscape, the utility companies continued to invest heavily in fossil fuel power while ignoring renewables (Schulz & Schwartzkopff 2015). Notably, private citizens and farmers have been the driving force behind the growth of renewable power in Germany, with 46% of all renewable generation capacity belonging to private individuals. In stark contrast, the four biggest utility companies own only 5% of renewable generation capacity (Schulz & Schwartzkopff 2015). These statistics, and the swift demise of the proposed climate levy, illustrate the degree to which coal interests are entrenched and dominant. Nevertheless, the climate levy debacle did serve to stimulate the public debate on the future of coal in Germany. This context of growing public awareness of the coal issue provided fertile ground for pro-environment coalition actors to leverage resources in the wake of an external perturbation, which would occur just two years later.

6.7 Hambach Conflict and International Failure Focus German Minds

Following the federal election of September 2017, a coalition government of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) was formed in March 2018, after five months of protracted negotiations.

During this time, a number of high-profile, focusing events shone a spotlight on climate issues, and in particular the effects of lignite mining in the country. The first event, in September, was the intensification of a longstanding protest by environmental activists in the 12,000-year-old Hambach forest in North Rhine-Westphalia, 90 percent of which had been razed by energy company *Rheinisch-Westfälisches Elektrizitätswerk* AG (Rhenish-Westphalian Power Plant, or RWE) for open-pit mining activities. When RWE called in the police to remove the activists from their treetop houses – where they had camped out in protest – so that the mine could expand further, the forceful eviction resulted in the death of a journalist and was highly publicized in the media. The conflict generated significant public sympathy for the activists’ cause and made the Hambach forest a symbol of resistance against coal energy (*Guardian* 2018).

According to Green politician Reiner Priggen — former leader of the Greens in North Rhine-Westphalia and voting member of the Coal Commission that was eventually set up — the Hambach forest conflict led to “the ever-increasing mobilization of the population, especially of young people” (interview, 12 August 2019). Litz agreed that the police brutality in Hambach created a “huge public reaction” (interview, 19 August 2019). In early October, over 50,000 members of the public joined the largest demonstration to date against the continued destruction of the forest and expansion of open-pit coal mines in the country (*Deutsche Welle* 2018b).

That said, both interviewees agreed that the Hambach Forest protests, although effective at increasing public attention on the issue of coal mining, was not the decisive factor in the policy process of phasing out coal. Instead, it was the prospect of failing to meet the Paris climate accord goals that led to the government taking the first decisive step of setting up a coal commission. In

October 2017, a leaked internal paper from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (*Bundesministerium fuer Umwelt, Naturschutz, und Reaktorsicherheit*, or BMU) revealed that Germany would miss its national 2020 climate target by around 20 percent, and warned that failure of such magnitude would be a “significant blow to Germany’s climate policy” and “a disaster for Germany’s international reputation as a climate leader” (Clean Energy Wire 2017, n.p.). Instead of reducing climate emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels, Germany’s carbon dioxide emissions would only be 31.7 to 32.5 percent below 1990 levels without additional measures. The BMU attributed this failure to stronger-than-expected economic growth, low energy prices, increased power exports and population increase (Clean Energy Wire 2017). Numerous analyses published in the media, including former SPD Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks, pointed to the country’s continued reliance on dirty coal as the reason that climate goals would not be met. Hendricks further called on Chancellor Angela Merkel to demonstrate the same commitment to national climate action as she did on the international level. Merkel had, in July, pushed hard for the G20 countries to step up efforts to comply with the Paris Agreement, and promised prior to the September general elections that Germany would meet its climate targets (Clean Energy Wire 2017). Priggen stated that the prospect of failure on the international stage was “the decisive point” in the policy process, and that the coalition government, once formed, “had to act” (interview, 12 August 2019).

Neither the CDU/CSU nor the SPD had taken explicit positions on phasing out coal in their respective election manifestos. The CDU/CSU only pledged to replace fossil fuels with renewables by the end of the century, while the SPD had ambiguously noted the need for structural change in the coal mining regions. Nevertheless, as a result of tremendous public pressure the parties were

under, the coalition agreement signed in March 2018 pledged to “establish a Commission for an action programme to achieve the 40 percent target and reduce coal-fired power generation” and comply with the 2030 climate targets (CDU/CSU/SPD, p. 17). Observers had noted that the SPD assigned two “*Energiewende* sympathisers” — Stephan Weil, state premier of Germany’s foremost wind power state, Lower Saxony, and Matthias Miersch, responsible for environment and agriculture policy within the SPD parliamentary group — to the coalition talks on energy and climate policy with the CDU/CSU. This meant that there was no SPD representative close to industry and coal on the team, which was a departure for the traditionally labour-oriented party (Clean Energy Wire 2018a). In contrast, the CDU appointed Armin Laschet, state premier of Germany’s industrial heartland North Rhine-Westphalia, to represent the party. Laschet publicly stated that although climate protection was important, keeping jobs was also “a moral goal” (*Rheinische Post* 2017). Due to these differences within the coalition, the government decided to set up a Commission, instead of deciding on a coal phase-out date, as a means to “delegate the unsolvable question within the government to a broadly composed commission in order to obtain proposals for solutions with greater acceptance” (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019).

6.8 A Narrow Mandate and an Imperative to Act Lead to a Resolution

In its resolution dated 6 June 2018, the Federal Government officially convened the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment, comprising 28 members representing different interests — industry, labour, environment and citizenry. Representatives from the federal ministries and the affected regions were also appointed to the Commission as non-voting members. Evidently addressing the political sensitivities around a coal phase-out, the

mandate letter began by emphasizing that the government strove to “create full employment and equal living conditions ... [and] to actively and fully engage with the structural change taking place in many sectors and also in order to strengthen growth and employment, particularly in affected regions” (BMU 2018b, p. 1). Furthermore, of the six objectives set out for the Commission in the letter, three focused on the economic protection of the affected regions, for example the “creation of concrete prospects for new, future-proof jobs in the affected regions” and investments and funding for structural change (BMU 2018b, pp. 1-2). Nevertheless, the mandate letter accomplished a crucial step in the policy process to phase out coal by explicitly stating that the Commission had to “develop a plan for the gradual reduction and phase-out of coal-based power generation, including a deadline and the necessary legal, economic, social, renaturalization and structural support measures” (BMU 2018b, p.2).

According to Priggen, one of the 28 voting members of the coal Commission, the specificity of the mandate letter meant that the phasing out of coal could not be called into question (interview, 12 August 2019). Nonetheless, the negotiation process was still a very difficult one (P. Litz, interview, 19 August 2019). Most controversial was the year of the phase-out, with environment representatives such as *Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland* (BUND), Greenpeace and *Deutscher Naturschutzring* calling for a phase-out by 2030 in order to meet the Paris climate targets (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). Other pro-environment coalition actors, including the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, citizens' initiatives from Brandenburg and the Rhineland, scientific community members such as the *Öko-Institut*, as well as renewable energies industry representatives likewise voiced their support for a 2030 phase-out.

They were further supported by the State Secretary of the BMU, as well as the Minister of the Environment of Lower Saxony (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019).

On the other hand, pro-industry and -labour coalition actors were staunchly opposed to setting any firm date for a coal phase-out. For the Ministers-President of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg, any discussion about an end date was initially unacceptable, and they were keen to continue coal-fired power generation until 2065. Their hardline position ostensibly stemmed from the experience of the collapse of the German Democratic Republic, when 80,000 workers in the lignite industry lost their jobs overnight (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). This was why, even though the Commission's work took place against the backdrop of worsening economic conditions for coal, there was deep resistance on the part of the pro-coal coalition against a firm phase-out date (P. Litz, interview, 19 August 2019). This starting position was backed by the Minister-President of North-Rhine Westphalia and the Federation of German Industries (BDI) (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). Litz, advisor to one of the co-chairs of the Commission, noted that even though the Ministers-President were not voting members, it was nevertheless crucial to get their support because the Commission's recommendations would be otherwise undermined. Furthermore, two of the four Commission co-chairs were the former Ministers-President of Brandenburg and Saxony, two of the regions that would be most affected by a coal phase-out (interview, 19 August 2019).

In January 2019, after seven months of protracted negotiations, the two opposing sides agreed on 2038 as the phase-out deadline for coal. Since the Commission's mandate letter excluded the option of no end-date, the pro-industry coalition had settled on asking for a 2045 end-date at

first. Litz noted that the final outcome of the Commission’s deliberations was the mid-point of both sides’ maximalist positions, namely 2030 for the pro-environment coalition, and 2045 for the pro-industry coalition (interview, 19 August 2019). A crucial reason for this outcome was how the Commission had been structured — namely the fact that all outcomes had to be adopted by a two-thirds majority. This meant that neither the pro-environment nor the pro-industry coalition could push through a completely skewed outcome, and both sides were forced to compromise (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). Furthermore, the prospect of receiving over 14 billion euros in structural funds softened the hardline positions of some pro-industry coalition actors, for example the state government of North-Rhine Westphalia, which began to act as a mediator between the two opposing coalitions (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019).

6.9 Continued Focus on Climate Issues Paves the Way for a Firm Commitment

Priggen noted that the spotlight on the Commission’s work increased over time due to the ongoing demonstrations in the Hambach forest as well as the “Fridays for Future” student strikes, which began in September 2018 and rapidly gained momentum in Germany (interview, 12 August 2019). On 15 March 2019, over 200 “Global Climate Strike for Future” rallies were held on a single day in Germany (*Die Zeit* 2019), and polls during the spring showed that climate change was a top priority for German voters (*Public Radio International* 2019). This shift in the politics of climate change in Germany began with an unprecedented heatwave and drought in April 2018, which saw record-high temperatures that led to over 1 billion euros in losses for the agricultural sector (*Deutsche Welle* 2018). This event highlighted for many Germans the fact that there had been a statistically significant increase in “unusually intensive warm phases in spring over the past

25 years” due to a warming climate (*Deutscher Wetterdienst/German Weather Service* 2018), which made climate change much more real to many people (*Public Radio International* 2019). Combined with the ongoing “Fridays for Future” climate protests and continued demonstrations in the Hambach Forest, the increased focus on climate issues culminated the Green Party’s second-place finish in the country for the European elections in May 2019. Notably, polls showed that 48 percent of Germans said environmental and climate protection were decisive factors in their vote, which was more than a 28 percent increase from the previous European election in 2014 (*Deutsche Welle* 2019).

Given the climate protection agenda’s increasing traction amongst the public, the German government committed itself to implementing the Coal Commission’s recommendations shortly after the report’s release in February 2019. The federal government presented an initial set of key decisions on structural economic support for the coal regions in May 2019, followed by a draft law on economic support that August (*Clean Energy Wire* 2019b). In parallel, in July 2019 the German Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi) published its legislative strategy to phase out coal (*Euractiv* 2019). Despite continued criticisms from the pro-environment coalition that the Commission’s recommendations were insufficient to meet the Paris climate targets, observers note that the process, and its outcome, marked a historic shift in Germany’s public debate. It would have been considered “political suicide” even to raise the issue of phasing out coal just three years earlier, but it was now accepted by all players that coal-fired power generation was incompatible with Germany’s climate targets (*Clean Energy Wire* 2018b, n.p.). Analysis of the policy process reveals a number of factors that were necessary for this significant change to occur.

6.10 Conversion of Stimuli into Response — Analysis of Policy Process

In the case of the coal phase-out, the prospect of failing to meet international carbon emissions reduction targets, as set out in the Paris Agreement, was akin to what the ACF terms a significant external perturbation. The admission by a federal government department that the country would miss its climate targets by a large margin stood in stark contrast to the progressive image the Germany projected at international fora when it came to climate protection and leadership. Combined with the escalation of the Hambach Forest protests, public opinion on this issue was sufficiently galvanized for the incoming coalition government to realize that it could not continue with business as usual on coal. The external perturbation was sufficient for the CDU/CSU and SPD coalition to take an unprecedented decision to promise a concrete step towards ending coal-fired power generation. This was especially notable because the previous attempt just a few years ago to impose a climate levy, and the swift reversal of the government's proposal, occurred under the same CDU/CSU and SPD coalition, i.e. there was no new actor with formal legal authority to enact change. The policy subsystem was still dominated by pro-industry and pro-labour coalition actors, who were significant constituencies of the political parties in power. Yet, the external perturbation this time around successfully initiated a policy process that would culminate in change. The case study also validates the ACF's hypothesis that an external perturbation, albeit necessary, is itself insufficient to lead to policy change. In the case of the coal phase-out, the following coalition resources played a crucial role in helping the minority coalition bring about the change:

- Opening of a new policy venue — The setting up of a commission representing diverse interests, with the explicit mandate to recommend a timeline for phasing out coal, was a crucial resource that enabled policy change. Eliminating the possibility that no phase-out date would be set forced the pro-industry and pro-labour coalition to accept that the phasing out was inevitable. Furthermore, the Commission was also bound by the rule that all recommendations had to be accepted by a two-thirds majority, making it impossible for the hitherto dominant pro-industry and pro-labour coalition to override the environmental faction.
- Mobilizable supporters — The high-profile “Fridays for Future” student protests, which gained significant traction across Germany, combined with the Hambach Forest demonstrations, served as a constant reminder to politicians that firm action was needed on climate protection. As noted by Commission member Priggen, there was high public interest in the Commission’s work due to the ever-increasing mobilization of the population through such protests, and its members were under pressure to reach a compromise (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019).
- International commitment and information — Germany’s international commitment to the Paris climate accord served as an accountability mechanism and a source of pressure for the pro-environment coalition to push for policy change. The *Bundestag* had unanimously approved the implementation of the Paris Agreement, yet there were no legal regulations for its concrete implementation. This incoherence, combined with increasing evidence and information about Germany’s impending failure to reach its climate goals, allowed the pro-

environment faction to form a convincing narrative about the necessity and urgency of phasing out coal. Priggen noted that the government's commitment to the Paris accord, against the background of worsening climate change, meant that the environmental movement became much stronger (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019).

- Financial incentives — Notably, a key enabler of successful policy change in this instance was the presence of financial incentives for the affected coalition to undertake structural adjustments. Even though there was already significant economic pressure on the utility companies due to the worsening economic outlook for coal, industry actors and the affected regions were unwilling to compromise without receiving compensation. For example, the state government of North-Rhine Westphalia initially insisted on 2045 as the only acceptable phase-out date but began to take on a mediation position when it became clear that the regions could receive 14 billion euros in structural funds (P. Litz, interview, 19 August 2019).

The case study of Germany's coal phase-out, similar to the case study of Sweden's democracy criterion adoption, shows how an external perturbation to the policy subsystem, combined with skillful exploitation of various resources by a minority coalition, can lead to better policy coherence for development — even when the issue is a “wicked problem” that involves significant goal conflicts between opposing coalitions in the policy subsystem.

Notably, the Coal Commission's work was effectively driven by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), even though the Commission was officially steered by

four ministries: Environment, Social Affairs and Interior, in addition to the BMWi (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). Even though the BMZ is responsible for Global Issues and Climate Policy and the Green Cabinet is responsible for PCD, both institutions were completely absent from the policy process and the work of the Coal Commission. Like in the Swedish case, existing institutional mechanisms for PCD in Germany did not play a role in the policy process of phasing out coal, despite clear linkages between carbon emissions and global development goals.

These are useful findings for proponents of policy coherence for development, who usually have to contend with deeply entrenched and more powerful opposing coalitions in their policy subsystems. Comparing the two case studies reveals important implications for current policy thinking and prescriptions for PCD, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 – Comparative Analysis

The Swedish and German experiences described here offer valuable insights for academics, coalition actors seeking policy change, and policymakers themselves. The case studies add to the existing literature on the topic and provide useful lessons for coalition actors who are advocating for policy change in favour of global development goals like the SDGs. Because successful policy change in both cases was preceded by failed attempts, studying the policy process over time makes it possible to distinguish the necessary and sufficient factors for success in a particular policy subsystem. Inductive reasoning, in turn, makes it possible to draw out useful general lessons for actors who seek to enact policy change in favour of PCD. In this section, I first comparatively

analyze the case studies and situate them within the existing literature on PCD, then identify important lessons.

7.1 Root Causes of Policy Incoherence for Development

The two cases validate what scholars term “intended incoherence,” which is when policymakers, confronted with conflicts between aid and non-aid policies, sacrifice development considerations for economic and other imperatives (Forster and Stokke 1999, p.25). In the case of Sweden, the fact that arms exports to non-democracies could harm development prospects and human rights was well-known as early as 2002, when the Foreign Affairs Committee first formally proposed a democracy criterion. Furthermore, Swedish peace organizations had been actively advocating for stricter arms exports criteria since the mid-1990s (L. Åkerstrom, interview, 7 June 2019). Yet, the government did not seriously consider adopting a democracy criterion for over a decade, as policymakers viewed arms exports as important not only for economic reasons, but also for security and defence interests. Germany, for its part, had acknowledged the evidence linking greenhouse gas emissions and climate change as far back as 1992 by signing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and committing to reducing its emissions. It had further demonstrated its leadership on climate action by passing legislation on an ambitious *Energiewende* in 2010, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050. Yet, policymakers did not phase out lignite — the most emissions-intensive fossil fuel — despite years of urging by environmental activists and Green politicians.

Both cases are also instances of what the ACF calls “wicked problems,” where opposing coalitions in the policy subsystem have significant goal conflicts with each other. This makes them particularly useful for the study of PCD, because intended incoherence and wicked problems are very common features of the most egregious cases of policy incoherence. The structural weakness of development constituencies vis-à-vis business and other domestic interest groups means that even when a policy incoherence is apparent, policymakers tend to prioritize other interests over development, i.e. one cannot assume that by making an “unintended incoherence” known, it will be resolved in favour of PCD. The case studies demonstrate how this happens even in the CDI’s best-rated donor countries. Despite both governments’ acknowledgment of the importance of, and ostensible progress towards, better policy coherence for development through institutional mechanisms, there are still inherent challenges to achieving PCD as outlined by Barry et al. (2010): when domestic and international development goals are conflicting, trade-offs are necessary and the development constituency is weak.

On the other hand, the case studies do not validate other obstacles to PCD that Ashoff (2005) describes, namely (i) flawed policy formulation and coordination processes, where inadequate institutional mechanisms and lack of evidence lead to incoherence; and (ii) conceptual-level shortcomings, where gaps in knowledge lead to incoherent outcomes. In both instances, there were adequate institutional mechanisms in place — an inter-departmental PGD working group in Sweden and the Green Cabinet in Germany — and well-publicized evidence that the policy incoherence was having a negative impact on global development goals. In fact, in both cases, there were no significant changes to the level of evidence before and after the policy change, so it cannot be said that increased or better evidence led to better policy coherence in either case.

Although policy incoherence can occur due to lack of evidence and institutional mechanisms, this paper contends that it is more useful to focus on solving intended incoherence. This is because ample evidence of incoherence and bureaucratic mechanisms alone are insufficient to force policy change. Politicians and governments must also be willing to prioritize development goals over other interests, and this can only happen when there is a fundamental redistribution of power in the policy subsystem. As the next section shows, for policy change to occur, a number of necessary and sufficient factors must be present.

7.2 Necessary and Sufficient Factors for Successful PCD

Both cases validate the ACF's hypothesis that, for significant policy change to occur, an *external shock* is necessary to redistribute resources and power towards the minority coalition within a policy subsystem. In the case of Sweden, the combination of the Arab Spring and the "Saudi Affair" galvanized unprecedented public opinion on the issue, effectively pressuring moderate politicians within the ruling coalition to take action (or be seen to be taking action) by appointing the KEX. This external perturbation led to the first step in a policy process that culminated in successful PCD. In Germany, the admission by a federal government department that the country would miss its climate targets by a large margin, against the background of climate change and its international commitment to the Paris Accord, led the incoming coalition government to set up the Coal Commission with the specific mandate of phasing out coal.

Given the dominance of the pro-industry coalitions in both policy subsystems, as evinced by previous unsuccessful attempts to enact policy change, it is unlikely that power could have been

redistributed without the occurrence of focusing events that highlighted the hypocrisy of the policy incoherence. It became untenable for politicians in Sweden to advocate for human rights and democracy on the one hand while exporting arms to, and symbolically supporting, non-democratic regimes on the other. In Germany, the norm of climate protection, and the leadership role played by Chancellor Merkel at international fora, contrasted sharply with the government's continued support for, and subsidies to, the highly-polluting and environmentally destructive lignite industry. As in the Swedish case, it became untenable for the German government to continue undermining its own climate protection policies and objectives while playing a leading role internationally. The external events therefore served to highlight policy incoherence as the first step in the policy process. As further hypothesized by the ACF, other factors or coalition resources were needed for the policy process to come to fruition.

Comparing the case of the democracy criterion in Sweden and the coal phase-out in Germany points to the *opening of a new policy venue* as a crucial factor that enables policy change. Given what Ashoff (2005) defines as the plurality of societal and political norms in both countries, where coherence is not necessarily viewed as a priority, the opening of new policy venues with explicit mandates to make progress on the policy issues made change possible. In Sweden, the KEX was specifically mandated to investigate the future of Swedish export controls of military equipment and propose new legislation to tighten controls for non-democratic states (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2012a). In Germany, the Coal Commission was specifically mandated to develop a plan for the reduction and phase-out of coal-based power generation, including a specific deadline. These explicit mandates meant that the commission members could not avoid reaching a compromise, lest they be viewed as having failed to achieve their objectives.

Analyzing the case studies also reveals another crucial aspect of the policy venues which made successful policy change possible — namely the *composition* of the commissions. In the case of Sweden, the previous attempt at adopting a democracy criterion, in 2003, had failed because the KRUT, or the “gunpowder” Committee, was composed of non-elected, pro-defence and pro-industry experts such as the Ministry of Defense, the Swedish Defense Industry Association and the Defence Materiel Administration. This policy venue simply reinforced the dominance of the pro-industry coalition, stymieing the minority coalition’s attempt to enact policy change in favour of PCD. In contrast, the second policy venue created in 2012, the KEX, comprised elected officials. Although they were mainly middle-ground, pro-industry politicians from the SDP, Moderate Party and the Liberal People’s Party, they were nonetheless sensitive to the groundswell of public opinion against arms exports to non-democratic countries, which the minority coalition successfully mobilized and leveraged to push for the adoption of a democracy criterion.

In Germany, the creation of a Coal Commission representing diverse sections of society, including both the dominant pro-industry and minority pro-environment factions, was effective at getting buy-in from all sectors. The rule that the Commission’s recommendations had to be adopted by a two-thirds majority meant that neither side could dominate the outcome, and all members were cognizant that failing to reach an agreed phase-out date would mean failing on part of the Commission’s core mandate. This led to a successful compromise on phasing out coal by 2038 at the latest, which was accepted both by the affected regions and the utility companies. It is unlikely that the Coal Commission’s recommendations would have been accepted if they had not

been the result of a negotiation between diverse coalition actors. This is in contrast to the government's previous, unsuccessful, attempt, just a few years earlier, to impose a climate levy without the dominant faction's buy-in.

In both cases, other resources also played a role in enabling policy change, such as the mobilization of supporters and the leveraging of public opinion. In Sweden, the advocacy coalition actors were highly skilled at harnessing public opinion to influence politicians, and they did so effectively in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the Saudi Affair. By keeping the pressure on the traditionally middle-ground politicians in the KEX, they helped to ensure a favourable outcome for the democracy criterion. In Germany, the large demonstrations by environmental activists over the Hambach Forest and by students in the Fridays for Future movement helped intensify public interest in, and media scrutiny of, the Coal Commission's work: according to Commission member Priggen, there was "unavoidable, intensive media reporting of all meetings of the Commission... and public interest in an effective coal phase-out increased due to the demonstrations in the Hambach Forest and the actions of Fridays for Future" (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). This meant that despite the deep-seated opposition to a coal phase-out among the Commission's pro-industry and pro-labour coalition members, they felt compelled to reach a compromise with the pro-environment faction.

Furthermore, in the case of Sweden, the entrance of the Green Party into government for the first time in 2014 (which gave it formal legal authority) was another necessary resource for the success of the hitherto minority coalition, as it could influence the passing of the democracy criterion bill in the *Riksdag*. For Germany, another valuable resource that the minority coalition

skillfully mobilized was the availability of financial incentives for the affected regions. The pro-environment coalition highlighted the possibility that a phase-out would occur eventually, given the worsening economic conditions for coal. This made the prospect of a 2038 phase-out date, in exchange for significant financial resources, more palatable to those opposed to ending coal.

These additional resources — mobilizable supporters, public opinion, formal legal authority and financial incentives — undoubtedly played important roles in the policy processes by helping to redistribute power towards minority advocacy coalition actors in favour of development goals. However, although necessary for the final outcome, these resources would have been by themselves insufficient for policy change. Analysis and comparison of the two case studies demonstrate that the *opening of new and issue-specific policy venues, with the right mandate and composition*, were the crucial and sufficient factors that enabled successful PCD, despite the significant goal conflicts between opposing coalitions in the policy subsystem. This analysis contends that, for the purposes of PCD, the opening of new policy venues with the right composition and mandate, in the wake of an external perturbation, should be considered the most important resources to achieve policy change.

7.3 Do the Standard Prescriptions for PCD Make Sense?

A key prescription for PCD in both the scholarly and practitioner literature is better bureaucratic mechanisms, in addition to more and better evidence. Many scholars analyze the process in a depoliticized manner, using technical and management-oriented phrases such as “an objective assessment of available options” and “effective management of policy execution”

(Picciotto 2005, p. 234) in order to achieve PCD. However, the case studies in Sweden and Germany demonstrate that — at least for “wicked problems” involving significant goal conflicts between coalitions — institutional mechanisms and bureaucratic approaches are woefully inadequate for enacting meaningful policy changes.

Although both countries already had existing institutional mechanisms at the bureaucratic level that could theoretically resolve cases of policy incoherence, these mechanisms were ineffective against the political sensitivities surrounding the issues: a combination of deep-seated goal conflicts between opposing coalitions and requirement for major *political* trade-offs. Interviewees in both countries, with first-hand knowledge of the policy process, stated categorically that the bureaucratic mechanisms for PCD were absent from this political space. In Sweden, the foreign ministry had no role in the KEX Committee or its deliberations, despite having policy responsibility for arms exports and PCD. Not surprisingly, officials from the Swedish Foreign Ministry staunchly refused to be interviewed on the topic of the democracy criterion, which could be due to the Ministry's absence from the policy process.

Likewise, in the case of Germany, the Coal Commission's work was effectively driven by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), even though the Commission was officially steered by four ministries: Environment, Social Affairs and Interior, in addition to the BMWi (R. Priggen, interview, 12 August 2019). Even though the BMZ is responsible for Global Issues and Climate Policy and the Green Cabinet is responsible for PCD, both institutions were completely absent from the policy process and the work of the Coal Commission. This could again explain why officials from BMZ did not respond to multiple requests for interviews.

Analysis of the case studies does support Lockwood et al.'s (2010) conclusion — based on a case study of the UK — that the main obstacle to PCD is usually not a lack of bureaucratic mechanisms, given the number of them at senior and operational levels. Although it is not clear whether better incentives in the civil service, as suggested by the authors, would have been sufficient for PCD in these cases, their prescription for clear political leadership appears to be in line with the lessons this thesis identifies. In both Sweden and Germany, the government demonstrated political leadership, in the wake of external perturbations, by creating new policy venues with clear mandates to resolve policy incoherence. It can be concluded that the political leadership required to resolve egregious cases of policy incoherence for development, especially those requiring significant trade-offs between global development goals and domestic goals, involves taking concrete actions such as creating dedicated policy venues with decision-making authority to resolve specific issues. Demonstrating meaningful political will, therefore, requires more than just statements “at the highest level,” as called for by the OECD’s eight building blocks of policy coherence for sustainable development (OECD 2017). The presence of technocratic “action plans” — another OECD prescription — is not necessarily a precursor to successful PCD, either. As we have seen, multiple PCD strategies laid out by the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the German BMZ failed to lead to any substantive changes in policy regarding arms exports or phasing out coal, despite the clear linkages between those issues and PCD.

7.4 Utility of PCD as a Guiding Concept and Prescriptions for Success

These case studies call into question the approach to PCD based on bureaucratic mechanisms and reporting. As Carbone and Keijzer (2016) point out, the current treatment of PCD as something achievable by technocratic means, such as Impact Assessments and a proliferation of reporting to organizations like the EU and the OECD, has limited utility in the cases of wicked problems that involve significant goal conflicts. The structural weakness of the development constituency means that institutional mechanisms and better evidence will not lead to policy change in favour of better PCD. Without significant external perturbations that can be harnessed by minority coalitions to redistribute power, focusing on “best practices” such as integrated approaches to implementation, analyses and assessments of potential policy effects, policy and institutional coordination, and monitoring and reporting — all OECD prescriptions for PCD — have marginal benefits at best. These activities may be useful for what the ACF terms policy-oriented learning, which results in minor policy changes, but are unlikely to result in significant policy change for PCD.

This thesis contends that PCD should be viewed as an issue-driven political exercise. It is noteworthy that in both case studies, the concept and language of PCD were absent from the policy processes. Even though the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the German BMZ have oversight of PCD in their respective governments and, by all accounts, have been very active in promoting the agenda, they played no role in the policy processes to adopt a democracy criterion and coal phase-out. The explicit concept of PCD was also not used in the policy processes. This could be because PCD has been co-opted and diluted as a technocratic exercise, resulting in less attention on its

norm-setting power — as Koff and Maganda (2016) note, the greatest significance of PCD is its normative value in prioritizing commitments for transformative development. The case studies show that exposing and publicizing the hypocrisy of incoherence — essentially giving with one hand and taking with the other — can be a very effective way of resonating with the public and galvanizing support.

For PCD to work, this thesis contends that development scholars and practitioners have to place more focus on its norm-setting power, and less on using it as a technocratic and depoliticized policy tool. The importance of civil society organizations that advocate for PCD cannot be overstated, as these minority coalitions can effectively harness external perturbations whenever opportunities arise, for example by mobilizing public opinion to influence decision-making in the policy subsystem. As correctly hypothesized by the ACF, an external perturbation alone is insufficient to lead to policy change — minority coalition actors have to harness every available resource in the policy subsystem to gain power and influence.

One possibility is for donor organizations like the EU and the OECD to focus their efforts on highlighting the most problematic issues faced by donor governments, instead of measuring the presence of bureaucratic mechanisms as a means of achieving PCD. By repeatedly highlighting the hypocrisy of incoherent policies, the idea of PCD as a positive norm can be socialized over time. Based on the case studies, this thesis proposes that focusing efforts on public norm-setting *can create or make more likely* perturbations to the policy subsystem — for example, the revelation that Germany would miss its climate targets only became a focusing event because the necessity of climate action had been effectively socialized with the public in the first instance. Likewise, the

revelation to the Swedish public that its government was arming dictatorships that crushed popular uprisings during the Arab Spring could only become a focusing event because promoting human rights had become a norm for a majority of the population. Without the norm of human rights or climate protection in Sweden and Germany respectively, the focusing events would not have had the same results in terms of leading to policy change.

Finally, this thesis suggests that for the most “wicked problems” of policy incoherence, those characterized by significant goal conflicts between coalitions, consensus-based and issue-focused policy venues comprising diverse interests can be a very useful tool – if they are representative of, or at least sensitive to, public opinion. In both cases, the governments chose to delegate negotiations and decision-making to specialized commissions that were publicly scrutinized. This resulted in outcomes that were acceptable and legitimate to all sides. It should be noted that the public pressure resulting from external perturbations played a crucial role in 1) creating the impetus for opening a new venue, and 2) ensuring that the minority coalitions had sufficient power in these new venues to push for policy change. Therefore, the redistributive role of external perturbations in the policy process cannot be over-emphasized — simply creating a new policy venue, without the possibility of redistributing power towards the minority coalition, is unlikely to lead to policy change.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

The case studies of policy change in Sweden and Germany, in spite of significant goal conflicts between opposing advocacy coalition actors, point to the necessity of analyzing the policy

subsystem to understand how policy coherence can be achieved. By disaggregating the policy subsystem into its component coalitions, describing the distribution of power and its changes over time, and identifying the events and resources that enabled policy change, scholars can develop a better understanding of PCD as a political process. Distinguishing necessary and sufficient factors that lead to policy change in favour of policy coherence can also provide a useful reference for advocacy coalition actors championing development goals.

The Swedish and German experiences, which are relatively uncommon cases of policy coherence improving after years of intended incoherence, suggest that the current prescriptions for PCD focused on better evidence and greater policy coordination are ineffective – at least for dealing with instances where the development constituency is much weaker than other interest groups. In such cases, bureaucratic mechanisms cannot make the significant political trade-offs required to achieve PCD. When the policy subsystem is dominated by economic or security interests, a significant external perturbation has to occur before power can be significantly redistributed in favour of the development constituency.

The context in which the perturbation occurs is also important. As the case studies show, exposing the hypocrisy of policy incoherence is only effective when the prevailing public opinion – such as supporting human rights or climate protection – are in line with the principles of PCD. This analysis therefore suggests that advocacy coalition actors in favour of PCD, including academics, place greater focus the concept's norm-setting power. Furthermore, the role of NGOs in advocating for PCD should not be overlooked, as their efforts to highlight cases of egregious policy incoherence are crucial to this norm-setting endeavour. By focusing efforts on norm-setting,

external perturbations to the policy subsystem can become more likely – giving rise to the opportunity for power to be redistributed in the policy subsystem.

The similarities in how policy change was achieved in both cases also suggest that the opening of a new policy venue following an external perturbation is key to achieving PCD. In order for the outcome to be deemed legitimate by all coalition actors, the government must mandate the policy venue to develop solutions to address the policy incoherence and ensure that it is comprised of diverse and politically sensitive stakeholders. Likewise, advocacy coalition actors should also be prepared to harness the focusing event and leverage public opinion to influence the decision-makers, so as to ensure that development interests are perceived as important by stakeholders in the policy venue. Only by skillfully exploiting the external perturbation and mobilizing political resources, can minority advocacy coalition actors instigate successful policy change in favour of PCD.

In terms of the Advocacy Coalition Framework, the case studies validate its main hypothesis that significant external perturbations can lead to policy change. This analysis further contends that for “wicked problems” in PCD, the existence and nature of the policy venue are crucial for successful policy change – more so than other coalition resources such as mobilizable supporters and formal legal authority. Other types of resources, such as financial incentives and international commitments, can also play an important role in helping redistribute power towards the minority advocacy coalition in favour of development goals, but are by themselves insufficient to lead to successful policy change.

The findings in this thesis should inform the future research agenda on PCD, especially for scholars who are concerned with finding better prescriptions for achieving success. It points to the need to think more critically about the technocratic treatment of PCD by donor organizations like the OECD and the EU, and to question whether depoliticized bureaucratic mechanisms should be the hallmark of PCD efforts – as is so often the case when assessments of PCD are being carried out. As this thesis only examined two case studies in depth to draw lessons for success, more work is needed to establish whether these lessons can be generalized across different issues and countries. One limitation of this thesis is the fact that both Sweden and Germany have a tradition of consensus-based policymaking; therefore, it would be useful to examine whether the policy process for successful PCD in other major donor countries like Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States – which have less consensus-based policymaking processes – follow similar patterns that involve an external perturbation, followed by the opening of a new and effective policy venue.

Another area of work could examine the policy process concerning more complicated or technical cases for policy incoherence for development, for example tax issues such as public country-by-country reporting, which are more challenging to link to broader norms such as human rights or environment protection. The two case studies examined in this thesis involved relatively straightforward issues – the links between arms exports to non-democracies and human rights abuses, and between carbon emissions and climate change, were generally easy for the public to understand. This made it possible for NGOs to highlight the hypocrisy of incoherent non-aid policies, mobilize public support and exert pressure on decision-makers to legislate in favour of PCD. It would be useful to study whether the ACF's hypothesis that significant external

perturbations can lead to policy change still applies in cases of policy incoherence where the issues are more complicated and less salient to the general public – in such cases, it appears likely that minority coalition actors will find it more challenging to capitalize on external perturbations to mobilize public support for policy change.

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