



# **THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN NIGERIA**

*A Political Economic Analysis*

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# THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN NIGERIA

## A Political Economic Analysis

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### **Abstract**

The phenomenon of a country being rich in employable workforce and being blessed with abundant natural resources yet having a large amount of her population deprived of basic needs, living in poverty on a day to day basis is not unknown among scholars of development politics. Although the causes are often well documented and explored, still it is worth asking what donors can do to amend this situation, what strategy helps the most and more importantly, whether current strategies are on the right track. This study investigates the correlation between the EU's development cooperation programmes and the political economic context of Nigeria, seeking to uncover the ways in which the EU is engaging with the situation, in order to facilitate development in the country. It examines the potential impact of the EU's policies and assesses them against the EU's own declared goals and more importantly the political economic context present in Nigeria, in order to evaluate how much the EU's development assistance package „fits” the environment she seeks to change for the better and whether her recent and current programmes help to bring about that. In order to determine that, it analyses the EU's development programmes combining qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry, finding that although programmes partially reflect the EU's declared principles and goals and at first glance seem to be well aligned with the political economic context of Nigeria,

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still they do not quite fit well into this environment as the causal relationships between the issues they target are deeper than the programme designs seem to recognize. Based on the results the study provides recommendations that could help enhancing the effectiveness of development cooperation and bring the desired end goals closer.

**Keywords:** European Union, Africa, Nigeria, development cooperation, development aid

## 1. Introduction

Recently there was an article about Australian scientists having built a new type of non-lithium based battery that can be recharged significantly more times than current ones without losing its storing capacity like normal batteries do. This is good news for everyone who is concerned about the massive consumption of fossil fuels, not to mention those who own an electric car, for this could alleviate our dependency on oil, possibly even eliminating the need for it on the long run. But how does that affect countries whose economies rely heavily on oil export and who could easily go bankrupt if oil prices suddenly drop?

Certainly it sounds menacing, unfortunately however the recent outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic has greatly influenced oil prices forcing them to drop significantly which means that low demand for oil and its horrendous effects on certain oil export oriented economies is not some future challenge to prepare for but a palpable reality.

If the country has other relatively developed sectors and exportable goods for the economy to rely on, it has a much better chance to stand its ground. However in Nigeria that is hardly the case which is only worsened by the fact that it is the most populous country in Africa as an economic breakdown could easily lead to an even greater humanitarian disaster in the already disastrous situation as a large part of the population is affected by poverty and starvation.



One way to deal with this issue is foreign assistance from and development cooperation with donors. Even though Nigeria is a recipient of foreign assistance, development over the years remained dismal. Among other factors this is attributed to poor policy frameworks and policy inconsistencies, with scholars urging researchers to study the impact of development assistance both in quantitative and qualitative terms to uncover the reasons behind the lack of development. (Fasanya and Onakoya 2012, 423-431)

Research found that the relationship between the level of poverty and aid from donors were in some cases not positively linked meaning that aid either does not reduce poverty or worse, it even perpetuates it. Because results were varying across sub-samples, researchers are called to conduct case studies on individual countries as the specific characteristics of each country needs to be taken into account when determining the impact of aid, in order to give indications to donors helping them to pursue their development strategies in a more conscious and effective way. (Arvin and Barillas 2002, 2151-56)

According to certain scholars the consistent rise of poverty shows the ineffectiveness of development programmes, (Oshewolo 2011, 6) also noting that the EU's leadership role in development has never been more crucial. (Holland 2008, 359)

They emphasize the importance of allocating aid based on each country's specific needs and performance with the possibility of regular adjustments in the future, pointing to *The Cotonou Agreement* as the document that urges the EU to focus more on domestic dynamics of recipient countries because neither financial aid nor preferential trade agreements have made significant difference in economic and governance related performance of ACP countries. (Evrensel 2007, 13)

Nigeria is an excellent example of a country with abundant natural resources and able workforce yet the bane of large scale poverty, unemployment, terrorism, violent conflicts and corruption is keeping it from achieving its potential which makes it an excellent choice for a case study in relation with EU development

policy. Although results and conclusions are highly country specific and by no means do they intend to promote the „one-size-fits” all approach, still they could contribute to the discourse on and practice of EU development policy.

### 1.1. Research question and hypothesis

Considering all this it is necessary to examine how the EU as a global leader of development can engage with this situation. It is necessary to take a closer look at how recent and current EU development policy can affect the lives of millions, how the given support could influence the problems. The question this study is concerned with is how does the EU’s development cooperation in Nigeria matches the country’s political economic context. In what ways is EU development cooperation aligned with the country’s problems and prospects, how much does it seem to reflect an understanding of the country’s situation, how well the EU as a donor aligns her programmes to country priorities and country specific issues as well as her own commitments regarding development cooperation?

Starting out from preliminary research and criticism on EU development politics and the fact that a significant amount of the Nigerian population lives in poverty, the hypothesis that this study operates with is that the EU’s development programmes must be missing the mark, meaning that that either the objectives of the programmes or the allocated sums or the particular sectors they target do not match the political economic context and domestic dynamics of the country, thus confirming the criticism voiced by various scholars.

### 1.2. Falsifiability and interpretation

The hypothesis is falsifiable in multiple ways. Since this study uses political economic analysis –explained in subsequent paragraphs- the foundation and background of the analysis is one –albeit widely accepted- assessment of the country’s political and economic context. One possible way of refutation is pointing out in what specific ways does the country context evaluation miss the

point, in other words how the main assumption and interpretational background of the analysis are mistaken.

Regarding the interpretation of the results- whatever they might turn out to be- a fundamental problem is how one defines „good alignment” or „match”. Admittedly this is an issue that is extraordinarily difficult to get around, and it is quite possible that there could be various definitions of these terms. However, to offer a solution, this study will sketch a preliminary expectation of results based on country context and earlier scholarly findings regarding EU development cooperation. Since this study is based on political economic analysis, merely the fact that EU development cooperation programmes address issues that indeed constitute a problem in Nigeria (which is quite obvious) should not be eligible to convincingly argue that the programmes are effective in the sense that they are targeting the right issues with the right amount of funding.

Therefore, this analysis intends to take a step further and by taking a preliminary look at the interplay of issues present in the country and targeted by the EU and seeks to interpret the results by integrating them back into this framework. This way the hypothesis of non-optimal alignment can be more effectively supported or refuted, as it will clarify what EU support to a particular area does, what other issues it might affect and how. Based on the nature of the hypothesis, it is important to note that results should not be expected to be binary, rather they are meant to be interpreted on a scale outlined by questions such as „How much?” and „What ways?”

### 1.3. Methodology

There are a number of possible ways one can analyse aid effectiveness with these ways being inherently connected to the definition of effectiveness. The widely cited study by Burnside and Dollar defines effectiveness as the value of growth defined in terms of GDP that can be attributed to the aid given. Beside using mathematical models, they also incorporate institutional and political factors as

well in order to determine how much the aid provided is responsible for growth. (Burnside and Dollar 2000, 847-848) The limitation of this approach – albeit certainly very useful and widely accepted – is that it defines effectiveness as GDP growth. This might be quite problematic considering the fact that aid in most if not all cases is given to boost development as growth in this approach is essentially equated with development ergo the more growth the recipient country, or sector for that matter produces the more effective the given development aid has been. However, the concept of development might be more complicated than mere growth as the subsequent introduction of the MDGs shows and there is much to uncover when it comes to developmental factors. As Burnside and Dollar point out – and is also voiced by other scholars – the local institutional environment is an important determinant of aid effectiveness - even if it is defined only as a matter of GDP growth – that cannot be neglected. (ibid. 2000, 864) In other words one might want to take a closer look at the recipient country before initiating massive flows of aid.

In light of this a slightly different approach of looking at aid effectiveness might be by starting at establishing a diagnosis for the recipient country and looking at how the allocation of aid and development projects are aligned with the specific circumstances of the recipient country. Essentially this approach is more of an ex-ante evaluation of aid based on its intended purpose with various other factors taken into account and this is where political economic analysis enters the picture.

Unsworth and Williams propose for the DG DEVCO that in order to enhance EU development cooperation, a new approach is needed. This approach is political economy analysis which as they claim can give donors a clearer picture about the political and economic environment they are about to engage with.

As its name suggests political economy analysis investigates the interaction of political and economic processes and their effects on development problems, how they might support or hamper the achievement of development objectives. Taking various factors into account it seeks to understand the influence of



formal and informal institutions upon actors and each other, as well as the influence of regional and international context. Due to this it is capable of pointing out crucial areas where political interests might hinder development or areas that are particularly in danger of providing rent seeking opportunities, or conversely they hold great potential for development while also uncovering the underlying causes of violence making it extremely useful in fragile situations where donors can easily make things worse least they understand the causes of instability<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, donors should not start with a specific reform agenda but with where the recipient country actually is, looking at the actual impact of institutions and other foundational factors instead of measuring them against an ideal standard.

However, there is no single orthodox method of conducting political economic analysis which means that it always can and should be tailored to the specific task at hand. The EC has also developed political economic analysis tools based on the work of other development partners. These consist of a structured set of questions that investigate how political and economic processes play out in a given country or sector, helping to pinpoint causal relationships between the various issues and from these relationships establish a country context that could be used as a starting point. (Unsworth and Williams 2011, 1-17)

#### 1.4. Defining the focus

In order to conduct an analysis of this nature it is necessary to draw the lines concerning the level of analysis. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs political economic analysis is a relatively flexible genre and should always be tailored to the specific task at hand. Therefore, the focal point of this study is defined in two main terms.

One is temporal focus. The time period of EU development cooperation this study discusses is the last decade, roughly from 2011 to present day. Choosing

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<sup>2</sup> This means that political economic analysis can be conducted at any given time, even during development cooperation programme implementation.

this particular time period correlates with the latest 2011 revision and current form of *The Cotonou Agreement*, the document that serves as the foundation of the EU's development cooperation with ACP countries like Nigeria. Focusing on this era up to the present day should give an up-to-date picture about the EU's development policy and could best contribute to scientific discourse. Regarding this another advantage of using recent data is that as mentioned in previous paragraphs, political economic analysis can and in fact should be conducted at any given time, even during project implementation as the main goal of this type of analysis is uncovering the underlying correlations between political, economic and even societal issues in order to have a better understanding of the impact of any given engagement in a particular environment. Even though theoretically it is the last decade that is being focused on, the majority of projects in the sample of the analysis are not older than three years and many are still being currently implemented. Therefore, it is safe to say that practically this is an analysis of the past and present three-four years' EU development cooperation.

The other dimension of focus is the level at which one examines development cooperation. Generally, the sharper the focus the better the analysis is considered to be since theoretically a more focused analysis can offer a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon it discusses and „more detailed” is often intuitively equated with „better”. Although it is indeed often so still this analysis takes a different approach and counterintuitively utilizes a broader focus that encompasses multiple sectors in Nigeria that receive EU support. There are two main reasons why this approach might be more useful.

The first has to do with the usability of results. As the next section of this chapter will further explain, one part of the theoretical framework this study builds upon is previous research done in the area of EU development cooperation, specifically the one that relates to Nigeria. These studies also often utilize a broad focus trying to grasp the subject of development cooperation from a holistic perspective, meaning that they do not choose one specific sector to focus on, rather they look at the totality of sectors that the EU engages with. Their

question is often not how much support one specific sector unrelated to the others receives but rather what the EU supports and more importantly why?

For this reason, this study also examines development cooperation programmes from a similarly holistic perspective. This way results are going to be easier to integrate into the already existing body of research as these results might support or refute already existing observations as their examined subject is of the same „size”.

The second and more important argument for a bit broader perspective is the very nature of political economic analysis and the issues it is concerned with. Since this study seeks to follow the broad guidelines proposed by the authors mentioned in the previous section it will encounter factors and issues across the whole spectrum of Nigerian political and economic life, factors that inherently influence various other areas across the political economic context. A fitting analogy might come from music theory where narrowing the focus down to a single note in order to analyse its role and appropriateness is by definition futile as no single note possesses any role (emotional quality) on its own, it is always defined by the surrounding notes, the tonal context, enabling the exact same note to have a profoundly different character in two distinct environments. Similarly here this means that focusing too sharply on a single sector or issue and treating it in isolation from its native causal environment could mean missing the point which is rather uncovering the web of causality and the repercussions of any given engagement at specific points with it. In other words, picking and analysing a single sector for instance infrastructure would likely to yield results that show that the particular sector is underfunded and needs more input in terms of allocated funds. However, this underfundedness can be argued in the case of each individual sectors when examined on their own, supposing that larger funds would eventually solve every problem that exist. Since the source of funds is not unlimited it is more appropriate to look at any sector or issue in relational terms, meaning that the analysis should examine how much attention/funding that sector receives in relation to other sectors. If the amount of allocated resources is limited, one is inevitably faced with the problem of

needing to prioritize one sector over the other. But which one and why? Therefore, this study adopts a relational method of analysing the EU's development cooperation and likewise the Nigerian political economic context that it seeks to engage with.

### 1.5. Establishing a theoretical framework

Taking the possibilities provided by political economic analysis into account, this study proceeds using a dual theoretical framework. In order to evaluate EU development cooperation from a political economic point of view, one needs to establish a country context outlining the aforementioned foundational factors that are the defining elements in the given political economic setting, as well as shedding light into the various ways how these factors influence each other along with the interplay of their dysfunctional workings. This country context serves as the backdrop to the subsequent analysis of the EU's development cooperation, a framework in light of which the results are to be interpreted.

The necessity of this component lies in the very nature of political economic analysis. Any analysis of this nature should grow out from a prior understanding of problems and situation „on the ground” as results are fundamentally an answer to the set of questions that emerge from the specific country context. In other words, if one wishes to analyse EU development cooperation- as this study does- it is crucial to come up with a background and related country- and situation specific questions first, which then the analysis can give an answer to.

Over the past few decades, the problems, potentials, political and economic factors and their often symbiotic relationship in Nigeria has been thoroughly analysed and documented. There is considerable amount of research on economic, societal as well as political and institutional problems that are responsible for the current situation of the country. Therefore, this study does not intend to conduct further research or go into an in-depth explanation of the relationship of these factors, as this has been done by other researchers, which means that research for political economic analysis on Nigeria is already a given.

Instead this study utilizes this existing body of research to establish the aforementioned backdrop and interpretational context for an analysis that focuses specifically on the EU's development cooperation.

The other crucial element of the theoretical framework is the research on EU development politics, especially those studies that focus on EU-Nigeria relations in this context. This area is also saturated with research, however a significant portion of them rather tend to focus on the possible motivations of the EU in Nigeria and factors that could possibly influence the EU's aid allocation. To fill a gap this study intends to inject new results into the discourse about EU development politics as reaction to previous research, results which could also be used for future studies on Nigeria as well as EU development cooperation.

## 1.6. Structure of the study

Following the guidelines of political economic analysis, this study consists of four main parts. First as one half of the theoretical framework this study takes a look at the EU's development policy and scholarly discourse about the area, with scholarly discourse divided into normative and descriptive parts. It sums up what other researchers have found regarding the EU's development cooperation with special regards to EU-Nigeria relations. Then based on these findings formulates questions and expectations for the subsequent analysis to answer and support or refute.

The next chapter very briefly sketches the political economic context of Nigeria in order to establish the aforementioned background. Again it is important to emphasize that there is abundant research material in this area, therefore this chapter does not intend to delve deeper into that, instead it provides a very brief summary of previous findings and more importantly the causal relationships between problems, and also comes up with questions and expectations for the analysis to answer.

The fourth chapter and the main part of the study is the analysis itself, the particular methodology of which will be discussed in that chapter.

Then, Chapter 5 moves on to assess the results in light of scholarly literature on aid and answer the questions and expected results put forth at the end of previous chapters. Results will be put back into and interpreted in the context of the country's political economic situation, presenting an explanation behind the EU's development policy and assessing in what ways EU programmes do or do not fit the political economic context of Nigeria. Then based on this the chapter moves towards a normative dimension, providing recommendations for enhancing development cooperation.

## **2. Literature review of EU Development Aid and Aid Efficiency**

Consisting of two sub-chapters, this chapter intends to give an overview of the EU's own positions and commitments on aid and its effectiveness as well as scholarly research and its findings related to the EU's development cooperation especially that relating to Nigeria, thus establishing one half of the theoretical framework.

### **2.1. EU positions on aid effectiveness**

An important document on aid effectiveness signed by the EU is the *Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation* that reaffirms the earlier Paris and Accra commitments. In the document entitled *EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness – Council Conclusion* the EU outlines her own key priorities and objectives in development cooperation.

The EU prioritizes strengthening key institutions and institutional capacities, aligning with donor's national priorities while using their systems making aid more effective and supporting donor ownership calling upon partners to reaffirm their commitments to act accordingly. (Council of the European Union 2011, 4-7)

According to the document the main objective is accelerating the achievement of the MDGs. The challenges it identifies are aid fragmentation which at the

time of the document was on the increase along with fragile states as the ones lagging the furthest behind in achieving the MDGs. Country ownership of development projects and joint programming with partner-country led implementation is also emphasized, as well as private sector engagement in development. Besides that, joint programming should be kept simple and pragmatic and it should be conducted at partner country level in order to respond to specific needs and the situation on the ground. (ibid. 7-10)

The EU gives special attention to strengthening democratic ownership and creating an environment in which civil society and development actors can build development consensus. For this purpose, the EU sees the strengthening of local authorities, parliaments, civil society organisations and audit institutions to be of extreme importance. Along with capacity development and strengthened country systems, effective institutions, institutional resources, good governance, rule of law are also noted as areas to be supported, as well as the fight against corruption which should be a joint responsibility. (ibid. 4)

These principles are reaffirmed by the *Busan Outcome Document* which also takes note of persistent poverty and identifies its eradication central to development goals, while admitting that efforts so far have been to no avail. The document also strongly encourages a result-based approach to development cooperation, also emphasizing that development cooperation should focus on partner countries priority needs, demands and context whatever they may be. The document defined the following broad guidelines of cooperation:

- Ownership of development priorities by developing countries
- Focus on results
- Inclusive development partnerships
- Transparency and accountability (Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-Operation 2011, 1-12)

These broad principles are elaborated in more detail in the document.

Another key document serving as a guideline and legal basis of development cooperation is *The Cotonou Agreement*, which outlines the EU's objectives along the following lines.

*Article 11* states that without poverty reduction security and peace cannot be achieved, as well as there is no sustainable development without the latter two. Therefore, conflict prevention should strongly be tied to addressing its root causes like poverty in line with the principle of ownership. (The Cotonou Agreement 2011, Article 11)

*Article 19* names poverty reduction as the ultimate objective of ACP-EU cooperation. To achieve that programmes should be tailored to the individual circumstances of each ACP country with the integration of civil society and its actors in the process. Beside these, particular attention should be paid to the achievement of MDGs. (ibid. Article 19)

*The Cotonou Agreement* states that particular attention shall be paid to pledges and objectives made and agreed at major UN and other international conferences. (ibid., Preamble) In light of this the eradication of poverty as a central objective of cooperation is also in alignment with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which also posits poverty and famine reduction as a central objective. (UN 2015, 19)

Based on these commitments it is safe to say that one can expect the EU's development cooperation priorities to have a very strong institutional and democratic focus and as a pre-requisite for development and security, EU development cooperation should also be oriented towards the reduction of poverty and food security, in line and accordance with the country situation and priorities.

## 2.2. Literature review of previous research

This section reviews and organises the points and views expressed in scholarly literature about EU aid. Then based on this, the chapter formulates question in



accordance with political economic analysis guidelines, questions that the subsequent analysis is expected to focus on and answer. There are two main aspects along the lines of which scholars studied aid; a normative and a descriptive dimension, both of them to be briefly outlined in this sub-chapter.

### 2.2.1. The normative dimension

Monye et al. identify three main schools of thought when it comes to EU development aid to Nigeria. These schools are the optimists, the pessimists and the pragmatist.

According to the optimist school aid should be increased in order to face the overwhelming economic challenges in developing countries. Since these countries are in a poverty trap, it would be essential to lift them out of it with a so called „big push” concentrated to areas such as, agriculture, health, education and clean water supply. Out of these water sanitation and agriculture are closely related to poverty reduction, education is more institutional in nature. (Monye et al. 2010 750-755) (Young 2009, 3)

Referring to another research they mention that according to this school the main causes of ineffectiveness on the donor side are „*impatience with institution-building, collusion and co-ordination failure, failure to evaluate, failure to exit, pretending that participation is sufficient for ownership, unreliable as well as insufficient transfers, and underfunding of global and regional public goods*”. (Monye et al. 2010, 750-755)

As for the pessimist school, a study of the World Bank found that on average aid had little impact on growth, however aid had positive effects when channeled into an environment with good policies. The study also claims that good policies were rewarded with higher aid but aid allocation was easier to explain with donor interests. According to the argument it would be commendable to allocate aid where good policies are present thus making it more effective. (Burnside and Dollar 2000, 864) (Diamond 2000, 206-209)

Contrary to this study, Okon in his review of five decades of development aid to Nigeria finds that not only does aid not have positive effects on human

development in Nigeria it even tends to worsen it in a way that a 1% increase in ODA will result to a decrease in human development (HUD) by 3%.

He argues that the effects of aid depend on the level of understanding the donor has about the recipient's needs. ODA therefore can be critical in enhancing the business environment for the private-sector, quickening growth and it is also a crucial instrument for supporting education, health, public infrastructure development, agriculture and rural development and food security.

Bilateral aid allocation according to him is better explained by the donor interest model, in which countries provide assistance to safeguard their trade, investment, political and security interests which is in accordance with the findings of Burnside and Dollar.

He concludes aid must be coordinated through an administrative framework with a clearly identifiable focal point. Therefore, one coordinating body and one monitoring and evaluation system at the highest level of government is desperately needed which is consistent with the ownership and leadership principles contained in the Paris Declaration. The government should sustain reforms in various sectors of the economy to encourage the inflow of foreign aid that could facilitate growth and development, reversing the negative effects of aid. (Okon 2012, 32-42)

Supporting these observations a study on the relationship between foreign aid and the quality of governance in Africa conducted in 2004 by Brautigam and Knack found that there is a robust relationship between higher levels of aid in Africa and deteriorations in governance quality and increases in GDP per capita tend to correlate with increase in governance quality. Large amounts of aid over a longer period of time can weaken institutions, agencies and governments that have perverse incentives thus undermining the possibility of their own development. They also agree that institutions and governance are key factors in determining aid effectiveness and therefore it is them that should be at the focus

of development aid; a claim supported by others as well.<sup>3</sup> (Brautigam and Knack 2004, 276-278)

However, their observations point out an important danger inherently present in the system, namely that aid regardless of its purpose can likely have negative effects on governance, meaning that it is quite possible that aid allocated institutional and democratic development might end up deteriorating them.

Thirdly, according to the pragmatic school in a poor country with poor policy environment the best strategy is focusing aid on the development of good institutions that could serve as a stable basis for further effective development. This could be achieved by setting up independent service authorities that could provide for the basic needs of people and facilitate move towards a better functioning institutional environment. This school argues that direct donor intervention to development projects should be reconsidered for it undermines government institutions required for development and growth, although acknowledging that channeling aid through dysfunctional and non-transparent government institutions is highly problematic. They align themselves with the optimist school arguing that donor programmes are often not aligned with the country's priorities. In their research they point out that out of the five areas mentioned above that require a big push, only two (health and education) receives considerable attention. Agriculture however is grossly neglected. (Monye et al. 2010, 755) (Collier 2009, 25)

Reaffirming their position on the role of government, more scholars warn that the EU should avoid bypassing the institutions of the recipient government through donor driven micro managed projects because it undermines the very target of a significant amount of aid. What donors should also avoid doing is forcing recipient governments to implement reforms by imposing adverse conditionalities without government ownership for that will result in non-

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<sup>3</sup> Fasanya and Onakoya also found that aid has negative impact in absence of good institutions and also argue that aid should be focused on developing adequate institutional capacities first. (Fasanya and Onakoya 2012, 424-430)

compliance with the expectations. They too echo the views that the EU uses a one-size-fits-all approach that does not take country specific factors into account. (Molenaers and Nijss 2009, 563) (Herbert 2012, 13) (Tombofa et al. 2013, 21) (Koch 2015, 494)

These concerns about bypassing institutions are also shared by Booth, who also criticizes the EU's development policy by pointing out that instead of aligning donor country portfolios with national poverty reduction strategy papers or national development plans of recipient countries, in many cases the actual policies pursued by the politicians and the relevant civil service departments bear little relation to the formally agreed strategies, which leads to aid having little in common with the recipient country's reality. Another noteworthy claim he makes is that there is overwhelming evidence in the analytical literature of aid relationships that aid flows tend to have perverse effects until the recipient country has acquired a developmental leadership. The evidence according to him contradicts the hypothesis that aid flows can facilitate the emergence of leaderships these countries need. More interestingly, he claims that aid will contribute to the deterioration of good public institutions in low income countries. He joins the camp that advocates for aid being directed towards underfunded public goods especially agricultural research and that greater efforts ought to be made addressing violent conflicts and arms trade because institutions are an area that is highly country specific and each recipient country has to figure out what type of institutional arrangement works best for them on their own. (Booth 2012, 541) Other scholars also agree that public goods and food security deserves more attention. (Gillies and Joseph 2009, 6)

There is hardly any doubt that the overwhelming majority of scholars may they belong to any of the above mentioned schools agree on and advocate the assumption that the most important factor in determining aid effectiveness is a well-functioning institutional, legal and policy environment in the recipient country. The subject of the debate is not whether good institutions are needed for long term development to be effective but what the most viable way to

establish or maintain them would be while multiple scholars agree that poverty reduction and agriculture are sectors that are grossly neglected.

A major dilemma seems to be whether government institutions should serve as channels or intermediaries in disbursing aid thus seeking to strengthen their role and push them towards transparency and ideal functioning or throwing money at corrupt government institution is wasted aid and it only pushes them further down the path of corruption. In other words, if the institutional environment is poor, which in the case of Nigeria certainly is, is it the most advisable way to deal with corruption, lack of transparency and accountability first, thus creating an environment that is capable of absorbing and effectively utilizing subsequent development aid whatever it is targeted at, or should donors first and foremost focus aid on other areas like agriculture, food security, public goods, health and education etc. and expect good governance and institutions develop naturally along the way, in accordance with local socio-political culture? Also related to that, to what extent should local authorities and government take part in the implementation? If not or almost not at all, that might minimize the chance of local officials embezzling the grants thus ensuring that the given aid will reach its target as it is controlled and supervised by more accountable and transparent international or EU organisations. As for the fragmentation of aid, scholars unanimously agree that it constitutes a major stumbling block for development aid to be of any effect.

### 2.2.2. The descriptive dimension

#### *Fragmentation*

Regarding fragmentation a study on aid provided to Sub-Saharan Africa points out that raising income level and poverty reduction has hardly seen funding increase at all, also noting that neither does infrastructural development get adequate resources. The study claims that the cost of information sharing, coordination, planning and aid administration are increasing and so does the number of specialised agencies that focus on narrow developmental issues at the expense of more comprehensive strategies, thereby increasing aid fragmentation

which reduces the effectiveness of aid and can cause institutional destruction by siphoning staff from government positions and bypassing the recipient government. (Kharas 2007, 2)

### 2.2.3. The EU's motivations according to scholarship

#### *The humanitarian dilemma*

One of the EU's motivations behind her development policy – albeit certainly an idealistic one – is the so called humanitarian dilemma. In case of suspending aid it is not necessarily the recipient government that will be most affected by it, rather the population, which might lose access to clean water, food supplies, electricity or any other service or good that is dependent upon the EU's activity. This could result in an instant or imminent humanitarian crisis, severely damaging the development previously achieved and supported, creating a situation that is going to require a significant amount of resources to manage, all this without any guarantee that the recipient government will comply with the terms set by the EU. Given the fact that poverty is also pervasive in Nigeria this dilemma is likely to shape EU policy considerations. (Del Biondo 2011, 389) (Zimelis 2011, 403)

#### *Democracy promotion, security*

Another motive of the EU in her development policy is promoting a European understanding of democracy. The reason behind that is that major powers consider lawless states as national security threats and hotbeds for terror. For this reason, more attention is given to conflict prevention by promoting democratic practices. (Gillies and Joseph 2009, 6)

Democracy promotion as another study claims however is not a top priority in EU-Nigeria relations. Oil, trade, internal stability and migration however are. Many European countries have long-standing commercial and economic ties to Nigeria, the backbone of which is oil and gas extraction, as well as other types of industries and infrastructure, an opinion that disagrees with claims mentioned earlier namely that infrastructure does not get the funding it should get.

Governance – related assistance however „*holds an unusually important place*” in the overall development assistance packages as numerous EU projects are clearly focusing on governance. (Khakee 2007, 2-9)

The EU’s intent to promote democracy however is undermined when the EU has to choose between democracy promotion and her own economic interests. Even if the EU suspends aid as a response to breaches or as a motivation to facilitate reforms, the maintenance of trade relations which is highly unlikely to be suspended undermines the effect of sanctions. A prime example of trade interests are the oil extraction activities of Shell and other European companies in Nigeria. The EU perceives the suspension of trade to be a step too costly to take, which raises serious doubt about her advocacy for democratic practices. (Crawford 2007, 81-86) (Carbone 2013, 490) (Sepos 2013, 274)

An analysis on the consistency of EU democracy promotion points out that according to the *Lisbon Treaty* main objective of the EU’s development cooperation is the reduction and ultimately the eradication of poverty. There is a general consensus that economic development cannot be achieved without democratisation. This idea is also articulated in *Article 9 of The Cotonou Agreement* which states that democracy, human rights, good governance etc., are an integral part of development. This according to the study leads to the EU being confronted with the previously mentioned humanitarian dilemma in which case the EU might leave a worsening political environment unsanctioned if the country makes progress in poverty reduction. This means that like trade interests, poverty reduction might also undermine democracy promotion. (Del Biondo 2011, 381)

### *Stability and Peace*

Although referring to the EU’s policy in the Mediterranean Region, Del Biondo argues that the EU’s priority is stabilising the region and not democratising it. Democratisation is a means to stability rather than the end itself. This thinking – according to her - can be traced back to *The Cotonou Agreement* which contains an article (Article 11) about fighting terrorism and building peace. The EU fears

that illegal migration, arms and drug trafficking and the ensuing chaos and violence are destabilizing the region thus undermining the EU's security. For this reason security concerns almost always precede any other development objectives. She concludes that in the case of aid allocated to Nigeria, economic factors and security concerns are the most important explanatory factors, as the country is or can be the major stabilising force in the region and is an important oil producer. Therefore according to her security concerns are the primary driving force beyond aid allocation followed by economic interests. (Del Biondo 2011, 385-390)

This evaluation is partially held by other scholars, adding that European governments and diplomats claim that the underlying causes of terrorism and violence and international instability are economic and political underdevelopment. Therefore the EU strongly supports programmes that target conflict mitigation and prevention in fragile states although according to some, certain programmes had an *ad hoc* nature and did not seem to reflect a complete understanding between security and development. (Bountagkidis et al. 2015, 93) (Youngs, 2008, 420) (Keukeleire and Raube 2013, 566)

On the other hand however security concerns are not the only drivers of the EU. Ethical concerns, political values, environmental protection and human rights are also among the factors that influence aid allocation. Schimmelfennig attributes this to the supposition that fundamentally the EU wants to create an institutional environment on the national and international level that mirrors her own environment due to her being comfortable in such an environment and knowing how to use it to her own benefit. This study of Bountagkidis et al. agrees with previously mentioned opinions that the EU's aid allocation does not focus enough on poverty reduction. Findings indicate that in explaining aid allocation strategic and economic concerns, particularly natural resources like oil are more important than institutions of the recipient country, which means that there is a huge disconnect between the rhetoric and practice of donors when it comes to aid allocation. However, the study admits that this assertion is problematic as strategic and political interests are not mutually exclusive.



(Bountagkidis et al. 2015, 94-107) (Farrell 2005, 279-280) Regarding the motivations of the EU behind her aid allocation policy, opinions are mixed. There seems to be an agreement that the EU's development politics is much more realist than mere rhetoric would allow one to believe. The rank of democracy promotion among her priorities is debated, as on the one hand there is a consensus that democracy is an essential pre-requisite to long term development and on the other hand when it comes to good results achieved in poverty reduction the EU allegedly turns a blind eye on undemocratic practices as well as prioritising her own economic and political and security interests when it comes to choosing between them and democratisation. Stability is pointed out by multiple scholars as the number one driving factor behind aid allocation as it is the alleged top priority of the EU. It is also argued that human rights, environmental concerns and ethical considerations are also among the factors that shape the EU's politics as well as the argument which states that even these ethical and institutional practices are meant to serve a greater purpose, namely the Europeanization of the region in order for the EU to make better use of it.

### 2.3. Suppositions and claims to be tested

Given the variety of the above presented scholarly opinion regarding aid effectiveness, alleged motivations behind the EU's aid allocation, arguments regarding the should-be-prioritized and less-focused-on areas and the EU's self-proclaimed goals and priorities there are a number of claims and findings to be put to the test.

- How are the EU's declared goals reflected in her allocation of aid?
- From the above mentioned schools of thought is there any that the EU can be put into based on her priorities, if yes then how and why?
- How does the EU's policy support or go against scholarly recommendations?

### 3. Country context

In order to provide the background for the analysis, this section gives a brief overview of Nigeria's political economic situation. A topic already too broad and vast in itself, this chapter intends to focus on three key issues, which are poverty and food security in conjunction with agriculture, corruption and oil. Obviously there might be quite a number of other factors that one can and should take into consideration, however this study proceeds along the lines of these three, as these are the ones that are constantly recurring in scholarly literature about Nigeria's domestic situation.

The rationale behind narrowing the focus down to these three particular issues is that they are considered to be extremely important drivers behind aid allocation. Furthermore the local political economic problems and more importantly their interrelatedness and self-amplifying nature can best be grasped by looking at it through the lens of these three issues for a number of other problems like violent conflicts for instance – as will be demonstrated - are possible to trace back to these three.

Yet another reason to use these as a backbone of looking at the political economic context is that they fit neatly with the subsequent analysis of EU aid, as each of them can be attributed to a specific target area of aid in the aid allocation which gives a good representation of the EU's focus and development strategy in the country and allows one to examine in what ways EU development policy is aligned with the problems and prospects of the country.

Reducing poverty is generally the ultimate objective of aid and for this reason and for the sake of the subsequent analysis it is important to understand the local nature and characteristics of it, what the underlying reasons are and what it affects, why attempts to this point to alleviate it were to no avail. Common sense dictates that poverty should be the main driver behind aid allocation moreover an indicator whether to provide aid to a country and if so then how much.

The absence of food security by its very nature constitutes a form of poverty. Poverty can and does take various forms, however undernutrition, the lack of food and water sanitation are issues that pose a threat to the daily lives of people as food and water are among the most basic biological needs, which means that without achieving palpable results in this area, poverty reduction is technically ineffective. Therefore, this study takes poverty reduction and food security to be closely related issues albeit later on in the analysis maintaining a separate category for each for the sake of accuracy and further usability of results.

In a similar manner to earlier research, agriculture in this study is assumed to be inherently related to food security supposing that agricultural development could alleviate both food security and poverty by providing if nothing more than subsistence farming and possibly a source of income for a significant part of the local population. Also as will be pointed out in this chapter local agriculture has great potential both in terms of economy and food security, making it an important area to be taken into account when analysing the local political economic context.

As mentioned in the previous chapter with certain „good” institutional settings aid can reach its intended destination and exert its intended effect, whereas with a less than optimal institutional environment, the same aid can even worsen the situation. While corruption is by far not the only factor upon which the quality of the institutional environment depends, nevertheless it is arguably an important one. An institutional environment with zero corruption can possibly be inadequate to efficiently absorb and channel aid due to its non-optimal configuration, however a theoretically optimal institutional configuration can still be grossly dysfunctional when paralyzed or turned detrimental by corruption. Therefore, corruption is a factor that needs to be given attention especially considering that it is a major if not the greatest problem in the political-economic context of Nigeria.

The third key factor to be considered is the presence of oil in the country. Unlike the previous two this factor is highly country specific. Since Nigeria is blessed

with abundant natural resources this is an issue that has a major role in shaping political and economic decisions in the country and there can hardly be any political economic analysis that does not touch upon this subject. As will be shown in the subsequent paragraphs oil in Nigeria is strongly linked with the quality of democracy and consequently the institutional environment which means that it can affect aid allocations in a number of possible ways.

As for domestic effects of the oil industry the prioritisation of oil as an export can siphon funds from other areas of domestic economy which can have a significant role in aggravating poverty. Due to these when analysing EU-Nigeria development cooperation from a country context point of view the inclusion of oil among the factors to be analysed in terms of political-economic context is an absolute non-negotiable.

With these in mind this chapter offers a condensed review of the research done so far regarding the above mentioned issues, and based on the findings draws a map that highlights how these issues are intertwined and how they all contribute to and perpetuate the vicious circle of poverty, corruption and violence. The purpose of this problem map is to serve as a background and context into which the findings of the subsequent analysis will be put back into and based on which normative conclusions can be drawn.

### 3.1 Poverty, food security and agriculture

#### 3.1.1. Poverty

As scholars observed, despite the attempts to tackle it, about 70% of the population lives in absolute poverty. Even though the country itself is rich, people find themselves trapped by pervasive poverty making the socioeconomic landscape fragile and offering Nigeria a place among the poorest countries. (Oshewolo 2011, 1-2)

Others attribute poverty to the poor provision of basic services<sup>4</sup> to the generality of the masses and adding that the situation in rural communities is even worse, due to the government failing to provide for their developmental needs. Besides that the underlying causes of poverty include inadequate programme coordination, political instability, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency and targeting mechanisms for the poor and that development programmes are often not designed to alleviate poverty. (Oshewolo and Oniemola 2011, 255) (Oshewolo 2011, 8)

Regarding potential solutions, civil society can contribute to poverty reduction by providing welfare services, the empowerment of beneficiaries, and being policy advocates for poor and marginalized groups.

Scholars point out that „*there are acute shortages of infrastructure and facilities at all levels.*” and that subsidies should target road construction, water sanitation and delivery, electricity and power supplies etc.

Another closely related solution is economic diversification that enhances other productive sectors other than oil as the country is blessed with abundant natural resources. In order to achieve that resources must be used efficiently and judiciously with the involvement of civil society (Oshewolo and Oniemola 2011, 265)

Another important contributor to poverty is large scale unemployment especially among the youth. Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, out of which 64 is unemployed. This is attributed to a rapidly increasing population and the fact that the unemployed youth are moving from rural to urban areas due the previously mentioned lack of infrastructure in rural communities. Beside aggravating poverty due to the lack of income, this trend poses a serious threat to democracy and political stability in Nigeria as youth are often used for political assassinations and other criminal activities. (Okafor 2011, 359-368)

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<sup>4</sup> Note that this is consistent with the arguments of scholars mentioned in the previous chapter.

### 3.1.2. Food security

As the FAO country programming framework writes: „*Food security, however, remains a challenge especially in the arid northern part of the country. In 2007, about 65 percent of the population was food insecure, with 34 percent consuming below the minimum level of dietary energy, as compared to 39 percent in 1990. The prevalence of children under five years of age, who are underweight, was estimated at 23 percent in 2008 against 35.7 percent recorded in 1990. Although the prevalence of underweight has declined, stunting is still very high at 40 percent. In an effort to address food insecurity and under-nutrition, the Government committed significant resources to support food security programmes in all states with the assistance of development partners.*

*However, despite successes, there are still issues of poverty, which continue to inhibit availability of adequate food to households, which predisposes them to weak resilience to cope with shocks Nigeria’s urban slums and rural communities. In addition to this, the importance of food safety in the context of household consumption, markets (raw and processed products, as well as those for export) are the areas that the Government has given particular attention. ... A recent UNDP Human Development report argues that sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, can extricate itself from pervasive food insecurity by acting on four critical drivers of change: greater agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers; more effective nutrition policies, especially for children; greater community and household resilience to cope with shocks; and wider popular participation and empowerment, especially of women and the rural poor” (FAO 2013, 7). These findings are also corroborated by a plethora of other studies<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> These studies include: Public Policy Instruments and Dynamics of Economic Development Indicators in Rural Nigeria (Berezi et al. 2017, 101-107)  
Reflections on Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Policy Considerations in an Emerging Democracy (Triegaardt 2009, 1-15)  
Agricultural Credit and Economic Growth in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis (Enoma 2010, 1-7)  
An Analysis Of Food Security Situation Among Nigerian Urban Households: Evidence From Lagos State, Nigeria  
The Challenges of Food Security in Nigeria (Titus and Adetokunbo 2007, 397-406)  
Poverty Reduction and the Attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects (Oshewolo 2011, 1-22)

### 3.1.3. Agriculture as a solution

Concerning solutions, the FAO proposes - in accordance with the *Nigeria Vision 2020*, a development plan prepared by Nigeria – that by transforming agriculture into a sustainable and profitable source of income, agricultural productivity needs to be boosted. This enhanced production could provide food for subsistence purposes, thereby providing a solution for the bane of food insecurity. For this purpose, the Vision seeks to attract large scale investments into mechanised production and processing, for Nigeria has a comparative advantage in agricultural production. (ibid. 2013, 7-12)

According to the Vision, agriculture is not only the key to achieve food security which is the overall main objective of the development plan, however it can simultaneously create jobs for millions of rural dwellers thereby providing a relatively stable source of income and a solution to the previously mentioned problem of poverty, moreover it is also the key to the much desired diversification of the economy. Yet another benefit of agricultural development is the resources it can provide for industries thereby laying down the foundations of future industrialisation. (Enoma 2010, 2) (National Bureau of Statistics 2010, 7)

In order to boost agricultural production, the FAO suggests that the sector needs to be equipped with adequate infrastructure and technologies. (FAO 2013, 11)

As for the main inhibitors of agricultural development beside the lack of adequate infrastructure and general underfundedness scholars point to corruption as the main issue to be dealt with as it renders all sorts of resource allocations to be of no effect. (Matemilola and Elegbede 2017, 20) (Berezi et al. 2017, 101-106)

## 3.2. Corruption

There is unanimous agreement in scholarly literature that the level and pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria is beyond extreme. A study on corruption in Nigeria attributes it to political and cultural causes, including religious and

ethnic diversity as well as ineffective reward and taxing systems and claims that corruption is causally tied to income inequalities and poverty. Regarding the solutions the study argues that merely instituting probe panels to fight corruption as have been done so far will not be an effective, rather it is the donors that should cut off aid upon perceiving notable levels of corruption. (Dike 2008, 1-18) These concerns are also held by various other studies on the subject.<sup>6</sup>

From a developmental point of view, a notable and non-negligible aspect of Nigerian corruption is that it is not restricted to the government and its officials. Smith in his study on Nigerian corruption argues that corruption is also widespread in civil society and NGOs. He shows that Western-dominated international institutions have shifted over the past two decades to a view that privileges civil society as a primary locus of economic development – a view echoed by certain scholars cited in the previous chapter – and that civil society along with NGOs are considered to fulfill the role of a watchdog of the government. Upon realising this-writes Smith- Nigerians reacted by establishing a myriad of various NGOs and civil society organisations to grab the available funds from donors, which means that essentially the main reason behind the existence of a large proportion of these organisations – which again are seen by donors as the engine of development - is rent seeking. For this reason, aid flows to Nigeria even if they are directed towards NGOs beside furthering the desired development objectives also just as much perpetuate corruption. Smith agrees with others that corruption is both the cause and the result of political and economic factors such as poverty and that the tapping of funds by NGOs and

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<sup>6</sup> These studies agree that corruption is a major if not the most important inhibitor of development and a pervasive malaise in the Nigerian polity. For more in depth research consult: *The Financing Gap, Civil Society, And Service Delivery In Nigeria* (Oshewolo and Oniemola 2011, 254-68)  
*Youth Unemployment And Implications For Stability Of Democracy In Nigeria* (Okafor 2011, 358-73)  
*Poverty Reduction and the Attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects* (Oshewolo 2011, 1-22)



civil society organisations created as a response to them being available only exacerbates corruption and poverty. (Smith 2010, 243-258)<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3. Oil

From a political economic perspective there is hardly anything that matches the importance of oil in Nigerian economy and politics. Scholarly data varies about the exact numbers however multiple studies agree that roughly 70% of government revenue is generated by exporting oil. While oil export is an undoubtedly large chunk in revenue generation it is all the more smaller in employing labour force as it provides labour for only around 3% of the total available labour force, making the country a great example of the Dutch Disease with the impact of oil on other sectors. For this reason, various scholars advocate for the previously mentioned economic diversification which so far has not been satisfactory partly because of unstable funding due to oil price volatility. (Akpobasah 2004, 1-3)

Related to this, another disadvantage of reliance on oil export is the need for foreign assistance due to decreasing oil prices. In times of a larger oil revenue the government had enough resources for funding its own development programmes, however when the oil price dropped at the beginning of the 1980s, the ratio Nigerian foreign debt increased to 60% of the GNI. (Fuady 2015, 1355)

Similar concerns are voiced by Ekong et al. as according to their study 25% of the country's GDP comes from oil exports making the economy extremely dependent on oil and its price volatility while diversification efforts so far have not yielded satisfactory results (Ekong et al. 2012, 54)

However, economy is by far not the only area that is negatively affected by the presence of oil. Oil is closely associated with authoritarian rule and it hinders democracy, a great example of which is the fact that in 2000 only two of the 290

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<sup>7</sup> A study on corruption by Sule et al. adds that various international agencies and multinational corporations especially in oil related fields are also siphoning money from Nigeria. (Sule et al. 2018, 103-105)

oil exporting countries were democracies. Revenues generated from oil are often spent on perpetuating the power structure.

Beside that oil ruins agricultural lands, fishing lands and water<sup>8</sup> which leads to militarization on the government's side and the situation gets even more explosive due to oil price volatility or when resources are not sufficiently distributed. Since violence often perpetuates itself, oil is a magnet for war as oil states are extremely prone to collapse and secessionist civil wars especially when the groups living oil rich areas are not the ones in power. (Gonzalez 2007, 11)

These grievances are supported by Boonstra et al. who show how higher oil prices stoke more protest and anger and facilitate violent conflicts as there were frequent attacks on oil installations in the Niger Delta region with more than a hundred kidnappings of Western oil workers while also pointing out that oil is indeed very much tied to corruption.<sup>9</sup> (Boonstra et. al 2008, 6-8)

Oil therefore holds a major explanatory power behind the maladies of Nigeria. It provides great opportunities for rent seeking while facilitating violence and contributing to the destruction of agricultural potential, the very thing that is considered to be a possible remedy to these illnesses.

### 3.4. Interrelatedness

The diagram at the end of this chapter shows how the above mentioned factors are all connected, reinforced and augmented by each other.

As an important driver behind violent conflicts and insurgencies oil in the current circumstances is much more of a curse than a blessing to the country as it exerts its disastrous influence on the political economic landscape of Nigeria by hindering the formation and functioning of democratic institutions and

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<sup>8</sup> Spillage is only one way oil destroys the environment. Excavations and the destruction of habitats also affects the environment

<sup>9</sup> Oil revenues are embezzled despite anticorruption measure and huge amounts of oil have been lost to siphoning or illegal 'bunkering' that helps funding militant groups. Beside that oil companies used the extra profit generated from higher oil prices to bribe local governors.

political stability as well as making the economy extremely sensitive to oil price volatility thereby severely decreasing the resilience of Nigerian economy.

Partly perpetuated by oil, corruption then paralyzes the institutional environment of the country which in turn will render most of the aid provided by donors to be of no effect, due to embezzlement or by the fact –as Smith pointed out- that a significant portion of NGOs and civil society organisations exist as an opportunity for grabbing available donor funds.

The impossibility of development due to corruption then results in large scale poverty and famine. A large percentage of the population is severely food insecure and is without any reliable source of income as the unemployment rate especially among the youth is alarmingly high. In a survey conducted in the Sub-Saharan region when asked what the most important problem facing the country most respondents mentioned poverty and corruption. (Gonzalez 2007, 14). Poverty is also related to violence and also to non-functioning, stagnating institutional environments as Elbadawi convincingly shows:<sup>10</sup>

*„In these situations, resources are allocated to address the immediate concerns of the day and are less likely to be allocated to education, the creation of infrastructure, or the strengthening of social capital. These economic setbacks have devastating effects on societies; for instance, excessive resources are devoted to security, and too few to education, health, and social services. Ultimately, this type of planning leads to a shortcircuited democratic politics. The Arab-Israeli conflict is an excellent example of this. The severity of economic problems caused by political violence ultimately depends on how strongly economic agents are averse to economic setbacks. If faced with high levels of risk, individuals will exhibit behavior that is risky and reckless.” ...*

*Grievance is just an incipient feeling, not an enabling factor. Fearron and Laitin argue that a lack of income is important, not because it makes insurgency recruitment cheaper or easier, but because it is a proxy for a weak state. That is, low income means that the state cannot maintain an exclusive monopoly on organized violence.” (Gonzalez 2007, 1-14)*

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<sup>10</sup> Rasheed in his study also describes how poverty contributed to the emergence of Boko Haram (Rasheed 2012, 21-26)

Agriculture is theorized by multiple scholars as a potential solution that could mitigate famine and poverty by providing food at least as subsistence farming while also creating jobs especially for rural people thereby slowing down rural-urban migration which also contributes to large scale unemployment and political instability. However, in order for agriculture to develop, adequate institutional capacities especially transparency, accountability and anti-corruption measures, as well as adequate infrastructure needs to be established. Without these pre-requisites development is essentially doomed to fail.

In light of this there are multiple areas and issues where the EU can engage and it is not unreasonable to assume that targeting and eliminating - or at least alleviating- any of the above mentioned systemic problems will be beneficial to the whole of the economy and polity. As shown, two of the major areas that are in desperate need of development are the institutional environment particularly corruption –for enabling further aid to effectively reach its target- and infrastructural underdevelopment with special attention to the agricultural sector as it holds immense potential in terms of poverty reduction which is the main objective of aid and Nigeria’s Vision. Therefore, in order to assess the development cooperation of the EU the analysis must focus on the following questions:

- Which one of the abovementioned problems (poverty, corruption, oil) along with their corollary effects (famine, political instability, lack of infrastructure etc.) are prioritized and how much?
- Related to that, does the EU development cooperation have a clear focus on any of the abovementioned issues without focusing on related problems, or it seeks to apply an all-at-once approach?
- Does the EU prioritize NGOs and civil society organisations or government offices when it comes to project implementation? If yes what does that mean?

One could reasonably expect the EU to give credit to the recommendations of organisations like FAO and maintain a decent amount of support for agriculture

as it is considered to be a multifunctional sector in terms of economic diversification, food security, unemployment and poverty reduction. Also if the level corruption is indeed that grave, this area can also be expected to be among the greatest beneficiaries of support as the EU herself has a declared intention of focusing on issues related to corruption.

**Figure 3.1. The Unholy Trinity of Nigeria**



Source: own compilation.

## 4. Analysis

The main subject of the analysis is an internal document prepared and published by the European Commission, containing an exhaustive, all-encompassing list of development projects taking or having taken place in Nigeria in the last decade, whether through direct funding from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, the EIDHR, the IcSP, the EUTF or as a part of the ECOWAS development cooperation. Last updated in July 2019 the document provides information about the budget of the projects, the source of funding, as well as the objective, target areas, implementing agencies, main activities and expected results of projects. Although the document does not go into an in-depth and thorough description of the individual projects, still it contains relevant information and data that could be satisfactory for conducting the analysis and finding out how the EU sees the situation in the country, what areas it seeks to develop and how much. (The European Commission 2019, 5-110)

### 4.1. Methodology

In order to get a broad picture about the subject, this study utilizes a method that simultaneously incorporates and combines both quantitative and qualitative ways of inquiry. Following this method allows for a more comprehensive way of looking at the given data and helps to get a result that will likely turn out to be more useful when it comes to the integration of findings into a broader context, than a mere sequence of numbers about the allocated aid or summary of project objectives would do.

According to the document there are 82 development projects related to Nigeria that are funded and supported by the European Union. These projects are split into three main parts, namely the *Nigeria EDF Programmes*, the *Regional EDF Programmes (ECOWAS)* and the so called *Other EU Instruments*.

This analysis is focusing on the *Nigeria EDF Programmes* and the *Other EU Instruments*, namely the *EU Emergency Trust Fund For Africa (EUTF)*, the *Thematic Programmes* and the *Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace*, leaving out the

ECOWAS projects which means a total sample of 51 projects. Although the ECOWAS projects do indeed contribute to development in Nigeria, the data provided there is not satisfactory for the analysis and would diminish the usability and value of the results as it is unknown what percentage of the allocated sum goes to Nigeria. This will inevitably result in the analysis being partial, however this way the results might turn out to be more accurate, which in the context of the whole study is probably a more favorable approach.

The main assumption the analysis is built on is that the EU will allocate more resources to an area which she considers important regardless if it is important for her own perceived interest or for that of the donor country or both.

Following the division of projects used by the document, the data the study focuses on is the total budget and the EU contribution therein, the agencies taking part in implementation, the number of projects within each section, and the objective and main expectations related to the projects.

This way in the Nigeria EDF Programmes there are three main groups of projects, namely the *Economic Cooperation and Energy*, the *Democracy, Governance and Migration* and the *Health, Nutrition and Resilience*. These categories also apply to the three other development cooperation initiatives the *Thematic Programmes*, the *EUTF* and the *IcSP* as well.

As for the qualitative part, reading through the description provided to each of the projects, looking for common themes, patterns, and correspondences this study uses a thematic, target area based division of projects for each of these three sections. This means that each target area has projects assigned to it that target or contribute to that particular area. In certain cases the study has seen advisable to take certain extremely closely related areas and objectives as one single unit.

After categorising the projects within each group, the sum of the total EU contribution to the target areas is attached to the target area in order to get a sequence representing the perceived priorities of the EU. This sum equals the

sum of EU contributions to the projects found within each particular target area. Since the document does not provide information about the allocation of resources within the individual projects this method seems to be the most viable in determining priorities. The results for the three main cooperation areas (*Economic Cooperation and Energy, Democracy, Governance and Migration and Health, Nutrition and Resilience*) which also include the *EUTF, Thematic Programmes* and *IcSP* projects are then further categorized and aggregated in a thematic manner based on perceived relatedness. Results are also provided in charts and diagrams below as well as explained underneath.

#### 4.1.1. Limitations of this method

A drawback of this approach is that the somewhat arbitrary categorisation inherently influences the result as the boundaries between the categories are up to debate and it is possible to argue that a particular project should or should not be included in the category it is included in. Examining the projects this way will necessarily add a certain degree of subjectivity to the analysis. It is important to keep in mind that in this type of categorisation one single project can be assigned to two or more target areas at the same time, meaning that in reality there is an inherently existing overlap between these categories and this way of analysing and grouping them will provide somewhat abstract results that can and should only be interpreted with this particular methodology in mind.

Also it is important to note that while evaluating and analysing any kind of development cooperation one should be aware of the fact that seemingly different areas like infrastructure and food security, or institutions are not completely separate and unrelated entities within the political economic and social context of a state, having no influence on each other. Therefore the categories and groups created and employed by this study - although based on perceived relatedness and similarity – are to a certain extent artificial and should be used and interpreted accordingly.



## 4.2. Expected Results

On the basis of the EU's own commitments and the scholarly literature on aid, the analysis is expected to give roughly the following results. Institutions, transparency, accountability are likely to occupy a prominent if not the first place in the overall development package, in accordance with the declared principles of the EU, as well as the scholarly claim of the EU's intent to transform the institutional and legal environment of the region to one that is of her own likeness in order to enhance the beneficial effects of economic cooperation. Besides that if the EU leadership also follows recommendations of scholars who advocate for focusing aid on governance, legal and institutional development, this is the area that is most likely to be at the forefront of development cooperation.

Poverty reduction should also take a significant portion of the allocated aid as the EU posits it as the main and ultimate objective of development cooperation, although scholars warn for it being underfunded. Agriculture is probably lagging behind in the list of priorities and so does food security.

If one accepts the assumption that economic interests are a prominent driving force behind the EU's aid allocation and that infrastructural and industrial development is a must have for the optimal functioning of economic and trade relations then there is a high probability that that these two are also among the most subsidised areas.

Furthermore if the supposed main motivation of the EU is political stability which includes managing migration, combating violent extremism, terrorism etc. as many scholars claim then this area should also enjoy significant attention, probably similar or slightly less in volume of aid given to it than institutions and infrastructure. According to scholarship, democracy promotion is not a top priority therefore it should be unlikely that it receives more support than security concerns or infrastructure.

As for aid fragmentation, if scholarly observations are true, there should be numerous agencies taking part in the implementation of projects, most of which are not affiliated with the government.

### 4.3. Results

#### Economic Cooperation and Energy – Nigeria EDF Programmes

Chart 1

Total budget: 1318,675 MEUR	Number of organisations: 12 (3 Nigerian)
EU contribution: 496,8 MEUR	Number of projects: 14

Target areas	Projects	Available resources
Agriculture	SEEFOR, NICOP	89 MEUR
Trade	NICOP, Nigeria Competitiveness Support Programme, EU Support to the Energy Sector in Nigeria- Phase 1	80 MEUR
Poverty reduction	Support to the Office of the NAO IV	8,5 MEUR
Energy / Electricity / Infrastructure	EU Support To The Energy Sector In Nigeria- Phase 1, First Contribution To AFIF in Support Of The Energy Sector in Nigeria, Second Contribution To AFIF In Support Of The Energy Sector In Nigeria, Solar Electrification Of Rural Social Services For Stability In Alignment	372,7 MEUR

	With UN Health Cluster And Borno State, SUNREF Nigeria, SEEFOR	
Coordination / Regulations / Monitoring / Capacity building	Support to the Office of the NAO IV, Technical Cooperation Facility IV – Nigeria, 11th EDF Support Measures: Public Outreach on the Implementation of Key National Strategies & EU - Nigeria Relations, EU Support to the Energy Sector in Nigeria- Phase 1, Eu Funded Trust Fund For Capacity Building In Borno State On PFM, Monitoring And Evaluation And Coordination, SUFEGOR, SLOGOR	281, 1 MEUR
Investments/growth	Nigeria Competitiveness Support Programme, EU Support to the Energy Sector in Nigeria- Phase 1, NICOP, EU Support To The Energy Sector In Nigeria- Phase 1, Second Contribution To AFIF In Support Of The Energy Sector In Nigeria, SUNREF Nigeria	154,7 MEUR

Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

## Democracy, Governance and Migration – Nigeria EDF Programmes

Chart 2

Total budget: 136,5 MEUR	Number of organisations: 12 (5 Nigerian)
EU contribution: 136 MEUR	Number of projects: 7

Target areas	Projects	Available resources
Migration	TIPSOM	10 MEUR
Stability	Response To Drugs And Related Crime In Nigeria, Eu-Support For Criminal Justice Responses To Terrorism And Violent Extremism,	59,5 MEUR
Institutions / Democracy / Accountability / Transparency / Corruption	Eu-Support To Democratic Governance In Nigeria, EU ACT, ROLAC	66,5 MEUR

Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

## Health, Nutrition and Resilience – Nigeria EDF Programmes

*Chart 3*

Total budget: 1070,909936 MEUR	Number of organisations: 27 (4 Nigerian)
EU contribution: 627 MEUR	Number of projects: 10

Target areas	Projects	Available resources
Food security	EU Support To Response, Recovery And Resilience In Borno State, EU Support To Recovery From Conflict And Resilience Building In Yobe State, EU Support To Strengthening Resilience In Northern Nigeria	218 MEUR
Poverty reduction / unemployment	MPP 9, NDSP, WSSRP II	226,5 MEUR
Institutions / Legal frameworks / Policies / Monitoring / Accountability	MPP 9, NDSP, WSSRP II, WSSRP III, EU Support To The Health Sector Phase 1, EU Support To Strengthening Resilience In Northern Nigeria, EU Support To Response, Recovery And Resilience In Borno State, EU Support To Recovery From Conflict And Resilience Building In Yobe	555 MEUR

Infrastructure / Energy / Public services / Water	NDSP, WSSRP II, WSSRP III, EU – SIGN, EASE, EU Support To Strengthening Resilience In Northern Nigeria, EU Support To Response, Recovery And Resilience In Borno State	481 MEUR
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Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by  
The European Commission, 2019

## EUTF

*Chart 4*

Total budget: 97,594793 MEUR	Number of organisations: 8 (0 Nigerian)
EU contribution: 95,2 MEUR	Number of projects: 5

Target areas	Projects	Available resources
Food security	Restoring And Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Based Livelihoods For Food Security, Employment, And Nutrition Improvement In Borno State	20 MEUR
Recovery / Social cohesion / Economic recovery / Institutions	RESILAC	34,2 MEUR

Migration	Strengthening Migration Governance In Nigeria And Sustainable Reintegration Of Returning Migrants	15,5 MEUR
Community management / Violence / Psychosocial support	Enhancing State And Community Level Conflict Management Capability In North-Eastern Nigeria, FROM Risk To Resilience - Strengthening Psychosocial Support, Mental Health, Reintegration And Protection Services For Children In Borno, Including Children Associated With Boko Haram	25,5 MEUR

Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

## Thematic Programmes

The *Thematic Programmes* consist of three main areas, the Economic Cooperation and Energy, Democracy, Governance and Migration and Health, Nutrition and Resilience.

The *Economic Cooperation and Energy* contains one single project, the NCCRP of 8 MEUR, implemented by 3 organisations, targeting renewable energy and reducing energy costs and emissions.

### *Democracy, Governance and Migration - Thematic Programmes*

Chart 5

Total budget: 1,3444707 MEUR	Number of organisations: 5 (3 Nigerian in Thematic Programmes)
EU contribution: 1,31518637 MEUR	Number of projects: 5

Target area	Projects	Available resources
Regulations / Accountability / Monitoring / Transparency / Human rights	Strengthening Regulatory Framework and Enabling Environment for a more Accountable and Transparent Civil Society in Nigeria, A Non-profit Newsroom for Investigative and Development Reporting, MATAI, Access to Social Services for Persons with Albinism in Nigeria	0,85270401 MEUR
Migration	Protection of Migrants and Asylum Seekers especially children and women coming from Nigeria and victims of trafficking	0,462,42836 MEUR

Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

### *Health, Nutrition and Resilience – Thematic Programmes*

*Chart 6*

Total budget: 21,5 MEUR	Number of organisations: 1
EU contribution: 15 MEUR	Number of projects: 2

Target area	Projects	Available resources
Food security	Eu Support To Food Security And Resilience In Northern Nigeria, Eu	15 MEUR



	Support To Food Security And Resilience In Taraba State	
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Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

*IcSP*

*Chart 7*

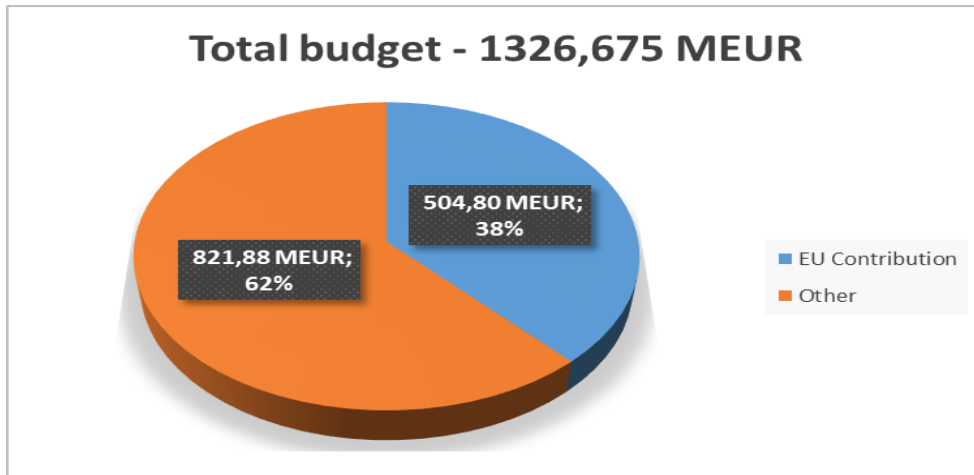
Total budget: 10,2 MEUR	Number of organisations: 5 (2 Nigerian)
EU contribution: 10,2 MEUR	Number of projects: 4

Target area	Projects	Available resources
Conflict de-escalation, stability, reducing violent extremism and terrorism	Support To The Nigerian Prisons Service Deradicalisation Programme, Strengthening Civilian Protection Policy And Practice In Nigeria, Demobilization, Disassociation, Reintegration And Reconciliation: Conflict Dissolution And Peacebuilding In North-East Nigeria, Stemming The Multiple Layered Crisis In The Niger Delta Region Of Nigeria (Phase 3)	10,2 MEUR

Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

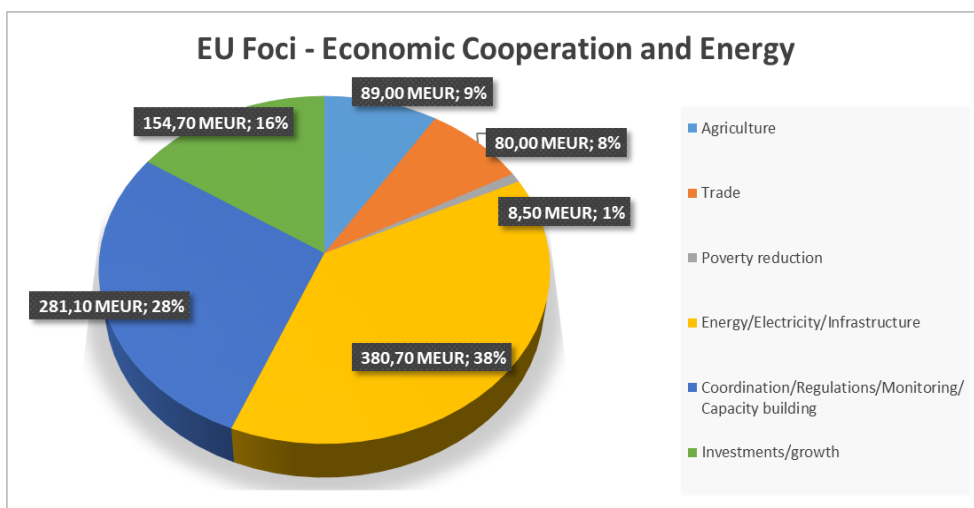
*Economic Cooperation and Energy (including EUTF and Thematic Programmes)*

Figure 4.1.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

Figure 4.2.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

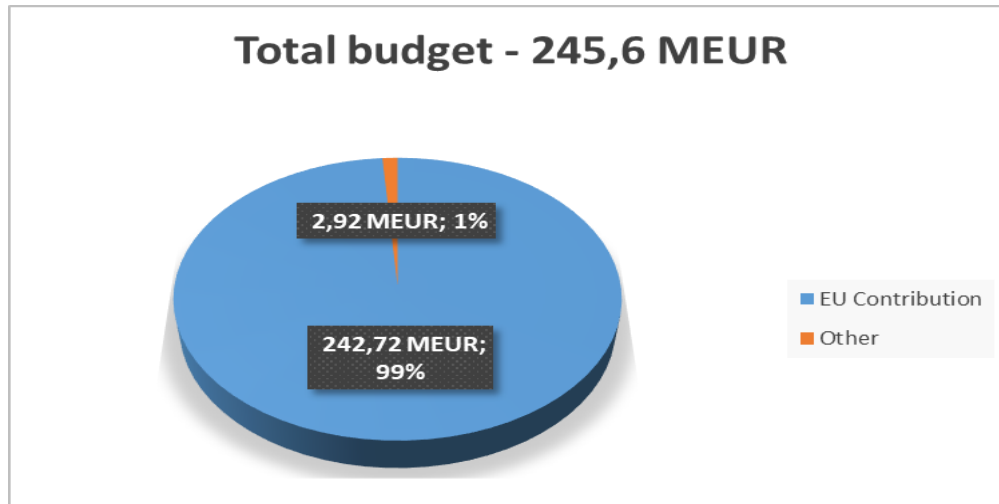


In terms of the first major development cooperation area, the EU provides slightly more than one third of the total budget. As for the priorities within this part the largest chunk is targeting the development of infrastructure and the generally the electric and renewable energy sector which seems to be in accordance with the main purpose of this part. The second priority focuses on the institutional capacities, coordination, monitoring and regulation. The rest of the contribution seems roughly equal to the size of the latter two and is divided into four parts, namely investments/growth, agriculture, trade and poverty reduction within the same order. The encouragement of investments enjoys approximately the same amount of support as agriculture and trade combined and poverty reduction stands at the end of the row with its one percent of support. Therefore, the priority list is as follows:

1. Infrastructure/energy
2. Institutions/Coordination
3. Investment
4. Agriculture
5. Trade
6. Poverty reduction

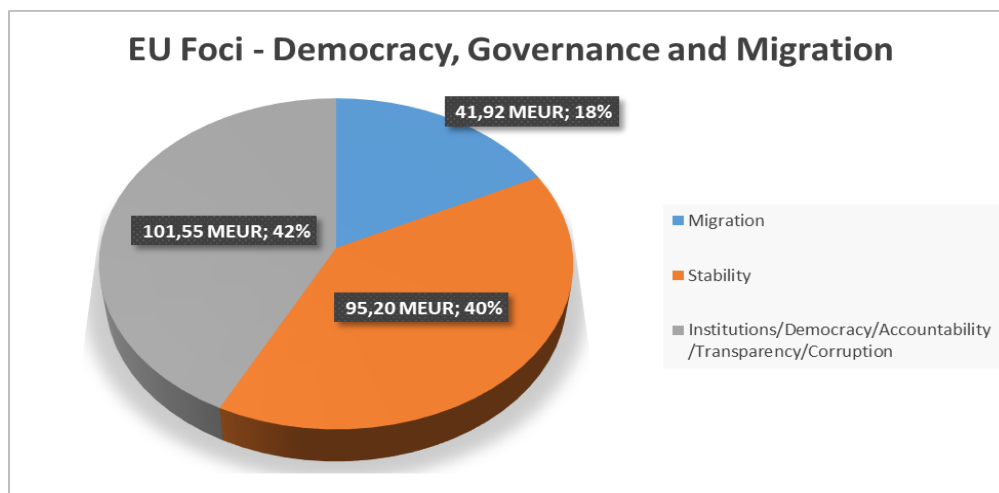
*Democracy, Governance and Migration (including EUTF, Thematic Programmes and IcSP)*

Figure 4.3.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

Figure 4.4.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

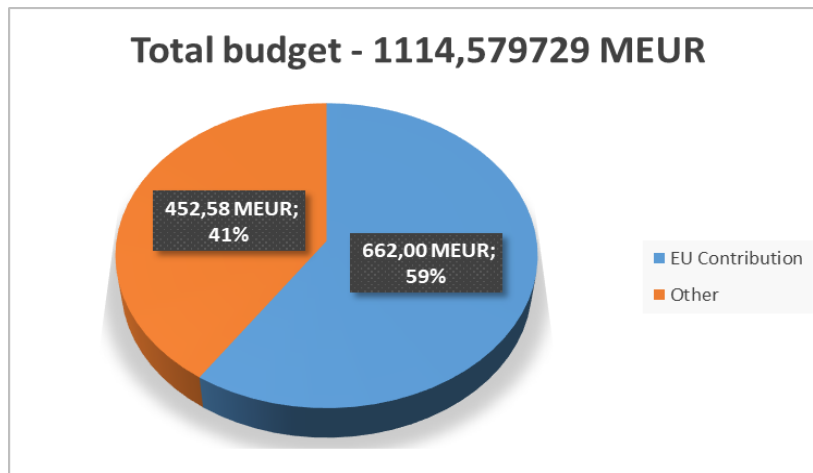


As for the second major group of projects, the EU support to these issues is overwhelmingly high with its almost 100% funding of project costs. Here it is important to note that an interpretation of results based exclusively on percentages could lead to very different conclusions than an interpretation taking the nominal sums and aggregated data into account. Looking exclusively at the percentages one could easily draw the conclusion that this is the area that is most important for the EU because almost 100% of the costs are funded by her. Although this conclusion could be a possible interpretation, however it is also visible from the other major areas that the total budget of *Democracy, Governance and Migration* is basically equal to the part dedicated to coordination, regulations and institutions in the *Economic Cooperation and Energy* area. Therefore this study proceeds to take a look at the aggregated results as well. Regarding the internal division of support to this area, the two main and almost equal halves are institutions etc. and stability, and the third bit is related to migration. Priorities:

1. Institutions
2. Stability
3. Migration

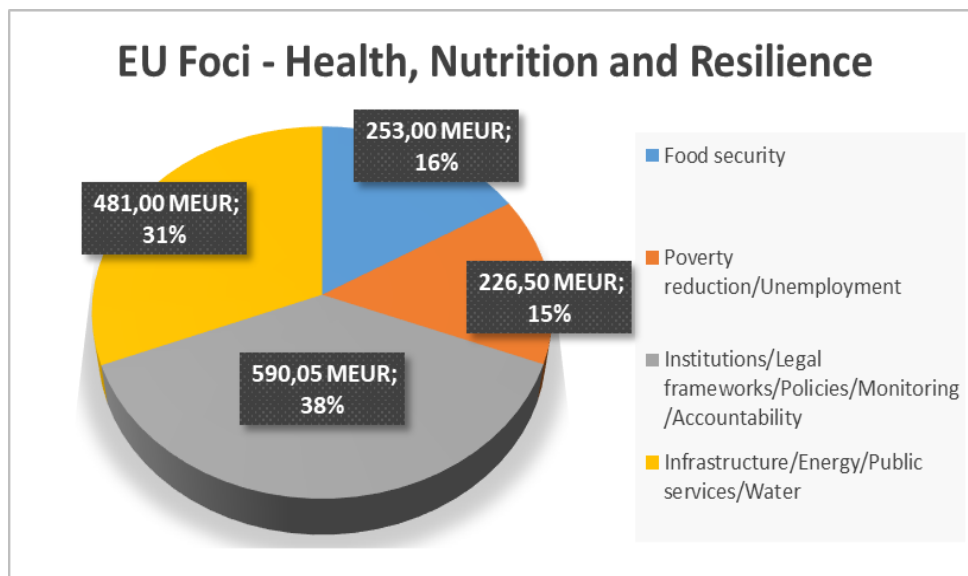
*Health, Nutrition and Resilience (including EUTF and Thematic Programmes)*

Figure 4.5.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

Figure 4.6.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019

Lastly in the third major area the EU contribution covers almost the two thirds of the total costs. The EU contribution is divided into four parts with the largest being institutions etc. with its more than half a billion EUR coverage. This concentrated attention to institutions resembles the internal allocation of the other two major areas where institutions are also among the greatest beneficiaries of aid. The second almost equal part in this area is infrastructure / energy etc, and the last two almost equal bits are food security and poverty reduction with poverty reduction slightly beyond food security. The latter two combined is almost equal to either of the others.

1. Institutions
2. Infrastructure
3. Food security
4. Poverty reduction

#### 4.4. Aggregating the results

As mentioned before looking only at percentages and drawing conclusions based only on them without looking at relative sizes of areas could be misleading. As seen in the diagrams and charts above, there are a few target areas such as institutions and infrastructure that are present across the whole spectrum of the EU's development cooperation. Therefore in order to get a more comprehensive picture, it is advisable to aggregate, compare and contrast the results.

On the diagram below, micro areas such as democracy, governance, institutions, capability building, monitoring, accountability, transparency, legal frameworks and policies are represented by the macro category „Institutions”. In a similar vein all that has been grouped together with infrastructure in the previous diagrams such as electricity and public services are to be found in the „Infrastructure” category and that applies to the other categories as well.

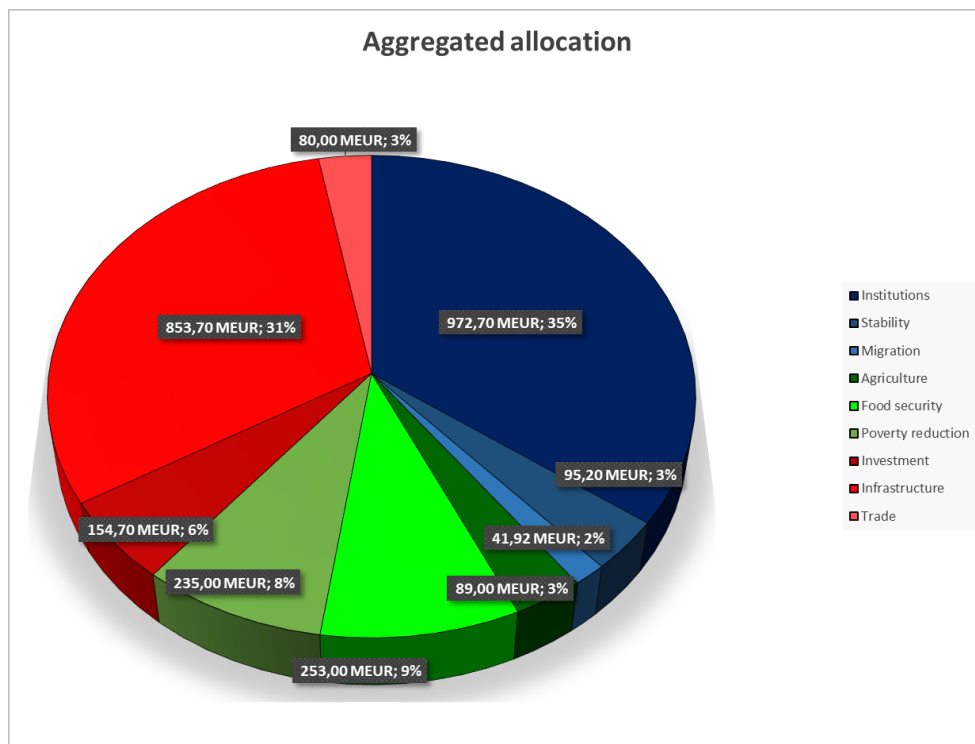
In order to provide further information, diagram is organised in a manner that categories that are more closely related to each other are next to each other and

are also color coded with roughly similar colors. This categorisation gives triads which are:

- Institutions / Stability / Migration;
- Agriculture / Food security / Poverty reduction;
- Investment / Infrastructure / Trade;

with trade being extremely debatable as it is equally reasonable to group it together with institutions as well as with infrastructure and investment as both good institutions and good infrastructure can be considered as pre-requisites and components of vital in trade relations. For this analysis it is grouped together with infrastructure.

Figure 4.7.



Source: „European Union-Nigeria Development Cooperation Programmes Compendium.” by The European Commission, 2019



Looking at the aggregated allocation institutions are visibly the largest beneficiaries of EU support, followed by the a similar sized infrastructure. Poverty reduction and food security are approximately quarter the size of the previous two. Investment benefits from support roughly twice as much as agriculture does. The triad of Agriculture / Food security / Poverty reduction still gets smaller support as either of the two single giants of institutions and infrastructure. This dataset enables two differing interpretations. Based on simply the nominal value of each individual area EU development priorities are as follows:

1. Institutions
2. Infrastructure
3. Food security
4. Poverty reduction
5. Investment
6. Stability
7. Migration
8. Agriculture
9. Trade

However, if individual areas are taken and ranked together in triads based on supposed relatedness the order is the following:

1. Institutions / Stability / Migration
2. Infrastructure / Investment / Trade
3. Agriculture / Food security / Poverty reduction

The common denominator in these two interpretations is the visibly strong institutional orientation of the EU development priorities. Another common pattern is the fact that agriculture is among the last of priorities in the list. Looking at relative size of areas institutions and infrastructure massively dominate the EU's development priorities. In a similar manner to each three previous diagrams of EU foci, the aggregated allocations show two very strongly subsidised areas, in this case institutions and infrastructure, and the remaining

chunk is divided to multiple smaller areas. This means that essentially the EU priorities have a dual focus.

As for the relation of the number of projects to that of the implementing organisations results are the following. The *Economic Cooperation and Energy* area has 17 projects with 13 organisations implementing them. The area of *Democracy, Governance and Migration* is made up of 16 projects with 22 organisations and lastly the number of projects within *Health, Nutrition and Resilience* is 12 which are implemented by 28 organisations. The *Economic Cooperation and Energy* area is the only one with more projects than organisations. The total numbers are 63 organisations - out of which only 17 are Nigerian - implementing 45 projects which means that on the average one project is implemented by one and a half organisation.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Comparing the findings with preliminary expectations and suppositions

Regarding the first question whether aid allocation is consistent with the EU rhetoric of strongly supporting institutional development, results clearly indicate that this is indeed the case. Institutional and legal capacities, accountability and transparency are in all three major areas (*Economic Cooperation and Energy, Democracy governance and Migration, Health Nutrition and Resilience*) among if not the most subsidised sectors. Also in the aggregated allocation this sector takes up most of the aid.

Concerning another important EU objective, results are not quite as supportive as with institutions. Poverty reduction taken together with food security still receives significantly less attention than either of the two main sectors of infrastructure and institutions. In areas which poverty reduction is a sub-target of, it consistently takes the last place among priorities, in the aggregated allocation however it is the fourth most supported area. If one takes poverty

reduction and food security as fundamentally one, due to them being extremely closely related, it becomes the third among priorities. Therefore, it can still be argued that the EU's rhetoric regarding poverty reduction is consistent with her policy however with extreme caution.

Agriculture receives very little attention as it takes the penultimate position on the priority list which seems to confirm the scholarly concern of it being underfunded and an ideal target of a „big push”. As for public services such as water sanitation, prospects are not that dire. These services are contained within the „Infrastructure” section of the aggregated allocation which is the second most subsidised sector among all. For more accurate results, they are to be found among the *Health, Nutrition and Resilience* projects where they are within the 31% slice of the EU Foci, the second biggest sector in that area, with 481 MEUR of available support. Therefore as opposed to agriculture these services seem to enjoy much greater attention, which although does not entirely refute the supposed lack of focus voiced by certain scholars however neither does it validate it, as these services are in the second most subsidised sector of the *Health Nutrition and Resilience* projects.

Since institutional development takes the leading role in all but one area, where it slightly lags behind Infrastructure, the analysis seems to support the claim that the EU seeks to transform the institutional environment to her own likeness. Obviously this cannot be proven or refuted merely by looking at these results, however institutions definitely take the lead in the EU's aid allocation, and it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the particular institutional setting that the EU is trying to facilitate mirrors her own. Whether this happens because the EU seeks to make better use of such an environment or not, the EU's development policy seems to be aligned with the recommendations of those scholars, the pragmatists, who prioritize institution building in order for subsequent aid to have beneficial or at least not detrimental effect.

Moving on to alignment with scholarly recommendations, in terms of a clearly identifiable focal point results do not indicate that there is one. Rather there are

two very strongly supported areas, institutions and infrastructure with roughly the same amount of support which means that EU development policy in the country is bifocal. If one accepts that poverty reduction and food security can be taken together as one, the results will show that there are three main areas that are focused on, infrastructure, institutions and poverty reduction, out which the former two are clearly prioritized. As the EU's attention is divided into three larger parts it becomes difficult to argue that development cooperation has a clearly identifiable focal point. If it does, it is institutional development however infrastructure receives only little less attention. Therefore the supposition that institutions and infrastructural development be underfunded in relational terms is clearly contradicted by the results.

As for the implementation of projects the concerns raised by scholars are confirmed. Roughly 27% of the implementing agencies are Nigerian. A lot of these organisations are NGOs or other civil society organisations and very few are government bureaus. There is no single coordinating body and most of the non-local organisations are international agencies or private companies. This means that the usage of recipient institutions, which is considered by many as crucial for institutional development is at a very low level which according to numerous scholars undermines the very target of aid which is mostly institutional development.

The assumption that the EU's intent to promote democracy is reflected in her allocation of aid is unequivocally affirmed by the results as the slice „Institutions” which contains democratic governance, transparency etc. is visibly the largest. Democracy and democratic ownership, governance etc. is a built-in feature of projects funded by the EU, as well as the direct target of certain projects. It is worth mentioning that the „*Democracy, Governance and Migration*” projects are almost 100% EU funded. Taking into account that this area enjoys roughly the same support as poverty reduction on its own, this ratio of EU - Other funding might be interpreted as rather symbolic. Democracy promotion is indeed prominent, however, it is rather a normative way of conducting other development projects rather than the main objective itself.

However, it is questionable whether democracy promotion in itself is a priority or not. As mentioned above it receives roughly the same amount of support as poverty reduction does, which means that on its own it could hardly be the main focus of attention. On the other hand however, an overwhelming number of projects target democratic institution building which according to the results is the top priority of the EU, the argument that democracy promotion is a top priority stands, which contradicts Khakee's observation, although one should be careful claiming this for the situation is more nuanced as democracy promotion on its own is certainly not a top priority. It is promoted extremely strongly, however rather indirectly. This answers the concerns of scholars who claim that the EU is not consistent with her democracy promotion. Their argument is based on the inconsistent application of sanctions and aid restrictions, however examining the allocation of aid shows that the EU does indeed put a lot of effort into democracy promotion although the application of sanctions might still be problematic.

Regarding infrastructure, results contradict the claim of Kharas that infrastructure is underfunded, as it is the second most subsidised area slightly behind institutions, with a massive amount of support in terms of percentage. It is quite possible that this sum of available resources does not meet the amount this sector would ideally require, in which case Kharas' argument stands, however in terms of relative support it is contradicted. Khakee's observation that infrastructure and industries are the backbone of the economic relations between European countries and Nigeria can clearly be supported using the results, and starting out from that, results can also support the claim that economic relations are of primary importance as infrastructure enjoys significant amount of support, however it still does not exceed institution building, which means that the claim of economic interests preceding democracy promotion is somewhat contested.

Concerning security, stability is a significant part of „*Democracy, Governance and Migration*” projects, although it is still slightly behind institutions. In the aggregated allocation however it is a minor area and takes the sixth position on

the priority list. It does not enjoy the same support as democratic institutions do. Even if taken together with migration it is far behind the support given to institutions or infrastructure. Therefore, the claim of Del Biondo that security concerns almost always precede economic factors and democracy promotion is strongly contradicted. If one accepts the above mentioned assumption of Khakee that aid allocated to infrastructural development can be an indicator of economic interest it becomes clear that it is economic interests that precede security concerns by large. Security concerns are given even less attention than poverty reduction is. Del Biondo's claim that the EU fears that illegal migration will undermine the EU's security interest is also contradicted as migration also receives relatively little attention. Results also contradict her claim that the EU wants to stabilise the region and not democratise it. Democracy promotion is much stronger than stabilisation. The only way for her claim to stand is that if democratisation – as she claims - is interpreted as a means of stabilisation. If it is so, her argument stands as the promotion of democratic practices is strongly present in EU development policy. However, when the two contrasted democracy promotion is clearly superior.

The observation of Bountagkidis et al. that the EU strongly supports projects that target conflict mitigation, disarmament etc. is only supported if one defines strong support as covering the total costs of related programmes. Indeed, there is a spectacular EU – Other ratio when looking at the funding of these projects. On the other hand, however, they still do not match the massive amounts of aid given to other areas of development. They also claim along with Del Biondo that security and economic concerns are the main drivers of EU aid allocation, however from this claim only the part regarding economic concerns seem to be valid. Bountagkidis' et al. claim that economic interests of the EU are more important to her than the institutions of the recipient country. This is also contradicted by the results, although infrastructural development receives almost the same amount of support as institutions and democracy promotion, which means that their claim is not without basis.

Finally, Khakee's claim that governance related issues are extremely important in the overall EU development package is clearly supported as good governance and corollary practices are an important part of almost all of the projects.

Although the borderlines are blurred between the three schools of thought mentioned before, the EU's allocation of aid seems to be in line with the pragmatic school for the most part. It is rational to argue that focusing this strongly on institution-building serves the purpose of establishing an environment first with good absorbing capacities in order to enhance the effectiveness of subsequent aid flows. On the other hand, however, results can also support the allegations that the EU is protecting her companies economic interests, particularly that of oil extracting companies by seeking to create a comfortable legal and institutional environment for them to maneuver in.

## 5.2. Applying the results to domestic political economic context

After having compared the results with expectations and findings from scholarly literature on aid, this chapter intends to translate the findings back into the country context and to the system of interrelated issues presented in that chapter. Based on the results there are a few important conclusions to be drawn.

First, it seems that although poverty along with food security is a problem of primary importance in Nigeria, so much so that even its *Vision 2020* also considers it the number one issue to be tackled, the EU aid shows little correlation with that. As demonstrated earlier the EU herself also prioritizes poverty reduction and the elimination of hunger in her own commitments, however this is not reflected in her aid allocation, meaning that this particular finding supports the hypothesis.

Secondly, both scholarly research about the domestic political economic context and EU aid agree that agriculture is seriously underfunded which is also supported by this analysis. This is especially an issue that deserves greater attention due to the potential agriculture holds in terms of poverty reduction and

economic diversification. The local government is also aware of its potentials, and dedicates significant attention to it in the *Vision 2020*. Experts of FAO along with other scholars note that agricultural development could be an important stage in the way out of poverty and could serve as a basis for later stages of development, however based on the EU's allocation of aid, the EU does not seem to be on the same page with them.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, simply the fact that a certain problematic area gets little funding is in itself not enough to convincingly argue that the particular development policy does not suit the country because from a political economic perspective it is the causal interrelatedness of issues that has a much more defining role in the overall assessment.

Based on this, from the perspective of causal interrelatedness the EU's development cooperation seems much less misguided. As shown in the third chapter one of the main problems in Nigeria is corruption and the lack of appropriate infrastructure. According to the analysis these are the very two areas the EU most strongly focuses on. Based on the allocation of aid, it is reasonable to argue that the way the EU tries to engage the situation in the country is by trying to establish a solid institutional environment in the first place, along with building the essentials of infrastructure, which possibly can result in poverty reduction and less violent conflicts, creating the much desired political stability which according to multiple scholars is a key driver behind the EU's development cooperation or in other words, simultaneous institution and infrastructure building is the cornerstone of EU development strategy and these two should serve as a basis for tackling the rest of the problems.

The advantage of this approach is that it treats two of the important elements of underdevelopment at once, possibly breaking the self-reinforcing causal chain of problems, a strategy that puts the EU in the pragmatic school mentioned in the earlier chapter. The EU seems to be aware of those recommendations found in scholarly literature that posit good institutions as an indispensable prerequisite of development and tries to act accordingly.





From this point of view the prioritization of institutional development does suit the political economic context of Nigeria well as institutional underdevelopment is considered to be the main cause of infrastructural and agricultural underdevelopment and therefore the underlying cause of poverty - which again – is the ultimate objective of development cooperation.

However considering the fact that problems are simultaneously the causes and effects of each other, theoretically any – or any two – entry points for the EU to engage would be a suitable strategy to break the circle and for this reason it is important to dig deeper and incorporate further aspects and results from the analysis.

As the analysis shows a significant amount of projects funded by the EU are targeting the development of civil society organisations and are also implemented by such organisations. If one accepts the argument that civil society organisations and NGOs in Nigeria are just as much riddled with corruption as the government bureaus themselves then the strong reliance of the EU on them is much more of a problem than a solution.

A warning against the dangers of overreliance on civil society is also given by Harber who calls attention to the fact that civil society in Africa is not inherently democratic and does not necessarily seek to limit or influence the policies of the state.

Moreover, civil society organisations can serve as agents of parochial or ethnic interests like certain organisations in Rwanda and Liberia that are daunting examples of ethnic-based organisations, which is especially an appalling situation considering that Nigeria is by far not homogenous neither in ethnic nor in religious sense as mentioned in the third chapter.

Other scholars along with Harber warn against the EU'S approach to build or reconstruct fragile states through technocratic one-size-fits all policies that do not take the local political economic context into consideration particularly ethnic and religious divisions and Harber even goes as far as arguing that

authoritarianism would be a better option to reduce poverty and instead of pouring money into institution-building, education should take the lead in forming and cultivating views and values that later will lead to the natural emergence of democratic institutions. (Harber 2002, 268-275) (Hout 2010,153) (Slocum-Bradley and Bradley 2010, 45) (Hurt 2010, 163-164)

The heavy focus on NGOs and civil society organisations by the EU in project objectives and implementation supports the assumption that the EU is aware of the pervasive corruption within the Nigerian government and seeks to tailor its development cooperation accordingly which on the surface level would go against the hypothesis, however if civil society and NGOs are equally corrupt than relying on them to facilitate change by providing massive amounts of support to institution-building means that the development strategy is not quite aligned well with the political economic context which in turn supports the hypothesis, as it can be reasonably argued that organisations that exist as a response to available donor money will hardly ever consider it their interest to facilitate development big enough to make further aid flows less necessary.

This means that it is extremely questionable whether aid allocated to institution-building and democracy promotion will actually facilitate development on the long run and it is quite possible that it only makes things worse by perpetuating corruption through civil society, meaning that one component of the EU's dual approach to development in Nigeria (simultaneous institution and infrastructure building) is already very controversial, leaving only infrastructure building but as shown earlier, due to pervasive corruption that becomes very problematic as well.

This line of argumentation has significance from another perspective as well. As outlined in chapter two, according to certain scholars the real motivation behind the EU's strong focus of democratic institutional environment could be better explained by her own long term economic interest, which seems to give a reasonable explanation why this area is the main focus of the EU along with infrastructure, why the EU hastens to create an environment that she and quite

possibly multinational firms, agencies and companies can navigate well in. If the EU holds to her own commitment according to which poverty reduction is a primary objective in the sense that every particular step in a development package should point to this direction, then she should seriously reconsider her development policy in Nigeria. If one of the legs of EU engagement (institution building) suffers from internal flaws, then it is naive to hope that serious results can be achieved. Even if the EU's „true” motivation behind focusing this strongly on institution building is her own economic interest it seems advisable to expect institutional development from rather natural processes as it is highly questionable whether the current setting will facilitate the emergence of desired institutions whether for her to make better use of them or not.

Again it is important to note that results show that security concerns and violence, often related to oil and poverty are not prioritized by the EU, as according to the supposed current strategy the solution to these issues is expected from the outworkings of the two strongly supported areas, namely institutions and infrastructure out of which the former suffers from fundamental flaws thus compromising the whole strategy.

The present strategy indicates that the EU views corruption as the cause of poverty and violence, which is true, however she seems to ignore or fail to recognize that corruption is just as much a consequence of poverty and violence as it is their cause. The EU's strategy seems to be mitigating corruption directly as a cause behind the symptoms, however not only the way the EU does that is problematic but also the view of corruption as a cause exclusively and not a cause and symptom simultaneously.

To sum it up, results yield a partial confirmation of the hypothesis. Scholarly criticism of agriculture and poverty reduction being underfunded is confirmed as well as the concern that the EU prefers not to use government bureaus, instead she relies on third party organisations when it comes to programme implementation. An interesting finding is that although the EU formally intends to develop government institutions and facilitate good governance, yet she relies

on government bureaus very rarely, thus confirming scholarly criticism that the very thing donors should avoid doing is bypassing government institutions. Ironically given the level of corruption within the Nigerian government, bypassing it hoping to avoid losing the funds due to corruption would seem advisable at first glance, and would refute the hypothesis. However, considering that corruption is by far not exclusive to government institutions but pertains to the totality of Nigerian society, pouring aid into an already corrupt environment hoping that it is going to transform itself is very much like trying to extinguish fire with gasoline.

In other words, the EU's intent to combat corruption as an inhibitor of further development is right, and in a certain way does fit the political economic context of Nigeria. However, when going deeper it becomes clear that this strategy - however common-sensical it may be- is seriously controversial and on the long run may even do more harm than good.

The infrastructural sector is not underfunded in terms of percentage, as it is the second major priority of the EU in Nigeria with almost equal support to institution building. This aspect of EU development policy seems to fit well into the political economic context for the lack of adequate infrastructure outlined in previous chapters.

### 5.3 Towards normativity

Considering all this, it is worth asking the question what the EU should focus on instead of institution building and in what ways her development policy should be tailored to fit the Nigerian political economic context more? If the proper usage and effectiveness of development aid is strongly dependent on the institutional environment as scholars unanimously agree then what should be at the center of attention if not establishing a proper institutional environment that would enable further development?

To provide a solution to this issue, it is useful to take a look at the way problems are interconnected in the political economic context of Nigeria again. Poverty

and food security are causally connected to both violence and corruption in a way that each reinforces one another. Based on this it is possible to claim that corruption and violence are caused by poverty and food security. Note that eradication of poverty and hunger are theoretically the ultimate objectives of both the EU as well as the Nigerian government, meaning that development programmes are meant to bring this goal closer either by the improvement of legal systems or promotion of democratic practices etc. On the surface level the EU's strategy of dual engagement (institutions and infrastructure) seems to be quite a good approach as it seeks to create a stable basis for further development.

Based on the political economic context and the results of the analysis however, this study recommends shifting the focus from institution building to supporting agricultural development while maintaining strong support for infrastructural development as it is needed for agriculture to develop, thus joining the optimist school which argues that development is to be achieved by giving a „big push” to certain sectors<sup>11</sup>. The rationale behind this is that in case of Nigeria the most optimal area where a big push could exert its influence and could possibly kickstart the disruption of the vicious circle is agriculture. As mentioned in the third chapter, many scholars view this as a sector the development of which could provide a solution to poverty and unemployment via the creation of jobs which would also mitigate rural-urban migration and could also alleviate famine by producing food, if not for export then at least for subsistence farming. In addition, as some scholars argue, it could even contribute to the subsequent industrialisation by creating a stable supply of raw materials for industries. However, the most significant benefit of agricultural development would be the much needed diversification of Nigerian economy, creating a reliable alternative for oil, the price volatility of which is a looming danger to the economy and livelihood of millions as recent events have shown.

With the decreasing importance of oil, violent conflicts could possibly decrease as well; as there were less incentives for combating for oil revenues. Beside that

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<sup>11</sup> See the diagram below

if agricultural development would alleviate poverty and unemployment, it is reasonable to expect the level of corruption to decrease with it for the two along with oil are interconnected. In their study on corruption in Nigeria, Abu and Staniewski also recommend the diversification of economy to decrease reliance on oil. With oil losing its primary role in revenue generation, rent-seeking activities would also decrease according to their argument. (Abu and Staniewski 2019, 3078). In agreement with this another study on Nigerian corruption also encourages stronger focus on growth enhancing sectors. (Yusuf et al. 2014, 104)

However as shown in the third chapter, one of the main reasons why agriculture cannot develop is inadequate institutional environment which means that shifting the focus to agricultural development and economic diversification would be futile in the absence of adequate institutions. While this is indeed a danger still it could be dealt with by establishing and relying exclusively on EU led agencies and monitoring committees with the exclusion of Nigerian civil society and NGOs. This is a radically unorthodox strategy and goes against the majority of scholars who warn against bypassing government institutions and who advocate for more role for civil society and NGOs, however with levels of corruption present in all of Nigerian society, including NGOs, it does have a rationale. For the EU to rely on any part of Nigerian civil society or any local NGO would be to risk not only losing the given support but also worsening the situation due to reasons explained earlier. With organisations hermetically sealed away from civil society or NGOs and under the direct control of the EU and her delegated officials and experts, the risk of corruption could be minimised. Another factor that should be reconsidered is the strength of potential sanctions imposed by the EU. The solution recommended by this study is similar to that of the earlier presented idea of Crawford who argued that donors should not refrain from strict sanctions<sup>12</sup> even if it jeopardises their short term trade

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<sup>12</sup> A very important factor that should be considered here is the development of technology, particularly the improving effectiveness of non-oil based energy like electricity. This technological development will constantly decrease the reliance of the EU's own energy sector on Nigerian oil, giving the EU a much stronger negotiating position when it comes to imposing sanctions. With the Nigerian economy failing to diversify itself, the imminent collapse of the

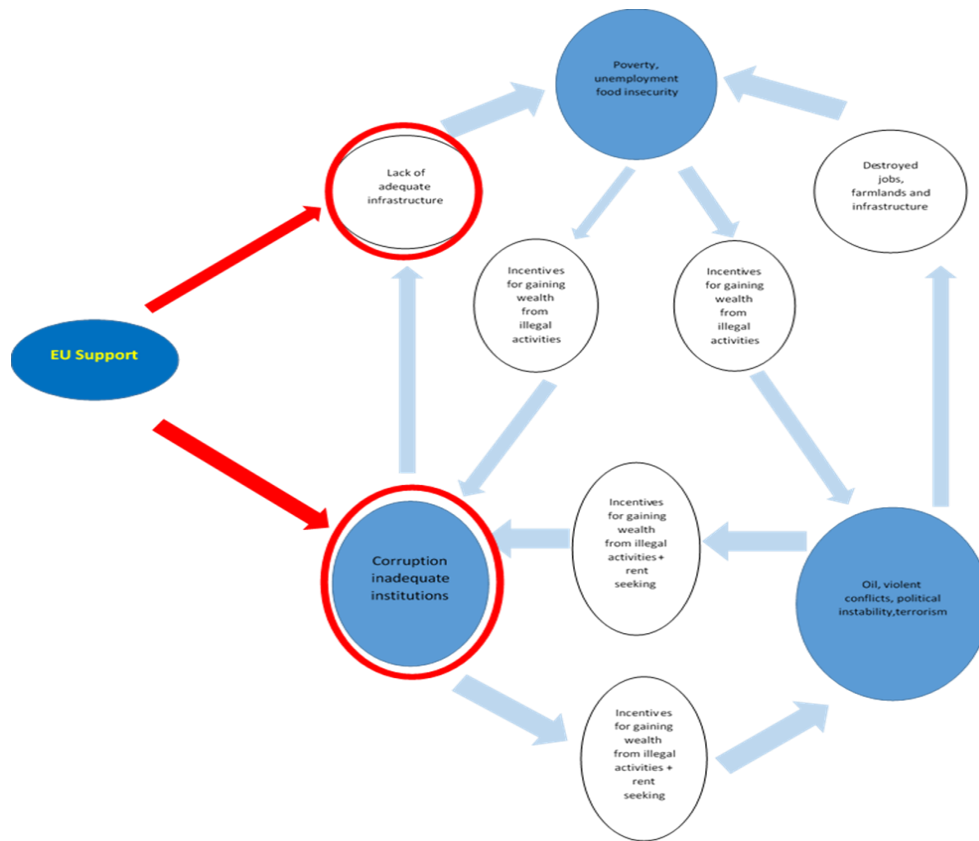
interests. As previously argued pouring vast amounts of aid into a corrupt machinery is unlikely to yield any good results as it failed to significantly improve the lives of millions suffering from poverty. If the situation in Nigeria will not improve there will be a constant need for EU support which might turn out to be more expensive on the long run than imposing strict sanctions and damaging trade interests on the short run.

Admittedly this strategy seriously violates the principle of development ownership which is also advocated by the EU, however the benefits might outweigh the cost. With corruption as the primary threat to development removed from the equation a certain level of infrastructural as well as agricultural development could be achieved which could possibly create a stable basis for further development which should later include institutional development as well, as it would create jobs, provide income and alleviate food insecurity for a significant number of people. With their most basic needs taken care of, individuals would be less prone to join insurgencies, terrorist organisations, engage in rent seeking activities or any form of corruption. This is essentially reversing the earlier mentioned argument of Del Biondo who noted that there is a consensus that economic development is not possible without democratisation. However, if one takes a look at how the lack of an adequate institutional environment is causally related to poverty and economic underdevelopment, it becomes clear that reversing the statement is also a valid conclusion, namely that democratisation is quite difficult to achieve without poverty reduction.

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economy might lead to even greater poverty, increased violence in accordance with the vicious circle jeopardising the developmental results achieved so far.

Figure 5.1. Current EU strategy



Source: own compilation.



Figure 5.2. Recommended EU strategy



Source: own compilation.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the EU's development cooperation in Nigeria from a rather holistic political economic perspective, hypothesising that the EU development programmes must be missing the mark somewhere as there are still millions living in poverty with their prospects and situation not having significantly changed for the better over the past years. After reviewing earlier research in the area of EU development aid, using the tools of political economic analysis it was looking at the causal relations between the main problems and obstacles of development present in Nigeria establishing a backdrop for the analysis which focused on EU funded development cooperation programmes in order to establish a priority list of the EU's goals. Based on previous research as well as the EU's own declared goals and principles it sketched a set of expected results that would logically come from the EU's own declared principles and general scholarly recommendations. After conducting an analysis of development cooperation programmes, it found that programmes align with declared principles and priorities only partially.

Then the study integrated the results back into scholarly discourse on the area, finding that the EU belongs to the so called „pragmatic school” as well as her not following certain consensual scholarly recommendations that are also among the EU's declared principles, meaning that EU development programmes are to a certain degree inconsistent. After this the study also interpreted the results on the basis of the previously outlined causal relationships of problems and obstacles present in the political economic context of Nigeria. The most important finding of the study is that the EU's development programmes fit the context only on the surface level as the EU does not seem to be aware of or recognize the deeper causal connections between the issues present in Nigeria, particularly the nature of corruption. Therefore although the EU does focus on relevant and important problems that indeed obstruct development, still the programmes are not aligned well enough with the political economic context as they focus very strongly on civil society and institution-building, a sector the actors in which are also the agents of corruption themselves. As corruption is



not only a cause of other factors but their result as well, the study recommended along the opinions of other scholars that the EU should shift its focus, concentrating more on poverty reduction and economic diversification by supporting agricultural development and expect corruption and violence to decrease as a result of more people getting their basic needs, thus having less motivation to gain wealth from illegal activities.

Corruption is a plague that affects Nigeria very much like cancer destroys a human body. Not only does it induce additional problems like lethal blood clotting but itself is also the result of other problems. Spreading through a body and siphoning off nutrients from cells, it technically starves the host body to death while it keeps growing. If one takes nutrients into the body, the tumor will absorb them to grow itself, very much like corruption siphons money away from meaningful development, perpetuating itself and strengthening its hold on every area it touches. Ideally, a well-functioning immune system should recognize the problem and terminate every dysfunctional cell, however if the plague is too widespread, the immune reaction will be less powerful. One solution could be to feed only healthy cells, which sadly is not possible at the moment. However unlike with cancer; as this study argued, in Nigeria if the EU made the bold move of directing significant amount of funds to develop agriculture and reduce pervasive poverty by implementing programmes herself exclusively, could possibly start an extremely long healing process that is long due and is getting all the more needed as oil prices suddenly drop even turning negative, and the level of technological development that liberates Europe from her reliance on fossil fuels is drawing- however slowly- but closer and closer.

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