EBA

08
2018

SEEKING BALANCED OWNERSHIP IN CHANGING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION RELATIONSHIPS

Niels Keijzer, Stephan Klingebiel, Charlotte Örnemark, Fabian Scholtes

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Report 2018:08
Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)

Niels Keijzer is a researcher at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) in Bonn, Germany. His research focuses on the European Union and development cooperation management.

Stephan Klingebiel is Co-Chair of the DIE's Programme on Trans- and International Cooperation. His research includes trans-national cooperation, aid & development effectiveness, and crisis prevention and conflict management. He is a regular Visiting Professor at Stanford University (Cape Town) and visiting lecturer at Philipps University (Marburg).

Charlotte Örnemark, Independent Consultant, Washington D.C., United States of America. She specialises in adaptive management and learning & gender equality, with recent clients including the World Bank and UN Women.

Fabian Scholtes is Desk Officer, Evaluation and Quality Management at Misereor, the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation. His work focuses on research/practice interfaces and organisational aspects of development partnerships and projects. He was a researcher at the DIE until October 2018.

Please refer to the present report as: Keijzer, N., Klingebiel, S., Örnemark, C. & Scholtes, F., *Seeking balanced ownership in changing development cooperation relationships*, EBA Rapport 2018:08, Expert Group for Aid Studies, Sweden

This report can be downloaded free of charge at www.eba.se

ISBN 978-91-88143-43-3
Printed by Elanders Sverige AB
Stockholm 2018

Cover design by Julia Demchenko

Acknowledgements

We would first and foremost like to extend our gratitude and thanks to the EBA reference group that accompanied the study process, consisting of the chair Gun-Britt Andersson and members Jan Cedergren, Joakim Molander, Isabell Schierenbeck and John Weeks. We are also grateful to Lena Johansson de Château of the EBA secretariat for her support throughout the process, as well as to her EBA colleagues for assisting us in disseminating and communicating our study results.

We would also like to thank our interviewees in Kigali, Monrovia and Stockholm for contributing their time and insights to our study, some of whom even more than once.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the research assistance by Magdalena Annerbo, as well as helpful comments during the inception phase of this study by our colleagues Sarah Holzapfel and Hannes Öhler.

The views expressed in this study, as well as any errors and omissions, are the authors'.

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Foreword by the EBA

Ownership is a key to sustainable results in international development cooperation. It is closely related to the concepts of capacity building and trust. Ownership is one of five central pillars of the Paris Declaration, signed by donors and recipients in 2005.[1] According to the Paris Declaration, aid effectiveness is promoted when developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption. In this sense, ownership may be understood as a source of aid effectiveness.

In various ways, the idea of ownership has guided Swedish government strategies and policies for development cooperation for many decades. This serves as a backdrop to the present study, and sets forth several questions pertaining to the concept, meaning and practice of ownership in Swedish development cooperation in the past and at present. How do actors apply the principle of ownership in the new aid landscape? And how can ownership be furthered in new development cooperation relationships?

The study reveals fundamental changes in aid architecture that need to be considered in promoting ownership, for example the decrease in government-to-government support, the surge of intermediaries and the proliferation of local stakeholders. Based on an analysis of current conditions for the promotion of ownership, the authors conclude that ownership continues to be a guiding principle in development cooperation. However, as the development cooperation landscape changes, there is a need to re-think the concept and practice of ownership. This is particularly the case as Sweden and other donor countries move from government-to-government cooperation towards multilateral support and intermediary cooperation.

The authors conclude that ownership must, in a true and meaningful way, balance dilemmas such as control *vs.* trust and accountability *vs.* learning, and take account of other fundamental dimensions such as transparency, capacity and power relations. It is

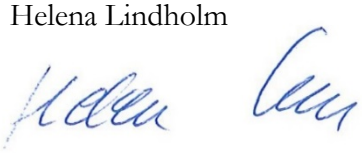
[1] The other four pillars being alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability.

suggested that the 'Doing Development Differently' initiative may provide a platform for the necessary adjustments when seeking balanced ownership.

The study targets the international development cooperation community at large and, more specifically, Swedish development cooperation. It is my hope that this report will contribute to dialogue on how ownership can be promoted in today's changing development cooperation relationships, and stimulate in-depth, knowledgeable discussion on the principle of ownership as a pillar for aid effectiveness.

The authors' work has been conducted in dialogue with a reference group chaired by Gun-Britt Andersson, member of the EBA. However, the authors are solely responsible for the content of the report.

Helena Lindholm



Gothenburg, November 2018

Sammanfattning

2019 är det 50 år sedan Pearsonkommissionens rapport ”Partners in Development” publicerades. Det var en milstolpe eftersom det var den första rapport som lyfte fram vikten av lokalt ägarskap och partnerskap som vägledande principer för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete. Dessa principer har sedan varit en självklar del av den internationella utvecklingspolitiska debatten. Samtidigt visar den nuvarande utvecklingen inom området att det är lika utmanande att främja ägarskap idag, som det var då.

Under åren 2005 till 2008 rådde en stark politisk samstämmighet om att det var mest effektivt att ge stöd direkt till nationellt bestämda, statliga utvecklingsplaner. Det var ett synsätt som grundade sig på den tidens internationella biståndsagenda om effektiva biståndsformer och nationell äganderätt inom utvecklingspolitiken. På senare år har däremot agendan med fokus på regeringsstyrt ägande börjat tappa i betydelse som en del av biståndet. Som ett bidrag till den pågående debatten om den här frågan, såväl i Sverige som internationellt, har vi i den här studien utvärderat och analyserat ägarskapets fortsatta relevans för det internationella utvecklingssamarbetet i dagens värld.

Dagens sätt att se på global utveckling har blivit bredare och mer inkluderande när det kommer till sakfrågor, de olika intressen som driver dessa, samt de berörda aktörerna. En helt avgörande skillnad är att dagens utvecklingsagenda har ett bredare fokus och ser bortom nationella utmaningar, för att i stället betona gränsöverskridande globala utmaningar som länder endast kan lösa genom att arbeta tillsammans. Samtidigt har möjligheterna att arbeta effektivt med just den här typen av globala utmaningar minskat till följd av det nuvarande geopolitiska läget och den ökade press som satts på multilaterala institutioner. Slutligen så har utsikterna för att skapa ett brett baserat utvecklingssamarbete med lokalt egenansvar på senare år försvagats i många länder till följd av civilsamhällets minskade utrymme för att agera och driva påverkansarbete.

Begrepp. Ägarskap används både i betydelsen operativ princip och som värdesystem i internationellt utvecklingssamarbete. Sverige är en av de ledande förespråkarna för ägarskapsprincipen, både

inom svenskt bistånd och i internationella fora. Ägarskap har betydelse för den övergripande motivationen och viljan till utvecklingssamarbete, men gäller också i lika hög utsträckning för de vardagliga beslutsprocesserna.

I den här studien omfattar begreppet ägarskap både själva processen och innehållet i utvecklingssamarbetet och ses utifrån ett uttryckligt relationellt perspektiv. Ägarskap både främjar och avspeglar kvaliteten på utvecklingssamarbetet och handlar i slutänden om att möjliggöra lokalt ägda och drivna samarbetsprojekt. Som princip är ägarskap mer eller mindre universellt accepterat och ger sällan upphov till motstånd på vare sig idémässig eller operativ nivå. Samtidigt är det viktigt att komma ihåg att principen om ägarskap samexisterar med en rad konkurrerande prioriteringar som aktivt lyfts fram i förhållande till andra mål inom utvecklingssamarbetet.

Ägarskap är nära kopplat till begrepp som rör kapacitet, hållbarhet och tillit. Det senare begreppet, tillit, är fortfarande bristfälligt undersökt både i policydiskussioner och utvecklingsstudier och tas därför upp och analyseras i den här studien.

Sverige. Den svenska riksdagen har fastställt att det övergripande målet för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete är att skapa förutsättningar för bättre levnadsvillkor för människor som lever i fattigdom och förtryck. Samtidigt som detta alltid har varit ett inslag i utvecklings-politiken har det svenska utvecklingssamarbetet i praktiken svängt kraftigt mellan ägarskap och givarskap. Den svenska regeringens syn på ägarskap går långt utöver den definition som fördes fram i 2005 års Parisdeklaration, där stor vikt lades vid statens roll och ägarskap i utvecklingssamarbetet. Regeringen betonar i stället att svenskt utvecklingssamarbete behöver bedrivas på ett både helhetsinriktat och ändamålsenligt sätt, där flera olika samhällsaktörer inom både den offentliga sektorn och det civila samhället samverkar för att få till ett bredare förankrat ägarskap.

På senare år har Sverige investerat mer i utvecklingssamarbeten som förmedlas av andra aktörer. Det kan röra sig om internationella icke-statliga organisationer, multilaterala internationella organisationer och andra former av globala fonder. En konsekvens av detta är att de finansiella resurserna befinner sig längre bort från de

avsedda mottagarna, och att det finns en parallell struktur för förvaltning och utbetalning i form av ytterligare styrmekanismer och mellanhänder. Ett konkret **fall** som undersöks i studien gäller Sveriges nya strategi för globalt utvecklingssamarbete inom hållbar miljö och klimat.

Det ökade fokuset på multilaterala aktörer i de tematiska globala strategierna motiveras delvis av Agenda 2030 och dess inriktning på lika tillgång till globala gemensamma nyttigheter (public goods). Men det kan också delvis ses som ett svar på det utbetalningstryck som uppstått genom en hög nivå av officiellt statligt utvecklingsbistånd (ODA), samtidigt som man har fört en restriktiv personalpolitik inom biståndets förvaltning under ett antal år.

De här förhållandena skapar, tillsammans med olika politiska prioriteringar och ärvda effekter av mer kontrollorienterade reformer, en rejäl utmaning för den önskade övergången till en mer tillitsbaserad förvaltning.

Fallstudier om Rwanda och Liberia har genomförts för att samla in observationer om arbetet med att främja ägarskap i bistånds-beroende miljöer som tidigare varit drabbade av konflikter. Båda länderna visade sig ligga i framkant när det gäller biståndseffektivitet och var framgångsrika i att uppbåda officiellt statligt utvecklings-bistånd. Ur ett samarbetsperspektiv kan båda länderna betraktas som framgångsrika och samtidigt djupt problematiska, om än av olika skäl. På grund av detta bedrivs Sveriges arbete i de båda länderna via många kanaler vid sidan om kontakten med regering-arna. Länderna uppvisar liknande tendenser, som exempelvis ökad fragmentering, men det finns också avsevärda skillnader: Liberia står inför allvarliga legitimitetsproblem och förtroendet mellan givare och regering är lågt. Rwanda å sin sida uppvisar ett starkt ledarskap, men lider av begränsningar och utmaningar när det gäller strategier för flerpartssamverkan och ett bredare förankrat ägarskap hos olika typer av samhällsaktörer.

Konsekvenser. När det gäller ägarskap i samarbetsprocesser har givarnas parter, mellanhänderna och de avsedda mottagarna olika preferenser när det kommer till samarbetets tillvägagångssätt och innehåll. De olika preferenserna medför en inbyggd problematik om

hur idén om ägande ska främjas i utvecklingssamarbetet. För att uppnå och främja en mer balanserad syn på ägarskap är det viktigt att ha en medveten strategi för att göra avvägningar mellan olika sådana synsätt och på så sätt motverka falska motsättningar, som kan hindra en effektiv genomförandeprocess. Ett par exempel på den här typen av falska dikotomier som tas upp i studien är ansvarsutkrävande kontra lärande, och tillit kontra kontroll.

Slutsatser. I studien dras slutsatsen att ägarskapsprincipen är och förblir en giltig vägledande princip för det internationella utvecklings-samarbetet, både som ett legitimt mål i sig självt och som ett medel för effektivt samarbete. Men om ägarskap även i fortsättningen ska kunna ha relevans som vägledande princip krävs radikala förändringar där både förståelsen av ägarskap och sätten att främja det måste anpassas till dagens förändrade verklighet. Ett flertal arbetsmetoder som försummar ägarskap och är skadliga för det internationella samarbetets hållbarhet på sikt uppmärk-sammades i studien. Detta understryker behovet av att stärka vikten av ägarskap som värdegrund och princip i utvecklingssamarbetet, samt hur man jobbar med det i praktiken.

En metod är att lyfta in ägarskapsbegreppet i en bredare diskussion om nya och annorlunda sätt att bedriva bistånd och utvecklingsarbete. En tydligare förankring i problem och lösningar som definierats lokalt och nationellt kan leda till mer rättvisa och bättre anpassade arbetsmetoder i hela kedjan av inblandade aktörer, där ägarskapet slutligen hamnar hos dem som är mest berörda.

Som ett bidrag till en sådan diskussion är det principiella rådet i den här studien att ägarskap endast kan främjas på ett meningsfullt sätt inom utvecklingssamarbetet om det: 1) på ett medvetet sätt åstadkommer en balans mellan exempelvis kontroll hos ett fåtal och en bredare förankring som kräver mer öppenhet, lärande och adaptiva arbetssätt, 2) tar hänsyn till andra centrala aspekter som är återkommande i framgångsrika utvecklingspartnerskap, som exempelvis transparens, kapacitet och maktfördelning. Studiens avslutande kapitel innehåller sju specifika rekommendationer, tillsammans med tänkbara medel och metoder som kan ligga till grund för utformningen av framtida politiska åtgärder och praxis.

Summary

The year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1969 landmark report 'Partners in Development' by the Pearson Commission of International Development. This report first acknowledged the importance of ownership and partnership as guiding principles for international development cooperation, which since feature centrally in the international development policy debate. Current trends show that promoting ownership today remains as challenging as it was back then.

During 2005-2008 strong political momentum was generated by an international aid effectiveness agenda that revolved around the principle of ownership and emphasised direct support to nationally determined plans. This 'government ownership' agenda has in recent years slipped to the side-lines. As a contribution to this ongoing debate in Sweden and beyond, this study assesses the continuing relevance of ownership as a guiding principle for development cooperation in today's world.

Today's global development narrative has become more inclusive and broader in terms of subject-matter, the actors involved and the interests that drive them. Crucially, today's agenda broadens the focus beyond national development challenges towards greater emphasis on cross-border challenges that countries may only successfully face when addressing these together. Contrary to this recognition, current geopolitical realities and the encompassing pressure on multilateral institutions lower the prospects for such cross-border challenges to be engaged with effectively. Finally, recent years show both a shrinking and changing of the space and agency of civil society that weaken prospects for broad-based ownership of development.

Concepts. Ownership is simultaneously approached as an operational principle and a key aspect of the value system of international development cooperation actors, including Sweden as a principal proponent. It both affects overall motivations and volitions towards development cooperation, yet equally relates to everyday decision-making processes.

This study considers ownership to refer to both the process and the substance of development cooperation and takes an explicitly relational perspective. Ownership both promotes and reflects the quality of the development cooperation relationship and is ultimately about enabling locally owned and driven cooperation. Ownership is considered universally accepted and unlikely to encounter resistance at both the ideational and operational level. Yet the same ownership principle coexists with multiple competing priorities that are promoted in relation to other development cooperation objectives.

Ownership is closely associated to concepts of capacity, sustainability and trust. The latter concept remains underexplored in both policy discussion and development studies and was explored in this study.

Sweden. The Swedish parliament stipulates that the aim of Swedish development cooperation is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. While being a constant feature in its development policy, Swedish development cooperation in practice has in earnest fluctuated between relative extremes of ownership and donorship. The Swedish government's understanding of ownership goes well beyond the statist definition promoted under the 2005 Paris Declaration. Its understanding instead emphasises the need for Swedish development cooperation to engage both holistically and purposefully in a broader multi-stakeholder context that includes state-to-state as well as state-society relations.

In recent years Sweden has invested in more intermediated development cooperation relationships. Consequently, the 'funding pot' sits further away from the intended beneficiaries, with additional governance mechanisms and intermediaries in place through parallel structures for management and disbursement. A concrete **case** explored concerns the global thematic strategy on the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Although the increased focus on multilateral actors, including through the global thematic strategies, is in part motivated by the 2030's Agenda focus on the equitable provision of global public goods, it can be equally explained as a response to the considerable disbursement pressure

generated by high ODA levels and conservative human resource budgeting. These conditions, combining with an abundance of policy priorities and the legacy effects of control-oriented reforms and processes, present challenges to a desired transition towards trust-based management.

Case studies on Rwanda and Liberia were conducted to collect observations on promoting ownership in aid-dependent post-conflict settings. Both countries were at the forefront of the aid-effectiveness agenda and highly successful in mobilising ODA. For their own reasons and circumstances, both states are on the one hand considered highly successful, while on the other hand deeply problematic. For these reasons, in both countries Sweden works around as opposed to directly with the government. While showing parallel trends, such as increased fragmentation of cooperation approaches, considerable differences are seen: Liberia faces legitimacy problems and low trust between donors and government, while Rwanda shows strong government leadership yet challenges and real limits to multi-stakeholder approaches.

Implications. When it comes to ownership of the cooperation process, donors' own stakeholders, intermediaries and intended beneficiaries will each have distinct preferences regarding the process and substance of cooperation. These preferences translate into dilemmas, which constitute a problem structure inherent to the very idea of ownership and its promotion in development cooperation. A conscious approach that trades off such dilemmas enables the promotion of a balanced ownership that counters false dichotomies that hinder progress in effective cooperation. Examples of false dichotomies that this study discusses are accountability versus learning and trust versus control.

Conclusions. This study concludes that the principle of ownership remains a valid guiding principle for international development cooperation, both as a legitimate aim in itself and as a means to effective cooperation. Nevertheless, in order to ensure its continuing relevance as a guiding principle, the understanding and process of promoting ownership needs to radically adjust to today's new realities. Several practices that neglect ownership and are harmful to the sustainability of international cooperation were

observed in this study and only underline the need to accelerate efforts to promote ownership.

Embedding the concept in a broader debate on 'doing development differently' – with emphasis on problems being nationally/locally defined and solutions nationally/locally owned – will lead to more equitable and adaptive ways of working across the chain of development actors involved, with ultimate ownership residing with those who are the ultimate right holders or constituents.

As an input to such a dialogue, this study's principal recommendation is that ownership can only be meaningfully promoted in development cooperation relationships if it (1) consciously balances the dilemmas entailed by its promotion on aspects including inclusion and control vis-à-vis learning and adaptive ways of working, (2) takes into account other key dimensions of successful development partnership such as transparency, capacity and power relations. As potential means to doing so, the concluding chapter of this study discusses seven specific recommendations to inform future policy and practice.

1. Introduction

The 50th anniversary of the landmark report 'Partners in Development' by the Pearson Commission of International Development is approaching. Apart from leading to the adoption of the 0.7% GNI target for Official Development Assistance (ODA), the 1969 report called for *"a new partnership based on an informal understanding expressing the reciprocal rights and obligations of donors and recipients"* (Pearson 1969). We have since seen countless acknowledgements of the importance of partnership and ownership as guiding principles for development cooperation, but similar to the 0.7% target the ambition remains far from realised. Instead, the overall picture remains one in which development cooperation both stimulates and erodes institutions that enable collective action (Ostrom et al. 2001).

The second half of the 1990s saw a surge in planned approaches to national development that provide a basis for a long-term development cooperation engagement. The Comprehensive Development Framework emerged as a precursor to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers that reoriented structural adjustment efforts to a central focus on poverty reduction and human development.

Combined with sustainable economic growth of OECD economies and the increasing aid flows this brought, the period 2005-2008 saw a strong political momentum for the so-called aid effectiveness agenda that revolved around the principle of ownership. The period saw the consolidation of Programme-Based Approaches, and particularly encompassed an increase in budget support that directly supported developing countries in realising nationally determined plans.

This 'government ownership' agenda has in recent years slipped to the side-lines. Today's global development narrative has instead become more inclusive, less government-focused and broader in terms of subject-matter, the actors involved and the interests that drive them. These changes should prompt a new discussion on to what extent efforts aiming to structure and govern development

cooperation are feasible and desirable, and how they may best be taken forward.

As a contribution to this ongoing debate in Sweden and beyond, this study assesses the continuing relevance of ownership as a guiding principle for development cooperation in today's world.

1.1 Relevance, objectives and focus of the study

Ownership is generally considered an important means for effectiveness of development cooperation. It has constituted a fundamental principle for Swedish cooperation since its inception. Sweden renewed its commitment to ownership and alignment with partner priorities under its 2016 Aid Policy Framework yet it remains an open question to what extent and how this framework can guide its evolving development cooperation profile. Although past studies have scrutinised ownership and ownership promotion in Swedish development cooperation [2], these studies can be complemented by a systematic study into key changes and trends in international development and their implications for the promotion of ownership.

With the aim of informing Swedish cooperation partners as well as other relevant stakeholders in promoting ownership promotion under today's changed circumstances and ambitious global development frameworks, the objective of the study is (1) to analyse how exactly ownership matters in development cooperation today and (2) how Swedish development cooperation today manages to ensure or promote ownership and how it could do so more effectively.

Four key issues inform the specific angle to researching ownership as taken in this study. First, understandings of ownership and its relevance vary widely. Researing it requires an inductive

[2] These include a Sida evaluation published in 2002, as well as Sweden's participation in the first and second evaluation of the Paris Declaration completed in respectively 2008 and 2011.

approach to assessing ownership from various viewpoints, grounded in an analysis of changes and trends in international development cooperation. This provides the basis for a systematic differentiation and conceptualisation of ownership to clarify the specific relevance and the respective requirements to development cooperation.

Second, despite varying understandings of ownership, there has been a shift change towards a broader concept of ownership beyond governmental or country ownership. This is reflected in the 2030 Agenda and its multi-stakeholder commitments.

Third, changes in the real-world context of development cooperation include a proliferation of actors, modes and interests, a growing role of contributions beyond ODA, and a tendency towards approaches involving multiple actors. These changes make it necessary to address the multi-stakeholder dimensions of ownership in particular.

Fourth and last is the focus on the formative, prospective objective of the study, i.e. on what Swedish cooperation can do differently, in view of the changed circumstances and relevance of ownership. These recommendations for change will be rooted in Swedish and others' experience with promoting ownership.

1.2 Approach and limitations

This study relied on a mix of methods that included a structured review of the academic literature and independent evaluations, a review of international policy discussions as well as policies relating to Swedish and semi-structured interviews. Interviews were both conducted at the study's inception phase between June and September 2017 and fed into the analysis of trends and inductive conceptual approach, as well as in late 2017 and throughout 2018 in relation to Swedish policies and the three case studies.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Stockholm, as well as in Liberia and Rwanda that provided two country case studies. The interviews in Stockholm included consultations in

relation to Swedish support for climate change and sustainable development, which constituted a third case study. Whereas interviews in Stockholm were conducted at various points in the study process, the case studies in Liberia and Rwanda were respectively conducted in December 2017 and January 2018 (see annex 1). More information on the approach taken to conducting interviews for the three case studies are presented in the study's relevant sub-sections. The results of all interviews were captured by means of written notes.

While the above qualitative and flexible approach is pertinent to the specific and conceptually challenging nature of the object of study, the methodological choices made come with certain limitations that should inform the reader's appreciation of the findings and recommendations that are put forward.

First of all, Liberia and Rwanda are both highly aid-dependent post-conflict states, yet with highly differing approaches to governance and development cooperation management. While providing instructive contrasting cases, they do not provide a basis for generalising findings on the promotion of ownership elsewhere. Therefore, the findings presented need to be actively considered by those interested in exploring this study's implications in other settings.

Secondly, the hybrid nature of this study, in encompassing both formative and summative analysis, limits its potential in providing a basis for accountability in terms of assessing to what extent past ambitions in relation to promoting ownership have been realised. This concerns a conscious choice, in view of the cyclical nature of development policy debates as well as the need to adjust to new agendas and realities. The consequence is that this study's findings and recommendations seek to inform future choices and strategic considerations, as opposed to providing ready-made solutions.

2. Promoting ownership in today's development cooperation: a trend analysis

2.1 The case for an inductive approach

In the period from 2005 to 2008, the international aid effectiveness agenda and its five key principles generated strong political momentum. [3] Regular meetings, monitoring processes and independent evaluation generated considerable peer pressure that both informed reform processes and enabled accountability relations. A key role was played by independent research and evaluation inquiry, which justifiably took the international agreements as a basis to analyse to what extent these had been translated into effective development cooperation practice.

Today's reality is starkly different from this period when the aid effectiveness agenda generated strong political traction and dedicated career tracks. International policy discussions continue through the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), an international platform guided by three ministerial co-chairs and supported by a joint OECD-UNDP secretariat. Yet the discussions and periodical meetings no longer generate strong peer pressure and accountability, but instead mainly serve to share and discuss good practices. Notwithstanding these recent changes, it needs to be acknowledged that from the onset, the governance of development cooperation has remained limited to soft-law processes, involving declarations and agendas, standards and guidelines and peer-review mechanisms. The interest of donors

[3] This process was initially launched by a World Bank-led High-Level Forum in Rome in 2003, but it was only at the second high-level meeting in Paris in 2005 when the process gained considerable traction (see Abdel-Malek 2015). The emergence of the policy process was also informed by country-specific efforts to reform aid relations during the late 1990s, such as in Tanzania following the 1995 Helleiner Report.

in developing and applying collective norms, as for instance determined in the OECD DAC, is in decline.

In the thirteen years that have passed since the 2005 High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris, development cooperation has undergone fundamental changes. Aspects of the system that were considered stable transformed considerably, while other aspects in need of reform proved remarkably path-dependent. In sum, development cooperation has changed to such an extent that a fundamental question must to be raised as regards the topic of this study: if development cooperation has changed so much, how could ownership remain a core principle for effective cooperation?

The above presents a case for an inductive and evidence-based approach to analysing ownership, as opposed to a theory-based endeavour that takes past policy statements as a starting point. For this purpose, this chapter analyses development cooperation trends to inform this study's conceptual framework. The chapter consists of three sections.

The first section considers the changing global development narrative. It observes that there is currently not a strong consensus behind what is otherwise presented as the 'new consensus development agenda'. Subsequently, an analysis is presented of how development cooperation relations themselves are evolving, which is a key foundational element since ownership is a relational concept as opposed to a static property.

The second section discusses key trends in the context in which development cooperation nowadays works. Key evolutions in developing countries are discussed, with particular attention towards principal actors including non-governmental stakeholders (e.g. civil society organisations and parliaments).

The third and last section looks into key changes on the side of the providers of development cooperation. It includes a specific discussion on the relevance of new and more established actors beyond the OECD.

The following table summarises key observations made.

Table 1. Global development cooperation trends relevant to the promotion of ownership

Global development narrative
• Policy convergence towards sustainable development • Greater emphasis on global public goods • A universal global development agenda • Divergence between global frameworks and bilateral development narratives • Mutual benefit considerations in development policy • Increased intermediation of development cooperation relations
Developing country trends
• Diverging growth patterns • Increasing inequality and environmental challenges • Persisting poverty and instability in fragile states • Shrinking spaces for civil society • Limited structural role for parliaments
Cooperation providers
• Fragmented and diversifying OECD providers • South-South Cooperation providers facing similar operational challenges • Increased contributions by global philanthropy • Increased earmarking of multilateral development cooperation • Emphasis on multi-stakeholder approaches and the private sector

In view of its function to prepare the study's conceptualisation of ownership, this chapter uses an inclusive and dynamic understanding of the term. Ownership is seen as depicting a relationship that stakeholders have with state and non-state partners, policies, programs, project or other elements of development cooperation. It concerns the question who 'owns' – or should own – cooperation processes and objects, for instance in the sense of having control or influence over them, or in the sense of committing and contributing to them. A partner or recipient country can experience ownership in various ways, including by determining its approach and focus, by hosting the joint process of program design and implementation and by committing own resources and taking responsibility for results.

Today, ownership is increasingly explicitly framed as a multi-stakeholder issue, going beyond government-to-government (or 'donor-recipient') relationship. This reflects that development cooperation settings have become more complex and interactive, and can be *"characterized by a myriad of actors in constant and changing interaction with each other"* (Tomlinson 2015: 6). Cognisant of this change, today's development policy frameworks both require and promote multi-stakeholder participation and ownership, which potentially may take the principle of ownership beyond the policy domain of international development cooperation (Janus, Klingebiel & Paulo 2014).

2.2 An evolving global development narrative: Implications for ownership

Four international agreements adopted in 2015 can be considered as constituting a *"new consensus development agenda"* (DAC HLP 2017):

1. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the 17 SDGs,
2. the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development,
3. the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction
4. and the Paris Climate Agreement.

All four agreements reflect the central recognition that social, environmental and economic change are integral to global sustainable development, and cannot be promoted in isolation. Moreover, the agreements include various principles or 'common themes' – including country ownership – that are not new but are consolidated and reframed in this new agenda (DAC HLP 2017: p. 2). Official representations of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs emphasise that not only has the agenda come about in a strongly inclusive process, but also the further process involves ownership

building by translating global goals into national goals, contributions and strategies (SDKP 2016).[4]

The new comprehensiveness and indivisibility of the goal system for international development cooperation and its holistic, systemic approach increase the system's complexity and scale considerably. The number and width of goals has expanded, as has been the interdependence between the goals, including trade-offs and associated challenges of ensuring coherence. [5] In addition, the framework is global in that sustainable development is also to be pursued at a global and regional level, rather than strictly within the borders of individual nation states. Finally, the framework is universal in that all countries, rich or poor and providers or recipients of development cooperation, face similar challenges and pursue similar ambitions.

This also has implications for ownership. First, the breadth and complexity of development goals entail additional work on all sides, for each goal as well as for managing the overall portfolio or goal system. A broader goal system involves a whole range of new actors, both within and between the new priority sectors. New actors join the game on the side of donors, as well as various new intermediaries and implementers. Consequently, the number of potential 'owners' on the side of recipients increases. This poses potential challenges of a managerial nature to aid-dependent countries in particular.

Second, the reference framework has become extrapolated to the global level. Responsibility for global sustainable development is common as well as differentiated. Additional challenges are posed by those global development challenges that can only be achieved when states address these together. [6] Countries may struggle to

[4] Kindornay (2015) analyses to what extent ownership had been part of important policy documents in the run-up to the SDG Agenda, including which drivers of ownership they presuppose.

[5] This involves the question to what extent the various goals are complementary or instead compromise each other. The International Council for Science (ICSU 2017) provides a comprehensive systematic overview on how SDG goals and related strategies are interlinked and may be pursued in a synergy-oriented manner.

[6] See also related discussions on providing global public goods (Kaul (ed.) 2016).

support programmes facilitating global progress when these involve trade-offs with domestic priorities. Embedding development in a global agenda may cause commitment fatigue and de-legitimation of development more generally, especially if OECD countries display signs of low ownership by committing to the agenda through general statements of intent whilst deviating through their actions.

Third, framing development globally offers emancipatory potential. Emphasising that development needs to take place in the global North as much as in the South may make it easier for partner countries to own the endeavour of development and the SDGs, both in terms of commitment to and control of development. Taking the driver's seat may become easier in that the framing of 'North develops South' is overcome. The 2030 Agenda explicitly requires actions and means of implementation that transcend the binary relation between North and South, developed and developing or donors and recipients. This would correspond to a stronger emphasis on *multilateral* rather than bilateral approaches and to allocations that are guided by *issue* or sector considerations rather than country-specific needs (see Paolo et al. forthcoming). This trend is likely to be reflected in an increased reliance on multilateral and/or issue-specific actors, including vertical funds. These trends of thematic allocation and multilateral cooperation may have adverse effects on national ownership, another aim of the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, the universal development agenda puts a stronger emphasis on contributions from the private sector, through new approaches such as Social Impact Bonds or through non-financial means ('knowledge' as a crucial dimension of development[7]), as well as contributions from various other areas of public policy. While specific implications of this are discussed below, a general implication is that the universal development agenda contributes to

[7] Knowledge generating and sharing is relevant to a range of development areas, such as the dissemination of new farming methods in agriculture, the improvement of public finance management, the establishment of welfare systems, and the introduction of measures to mitigate climate change. It includes scientific and technical expertise and, to a large extent, implicit knowledge gained from implementing development interventions and working in local contexts. See Janus, Klingebiel & Paulo 2014.

an ever more complex, diffuse constellation of development actors with specific profiles and practices. This challenges developing country authorities to manage the assistance provided to them and ensure alignment to national priorities.

Diverging views within and between development partners

The expanding global development narrative has implications for the scope of the mandate and competence of development policy vis-à-vis other areas of global public policy. Despite the broad commitment to the new consensus development agenda, divergent views and ambitions remain as to what development cooperation should be about, ranging from 'leaving no one behind', 'leveraging private investment', or 'tackling root causes of migration'. A key point of divergence across development partners is to what extent development cooperation should be unequivocally oriented towards producing developing country benefits, or whether the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda supports an orientation towards mutual benefits of developed and developing countries. [8] These considerations do not only inform policy debates, but also discussions on the modernisation of ODA reporting and an emerging measure for Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) through which countries report on their development finance engagement beyond what is covered under the ODA definition.[9]

These diverging views have two implications for our study.

First, these views are held by specific actors and relate to different aspects such as the purpose of development, its principal means, or the causes of lack of development. A recipient government might conceive of development as growth while a donor counterpart emphasises inclusion and equal opportunities.

[8] Please refer to Keijzer & Lundsgaarde (2017) for further reflections on the rise of mutual benefit objectives in development policy.

[9] For more information on this process, see: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/tossd-task-force.htm

External partners, ranging from development banks to civil society organisation, may either seek to address direct challenges such as infectious diseases or malnourishment, or promote social transformation to overcome inequalities producing these effects (McGoey 2015). Development as a process may be seen as unleashing economic potential by changing framework conditions of firms and individuals or as equitable interaction among and emancipation of groups. Such views cannot simply be attributed to certain actor classes, which would have simplified the picture. For instance, since the uptake of results-oriented 'development managerialism' in the 1990s, CSOs no longer uniformly subscribe (if they ever did) to a leftist 'social transformation' approach (Elbers et al. 2014).

Second, the diverging views inform different approaches to cooperation, and consequently differing interpretations of key guiding concepts including ownership. Cooperation efforts emphasising economic growth may 'by extension' emphasise partner country government's ownership in terms of committing to results, investment-oriented policy and public sector reform, while a holistic social transformation approach may emphasise inclusive participation in the control over setting priorities. The different discourses reflect different understandings of what ownership entails, who should own and what and how cooperation should be managed accordingly. This diversity of views increases with the broader SDG reference framework, with the number and nature of new actors involved, and with the differentiation among partner countries that is increasing or increasingly recognised.

This increased diversity of views and ownership approaches is generally legitimate, and testifies to a legitimate widening of the international community cooperating in pursuit of sustainable development. However, the diversity is expected to create incoherence or confusion in concrete constellations and interaction. In increasingly intermediated and actor-diverse development cooperation settings, the diversity of views, including those on ownership, exacerbates the challenge of coordination and of establishing a common basis for interaction.

Finally, the broad nature of today's global development framework has generated debate as to whether they *can* be adequately addressed by means of development cooperation. There has also been a diversification of views on where the *boundaries* of the development cooperation system should be drawn and where its institutional environment (e.g. other policy fields) begins. This is in part explained by the official competencies of those ministries and agencies tasked to design and implement development policies in OECD countries. It moreover raises questions as to where the role and contribution of development cooperation ends, and those of other areas of public policy begins. Finally, there is a growing discrepancy between the type of development cooperation that the general public supports, based on an image supported by official actors, and the actual practice of development cooperation as pursued by these same actors (Keijzer 2017).

Approaches to development cooperation that diverge from the universal agenda

Two further trends in cooperation approaches affect the promotion of ownership. One concerns responses to temporary high numbers of refugees to Europe and increasing regional instability. This has prompted many countries to increasingly rely on ODA budgets to further humanitarian aims and cover costs for in-country refugees (see Knoll & Sherriff 2017). This trend reflects a need to respond to growing crises in the world, yet the reliance on ODA goes against ODA concept's long-term orientation and its stated purpose to promote economic development and welfare in developing countries.[10]

[10] Moreover, the strongly erratic spending on refugees in OECD countries may mean that those that stick to fixed ODA input targets may be faced with considerable disbursement pressure in the event that refugee expenditure is lower than foreseen. This is so because ODA reporting guidelines only allow expenditure on in-country refugees to be reported as ODA during the first year of their stay. Resulting disbursement pressure can be expected to translate into pressure on partner countries to accept funds and programs even if these are not fully aligned. A recent audit noted that the Swedish government was considering

Whether this more interest-driven starting point goes at the expense of interests of the partner countries is an empirical question. This crucially involves the aspect of whose ownership counts: employment creation and improving border control may actually be aligned to the government's priorities, while beneficiaries or the population at large may have different views. Both are unlikely to play a decisive role when these priorities are anyway based on the donors' clear self-interest in reducing refugee flows and promoted with equally clear emphasis and rigour. Asking to what extent self-interest driven cooperation is in line with priorities of the developing country should thus go beyond examining interest convergence and should consider to what extent the process was conducive in promoting a sense of ownership among all involved.

In this case, self-interested cooperation is a reaction to increasing refugee flows. A second trend is that new emphasis has even pro-actively been put on 'mutual interests' that development cooperation should serve. Although the 2030 Agenda is universal in nature and thus assumes sustainable development to be of benefit to all, recent official development policies of OECD states and the EU refer to development cooperation as pursuing mutual benefits without clarifying the balance between the interests pursued. Moreover, and in contrast to the official policies, operational activities and official documents tend to focus on the expected developing country benefits only. These in turn guide monitoring and evaluation activities, which leaves the donors' benefits of cooperation implicit and obscures inquiry as to whether an intended balance is struck. This hampers scrutiny on the pursuit of process management considerations, including the promotion of ownership (Keijzer & Lundsgaarde 2017).

This is not to *a priori* consider the trend in mutual benefit policies unwanted from an ownership perspective. A counterargument could instead be that mutual interest is a basis for a contractual relationship among equals that is more emancipatory than a relationship based on altruism, and thus preferable in terms of ownership. Similarly, one could argue that ownership can be

measures on how to mitigate the uncertainty caused by refugee expenditure to the ODA budget as a whole (see Riksrevisionen 2016).

stronger in a relationship pursuing mutual interest rather than long-term collective interests in global public goods that are less immediately relevant. However, these potentially positive effects of mutual interest approaches on ownership presume that the interests of the partner country coinciding with, or set off against, those of the donor country are shared by society-at-large. This is an ambitious assumption, and practice features many examples to the contrary.

Looking ahead, the new emphasis on donor interests could reinforce unequal power relations in development cooperation that ownership promotion would actually seek to address. To what extent this happens, or to what extent ownership might instead flourish under such 'mutual interest'-based cooperation, in no small part depends on the engagement of developing country stakeholders.

2.3 Changing development cooperation relations

A consequence of the evolving programmatic context and a key starting point for any research inquiry into the promotion of ownership is that development cooperation is in essence a relationship. Although the 1969 Pearson Committee already used the word 'aid relationship', this fundamental nature of development cooperation is frequently forgotten when the shorthand form of 'aid' is used. Discussions on aid all too easily misrepresent development cooperation as a process that can be technically managed, leveraged, or otherwise directly controlled by the providing actor.

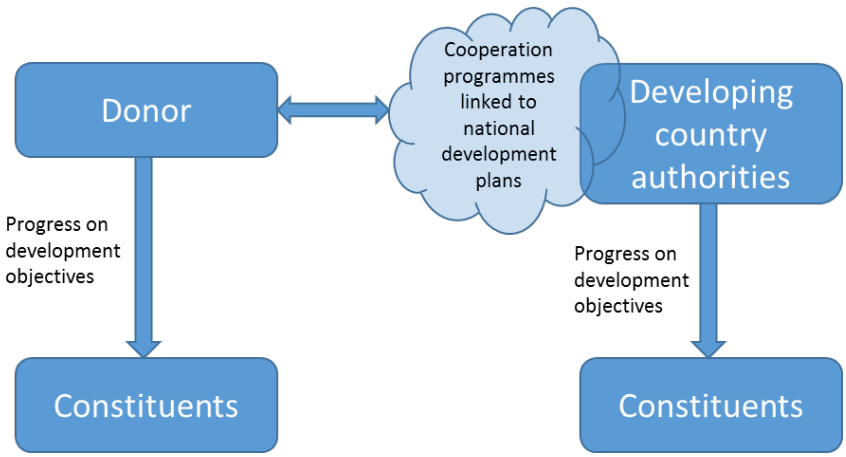
If discussions would instead start from the realisation that development cooperation is a relationship, and that the strength of that relationship determines its results, then the next challenge is how to better understand and improve that relationship.

Ownership is central to such considerations, and can quite literally be seen as a property of that relationship. In this context, it

should first of all be acknowledged that the concept of ownership – and thus the understanding of the type of relation to which it applies – was originally developed in the context of government-to-government cooperation. Ownership was initially also ideologically framed, e.g. by donors with no recent colonial past such as Sweden. Sweden's policy framework was informed by *dependencia* theory and aiming to facilitate self-reliance and control over national development (Brolin 2017).

As depicted in the following figure, the type of aid relationship often implied in discussions on ownership is a binary one between two governments, each representing its own constituents.

Figure 1: Direct government to government cooperation



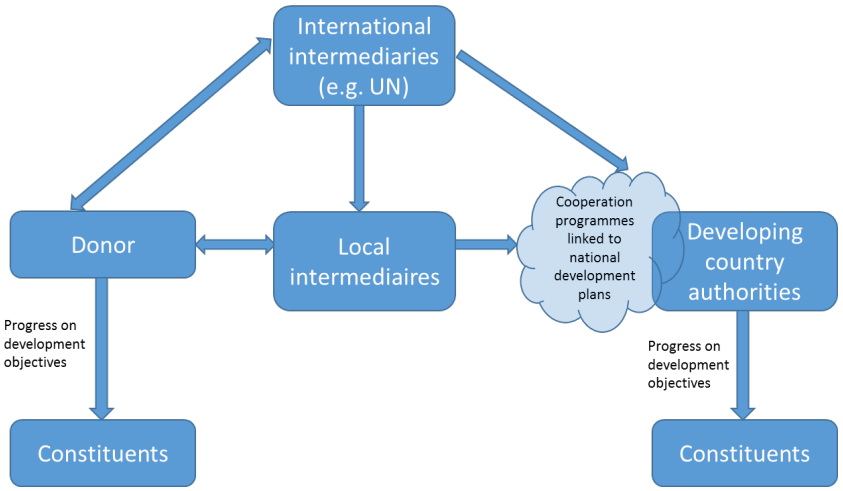
Source: own elaboration, adapted from Vielajus et al. (2009, 9)

In contrast to this binary relationship, much of today's development cooperation is characterised by one of increased intermediation. [11] This is in turn driven by several ongoing changes, including: (1) a reduction in the use of budget support by bilateral donors; (2) human rights violations and weakening democracy, leading donors to continue working on governance but via intermediaries

[11] Current trends in technological innovation and big data have stimulated a trend of 'disintermediation' as recipients become available to directly source expertise from the global market. It has been suggested that development cooperation may in the future become disintermediated too: https://www.devex.com/news/disintermediation-and-how-it-affects-globaldev-implementers-86413

and; (3) the increased focus on the productive sectors, for which some donors lack required expertise. For these and other reasons, the principle of ownership and its promotion should be situated in a more intermediated relationship whereby the two central actors work via civilateral, parliamentarian, private or multilateral stakeholders, as depicted in the following figure.

Figure 2: An intermediated cooperation relationship



Whose ownership?

When considering ownership as a property of the type of relationship depicted here, the question of 'whose ownership' soon emerges. While various of the actor categories here in reality are multiple stakeholders of their own (e.g. public authorities range from the office to the president to rural municipalities), ownership has sometimes been depicted as the required level of 'buy-in' of all the stakeholders involved in cooperation.

A seminal study on aid relationships by Ostrom et al. (2001) found that the individual relationship between these stakeholders, as well as the nature of the goods and services involved in their cooperation, produce basic incentive problems as manifested in

informational and motivation problems. Crucially, the study found that the use of intermediaries – which it referred to as contractors – may create incentives that undermine beneficiaries' commitment to and control over development cooperation:

> *"A consultant concerned with possible future contracts with Sida is likely to maximize his or her control over a project, and not pass along control to the intended beneficiaries. Passing along such ownership to the beneficiaries is risky. Beneficiaries do not have the same incentives as contractors. Thus, beneficiaries many not act in the ways that Sida wants. It is rational for contractors to reduce this uncertainty by retaining control"* (Ostrom et al. 2001: xxv)

Providing core funding, as opposed to financing earmarked interventions, could be considered as one means to support intermediaries in ways that could promote ownership of beneficiaries (see Jenks & Topping 2017). In this case, governance arrangements of the intermediaries of the agency concerned would allow the donor to promote these objectives in interaction with the other constituents and shareholders.

The study by Ostrom and colleagues analysed the relations as financed through ODA, a source of development finance which seeks to promote welfare in developing countries. Given current global trends, in particular the increased availability of development finance other than ODA in developing countries, as well as the direct use of ODA for the purpose of attracting such finance, some of the study's findings remain valid while for others the incentive problems as identified intensify.

This is challenging for a donor such as Sweden, which seeks to represent the views of the poor and a rights-based perspective throughout its development cooperation. In contexts where it co-finances larger interventions together with other investors that follow different principles, it needs to take a risk that its own policy imperatives are trumped in the process. One example is discussed in the following box.

Box 1: Development at the expense of intended beneficiaries?

In North-East Sierra Leone, Sweden's Development Finance Institution 'Swedfund' bought 8% shares in a project implemented by Swiss energy multinational Addax. The project acquired land previously owned by smallholders, and used to produce crops such as melons, groundnuts and peppers, in order to produce large-scale sugar cane for bio-ethanol production.

At 267 million euro, the project was the largest foreign investment in the country's history. More than sixty villages with 14,000 inhabitants had to trade the land in exchange of financial cooperation and the prospect of 4,000 jobs, infrastructure, trainings, modern vehicles, schools and health clinics. Despite considerable investment by Addax in terms of social and environmental feasibility studies as well as periodic monitoring, the farmers living in the area were hardly consulted in the acquisition of the around 57,000 hectares of land for the project.

Addax-commissioned studies and independent research by NGOs reflect different discourses and expectations of large-scale investment. They also show that the investments themselves generate considerable uncertainty among local communities within or near the investment site, and that these expectations are highly challenging to manage.

Subsequent years witnessed the abrupt stop of the EU's biofuels subsidies scheme, reducing oil prices, but also the Ebola crisis that hit Sierra Leone in 2013. In 2015, Addax requested Swedfund and other organisations to divest, after which the project was sold to the UK multinational Sunbird Bioenergy. Development cooperation by nature necessitates taking risks, and this example does not rule out that public authorities had strong ownership of the project concerned. This case shows the challenging nature of the various expectations and perceptions that have to be managed in intermediated development cooperation relationships.

Sources: Vos (2018); Havnevik (2014: 48-60)

2.4 Trends in developing countries

The new global development framework has prompted a rethink of countries' relationships altogether. The distinction of developed versus developing countries is problematic if development is as necessary in OECD countries as in LDCs. One prominent example

in this regard is the World Bank which started to phase out the terms 'developing' and 'developed countries'.[12] At the same time, the distinction of donor and partner countries has still some analytical value to understand the position from which ownership of development policy is taken. The following discussion of changes in the global landscape that affect the policy field of development cooperation illustrates this.

Changes in and among partner countries

Over the last decades, a number of countries have changed considerably in terms of rising GDP, institutionalisation of markets, improving indicators of social or human development etc. Indeed, developing countries are generally considered to become increasingly dissimilar to the point that its usefulness as a statistical category can be questioned, with Hans Rosling suggesting using it was intellectually lazy (Khokar 2015). These changes may be debatable, be it from a critical viewpoint e.g. regarding the 'globalisation of neoliberalism' or from an analytical viewpoint that questions e.g. the sustainability of change – given the limits of GDP in environmental and distributive aspects and the fact governance crises may quickly destroy achieved economic progress. In any case, the effect is that there is a greater differentiation among countries due to varying progress. This has various implications:

(1) The challenges to be addressed by development cooperation have also changed. Middle-income countries face increasing inequality, while industrialising countries face environ-mental deterioration.

(2) A number of countries are less dependent since they have access to other sources of capital inflow such as remittances, FDI, taxes. Some developing countries have better capital ratings and access to better loans than some OECD countries.

(3) Some countries – usually those where conditions are particularly difficult (conflict or post-conflict, resource-poor, persistently low-income countries) – continue to be aid-

[12] http://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/2016-edition-world-development-indicators-out-three-features-you-won-t-want-miss

dependent. The number of fragile states has recently increased, partly because it is a self-assigned depiction (OECD 2016).

The role of development cooperation in these changes is not always clear. The extent to which and the conditions under which aid contributes to economic growth is a subject of a long debate (for an overview see e.g. Barder 2009; Riddel 2014). Critics argue that countries may be aid-dependent because of aid itself. Classifying countries as fragile may relate not only to de facto fragility but also to how this mobilises aid.

Despite the differences among partner countries, which are likely to increase further (Koch 2014; UNCTAD 2018), a dichotomous view prevails as to whether aid should be allocated based on needs or performance (Pietschmann 2013). Empirically, it is not clear to what extent donors' allocation patterns are oriented towards good performers, countries most in need, or to those most closely aligned with a donor's priorities or where donors' self-interests are served best.[13] There seems to be a growing push to engage more in middle-income countries (Barcena et al. 2017), which given finite ODA budgets may create trade-offs with the 2030 Agenda's commitment to provide 0.15-0.2% of GNI as ODA to LDCs.

Shrinking spaces for civil society

A recent literature review concludes that, broadly defined, *"civil society has strengthened the accountability of the development process"*, and that its independence and 'fit' with the state explain civil society's contribution to development processes (Hossain et al. 2018: 7). Discussions on broadening the concept of ownership beyond government-to-government cooperation intensified towards the 2008 High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Civil society has since figured as a key actor in generating or holding ownership of development policy and practice. Civil society is not a sharply

[13] Hoeffler & Outram (2011) suggest that all bilateral donors allocate to some extent according to need and self-interest.

delineated actor group or sector of society as a whole.[14] However, the following sketch of the role of civil society for ownership clarifies to some extent which activities and actors it encompasses.

On one hand, there are the watchdog and advocacy functions. These are related but not the same. One is about holding the state – government, public sector agencies, but even the legislature – accountable. The other is about pushing for change. Both involve public participation and the voicing of otherwise neglected concerns. On the other hand, there is the function of implementing projects and providing public services. This delivery function supports also the democratic function when it materially empowers people to organise and to build and voice their preferences.

In recent years, the space of civil society to function and to take and support ownership as described has shrunk considerably. This is notwithstanding the fact that the last ten years show an increase in the number of electoral democracies (International IDEA 2018: 9). Hossain et al. (2018) further note that developing countries saw a sharp increase in formal organisations during the 1990s and 2000s in the form of aid-financed formal organisations in the liberal tradition. Analysing trends and effects of restrictive legislation, the authors conclude that civic space is changing rather than shrinking in relation to two trends. The first trend concerns the spread of digital technologies, as well as the greater space taken by specific movements, including prominently right-wing and extremist movements. Secondly, civic space is changing in that many civil society actors manage to continue operating by entering into closer relationships with the state and elites.

The trend of these 'shrinking spaces' is closely related to the crisis of the liberal democratic order (Diamond 2018). According to the

[14] For a brief overview on the role of civil society organisations for development effectiveness, see Leiszen et al. (2013). In the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy, civil society actors are understood broadly as *"non-profit associations, communities, networks and social movements, established on the basis of a common theme, goal or ideology, (including) non-commercial media, foundations and research institutions"*, having an *"important role in increasing people's knowledge about civil rights and obligations, helping to ensure that the voice of the most vulnerable people is heard, accumulating social capital, strengthening inclusion and promoting political and legislative reforms."*(MFA Finland 2017: 5).

CIVICUS Monitor (2017), only three percent of people worldwide live in countries where space for civic activism, or civic space, is truly open. While offering a different assessment of the overall situation, another survey by the European Foundation Centre notes that not a single society in Asia and Africa is presently considered as enabling and safeguarding the civil society space for all (EFC 2017: 6). These civil society spaces are instead observed as shrinking due to government measures to *"monitor, restrict or harass NGOs, community-based organisations and social movements"* (ibid.). Such measures include crackdowns on freedom of assembly and speech; restrict which organisations are allowed to operate, where, how and with whom; criminalisation of organisations and of dissent (as being against 'national interest'); inhibiting the work of CSOs by restricting financial flows or burdening them with administrative and reporting requirements; intrusive monitoring and open harassment or violence. Although recent research found that several Asian and African states see an increase in civil society participation, the inverse trend was seen in other countries, while declining election turnout in other countries is another negative indication of participatory engagement (International IDEA 2018: 16).

One consequence is that CSOs cannot adequately play their roles in promoting broad-based ownership. Moreover, additional effects can induce a vicious circle of civil society losing ground. Restrictions of the watchdog function make it easier for states to increase their pressure further. This also depends on how civil society manages to react to initial confinement. A recent study by the European Foundation Centre (EFC 2017) suggests that many funders of civil society work as well as CSOs themselves mostly adapt to the new situation by trying not to make things worse and lose the space that is left. They shift funds to less political activity, frame their activities in more optimistic terms ('helping girls have a better future' rather than 'reducing sexual violence') and change the institutional setup by maintaining presence only via regional offices, registering as a for-profit firm rather than as NGO (EFC 2017: 11 ff.). Funders similarly seek to reduce the profile of the support they may provide, as opposed to publicly motivating their choice to do so.

In view of these circumstances, many CSOs may respond by 'giving in and going with the flow' in order not to lose the remaining space. This may however lead them to drift from their original mandate and role. Their reduced ownership in national as well as local development policy and programs may also translate into a more general loss of ownership by the wider population that would otherwise perceive itself represented through a more autonomous engagement of CSOs. Finally, in addition to their space and resources, CSOs' legitimacy among their constituencies and in society at large may become negatively affected if they 'give in' and lose their status as independent actors for public goods.

To the extent this option is discussed, actors agree that a pushback against government's tightening grip has to be locally owned and rooted. External partners may only play a facilitating role in this regard. In addition to providing direct support, external partners may also engage at a higher level, for instance in multilateral forums and international diplomacy. This implies a tricky balance when involving local civil society in the process in order to let them be part of and own the pushback (EFC 2017).

It should be noted that the above discussion assumes that CSOs as such are inherently developmentally oriented, legitimate agents committed to public goods. In reality, the legitimacy local CSOs claim to have in terms of representing interests towards the government, donors or others is not uncontested. An alternative perspective considers CSOs – which are often rooted in specific areas and issues – as special interest groups. Yet a different view would emphasise that CSOs provide services and participation that the state should provide and thus undermine the state's responsibility. A general or in-depth discussion of the legitimacy of CSOs in development is beyond the scope of this study[15], which instead will focus on the roles of CSOs in development cooperation relationships.

[15] See Onsander (2011: 29ff) regarding Swedish support to CSOs. For a recent overview on the literature and the various sources of legitimacy of CSOs see Puljek-Shank and Verkoren (2017).

A changing role for parliaments?

Parliaments are a key actor in development cooperation more generally and for democratic ownership in particular (Eberlei and Henn 2003). The Paris Declaration was one of the international statements that contributed to this recognition, while the aid effectiveness agenda as a whole also stimulated targeted capacity development support to parliaments. The role of parliaments is usually seen in three dimensions (Sida 2012; ODI 2007). Legislation, i.e. passing laws and budgets, is crucial for the state's capacity to plan and allocate resources in a legal and legitimate way. Oversight is the key mechanism to hold the state accountable towards citizens. Representation of citizens and the collection, aggregation and articulation of interests are essential for the responsiveness of the executive to citizens' needs and preferences.

From the perspective of promoting ownership, parliaments have two key roles. They *themselves* should own development by demanding and shaping it and by overseeing its operationalisation and implementation, at least on the highest level. Second, citizens and constituencies should be able to own development *through* their representatives in parliament. Parliament should create or support citizens' ownership, including acceptance of and commitment to policy, expenditure, democratic procedure etc. An important aspect of this is that parliaments should reconcile diverging interests of different stakeholders, e.g. between different regions and ethnic or professional groups. This is a prerequisite for broad-based ownership that does not only bridge between different sectors but also between different groups.

In practice, parliaments in many developing countries fulfil these roles to a limited extent at best. Occassionally unfairly so, many are regarded as rubber-stamping assemblies that sign off what government comes up with, or as merely policy-*influencing* rather than policy-making (Egreteau 2017: 2). Recent reviews of how parliaments perform are scarce, but by and large their impact on how government promotes development is limited and *"in the eyes of the population they are among the least trusted and legitimate institutions"* (Sida 2012: 12). Another issue is the persistent gender gap that exists in

parliamentary representation with minority groups also being consistenly underrepresented.[16] Several multilateral organizations, including UN Women, have sought to address this through their programming process. Yet, a recent evaluation highlighted the importance of focusing support on the political inclusion and parliamentary respresentation of those who are typically 'left behind' in the parliamentary process. These include ethnic minorities in remote or marginalised areas, women who may face political violence, or women who do not have identity cards. This was seen as particularly important given the lack of incentives Members of Parliament generally have for representing the needs of constituencies with limited political influence (UN Women, 2018).

Some bottlenecks have repeatedly been emphasised: parliamentarians often lack capacities to perform their duty and their incentives are often against risking their seat by holding the executive to account or performing their mandate as opposition. Parliaments lack procedures and basic infrastructures necessary for effective work. Rules and mandates restrict and keep them weak compared to the executive. Dominant ruling parties or overly strict party discipline may largely prevent political debate. Constituencies' expectations often push parliamentarians to bring home immediate gains rather than representing interests in the wider polity. Development cooperation has also contributed to marginalising parliaments by focussing on governments and providing support off-budget. Finally, at least early parliamentary support programmes often focused on parliaments as institutions while neglecting the underlying causes of them being dysfunctional (ODI 2007: 3). A recent study emphasises the need to understand the political economy of parliaments and how they as well as parties and parliamentarians really operate (Sida 2012: 34 f.).

Against this background, it is not clear how recent trends in development cooperation will affect the role of parliaments regarding ownership. However, two changes discussed earlier make improvements unlikely. First, and as discussed below, South-South

[16] According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, only 22.8 per cent of all national parliamentarians world-wide were women as of June 2016, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995.

Development Cooperation providers are unlikely to work directly with parliamentary development and the ownership that parliaments have or promote. Second, the current trend of shrinking operating space for civil society also has a negative effect on open civic debate and contestation.

When parliaments subscribe to their democratic and developmental role, they can act in some synergy with civil society, whether in terms of holding government accountable or taking up concerns and preferences of citizens. Moreover, the weakening of civil society must be seen as part of a more general move against participation and democratic accountability. It is unlikely that governments treating civil society as a risk will allow parliaments – which have an official mandate of overseeing government – to become more important.

2.5 Changes in the providers of development cooperation and in their modes of engagement

OECD donors: declining relative importance and further actor proliferation

Although official development assistance has continued to grow in the past years, other sources of development-relevant international finance entered the picture. Moreover, the collective impact of ODA has arguably become less than the sum of its parts as a result of a decline in joined-up approach, increased fragmentation of aid, and diverging approaches that weaken support for DAC norms and standards (see Klingebiel, Mahn and Negre (eds.) 2016; Keijzer and Verschaeve 2018). These and other trends contributes to a declining importance of ODA in the financing of development altogether. Especially in partner countries that have diversified external sources of finance, this may shift the balance of ownership considerably to the side of the partner country. At the same time, more actors in donor countries are involved in developmental relationships with

partner countries, including additional levels or departments of government previously not prominently involved in international cooperation.

The inclusion of additional sectors and agencies on the side of donor countries raises issues of policy consistency. When donor countries relate to a partner country with a broader, more diverse and less consistent front of goals and actors, the partner country's ownership may face additional challenges. Moreover, when additional sector agencies of donor countries enter the arena, they may not follow established cooperation frameworks and procedures, and may instead operate in parallel. This means new sector agencies not only bring in additional topics, approaches and administrative or other requirements, but they do so without a structure that would support the partner country in keeping control over the overall cooperation portfolio.

This trend is part of the more general increase of actors that are present in the field and that potentially claim their share in ownership of development policy, which has often translated into further fragmentation of development policy and practice in the partner countries. The proliferation trend also concerns donors and financiers more generally. According to Woods (2011), over 200 multilateral aid-providers report their activities to the OECD. Other key trends include new or emerging bilateral donors, new actors such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, private funds that invest into microfinance markets and, importantly, philanthropy. In this light, some authors even argue that the field is no longer dominated by official aid agencies and government-to-government bilateral relationships (Kharas 2014: 861).

South South Cooperation (SSC)

'New' (or alternatively referred to as 'emerging'[17]) bilateral donors have added their own ways of international cooperation to the policy field, establishing for instance South-South Cooperation (SSC) as an alternative development model and cooperation setup

[17] Both labels are wrong in that countries like India and China have a long track record of providing development assistance, easily going as many decades back in time as many OECD partners.

(Chatuverdi 2016; IDS 2017; Hackenesch 2018) and the policy of non-interference most prominently advocated by China (see e.g. its recently released White Paper on foreign aid, People's Republic of China 2014).

The effects of this development on ownership are difficult to grasp for a variety of reasons. First, the labels of 'new donors' or SSC covers a broad variety of different actors, approaches and practices (Bracho 2015; Chaturverdi, Fues & Sidiropoulus (eds.) 2012). For instance, Manning (2006) categorises new donors as (1) those belonging to OECD but not part of the DAC, (2) new members of the EU that are not part of OECD but broadly remain within the OECD style of development cooperation, (3) Middle East Arab countries, some which now associated to OECD processes and (4) all others, including BRICS and whole range of Latin American countries. This illustrates the breadth of new actors already in terms of donor countries. De Renzio & Seifert (2016: 1864) suggest conceiving of SSC without the more homogenous Arab bloc and by distinguishing two waves of China, Brazil and India vs. Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and others. This distinction emphasises that the former group is older and more outspoken in declining to participate in DAC-based processes, while the latter group interacts more with DAC donors. Nevertheless, important differences within the two groups remain, e.g. between China and Brazil.

Second, the effect on ownership can refer to very different levels or aspects. Developing countries' ownership of the global agenda is a different matter than from ownership of certain actor groups in specific programs within or between two developing countries. Compared to the rather OECD-driven formulation of the Millennium Development Goals, countries like Brazil and China played important roles in the formulation of the 2030 Agenda. In principle, this involvement is likely to increase the ownership of actors in these and other countries of the so-called Global South. So, to the extent that the SSC dynamic has increased the role and participation of developing countries, their ownership could be positively affected. On the other hand, if China has more ownership now in the global agenda, this does not necessarily mean that, just

because developing countries overall had more of a say, all developing countries feel an equal sense of ownership to the agenda.

Regarding ownership within SSC programs, much depends on individual context and interventions. At the same time, some general differences between SSC providers may be observed. SSC with China may be relatively inclusive on the level of government-to-government mutual interests, which has mostly been the focus of SSC (Moilwa 2015). It may be less inclusive when it comes to beneficiary communities, local construction firms etc. SSC with Brazil, on the other hand, could profit from the country's tradition of civil society involvement and participatory implementation. In practice, however, Brazilian technical cooperation has a mixed track record regarding partner country ownership and alignment (Cabral et al. 2014). While its claims of being demand-driven are justified to some extent, *"The Brazilian approach largely bypasses local civil society and other development agents"* (ibid. 193) and its alignment to national priorities is rather ad hoc. The infamous ProSavana project in Mozambique was heavily criticised for the lack of consultation with the local population and its imposition of the Brazilian Cerrado agribusiness model (de Renzio & Seifert 2016: 1867). It is unclear and case-dependent to what extent inclusion, alignment and ownership are promoted more decidedly and effectively in SSC.

Apart from the differences among SSC donors or projects, the theory and principles of SSC have some relevance for ownership promotion. In theory, SSCs aims for *"sharing of technology, approaches and expertise deriving from provider countries' efforts to tackle their own development challenges"* (Moilwa 2015: 1). The underlying principles include emphasis on horizontal cooperation (as opposed to vertical, hierarchical North-South cooperation), non-interference and the lack of policy-related conditionality. Moreover, SSC more openly involves mutual interests and overlaps of commercial and geostrategic objectives with development cooperation (cf. Cabral et al. 2014: 186).

How might these translate more generally into ownership? Four sources can be considered:

- One source of ownership would be the emancipatory dimension of SSC, enabling countries to follow their own path.[18] However, in most cases SSC is between new donors and old recipients. Especially when cooperation is based on a mutual interest approach, the approaches and solutions provided are unlikely to be fully demand-oriented. In that sense, the relationship is hardly horizontal and the ownership challenge may not be that different from traditional development cooperation.
- Another alleged source of a horizontal relationship, 'historical-cultural' similarity, is also not very convincing given the diversity of countries. In most cases, the only horizontal relationship will be that both countries are or used to be part of a global economic periphery. More important for the emancipatory dimension may be the principle of non-interference, though this concerns political rather than developmental internal affairs.
- A third source of ownership would be that solutions provided by Southern donors are indeed more compatible with the needs of the recipients because they stood the test in another developing country. Here, again, the question is how compatible such solutions are if the similarity is limited to that of also being a developing country.
- A final source of ownership, especially on the recipient side, would be the stronger involvement of other actors like parliament, civil society etc. In this regard, however, SSC cannot generally be said to score any better than development cooperation by DAC members. The potential

[18] Muhr (2016) points to a distinction of three different phases in which SSC has had rather different meanings. The latest phase is characterised by the importance of 'best practice transfer' between countries of the global South. However, in earlier decades as well as in some Latin American countries today, the idea of cooperating within the South was much more related to Third World emancipation. Whether one follows such terminology of dependency theory or not, the relevant point is that SSC is mainly framed as a cooperation around different models, modes of interaction etc. as means to achieve (capitalist) economic development. The emancipatory potential of SSC of questioning the actual goals of development receives less attention.

of civil society-led SSC (Moilwa 2015) still needs to be fully realised.

Across the board, the emergence of new agents with their alternative practices has certainly called into question the dominance of North-South cooperation and has increased the choice and the bargaining power of recipient countries, possibly strengthening their capacity to negotiate the terms and drive the implementation of development programmes. Apart from that, SSC by itself does not necessarily fare better regarding ownership promotion in a broader sense. With its claims of mutual benefit and 'horizontal' cooperation, it largely corresponds to internationally established norms on aid effectiveness, particularly country ownership and mutual accountability. Although large SSC providers have declined to formally align themselves to the international development effectiveness agenda, there is sufficient evidence to assume that they are concerned with similar process considerations and effectiveness principles.

Philanthropic donors

Philanthropy has been become increasingly important in development cooperation. Its contribution is primarily seen in the resources they provide and innovations they contribute or initiate. Until recently, there was little research on how much and how foundations engage in development countries (OECD 2018; see OECD 2003; Witte 2008; Martens & Seitz 2015; Lundsgaarde et al. 2012; McGoey 2015).

In terms of importance, while philanthropic flows have recently increased a lot, their overall volume is still modest compared to ODA. Over the years 2013-2015, the overall amount was USD 24 bn. At the same time, in some sectors – health in particular – foundations have become key actors (OECD 2018: 36). Three-quarters of the funds support social sectors. The overall contribution is concentrated, with 82% of it coming from merely 20 foundations. Much of the funding comes from US-American foundations, including the towering share of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This domination is a recurring issue of critique (cf. Martens & Seitz 2015). Large parts of philanthropic giving

(67%) go to middle-income countries including India as the largest single recipient), while LDCs only receive 28%. In regional terms, Africa received the largest share. In some developing countries, domestic philanthropy plays an important role, although *"organized and institutionalized philanthropy is relatively recent"* (Martens & Seitz 2015: 10).

The increasing importance of philanthropy affects the promotion of ownership. First, almost all funds are channelled through intermediaries, of which 50% are private actors, including civil society and the for-profit private sector as well as public-private partnerships. In contrast, only 2% are channelled through government organisations (OECD 2018: 70). The effect is a privatisation of aid. Coordination and coherence with ODA is not a structural feature but happens ad hoc. Moreover, philanthropy operates in a regulatory grey area. Foundations are usually accountable to their own board of trustees, but not to intended beneficiaries of their actions (Martens & Seitz 2015: 65). In their home countries, they often face limited disclosure requirements (ibid.). Partner countries often lack clear regulation of foundations and strategies for interacting with them. Developing country governments tend to have an ambivalent relationship with them. On one hand, they welcome the funds brought in. On the other, they often fear a loss of control especially regarding the domestic development narrative. *"This ambivalence may well reflect underlying attitudes to philanthropy's tendency to support civil society's role as watchdog of government policy"* (ibid. 102). Largely private channelling and implementation, lack of regulation, the ambivalent relationship of foundations and governments, limited mutual knowledge and understanding and limited presence of the foundations themselves in the countries make it difficult for partner countries to get a grip on philanthropic work.

Second, on an international level, large foundations are increasingly involved into global development policy debates, including regarding the post 2015 development agenda. They are invited and they demand to be heard (Martens & Seitz 2015: 17).[19]

[19] However, not all foundations try to get involved (Missika 2016). Others, which Missika calls 'catalysts', keep a safe distance to this dialogue and focus on more

Foundations do not necessarily adjust to international agreements but retain their own 'policy space', such as most recently the 2030 Agenda. The Gates Foundation, *"instead of supporting the holistic approach of the SDGs (…) announced that it intends to keep its narrow focus on development and extreme poverty in the global South"* (ibid. 18). Martens & Seitz (2015: 61, 64) further suggest there is a risk that the relevance of publicly accountable decision-making bodies is undermined by the influence of foundations on agendas and standards. At the same time, while foundations exercise influence without being officially mandated to do so, there are no obligations for themselves resulting from this involvement.

Third, there is a strong trend towards strategic, results-oriented 'venture philanthropy'. Venture philanthropy treats grantees as partners in an investment and provides them with financial and other support (for an overview see EVPA 2017). It aims at large-scale impacts and even systems change (Walker 2017), often putting a lot of money into a single organisation for tackling a specific problem within a limited timeframe.[20] More than 80% of funds channeled through intermediary institutions is earmarked for specific purposes (OECD 2018: 66) rather than open for prioritisation by recipient country actors. Such philanthropy takes a top-down business approach with strong emphasis on technical intervention, short-term effectiveness and efficiency (through economies of scale), rather than tackling more socioeconomic or political causes of poverty via inclusive approaches. Related to this, impact measurement and other evidence play a key role for strategic decisions and targeted investment choices (OECD 2018: 76). A strong focus on measureable outcomes tends to be short-sighted and may lead to risk-averse and little innovative investments. Priority is given to sectors and issues where impact is easy to

tangible co-operation opportunities and on testing new ideas and approaches. A last group that Missika terms lonely wolves do not consider it essential to engage with governments and others. *"Failure to establish clear pathways for engagement might perpetuate the 'go it alone' model"* (OECD 2018: 96).

[20] Another aspect of the firm-like approach is that in mission-related investments, *"foundations no longer distinguish between investments to maintain and expand their endowment, and their grant-making strategies"* (OECD 2018: 82). Foundations put money into investments with competitive financial returns that feed into their endowment and that – also – support their mission.

measure. Moreover, impact measurement refers usually to the more specific program goals of the foundations rather than broader, long-term goals (Martens & Seitz 2015: 60). This further limits the accountability of foundations towards intended beneficiaries.

Finally, as a consequence of their substantial resources and accompanying expectations, larger philantropic foundations and impact investors frequently bypass local actors and networks. They also bring few resources and little empowerment to local actors, in particular local civil society. Given their strong focus on measurable outcomes and large-scale impact, foundations – especially those operating in the venture philanthropy mode – focus on few large and usually international NGOs where their venture investment (financial and otherwise) will predictably bear fruits. The longer-term capacity development effect of philanthropic engagement is difficult to establish. This, however, would be a prerequisite for local ownership, whether based on appropriating innovations and solutions that this engagement brought in or based on taking

In sum, development philanthropy involves several challenges for the idea of ownership promotion. However, there are also potential positive effects. Some of the ways in which foundations engage in and with developing countries and international development cooperation are part of a general trend (of aforementioned 'venture philanthropy'). Other aspects are more individual. The Open Society Foundation alongside some other progressive foundations [21] that support the deepening of the democratic process and inclusion, using funding approaches that promote organisational learning and local priority setting through the provision of core funding differ explicitly from this trend. Instead they support liberal values including public debate and political inclusion. Similarly, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation is explicitly supporting good governance approaches. If this is the program of a philanthropic entity, it may be much more conducive to broad-based ownership of development than the top-down technocratic interventions discussed above.

[21] E.g. Hewlett Foundation, McArthur Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung to name a few.

Increasing earmarking of multilateral development cooperation

There is an overall trend towards funds and other approaches to managing finance where allocation decisions are often made or prepared outside, or with limited influence of, the state where interventions shall be implemented. This trend manifests most visibly in topic-driven allocation and in multilateral funding increasingly being earmarked (whether regarding topics or otherwise).

In the case of OECD DAC members, their share of ODA provided to and through multilateral organisations had reached 40% of gross ODA in 2010.[22] Of this, more than half is provided as core funding to multilateral organisations (assessed or voluntary contributions). The other part is non-core funding or multi-bi aid. This is voluntary but earmarked funding for more or less specific topics and sectors and/or for countries or regions. This multi-bi aid has increased significantly over the last decades (Browne and Cordon 2015; Eichenauer & Reinsberg 2017; Reinsberg 2016; Eichenauer & Hug 2015; Jenks & Topping 2017). Some earmarked funding goes through mainstream cooperation of established multilateral organisations, but most increases in earmarked finance are channelled through special purpose trust funds, including so-called vertical and global funds. Special purpose trust funds (SPTFs) are *"set up by one or several donors of the multilateral organization in order to support thematic, country- or region-specific priorities or any combination thereof"* (Eichenauer & Hug 2015: 3).

The implications of this trend for recipient country ownership have hardly been researched. However, some likely effects on ownership can be deducted from donors' main motivations for multi-bi aid and from some of its general effects. From a donor's point of view, multi-bi aid allows for targeting aid in line with the

[22] Most multilateral ODA goes to a few clusters, including the European Development Fund (36%), the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA, 22%), United Nations Funds and Programmes (9%), the African and Asian Development Banks (5% and 3% respectively), and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (7%). The remaining 200+ multilateral organisations, funds or trust funds together receive less than 20% of total multilateral aid.

donor country's own interests, for stronger control of funds and thus for accountability to domestic constituencies. Moreover, multi-bi trust funds may help to influence the portfolio and direction of the multilateral organisation hosting the fund, while maintaining for the donor the flexibility of voluntary contributions. Finally, these funds increase donors' specific visibility and allow for claiming merit for success, while responsibility for implementation in risky contexts and for results is delegated to the multilateral organisation (Eichenauer & Hug 2015; see also Guljarani 2016, Reinsberg et al. 2015, Tortora & Steensen 2014). Multi-bi allocation is additioanlly expected to negatively affect hosting agencies themselves through increasing transaction costs, lower predictability of funding and crowding out core-funding with earmarked funds (cf. Reinsberg 2016).

The literature suggests various effects of multi-bi aid (Eichenauer and Hug 2015; Eichenauer and Reinsberg 2017; Sridhar and Woods 2013; Tortora and Steensen 2014; OECD 2015). It reduces alleged advantages of multilateral aid, such as a broader knowledge basis; flexible, more efficient and more cohered allocation based on a pooled budget and overall funding strategy; less politicisation of allocation, since a multilateral agenda already reconciles priorities of different actors; and the capacity for supporting systemic development as based on the breadth of a multilateral organisation's portfolio. In contrast, multi-bi allocation may divert the focus of attention introduce particular interests that lead to funding *"activities that are more popular with donors than beneficiaries"* (Reinsberg 2016: 186). To the extent that multi-bi aid results from emphasis on quick, measureable and visible results, it may also narrow the scope of development objectives pursued by the multilateral agency. More generally, coordination of allocation for cross-sector effectiveness is hampered when multi-bi aid interferes with a multilateral agency's overall strategy.

The effect of 'bilateralising' multilateral development aid is illustrated by OECD figures showing that earmarked contributions from the OECD to UN organisations increased from 58% in 2007 to 76% in 2015. Beyond this overall picture, a recent targeted analysis of UN funding commissioned by EBA shows huge

variations across UN agencies between the core and non-core allocations they receive, as well as similarly large differences across donors in terms of what mix of funding they provide. This diverse picture however accumulates to a strong discrepancy between UN system vision and funding realities: *"the preponderance of non-core funding has encouraged more rather than less overlap and duplication among the activities of the funds and programmes—exactly the opposite of the direction of current UN reform initiatives"* (Brown et al. 2017: 17). Prevailing practices indicate that donors as well as UN organisations experience disincentives to promoting a stronger UN development system, which means that existing OECD good practices are unlikely to be implemented through collective action of all concerned (see OECD, 2012).

Four implications of the increase in multi-bi aid for the promotion of ownership are observed.

1) Decision-making on multi-bi funding risks bypassing developing country processes. One might argue that ownership does not only develop from involvement in prioritisation. If earmarking happens to be aligned to or even based on the government's agenda or society's needs and if recipient country actors are involved in technical implementation, monitoring etc., ownership might develop 'downstream'. However, while this may win actors over, it conceals the more fundamental ownership conflict regarding priorities.

2) The instrumental nature of multi-bi aid inhibits capacity development. The rationale of multi-bi aid is usually not towards a holistic or systemic approach, considering that this is much less controllable and success much less attributable to a donor's funding than results achieved through project interventions. The projectised approach tends not to involve direct support to, or substantial use of, developing country systems and procedures. When implementation of multi-bi aid for instance involves local civil organisations, targeted capacity development would be in line with the multi-bi rationale and could enhance ownership at least of these organisations. But this effect would be selective and thereby limited. It might even position those organisations further against the state.

3) Multi-bi allocation adds to aid fragmentation. *"(J)oint trust funds hosted by multilateral institutions appeared to be the ideal instrument to coordinate, harmonise and avoid sectoral and geographic fragmentation of individual donor interventions. And yet, empirical examination has shown that the vast majority of multi-bi aid occurs through single-donor trust funds"* (Gulrajani 2016: 19). Single-donor control of funds dominates as motive for multi-bi aid. This results in fragmentation in the partner country, which adds to the administrative burden and makes it ever more difficult for government to promote ownership by realising a coherent development cooperation policy.

4) Other forms of channelling bilateral funds through multilateral agencies have different ownership implications. Multi-bi aid in the form of SPTFs seems conducive to ownership promotion only under clear specifications. However, this is not the only case of using multilateral agencies for implementing bilateral funds. A different example would be that of allocating funds directly to programs that are implemented by multilateral agencies, e.g. UN programs. Unlike most SPTFs, doing so would not necessarily involve establishing a separate fund solely defined by the donor's priorities. Rather, the program run by the UN agency may be specifically aligned to recipient country priorities and designed in collaboration with the government. This case would have completely different effects on ownership.

Thematic allocation at the expense of country-programmed aid

Multi-bi aid refers to the allocation channel. To the extent that multi-bi is an instrument for ensuring allocation to certain topics, this trend overlaps with a general trend of thematic allocation (see Paulo, Janus & Holzapfel 2017). The forms of channels in which thematic allocation takes place vary. Apart from SPTFs hosted by established multilateral agencies (such as World Bank or UN programs), vertical funds like the Global Environment Facility or the Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF) constitute new, topic-specific multilateral actors. US presidential initiatives such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

or Feed the Future add another topic-driven source and form of development funds.

The different funds and programs share a number of key features. Funds are directed at a more or less specified topic and usually relate to problems on transnational or global scale. Target countries are selected 'downstream', i.e. after the topic and general approach are defined. Selection is based on topic-specific criteria and general criteria such as need, but specified towards the topic concerned. Thematic allocation is flexible in terms of implementation channels and setups. Importantly, funds often go to civil society organisations, research organisations or networks, rather than only to conventional governmental agencies.

In terms of ownership, this suggests that the role of countries and national structures and strategies is relativised. Alignment to national priorities may even be left to the implementation level. Programs often involve standard indicators across countries. If these are not adaptable to the target country's context and results framework, or at least complemented by context-specific indicators, the funds come not only with a pre-defined topic and approach but also with an operationalisation model that further reduces the influence of domestic actors.

In addition, while the role of the target country is reduced or at least put 'downstream' in the allocation process, thematic funds go to a large extent into specific countries rather than multilateral core funding pools. Moreover, thematic allocations are often from single donor countries. If the two aspects coincide, this constitutes bilateral funding that is not backed by a formal bilateral relationship to provide space for the recipient country to take ownership early. Whether a donor country then imposes its preferences on the allocation in a country or aligns to the country's priorities depends on the case. Finally, thematic allocations tend to channel funds not through the national government but to international NGOs or multilateral organisations, such that local capacity development resulting from a thematic allocation often is less prominent.

Development cooperation in support of multi-stakeholder approaches and private sector inclusiveness

The involvement of private sector actors has also diversified, ranging from sponsoring to multi-stakeholder networks, Public Private Partnership as well as direct investment and equity participation. Each of these are generally characterised by an increased involvement of private sector actors (Wehrmann 2018; BMZ 2011). Private sector involvement has also increased in the context of transnational multi-stakeholder partnerships, which have strongly increased in number since they emerged in the 1990s and which are supposed to promote public policy objectives in a network rather than hierarchy setup. Pattberg & Widerberg (2016) observe that many of these are either ineffective, for various reasons, or have evolved towards pursuing new agendas.

A discrepancy can be seen between the intrinsic desire to cooperate more with private sector actors, which by nature are short-term oriented towards predictable outcomes, and the long-term as well as more abstract aspirations set out in the 2030 Agenda. Efforts to monitoring the engagement of private sector actors in multi-stakeholder platforms need to strike a balance between joint learning and doing justice to the different forms and contexts of various initiatives (Wehrmann, 2018). Lundsgaarde and Keijzer (2018) suggest that the increased focus on multi-stakeholder efforts including private sector actors requires new approaches to coordinated action that involve four elements: a positive framing of coordination benefits, enlargement of involved stakeholders, increased focus on enabling over planning, and growing attention to coordination across countries and within sectors.

Catalysing and leveraging private-sector engagement is another area for which new instruments have been created, and which is particularly pursued by DAC members that avail of strong development finance institutions, in particular the EU, Germany and France. Such efforts are commonly referred to as 'blended finance' and reflect the conviction that combining such finance types generates effects beyond what these types of finance would

achieve independently. The types of blends may entail a mixture of different types of public funds or a combination of public and private finance. The public financing component can include grants, investment guarantees, market rate or concessional loans, equity as well as accompanying technical cooperation (Lundsgaarde, 2017: 4). An implication for this study is that the types of cooperation inputs provided affects opportunities and challenges for ownership, for instance because the use of loans necessitates parliamentary involvement in some countries, whereas grants does not require this.

2.6 Three dominant trends

To conclude this chapter, three overall trends in development cooperation today pose key challenges for the promotion of ownership and inform this study's conceptual framework and research inquiry.

First, the promotion of ownership is linked to a set of challenging *ambitions*. This results from a shift in thinking about ownership from something technical that has to be managed to something political that has to be enabled. For this to occur, cooperation relations need to include and be supported by broad constituencies. The number of actors involved in cooperation relations also increases as a result of operational choices and priorities characterised by increased intermediation, which in part is influenced by assessments of the geographic and governance contexts of where cooperation takes place.

This reframed ambition also results from the broader reference frameworks of development cooperation, most importantly the 2030 Agenda and its stronger focus on cross-border challenges that entail a wider range of areas and relevant actors. This is a strong shift from the government-to-government emphasis of discussions on ownership and aid effectiveness in the period from 2005-2008, although the starting point today is different for developing countries and their external partners. The shift is further shown in the increase in mutual interest-oriented developing policies emphasising private sector involvement, as well as in how donors engage with and through multilateral actors.

Second, the number and interdependence of *parameters* for the promotion of ownership have increased since it works differently across different sectors, cooperation instruments and actors, making the issue of ownership promotion more ambitious and also more complex. The concept of ownership therefore has to fit into increasingly diversified cooperation settings. The increasing number and diversity of actors involved – including OECD as well as non-OECD partners, but also intermediating actors – has led to a broader spectrum of available cooperation approaches, with individual and collective interests pursued through each of these. Moreover, more (and sometimes conflicting) intermediary interests and actors also means that ownership has to be seen through a more complex *web of relationships* of actors. Promoting ownership of one actor, which involves taking that actor's interests into account, is not independent of the ownership of other actors and may involve conflicts and trade-offs that counteract the actual endeavour of including more actors on a broader basis.

Finally, cooperation approaches are characterised across the board by increased privatisation of the public sector, including the area of development cooperation. The relative weight of ODA compared to private sources of finance (including direct investment, remittances and global philanthropy) is declining. Private sector-inspired views and approaches to development cooperation management increasingly influence ODA-financed interventions, while private sector organisations are often considered the most relevant stakeholders to lead cooperation programmes targeting productive sectors. Part of the picture is one in which development cooperation is more explicitly motivated in relation to the provider's (or donor's) own interests, such as tackling assumed root causes of migration. This is also reflected in increased thematic allocation of resources, as well as increased earmarking of funding to multilateral organisations. In a similar vein, South-South Cooperation providers typically focus their cooperationon areas of mutual interest, even if this can be in relation to a more narrowly defined agenda or for a specific utility. Another side of the privatisation trend is the increased engagement by global philanthropy, which provides considerable investments in global sustainable development yet is

less subject to scrutiny and transparency as opposed to public development cooperation providers.

3. Analysing ownership in development cooperation

3.1 Introduction: what is ownership?

The analysis of trends and practices presented in the previous chapter points to the evolving nature of development cooperation relationships, and thus of ownership. Its principal observation is one of increased diversity: between and within developing countries, among the types of external partners and the motivations driving their engagement, and the various means they employ. National authorities retain a key role in governing external cooperation within their sovereign borders, yet today's development cooperation is gradually moving away from direct 'government to government' relations towards more intermediated cooperation relationship involving a multitude of stakeholders.

Studies assert that the concept of ownership is central to development cooperation, although what ownership is and means remains contested (Woll 2006: 12; Cramer 2002; Roberts 2009; Dunning et al. 2017). Whitfield (2009) summarised this Babylonian confusion by observing that some consider ownership as a 'commitment' and official documents expressing this, while others consider it as developing country 'control' of development cooperation (Whitfield, 2009). Past policy discussions have emphasised commitments while most academic research focuses on control. One prominent research project defined ownership as *"the degree of control that recipient governments are able to exercise over policy design and implementation, irrespective of the objectives they pursue"* (Whitfield & Fraser 2010: 343). Critics of the concept suggest that ownership in practice means *"having developing states do what the international community would have liked them to do without having to tell them to do so"* (de Carvalho et al. 2018: 6).[23]

[23] In relation to EU development cooperation in Somalia, Ejdus (2018: 29) linked to concept to the colonial governance approach of 'indirect rule' and defined

Ownership is not a static 'property' for effective development cooperation, but instead an objective that is actively promoted and evolves over time (Leutner & Müller 2010, 52). Ownership reflects the quality of the development cooperation relationship and is shaped by the ability of all involved to propose and consider offers and demands.[24] As a consequence, its dedicated promotion can be considered as contributing towards improving and strengthening that relationship. [25] It moreover relates to both the process (commitment) and substance (control) of the development cooperation relationship. A key implication is that in addition to observing to what extent ownership is 'manifested' and perceived, research needs to consider stakeholders' dedicated actions towards promoting ownership and analyse their effectiveness.

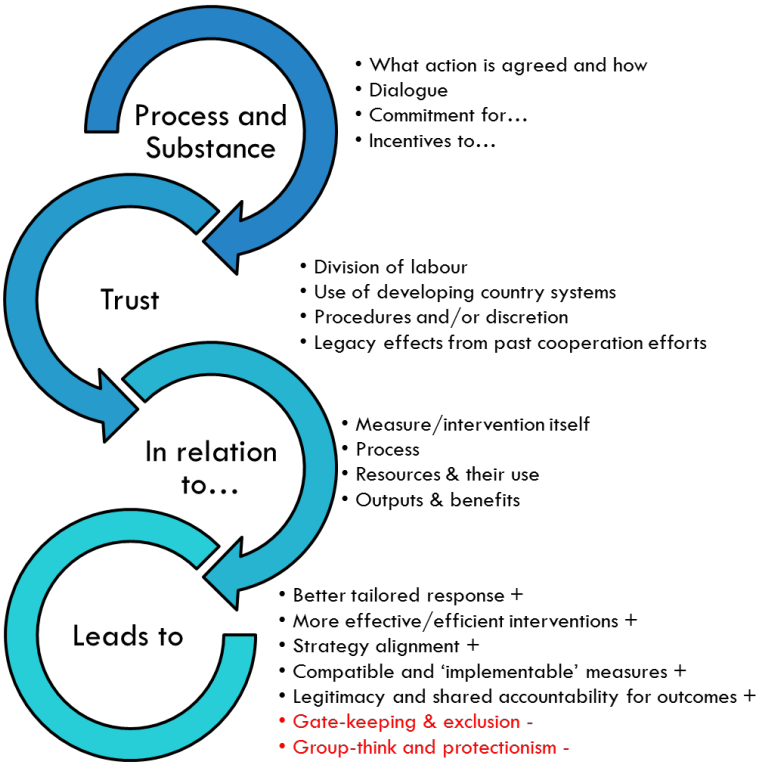
Analysing ownership then requires assessing relationships among actors throughout and beyond typical intervention cycles (design, planning, implementation and monitoring, evaluation) and timespans. The following figure presents the study's framework of inquiry, and the various dimensions of ownership that it considers. As per the study's understanding of ownership as a relational concept, the framework emphasises the role of trust in guiding stakeholders' preferences, expectations and actions.

ownership as *"supply-driven responsibilization of host states for externally designed objectives"*.

[24] Edgren (2003: 3) similarly observed that ownership is used as a metaphor that relates to the joint effort associated to a partnership and covers the entire process from designing the plan to the sustainability of its results.

[25] See also Dunning et al. (2017: 5), who emphasise the instrumental importance of ownership for aid effectiveness. From another point of view, shared by Swedish development cooperation, programs being in line with partners' preferences and based on partners' commitment and control is a form of partners' autonomy and desirable in itself. See also Tomlinson (2011: 5).

Figure 3: Dimensions of ownership



The order of the arrows in the diagram suggests the theory of change underlying the concept of ownership and its promotion in a development cooperation context. Reality though is not as linear. An intermittent change in the wider context, or among key stakeholders concerned, will in turn have a bearing on both process and substance.

Ownership extends to the substance as well as the process of cooperation. Assuming that current patterns of cooperation show ownership deficits, then successfully promoting ownership requires equal doses of 'doing development differently' (process) and 'doing different development' (substance). Table 2 presents some key considerations.

Table 2: Ownership of process and substance

Process	Substance
• Before and during: owning by officially committing to and justifying and supporting interventions. This entials taking cooperation forward in terms of design, financing, contracts and implementation in line with established procedures. • Ex-post: owning by being accountable for the choice of the intervention (what was done?), for the implementation (how was it done?), for its results (what was achieved?) and impact (what will remain?).	• Problem definition & strategic fit: whether an intervention is taken at all and to what end. This determines compatibility with policy needs, preferences and priorities and with the development strategy and portfolio. • Approach and inputs: tailoring to needs, conditions, and use of local or exogenous inputs. • Participation: who gets to take part in the cooperation and its benefits. It further entails control over geographical, sectoral and social foci regarding the beneficiaries.

The promotion of ownership is thus linked to several related considerations, including capabilities and incentives of actors who design, deliver, are meant to benefit and/or are to be held accountable. It also emphasises the need to address sustainability of results beyond the lifespan of distinct projects or programmes and the extent to which a measure feeds into longer-term processes of contextually embedded and endogenously driven change. Swedish development policy makes links between ownership, capacity and sustainability, which merit further exploration (e.g. Salomonsson et al. 2011; GoS 2016; 2018).

3.2 From government-based to multi-stakeholder ownership

Following the wave of African independence in the 1960s, development discourse placed strong emphasis on ownership in relation to the young nations' expressed need to attain self-reliance and autonomy (Graham 2017). During the decades that followed, country ownership was equated with government ownership, and the importance declined once discourse began to emphasise the need for deregulation and privatisation. Ownership was perhaps most neglected during the Structural Adjustment Plan period, characterised by strong 'donorship' and imposition of policy options onto indebted governments.

In 1999, the World Bank and IMF adopted the so-called Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), which emphasised ownership by the countries concerned, a holistic approach, a long-term perspective, and the broad involvement of all relevant actors (Wolfensohn & Fischer 2000). The CDF was the basis for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers that were highly influential during the first decade of the new millennium. During this period, ownership was unambiguously considered as ownership by national governments, and defined as a commitment to the programmes defined in the concerned strategy papers.

This understanding of ownership as commitment was reflected in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and was linked to countries having adopted a national development plan (OECD/DAC 2008). Since commitment figured as underlying condition of the donor-recipient relationship, Graham (2017: 378 ff.) termed it conditional ownership. The critique of this 'shallow ownership' was acknowledged in the run-up to the third high-level forum in Accra of 2008. The outcome document adopted there included the following commitment on ownership: *"country governments will take stronger leadership of their own development policies, and will engage with their parliaments and citizens in shaping those policies. Donors will support them by respecting countries' priorities, investing in their human resources and institutions, making greater use of their systems to deliver aid, and increasing the predictability of aid flows"* (OECD/DAC 2008: 15).

The statement was informed by the engagement of several actors including civil society, and was interpreted as the international community's support to the idea of *democratic ownership* (or alternatively *inclusive* ownership). The statement also broadened the focus of ownership to include donors, thus recognising that ownership resides in and depends on a relationship.[26] Graham (2017) argues that democratic ownership goes beyond the donor-recipient relationship since it includes state-society relations on the partner side. Inclusive processes should allow relevant actors to engage in policy-making and co-determine cooperation priorities.

Although donors did not find it straightforward to reform procedures in light of the new concept, the understanding of ownership broadened while the process of determining national priorities became seen as part and parcel of the development process. Yet, in its application the approach remained rather binary: the state on the one hand and civil society on the other hand deliberate on development goals and priorities; the state and donors agree on means provided to achieve these goals.[27]

The proclaimed emphasis and relevance of inclusive ownership and contributions to the development agenda stand in sharp contrast to the shrinking space for civil society to operate in many parts of the world, particularly in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes.[28] Shared, or multi-stakeholder ownership inevitably has to look at 'ownership by whom' and the level of contestability by civil society and citizens in relation to which agenda is being 'owned'.

Applying the concept of ownership to a multi-stakeholder setting requires differentiating the types of roles that different actors may play. Such differentiation may be done vertically (levels of

[26] The concept of alignment was retained, though, which refers to donors' supporting priorities as set by developing country governments.

[27] Stern et al. (2008: 36) found that in most cases, donors' practices continued to prioritise *"central government ownership, not always encouraging inclusion of other development actors such as local governments, parliaments, civil society and the private sector."*

[28] As discussed in chapter 2, recent research (Hossain et al. 2018) with a broad perspective on civil society argues that the space for civil society is changing rather than shrinking. Yet restrictive legislation in particular targets those civil society organisations that are involved in development cooperation relationships, and hence can be justifiably considered as shrinking or under stress.

governance) or horizontally (across sectors). Vertical differentiation may include local, regional, national, trans- and supranational settings. Challenges of ownership may be linked to physical distance, differences and power relations between levels and the limited availability of resources, especially if funds are implemented in projects rather than entering these organisations' budgets. Horizontal differentiation, in turn, concerns how actors across different sector relate to others promoting different mandates, interests and incentives. Within these spheres, any individual actor may – at different times – fulfil any of the following roles:

- **Financiers** including donors, national development banks, philanthropic organisations, private investors, domestic and foreign tax payers,
- **Partners** such as governments, public sector agencies, NGOs; those with whom financiers directly agree on purposes and uses of funding, and who receive funding for subsequent allocation,
- **Implementing** agencies, contractors and consultants (public, non-profit or for-profit/ private),
- **Observers** including media, academia, advocacy and watchdog organisations.
- **Rights holders**, recipients, beneficiaries or users citizens, users of public services and infrastructure, civil servants, consumers and firms)

As per their position and roles, actors have different stakes both in terms of their expected returns and how a particular development cooperation initiative can be designed, organised and implemented. Vertically integrated chains of ownership are more likely to effectively hold power-holders to account by grounding ownership in political reality and civic contestation. In such processes, many competing actors may be striving towards the same end goals but with different immediate interests and preferred means for getting there. Yet by working across vertically linked networks or coalitions, they can achieve systemic and 'locally owned' outcomes (Fox 2016).

3.3 Three critical perspectives on ownership

The development studies literature identifies several critical perspectives on ownership. Much of these perspecitves relate to specific projects or interventions, as opposed to taking a more holistic view of ownership and societal grounding of *longer-term reform/development processes*. The critical perspectives centre around three main issues: (1) manipulated and voluntary ownership, (2) ownership and appropriation, and (3) the political quality of ownership.

Manipulated and voluntary ownership. This fundamentally sceptic view boils down to the question of how ownership can come about or how it can – or should – be promoted *at all* if it is not there from the start (see e.g. Woll 2006). Promoting ownership may be artificial and manipulative because if people are *made to want* something, they do not actually want it. This may of course be the case and devel opment cooperation does have a track record of efforts to change partners' or beneficiaries' preferences towards those of the donors.

People may however change their minds, not necessarily by manipulation but also by accessing timely and meaningful evidence or learning from other stakeholders' perspectives which, in turn, may produce new insights or forms of engagement. Moreover, underlying motives for wanting and committing to a program can vary. An actor may commit to a program because it is part of her mandate or job, because (s)he has specific incentives (such as budget to be spent or returns from the program), or because of an intrinsic 'true' will and conviction. It is not clear which motive for committing to a program should count as voluntary and which should not. In this light, voluntary versus manipulated ownership are not a clear-cut dichotomy, neither from a static nor from a dynamic perspective. From a practical viewpoint, it is hard to draw a line for what can be considered 'voluntary enough' to count as ownership, even without solving the tricky fundamental problem of 'what means voluntary'?[29] Conditionality that is required by financial

[29] Public debate designed to convince partners of something decided upon, as an infamous IMF-coauthored working paper once suggested (Drazen & Isard 2004),

regulation of the donor country (i.e. where even the donor has no choice) may plausibly count as less imposing than conditionality of the 'either this program setup, or no funds' kind.[30]

Ownership and appropriation. An implication from the above discussion is that ownership evolves and fluctuates over time, and if there is initial lack of or limited ownership, actors might *make it their own*. The relationship of ownership and appropriation has been discussed in anthropology (Strang & Busse 2011). In this view, making something one's own usually involves transformation. A sceptic view is that 'ownership later', in the sense of launching a programme in the hope that partners will later come to accept and support it, is not very promising. One possibility is that acceptance does not come because the program is and remains considered imposed or forced upon partners. Another possibility is that appropriation happens but involves substantial *adaptations,* up to the point that the program does not work as intended. This has two implications for ownership promotion. First, too much ownership and transformative influence may be taken by a particular actor with specific roles, in a way that negatively affects a program's technical effectiveness or compatibility with the needs of another actor. Second, a key question is which real opportunities partners had, and when, to make a program their own. For instance, a concurrent trend is to use adaptive management in the spirit of co-creation and mutual learning between partners. This has proven more promising as a practice, but is very dependent on the power relations in such a set-up and *who learns how* in the process (Engel & Carlsson, 2002).

Ownership by overcoming dissent? The two aforementioned critiques suggest that in the absence of ownership at the start, ownership promotion will either fail or result in fake, manipulated ownership or in appropriation and change of the program. The inherent assumption of dissent or conflict between parties concerns the donor-partner relationship. Ownership in development is indeed fundamentally political (see Cramer 2002; Booth 2011) and it is about prioritising some issues or means over others. At the same

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is plausibly different from a process that offers or allows for a change of mind or that is literally open in terms of results.

[30] See the synthesis report to Sida's 2002 study, by Weeks et al. (2002).

time, the relationship between parties need not always be conflictual. Donors may in fact let go or give in, or there may not be substantial conflicts in the first place because joint program development works effectively. On the other hand, conflicts are certainly not rare. Even given basic consensus, details will still prompt dissent, negotiation and efforts to convince. Finally, the above focus ignores the diversity ownership within a partner country and possible dissent e.g. between local and national level or state and civil society.

As a result, there are complementary key propositions that ownership promotion needs to take into account. On one hand, ownership cannot be produced ex post, at least not without considerable cost or risk. On the other hand, ownership can develop and needs to be seen as dynamic.[31] Taking the example of Somalia, Ejdus (2018) described how local resistance undermined ownership promoted by international partners of the EU Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa. Essentially, with the exception of the Seychelles, all countries associated to the regional programme did not consider piracy as their own problem. Instead, local stakeholders considered it a legitimate reaction to challenges of unregulated fishing and international interventions which were in part created and supported by the same external partners proposing the programme. Over time, the programme adjusted by reducing in scale, while enlarging the focus to include other maritime challenges. Whilst the overall anti-piracy objective was not formally abandoned, the case stands as an interesting example of development cooperation negotiation.

For the analysis of a given ownership situation, resulting key questions are (1) based on which motives ownership came about (if it did), (2) through what process it emerged (and how inclusive this was) and (3) to what extent ownership promotion was an explicit priority (relative to how much initial motivation for and consensus regarding the program was already there). These questions merit a

[31] One of the key insights in the case studies is that ownership takes a lot of time to develop, which is why all too often donors are not ready to wait and rather take back initiative, thus jeopardising the development of ownership on the partner country side.

further look into the importance of trust in the promotion of ownership.

3.4 Trust and ownership

Three reasons motivate the present research inquiry into ownership to give explicit and prominent attention to the concept of trust:

- First of all, trust and ownership are strongly related. Promoting ownership necessitates putting trust into counterparts and in their capacity and willingness to make good use of that ownership. Trust and ownership can interact in synergy and may either reinforce or undermine one another.
- Second, trust is not only the opposite of control, it may also be based on control, e.g. of some basic parameters in a partnership that makes it easier to trust others. As means of relationship management, trust and control are both substitutive and complementary.
- Third, trust features prominently in ongoing discussions about the reform of the Swedish public sector, with a designated government committee facilitating this debate. Linking this debate to the discussion on ownership promotion in development cooperation would enable mutual learning.

While a relevant object of inquiry, the concept of trust is underexplored in development studies as well as in policy discussions on international development cooperation. In view of this, a dedicated literature review was conducted, of which the main findings are presented below so as to guide the study's analysis. Given its nascent role in policy discussions and development research, chapter 6 of this report discusses the findings but also generates additional theoretical insights and ideas that serve to inform both research and policy debate.

In theory ownership could be based on a detailed contract asserting who owns and who is in charge of what and how. This

would be in line with new public management and a results-based management approach that makes cooperation and funds contingent upon fulfilled tasks. In practice, however, there are at least two problems. First, a relationship based on contractualised labour division is unlikely to facilitate cooperation across the interfaces between different areas and actors as implied in development cooperation (Rottenburg 2009). Contractual ownership also does not imply internalised ownership. If cooperation and partnership are about converging towards shared objectives, compartmentalising functional aspects of that broader relationship would seem counter-intuitive. Even if one actor or actor group is in the driver's seat, partners need to agree jointly on the goal and on the road to take. In that sense, partners would have to jointly agree on who does what and how responsibility is divided.

In development cooperation, ownership takes shape and evolves over time in a relationship of which the external partner has limited control. Leaving aside the question of whether in any field cooperation can be fully 'contractualised', development cooperation is usually relevant in contexts where institutional capacities are weak, or where specific skills or financing is needed to solve specific problems. Ownership does require that actors have some control over the process and decisions, even if only to remain committed and legitimate towards their superiors or constituencies. However, since that control is imperfect, ownership also involves trust, in different ways.

Shared ownership and division of labour requires 'letting go', i.e. giving up or sharing control, reducing formal requirements and working with imperfect (albeit credible) commitments. Challenges in developing country systems' often prevent donors from using these. Donors instead frequently establish and work through parallel systems for planning, contracting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This contributes to a general lack of trust among partners, a lack of ownership on the recipient side, and a delay in capacity development 'on the job'. Breaking through such vicious circles requires an uncertain investment or 'leap of faith'. Similarly, on the side of developing country institutions, taking ownership of cooperation may require taking the lead despite remaining uncertainties regarding the donor's behaviour and reliability, or the

agenda promoted by the donor. A donor might require from the development country government or from the implementing agency certain upfront investments, whether financial, institutional/legal or political, while funding is not yet guaranteed.

In this light, trust is key in the promotion and nurturing of ownership. The literature on development cooperation is relatively limited regarding the role of trust in aid relationships and ownership.[32] In international relations literature, trust has received more systematic attention (Haukkala et al. 2015, Brugger et al. 2013), including conceptual considerations. Trust is conceived of as a *"complex, multidimensional and* ***context-dependent*** *concept"* (Ceglarz et al. 2017: 571, emphasis added). Looking at trust in a marriage or in international climate negotiations involves different issues. A general key aspect is that actors invest in cooperation – for various reasons – while risking that their counterparts do not reciprocate (sufficiently). It involves the *"intention to* ***accept vulnerability*** *based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another"* (Rousseau et al. 1998: 395, quoted in Ceglarz et al. 2017: 571, emphasis added).

A recurring issue in the existing international relations literature is how to define trust and determine contributing (f)actors. Following Ruzicka (2015), rational choice approaches consider trust as a result of a calculation of the likelihood that one's interaction partner will 'defect' from cooperation; this often relates to specific situations. Thus, before admitting implementation failure, a recipient of funds might calculate whether a funding organisation (a donor, an international NGO) may withdraw from funding or can be trusted to keep up the partnership. Constructivist approaches see trust as a social phenomenon underlying relationships. In this light,

[32] Trust plays an important role in the anthropology of development (for an overview see Mosse 2012), but often with a focus on trust relationships and dynamics among local groups rather than governments and donor agencies. This aspect is also central in the literature on social capital as a factor of entrepreneurial activity and economic development (e.g. Bjornskov and Méon 2015; Murphy 2002). Some contributions use trust as conceptual focus of empirical development research. For instance, Elbers et al. (2014) look at the change of organisational logics of Western NGOs from trust-based social transformation approaches to control-based development managerialism. Ceglarz et al. (2017) analyse the role of trust in power development projects in Norway.

trust develops as a more general attitude towards a counterpart based on a trajectory of interaction, communication and shared experiences. Psychological approaches emphasise beliefs, biases and discourses that make some seem trustworthy and others not. If one's counterpart works in the same kind of organisation, has the same disciplinary background or shares a preference for the same project design, that counterpart may intuitively be seen as more trustworthy.

Trust is an ambivalent concept, located somewhere between complete uncertainty and full certainty of behaviour. Trust therefore involves a leap of faith, a risky step forward when sufficient evidence is unavailable – as it would always be in processes of complex social change and development involving a multitude of actors. To overstate the point, were evidence complete, trust would not be necessary. This leap of faith may then lead to a process of trust-building (Booth & Wheeler 2008). It involves some human intuition, or – especially in the arena of development cooperation relationships – a sense of commonality or mutuality and an evaluation of one's counterpart's motives and situation, as well as of the reliability of that counterpart's commitment.[33] Trust is ultimately something that only people have, although systems of human organisation and human interaction can help reinforce or undermine it.

Once initial trust is established, trust can interact with ownership in a synergetic and mutually reinforcing manner. Once donors trust recipients and relinquish more control, this may put the relationship on a more equal footing. It may raise trust also on the recipient side, towards the donor, making it more plausible to indeed take the lead and thereby generate further trust on the donor side. This way, a leap of faith can result in a steady process of trust-building.

Another factor influencing trust-building is the expectation of repeat interactions, which emphasises that trust is something to be earned over time. Long-term cooperation efforts show that a cooperation that is founded on such trust and solidarity stand a larger chance of getting through difficult times and can pave the way

[33] Swedlund (2017) discusses the importance of reliable commitments for development partnerships.

for more meaningful cooperation in areas that initially were considered sensitive. The evaluation of long-term Swedish development cooperation in Vietnam confirms and illustrates this (see Box 2).

Box 2: Swedish development cooperation with Vietnam: Trust-building over time

An evaluation study report of Swedish long-term development cooperation with Vietnam (1969-2011) emphasises the importance of trustworthy relationships as a driver of successful development co-operation. Co-operation with Vietnam was judged to have made a major contribution to poverty reduction, largely through its support for the Doi Moi economic reforms (which lifted many millions of Vietnamese out of poverty) during a time when Sweden retained relations and could engage in policy dialogue, capacity building and give technical support. This led to a phase where Sweden could engage in experimental and long-term cooperation for local democracy, which has affected national development plans with rights-based approaches including advancing women's rights.

In the initial phases, cooperation focused on large infrastructure projects (the Bai Bang Paper Mill and Hanoi children's hospital projects) of which neither were consistent with the most pressing development priorities of the time. However, both projects were based upon requests for support by the Vietnamese Government and therefore gave Sweden the opportunity to demonstrate solidarity with Vietnam during a challenging period of Vietnamese history. In doing so, the projects provided the foundation for the long and productive relationship that followed. The non-prescriptive nature of Swedish support was considered important, as it allowed the Vietnamese to develop their own economic model of reform without undue external interference. The special relationship also enabled Sweden to engage with Vietnam in particularly sensitive areas such as human rights, anti-corruption and the media. In the 2000s this culminated in innovative support for the Chia Se Poverty Reduction Program, which instituted grassroots democratic planning processes, and in the programme of partner driven co-operation, which, having built on the enduring relations between Swedish and Vietnamese institutions, were seen to represent a sustainable model of co-operation that will persist after development co-operation ceases in 2013.

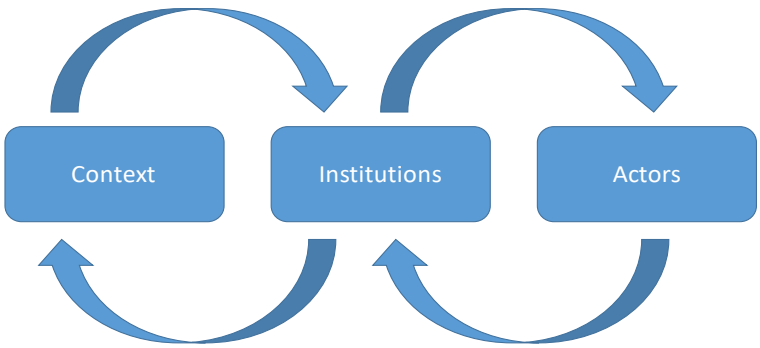
Source: Sida Evaluation Study Report (McGillivray et al. 2012:4)

Although trust is positively related to and in practice implied by the promotion of ownership, trust can also be damaged – including by actors who are initially not in the picture of the specific relationship concerned. Discussions on promoting ownership should thus explicitly relate to whether actors' practices strenghten or undermine trust. To this end, chapter 6 provides an overview on aspects to take into account, including sources of trust that can be drawn upon and nurtured through development cooperation, as well as a more grounded understanding as to how trust relates to regulation and control.

3.5 Operationalising ownership

Building on the preceding conceptual discussion, this section presents the study's overall analytical framework. Its focus is both descriptive and heuristic: it allows for exploring and describing ownership in development cooperation in a structured, coherent and comprehensive way and for raising key questions necessary to understand how ownership develops and how it may be promoted. The framework consists of three interlinked components across context, institutions and actors, an analytical distinction that is also applied in assessments of capacity (e.g. Salomonsson et al. 2011: 8) as well as in political economy analysis.

Figure 4: Analysing the context, institutions and actors in the promotion of ownership



Source: Adapted with changes in wording from Freckleton, 2004: 2

1) Context

No country is the same, and ideally speaking development partners adapt their approaches to the context in which they find themselves. Yet the same external partners will need some degree of standardisation and procedures so as to manage and monitor their engagement in these various contexts. Developing country actors face a similar challenge of accommodating and organising the broad range of external actors.

Specific contexts may vary depending on some of the following variables:

- **Importance of ODA for national development plans**: some partners rely on external partners for funding public service delivery to an extent that they are dependent on them for doing so. Other countries instead prefer to rely on ODA for 'non-core' expenditure, innovation or private sector development.
- **Capacity to manage development**: regardless of the previous characteristic, stakeholders in the country concerned may differ in the extent to which and how they manage development. A state with strong capacity in this regard tends to be relatively independent and thus in a powerful position towards donors. Low ownership is not necessarily indicative of a low capacity to manage development including donor relations. It could reflect a conscious choice e.g. not to commit too strongly, in order to remain flexible and maximise access to different sources of finance.
- **Shallow or broad-based ownership**: On one end there may be a state in which only the top political leadership has strong ownership, meaning that followership by other actors is low or based on coercion. Towards the other end, a variety of actors such as parliament and private sector may share the development agenda.
- **Level of decentralised governance:** Even within the state and public sector, countries differ in terms of whether

central government effectively imposes a particular development policy across levels or sectors. Local or sub-national administration or representations of national agencies may divert from central policies. As a variation, key aspects of the state may have been 'outsourced' to external partners (particularly in fragile states).

Within these contexts, the behaviour of donors may differ accordingly:

- **Responsiveness and focus**: partners differ in the amount of decisions that are taken by their embassies and representations 'on the ground'. Generally speaking, vertical decision-making where those decisions are taken outside the country concerned are on the increase, particularly in view of the fact that multilateral sources and vertical issues-based trust funds play an increasing role in financing national development initiatives. Moreover, in many countries external partners are evolving from 'development partner' towards an 'investment broker', which correspondingly affects the nature of the dialogue with local stakeholders. This in turn may affect portfolios, e.g. loans and/or grants.
- **Ahead of the curve?:** In some countries, recent structural changes in international development cooperation are strongly present, such as actor proliferation, topic-driven allocation, aid allocation based on mutual interests etc. External partners may respond to but also directly cause this changing setting. As a consequence, development practice may be more or less localised.
- **Fragmentation:** This dimension also concerns the presence of donors in the partner country, including the level and diversity of that presence and of coordination among donors. One possible scenario is a multiplication of agendas and interests, and a corresponding increase to the challenge of promoting ownership of those actors involved. Another scenario may be that low coordination provides space for a capable partner country to push through its own agenda and choose who to cooperate with among donors with different standards.

Contexts may differ in the extent to which the partner country authorities exert a strong pull on form, substance and process of the cooperation, which in turn may affect national ownership. Authorities may be 'micro-managing' to the point of seeking influence over the inputs to be used by external partners, or instead take a macro approach by influencing the direction and substance of cooperation.

2) Institutions

Against this understanding of the context, analysing what ownership *involves* and how it *manifests* itself across various *stages* of partnerships is key. This concerns the 'domains' (ownership regarding what, e.g. program design, implementation etc.) and 'objects' of ownership (process vs. substance). Institutions should be considered as enablers or disablers of ownership by providing (a) actors space to act, (b) the way actors are supported (material and moral support), and (c) by governing processes and spheres in which culture and interests are articulated. As per these parameters, institutions may in practice be reliable or unpredictable, and be more or less effective to their stated purposes.

Typically for a development cooperation setting, and as per the above discussion on the use of country systems, donors will differ in to what extent and how their development cooperation engagement uses developing country institutions. To this end, they may either work through more informal and verbal settlements, or instead seek to negotiate 'à la carte' arrangements.[34]

3) Actors

A concept of multi-stakeholder ownership may serve various purposes. Normatively it may inform analysis as to what roles different actors play in practice in the development process. For this purpose, two key aspects need to be considered. First, in terms of rationale, broader stakeholder inclusion in owning the development

[34] For instance, this three-page document provides the basis for development cooperation relationships between the government of Liberia and its Swedish partners: https://www.regeringskansliet.se/contentassets/96ae89183a494dfc942e9d2c6dc4ecd0/samarbetsavtal-bilaga-2

process matters both *intrinsically and instrumentally*. From a rights-based perspective, the closing of capacity gaps between rights-holders and duty-bearers can be seen as a means of extending the ownership agenda to people themselves. A cornerstone of Swedish development cooperation, a human rights-based perspective further dictates that this involvement should be empowering (not merely extractive). In other words, it should help shift the power of ownership to those who can hold duty-bearers to account. Broad-based ownership of results, can also help ensure that there is social accountability for results (Fox 2016). From a more instrumental perspective, multi-stakeholder ownership is also desirable to the extent that this broadens the basis for and enhances the acceptance, effectiveness and sustainability of development – at least when this effect is not overcompensated by negative effects, such as a mere minimum consensus. Broad inclusion would tend to be driven by the intrinsic value of inclusion while targeted inclusion would be in line especially with the instrumentalist approach.

Against this background, the actor dimension of this study's conceptual framework facilitates inquiring, structuring and analysing the actor-dimension multi-stakeholder ownership. The purpose may either be to understand *existing* multi-stakeholder ownership, i.e. various stakeholders claiming or exerting ownership of a program or process, or to describe the given (local, sector, overall) political economy as a *basis* from which multi-stakeholder ownership may be promoted. Looking at which forms actors' ownership may take also involves the issues of what these actors' understanding of ownership actually is – is it mainly about control? Which need for commitment do they see?

The analysis would need to look into *several* relevant issues or questions for each actor, from their perspectives, in order to provide an overview of the extent that key issues – e.g. conflicts of interests, incompatible forms of ownership – can be identified, that then can be explored in depth. Four aspects are key in this regard:

1. Actor's main interests
2. Their relationships to program(s) investigated as well as to others
3. The forms that actors' ownership takes

4. The implications for ownership promotion

A limitation to this approach is that it does not distinguish the various instances in which actors may seek or exercise ownership of a program. It instead conflates the perspective to a one-moment view. How actors relate to a development program 'now' may tell at least something about their more structural relationship to such a program or initiative.

4. Ownership in Swedish cooperation

4.1 Strategic continuity and frequent policy change

A historical perspective: shifting prioritisations of ownership

The Swedish parliament stipulates that the aim of Swedish development cooperation is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Throughout its history, Swedish development policy has expressed and promoted various understandings as to how this objective could be achieved. Though geopolitical motivations were also mentioned from time to time, the main policy focus throughout has been to position Swedish development cooperation at the service of developing countries' own priorities and strategies (Danielson and Wohlgemuth 2005). A 1972 memorandum stated unequivocally that *"Swedish assistance is country-oriented inasmuch as it proceeds from the needs, objectives and priorities of the recipient country"* (SIDA 1972: 1). The introduction of Swedish development policy was informed by dependency theory, focusing on facilitating 'self-help' of developing countries and with a strong emphasis on avoiding the promotion of a dependency on aid (Brolin 2017a).

While having a clear starting point, as well as enjoying strong and broad-based public support, efforts to achieving and maintaining consensus have resulted in a highly inclusive policy making process. Analysing the period 1968-1993, a government-commissioned study concluded that this search for compromise typically results in a broad and highly faceted policy framework that from the outside may not be seen as sound (Hveem and McNeill 1994). While external reviewers may point to an 'overkill' of partner countries, themes, policies, as well as an unclear hierarchy between these various plans and statements (e.g. successive DAC Peer Reviews in 2005, 2009 and 2013; see also Brolin 2017: 34), continuity can be

detected in the substance and guiding principles set out in these documents.

Exploratory interviews for this study encouraged the authors to include a historical perspective. Specifically, the interviewees argued that a certain 'cyclical' pattern could be detected in Swedish cooperation, in which the policy accentuated either ownership or donorship. An earlier study considers 'donorship' as the opposite of ownership, defined as a *"syndrome in which all initiative emanates from the donor side and donors determine which values and objectives are good for the beneficiaries of aid"* (Edgren 2003: 4). One research paper captured the cyclical dynamic as follows:

"Like many donors Sweden turned from strict donor-driven project aid in the 1960s to a recipient orientation in the early 1970s, when country programming was introduced, then turned to a period of donor domination during the 1980s, with structural adjustments and conditionality at the centre of interest. After a major exercise to investigate the donors' and recipients' different roles in the late 1990s, partnership and ownership were introduced" (Oden and Wohlgemuth 2013: 20).

The analysis presented in this chapter has been informed by means of semi-structured interviews conducted in Stockholm in March and September 2018, complemented by a review of policy documents and operational programmes, both obtained directly from interviewees or accessed through public sources.

Who decides on the place of ownership in Swedish policy?

The cyclical focus on ownership in Swedish development policy has been argued as driven by a combination of domestic factors and international trends. In Sweden, public agencies have a high degree of independence and a minister may not interfere in public administration and public policy implementation. Government issues longer-term instructions (*Instruktion*) that determine the overall mission and governance of the agencies. Strategy guidelines establish the main starting points (including effective development cooperation and humanitarian assistance) to be followed as well as

the planning-, implementation and reporting cycles. Objectives are set by the government in geographic, thematic and multilateral strategies, usually of a duration of 4-6 years. Annual appropriation directives (*Regleringsbrev*) set out agencies' objectives, resources available to pursue these as well as reporting requirements (Vähämäki, 2016: 51).[35] Through these instruments, government can direct the activities of government agencies, yet *"(…) it has no powers to interfere with how an agency applies the law or decides in a specific case"*. Contrary to many other EU member states, 'ministerial rule' over government agencies is thus prohibited (Government Offices of Sweden 2014: 7). Beyond this formal practice, in practice the public debate and political actors influence the substance and implementation of development cooperation (Danielson and Wohlgemuth, 2005).

Its recurring prominence is evidence of the ownership principle being a strong and consistent policy principle of Swedish cooperation policy. For instance, the Parliamentary Committee on Sweden's Policy for Global Development strongly asserted that *"Experience shows that development assistance is most effective when it supports a process that the country owns and operates itself"* (SOU 2001: 241-242). While prominent at the strategic level, there have been important variations in to what extent this priority has been translated into practice, owing to global trends and Swedish development policy decision-making processes.

In essence, the focus on ownership has strongly guided both the development and continuity of Swedish decision-making on its development policy (see EBA 2016). The laws governing public management, including management of ODA, are set by the Parliament. The Parliament also decides on the budget proposed by the government. By deciding on the maximum allowable expenditure on administrative costs as proposed by government, parliament however does have a key influence on how the ODA funds may be managed in practice.

Within the parameters set by parliament, the government in principle has a broad and strong mandate to decide on the focus and

[35] See GoS (2017).

direction of Sweden's ODA. The government decides on the distribution between humanitarian aid and development aid, how much is given as core support to multilateral organisations, countries to have bilateral development cooperation with and thematic prioritisations to fund. Within those overall parameters, which are agreed with parliament through the budget bill, government subsequently delegates decision-making to the agencies on the basis of general instructions. In line with the annual budget and the broad framework conditions agreed with the parliament, government subsequently issues annual letters of appropriation that allocate funds to the implementing agencies and determines the general and financial conditions that will apply to the year's activities. The letters make reference to the relevant multiannual strategies, which set the boundaries for medium to long term planning. Agencies are also given the right of disposal of certain budget lines, e.g. for the implementation of a specific strategy. Within these limits, the agencies are free to decide on implementation (EBA, 2018).

There is broad-based public support (i.e. ownership) for development policy in Swedish society, as confirmed in recent surveys (Oscarsson & Bergström 2017; Sifo 2017). The inclusive approach through which policies are formulated means that in practice various policy interests and aims co-exist, and seemingly peacefully so, although trade-offs are likely to be encountered at the operational level.

Today, the relationship between the Swedish government and Sida is key to understanding its policies and approaches to promoting ownership, as is the strong role played by Swedish civil society. The current system evolved from a more fragmented one. Sida was created in 1995 through a merger of five entities.[36] Prior to Sida's creation, these entities carried out their programs with relative independence, each with their own understanding of the overall

[36] These were the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), the Swedish Agency for International Technical and Economic Cooperation (BITS), the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation in the Developing Countries (SAREC), Swedecorp and the Swedish Centre for Education in International Development (Sandö Ucentrum).

objectives and principles of development cooperation (OECD/DAC 1996).

The Swedish development cooperation system has thus been consolidated over time and continues to evolve. Three current trends merit further analysis for their implications on the promotion of ownership: recent reorganisations and the increasing role of intermediaries, increased use of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other multilateral organisations, and an increase of non-grant based development finance.

Recent trends give rise to new ownership challenges

(i) Reorganisation and the role of intermediaries

Firstly, in recent years 'indirect approaches' – i.e. more intermediated development cooperation relationships – have increased under a set of global thematic strategies. Under these strategies, more funds are managed via UN agencies, IFI trust funds, global initiatives, and other international organisations. Although Swedish development cooperation has always been implemented through a number of actors (Swedish, local and international), a trend of centralisation of thematic funding via global funds, initiatives or agencies have encompassed alternative delivery chains sometimes leading to an increasing number of intermediary actors. Consequently, the 'funding pot' may sit further away from the intended beneficiaries, with additional governance mechanisms and intermediaries in place through parallel structures for management and disbursement. Although this does not necessarily undercut ownership, it may come with increased challenges for locally embedding aid in a context-relevant manner so that it is synergetic with other in-country initiatives. Such design challenges are not unique to Swedish development cooperation. Other donors' special allocations of earmarked thematic funding managed centrally or through parallel structures have been found to face ownership and efficiency challenges despite an intended focus on 'ownership' at

regional and sub-national levels, involving large transaction costs before investments reach intended end beneficiaries.[37]

One factor influencing the increase in intermediated cooperation relations concerns the decline in budget support operations, which amounted to 3% of Swedish ODA in 2013 and has since been phased out from bilateral cooperation (OECD/DAC 2013).[38] Another factor was staff cut-backs at Sida headquarters that were principally triggered by the agency having exceeded its budget. The direction of the reorganisation was in part informed by critical reports by the Swedish National Audit Office.[39] The circumstances at the time contributed to a broadly felt perception across the organisation that it was forced to accept the reforms as an issue of discipline as opposed to being enabled to co-design it.

Following a government commissioned evaluation, a substantial reorganisation of Sida as an agency was initiated in January 2010 with a new organisational chart and management structure announced in 2011 (Statskontoret 2011). A follow-up report noted that staff had been reduced from around 670 in 2010 to around 550 in 2012 and that most of the staff reductions had been done at the central headquarter level in line with Sida's reinforced *fältfokus* (focus at country-level) meaning that the relative number of staff was larger in the field than at headquarters (see also Brolin 2017: 39, Ekonomistryrningsverket 2011). It could be argued that this deconcentration would bring development cooperation more in line with the Swedish approach to public administration, which is characterised by an unusually high degree of decentralisation for a unitary state (Levin 2009). As regards the promotion of ownership,

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[37] See for instance: Evaluation of Danida's 'Women in Africa Regional Support Initiative' (2011:03, Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Annex 3 includes a cost analysis demonstrating how an average of only 2.5% of the overall budget trickled down to end beneficiaries (women entrepreneurs) in a sampled grant initiative, while the largest investments went to intermediaries higher up in the in the delivery chain. http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/11097/pdf/evaluation_women_in_africa.pdf.

[38] Sweden continuous to support budget support operations and related forms of cooperation through its contributions to the European Union and the World Bank.

[39] As reported here: https://www.thelocal.se/20100527/26880

the increased country-level focus could in principle facilitate context-sensitive cooperation and the promotion of ownership.

However, the reorganisations and ensuing staff cuts in Sida were carried through despite the fact that global thematic strategies and aid envelopes (as opposed to bilateral country strategies and aid) were gradually increasing in size. These reforms were also motivated by a broader introduction of New Public Management (NPM) reforms in the Swedish public administration since the early 1990s, focusing on efficiency, managerialism, marketisation and a corporatisation of public sector agencies. In development cooperation it took its form primarily in an increased focus on value for money and 'legitimising' tax-payer's money through increased control and auditing of results. It has been claimed that the concern for efficiency, standardisation and control often occurred at the expense of democratic accountability, sustainability and more holistic approaches. The reforms instead incentivised unproductive 'silo thinking' between different units and suppliers in relation to complex and inter-dependent problems. Sweden is portrayed in the literature as one of the early adopters of NPM alongside the UK and US, even though incentives differed somewhat. The NPM reforms came with trade-offs for solidarity and mutuality with partner governments as guiding principles for aid and development cooperation (Foss Hansen 2013). For Swedish cooperation, this trade-off intensified the tension between *"the wish to do good or to do a proper action, i.e. the solidarity rationale, and the pressure to show results, i.e. the effectiveness rationale"* (Vähämäki 2016: 236), at the expense of the former.

The centre-right Governments of 1991–1994 and 2006-14, and some municipalities and county councils in Sweden (which are highly decentralised) have been at the forefront of this type of welfare-state focused NPM reform (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011), even though the Social Democratic Party also largely went in the same direction of public sector reform during their periods of governing (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). There are ongoing discussions as to whether Sweden experiences obsessive measurement and 'over-surveying' of service users, as the more common term used under

NPM instead of 'citizens'. [40] This critique points to evidence of perverse incentives and wrong prioritisation in public service provision in order to reach arbitrary targets, legitimise new market actors, or to produce a quantifiable results measurement.

Although many Swedish development stakeholders did not principally reject the introduction of NPM-related reforms and considered that such reforms could produce benefits, they consider that the vigorousness with which it was implemented had largely prevented such potential gains to be realised. A frequently noted negative effect of the NPM reform has been the reduction of professional functions to atomised and disconnected administrative tasks, while the know-how is outsouced to private providers. This has led to a renewed call for ethical leadership and 'navigation by judgement' of professionals at the frontline of public service delivery; something which has been echoed in the international development (Honig 2018). There is also a renewed political will to look at alternatives and complementary approaches that re-introduce trust, values and principles for the common good in public service provision. Such efforts make ethical professionalism a core ingredient to renewing the social contract between public service providers and users (*Tillitsstyrning)*. In Swedish public service, this led to the creation of a government appointed commission (*Tillitsdelegationen*) to explore the introduction of trust-based management in the public sector in 2016.[41] Swedish development cooperation actors are also in the process of discussing how to apply a more trust-based management to their work

(ii) Increased use of International Financial Institutions and other multilaterals

In recent years, Sida's budget for human resources and administration *('förvaltningsanslag')* has not increased proportionally to the growing ODA budget. This restrictive human resources budgeting has resulted in considerable disbursement pressure.

[40] See e.g. opinion piece in Dagens Nyheter, 6 March, 2018: "Konsekvenserna av att allting ska mätas har blivit absurda": https://www.dn.se/asikt/konsekvenserna-av-att-allting-ska-matas-har-blivit-absurda/

[41] https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/tillitsreformen/

Given current projections of sustained economic growth, this disbursement pressure is likely to increase rather than decrease in the years to come.[42] Consequently, large amounts of Swedish ODA is currently being spent through intermediated cooperation setups, principally through multilateral agencies, in addition to separately managed and disbursed core funding to such global institutions. Interviewees noted that this recent shift was as much influenced by disbursement pressure and human resource constraints as by strategic choices.

Compared to direct cooperation relations, engagement in intermediated and multi-stakeholder cooperation contexts requires a more hands-on involvement in terms of promoting the Swedish policy interests since Sweden is only one of many donors and partners. Locally led ownership in partner countries is a key aim of Swedish development cooperation that cuts across thematically targeted policies around e.g. gender or climate change. It thus appears as though policy principles for which broad-based consensus is assumed to exist, *in casu* the promotion of ownership, are less vigorously operationalised and implemented compared to other policy principles for which some level of opposition is assumed to exist. This is shown in the recently adopted guidelines for programming (GoS 2017), where guidance on programming multilateral cooperation put a relative strong emphasis on the need to work through relevant, result-oriented and effective organisations. The latter is assessed by means of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), of which Sweden is a member, yet its methodology does not include dedicated performance indicators in relation to dialogue or ownership. The closest item in the indicator framework concerns the organisations' alignment of interventions to national priorities and result frameworks (MOPAN 2017).

The increased reliance on intermediated cooperation approaches have put some pressure on the socio-political contract for Swedish

[42] Swedish real gross domestic product is expected to increase by 2.25% in 2019, 2.06% in 2020, 2.04% in 2021 and 1.87% in 2022. Providing the 1% GNI target is maintained, this will mean the absolute size of the ODA budget will continue to increase. Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/375277/gross-domestic-product-gdp-growth-rate-in-sweden/

development cooperation. This became apparent a few years ago, in response to critical reporting in the *Svenska Dagbladet* about an evaluation by the department of foreign affairs that looked into how its multilateral development cooperation was administered (Nordberg and Majlandt 2014). The reporting showed that although public support for development cooperation remains strong in Sweden, the public is nonetheless sensitive to the impression that government does not strongly assess or steer what international organisations do with the un-earmarked fund that they receive from the Swedish government. Similar critique was more recently put forward by leading CSO voices as well as a former Sida General Director (OmVärlden, 2018; SVT Nyheter 2018). This suggests the need for public support to be renewed and reoriented to the full scope of Swedish development policy, as opposed to a small and potentially shrinking section of its portfolio.

(iii) From grants to non-grants

Recent years have seen a greater use of other forms of non-grant based aid, including blended finance that use ODA as a means to trigger or otherwise promote private investment, as opposed to a self-standing source of development finance. Sweden engages in such forms of cooperation through multilateral development banks, the European Commission and European Investment Bank's blending operations, as well as the engagement of Swedfund, Sweden's Development Finance Institution. While prescriptive conditionality for such loans linked to structural adjustment packages in the past were seen to stifle ownership in such collaborations, the universal alignment behind SDGs as reflected in national policy priorities could provide a basis for aligning loans with national commitments to reforms. Recently, principles of obligatory beneficiary consultations for all World Bank loans with identifiable beneficiaries (Manroth et al. 2014) along with a reinforced Environmental and Social Safeguards framework (The World Bank 2017) have also signalled an increased sensitivity to the delivery principle of centring interventions on citizen outcomes (Gonzales Asis and Woolcock 2015). This has been coupled with efforts to create mechanisms for increased social accountability of sector reforms by involving civil society and citizens in monitoring

progress. However, such efforts still have to be applied at scale, with some notable examples of vertical integration to learn from (Isaac et al. 2017).

From the Policy for Global Development to the 2016 Aid Policy Framework

One paradoxical aspect of Swedish development cooperation is the perception of abundant policy change combined with considerable strategic continuity. A key role in this regard is played by the Parliament's Policy for Global Development (PGD), which was adopted in 2003. Parliament can change this policy, yet it is expected to strive to do so by means of a broad-based agreement across parties. Hence, a new government may change the development policy but this should stay 'in tune' with the PGD.

The PGD is perhaps best known for ensuring a whole-of-government approach to Swedish development policy (an aim also referred to as 'policy coherence for development'), but also sets out overall development cooperation aims. Most prominently, parliament's decision requires that until today all Swedish development cooperation should be characterised by a rights perspective[43] and the perspective of poor people on development. The following quote illustrates that parliament has emphasised the need to integrate both perspectives (Parliament 2003: 7):

"Development can never be externally created or imposed on people. Development is created by people in their own society. We must therefore become better at listening, but also at making demands."

The high significance of ownership for Swedish development cooperation is confirmed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee's recent mid-term review of Sweden (DAC 2016). In the context of that review, the Swedish government announced plans to sharpen the focus on ownership and alignment in the updated aid policy framework. The mid-term review further observed that Swedish development cooperation may simultaneously strengthen

[43] This signifies that human rights shall be the basis for measures taken to promote a just and sustainable development.

its support to and through partner country government systems, while also furthering its engagement with the private sector and non-state actors, as well as developing new instruments and approaches.

The government's Policy Framework for Swedish Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance was published later that same year. The policy framework sets out prominently that the commitment to ownership is a critical success factor for Swedish cooperation:

"Sweden has always scored high on the direction and results of its development cooperation in OECD evaluations. One key reason for this is that cooperation is based on dialogue, local ownership and a long-term approach" (GOS 2016:4).

The same page of the introduction to the new aid policy framework asserts that *"broad-based local ownership is vital to sustainable development and sustainable results"*. The introduction to the policy framework notes that a dedicated section presents the Swedish government's views as to what broad-based ownership entails and how it may be promoted. The section concerned, however, does not present a clear conceptualisation but instead presents specific priorities for ownership. These may be summarised as follows (GOS 2016: 51-52):

- The principle of tailoring development cooperation to the development strategies and plans of the partner country itself.
- The Swedish government expects partner countries to draw on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Accord to determine these strategies and plans.
- Partner countries decide where development cooperation financed goods and services are to be procured from, with dedicated assistance to support countries in doing so in line with Swedish standards as well as international policy priorities.
- National institutions and local actors are considered to be key for promoting ownership, including in fragile states where such institutions may have been weakened.

- Finally, Swedish development cooperation considers ownership to be an objective that transcends its bilateral policy and that should be promoted too through coordination with other donors.

The aid policy framework presents a separate section on the importance of dialogue (p. 54). This section accentuates that dialogue allows for deepening relations, deeper relations, shared learning and development cooperation in line with the principles of aid effectiveness. The way in which dialogue is given shape and taken forward in the broader context of Swedish development policy is thus considered crucial for promoting ownership and effective cooperation. It further emphasises that ownership is not achieved on paper but requires direct interaction between all relevant partners.

Although a clear conceptualisation is not provided, the above summary shows that the Swedish government's understanding of ownership goes well beyond the classical and statist definition promoted under the 2005 Paris Declaration.[44] Instead, this more up-to-date understanding emphasises the need for Swedish development cooperation to engage both holistically and purposefully in a broader multi-stakeholder context that includes state-to-state as well as state-society relations. Sida's 2018 mission statement reflects the same understanding and recognises the importance of promoting ownership: *"to be relevant and sustainable, we know that solutions must always be owned and driven by the actors who are locally rooted in the development context in question"* (Sida 2018: 1). To this end, Sida commits to mobilising and catalysing all key stakeholders, bringing these together and seek relationships based on trust (Ibid.: 2).

For Swedish cooperation to promote such 'multi-stakeholder ownership' in today's context means embracing the participation of multiple actors across the state and non-state spheres of society in the development process, be it through social accountability initiatives that involve civic engagement in public service provision,

[44] Namely that *"countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions" (OECD 2005).*

or via inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue. This would include parliaments, civil society organisations, professional associations and trade unions, supreme audit institutions, business, academia and media – in the domains of policymaking, development planning, implementation and review. Understood in this way, the principle of multi-stakeholder ownership would serve as an interface for promoting the two perspectives guiding Sweden's development policy set out in the Policy for Global Development (GOS, 2003).

The specificities of the Swedish system

In Sweden, but also anywhere else, policy frameworks do not implement themselves, but have to be operationalised into specific guidance and instructions so as to be translated into reality. In the case of Sida, as per the general approach to government in Sweden described above, this is formally done by means of annual letters of appropriation from the government to Sida. These letters set out the annual objectives Sida should work towards and how much money the authority is allocated. They also state how resources should be divided between the agency's various activities, such as national co-operation, regional co-operation and administration.[45]

The agreed division of labour is that the government decide on the 'what' (sectors, themes) and 'where' (countries, regions) of development cooperation, whereas Sida decides on allocations within these strategies. This role division is nevertheless not always clear-cut and sometimes contested. Sida's involvement in designing and implementing development interventions, notably through its considerable staff base in Swedish embassies, means that it avails of considerable context-specific knowledge that should be, and often is, of benefit to formulating overall development policies. Towards the end of the 2000s, trust between Sida and the government, principally the foreign ministry, eroded as a result of government efforts to clarify and formalise the division of labour. As a result, the rules of the game that otherwise had guided the system since Sida's establishment had become unclear (Brolin, 2017: 113). In

[45] Source: Sida's website: http://www.sida.se/English/About-us/How-we-are-governed/

recent years, working relationships are widely considered to have returned to normal and are now characterised by constructive exchanges.

Generally speaking, the considerable influence of Sida as an implementing agency and its relative operational autonomy sets it apart from many other OECD countries. Another take on this relationship is that Sida accumulated knowledge about development cooperation that the government needs in order to formulate policy (Brolin 2017).

What also sets Sweden apart from other members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee is the high proportion of ODA channelled to and through Swedish civil society organisations (CSOs). An internal analysis conducted by Sida notes that support to and through[46] NGOs has increased (from 5.7 bn SEK to 6.7 bn SEK) in 2014, but that support to local organisations in the partner countries saw a slight decrease, which is in line with OECD/DAC trends in civil society support from 2013 (Hjalmarsson and Skoglund 2015; OECD/DAC, 2018). A specific feature of Swedish cooperation is that Swedish NGOs function as intermediaries so that they in turn provide support to and through CSOs based in developing countries.

The quality of the relationship between the government and Sida has a strong influence on the effectiveness of Swedish development policy. The relationship was under pressure in the period 2006-2014, as noted in the 2016 DAC mid term review (OECD 2016). An evaluation of the Swedish Agency for Public Management Support (Statskontoret, 2011) went even further and noted that the foreign ministry did not effectively manage Sida (Brolin 2017).

This came at the time when broader efforts were underway by the sitting government to introduce NPM across Swedish public agencies as outlined above, with efforts to introduce more stringent

[46] The formulation 'to and through' refers to two ways in which DAC member can report their ODA for civil society as ODA: (1) ODA *to* NGOs refers to core contributions and pooled programmes and funds; while (2) ODA *through* NGOs concerns earmarked funds channelled through NGOs and other private bodies to implement donor-initiated projects (OECD/DAC 2018).

reporting and control mechanisms and increased outsourcing and competition between intermediaries under the umbrella of efficiency and Results-Based Management within Sida (see also Brolin 2017; Vähämäki 2016). This put even further strain on the relationship between Sida and the government in the 2006-14 period, as it inadvertently made the navigation space for engaging in adaptive and outcome-focused engagements with partners more restricted. Civil society support channelled through Swedish NGOs with a framework agreement with Sida was documented to suffer from this top-down demand for results. In some cases, this went as far as leading to a recentralisation of NGO field staff to cope with reporting demands in Stockholm, and introducing inefficiencies for local partners who had to engage in meaningless counting instead of strategically engaging in local change processes (Ørnemark 2012).

The change of government in 2014 appears to have softened the RBM drive. It has also opened up for an increased interest for new ways of working adaptively within Sida, including ways to 'reclaim' the results agenda, which was the topic of a Sida Development Talk in 2018. [47] During this seminar, Sida clarified its views and requirements on results-based management. Other efforts have also been underway in Sida since 2015 to work more adaptively and using RBM – not only for upwards accountability and reporting – but also to be able to institutionalise a more deliberate way of applying adaptive management in its development cooperation with partners based on the principle of mutual accountability and learning. Much of the NPM reforms nonetheless remain.

Another key management approach to promote ownership through Sida's engagement concerns its electronic management system known for its abbreviation TRAC. This contribution management system supports Sida officials to work with planning, appraising, monitoring, to completing a development intervention. The online tool allows its users to generate reports throughout the project cycle and integrates all relevant cross-cutting policy considerations (Nilson and Lindgren Garcia 2017:7). Associated with the result-based management drive during the period from

[47] Sida Development Talk, Reclaim the Results, March 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi3BGYm2N6o

2008-2013 (see Vähämäki 2017; Brolin 2017), the TRAC system contributed to a control-oriented mindset that was not conducive to relegating control to key stakeholders in developing countries. A recent reform of the TRAC system, introduced in 2018, has nonetheless taken decisive step away from the overall philosophy that spurred its creation. The reform included a simplification and a reduction in its 'box-ticking' aspects, though Sida officials are cognisant that moving away from the previous more rigid management mindset will only be accomplished through additional capacity development support, including training. Table 3 presents some examples of how the new TRAC system presents updated instructions on promoting ownership, which were also well-reflected in its predecessor.

Table 3: Comparing Sida's previous and current electronic management system

Previous TRAC Guidelines	Current TRAC Guidelines
• Ownership is analysed in a standard section on "Sustainability, Ownership and Risk" • The guidelines state that "the assumption is that there is a logical chain where capacity and involvement gives ownership which in turn is key for sustainability" • The instructions argue that giving local partners responsibility for managing funds and implementing the intervention can strengthen local ownership • The agreement partner is checked on having a strategy for securing ownership of its beneficiaries • In addition to the agreement partner, a similar assessment is	• A key aspect of the guidelines concern determining whether "the agreement partner has a strategy to secure ownership of its partners' programmes and routines, resources and competence to assess the sustainability of its partners' intended outcomes" • The same assumption on the link between ownership, capacity and sustainability is repeated • A separate check of aid effectiveness principles is made, which features ownership • Key to the process though is documenting the assessment of ownership, based on an informed appreciation of several actors – including

promoted of other actors who are to be involved in the intervention

- Ownership is also covered as part of an assessment of programme-based approaches, and defined here as "Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption";
- Alternatively, the term local ownership is defined as "(first and secondary) target groups' and/or beneficiaries' participation in the definition of needs, objectives and working methods as well as in the process of implementation and follow-up of the project/programme."

those not directly associated to the intervention

- The guidelines explicitly recognise the political nature of development cooperation, and acknowledges that any intervention will create both winners and losers

Source: author's compilation based on copies of the guidelines received from Sida

In sum, although both the previous and the current TRAC system involve a check of ownership both at the level of critical assumptions and risk management, the current guidelines put more emphasis on the relational aspects. A key step forward is that ownership is not considered a binary aspect (i.e. it is there or it is not) but instead encourages Sida colleagues to adopt a dynamic and relational perspective. Guiding questions moreover emphasise that, consequently, ownership may fluctuate over time and has to be nurtured and promoted throughout the intervention's life-cycle.

For all channels of Swedish cooperation, including private, civilateral, multilateral and through the European Union, efforts are to be made by Swedish actors to determine whether and how ownership is understood and pursued as an objective. This is challenging in the sense that formal strategies of government (e.g. its strategy for multilateral development cooperation) or those of key actors such as civil society do not necessarily formally allude to ownership. Therefore, instead of taking the concept of 'ownership' as a starting point for a dialogue, Sweden may most effectively enter

into such a dialogue by incorporating it into a broader discussion as to how development cooperation should be done most effectively and sustainably today. Embedding the concept in ongoing debates on development moreover may guarantee stronger 'uptake' by development practitioners, as Box 3 illustrates with the example of a current movement.

Box 3: Doing Development Differently

The Doing Development Differently (DDD) movement arose in 2014 around a set of principles focusing on problem solving that is locally led – a key principle across the DDD manifesto across all aspects of development cooperation. Local leadership and ownership, as well as a strong focus on meaningful results, is at heart of this initiative, as is the notion of the need to involve many players working together to deliver progress in complex situations. [48]

A multitude of tools and analysis on how to take this agenda forward have been developed and spearheaded by several donor agencies (DfID, World Bank, GIZ etc.), with approaches like problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) to building state capability (Andrews et al. 2017), efforts to engage in system-wide adaptive delivery[49] and dedicated knowledge sharing fora.[50] This study also came across innovative efforts within Sida to apply these adaptive approaches to programming and joint learning, with an effort to more clearly anchor and connect it to the local ownership agenda which is at the heart of Swedish development cooperation. This could provide a new arena for further exploring how to more concretely work with operationalising the ownership issue in practice, and to build internal and joint learning with partners on the issue.

[48] Doing Development Differently Manifesto, from the Oct. 2014 workshop: http://doingdevelopmentdifferently.com/

[49] See e.g. the Global Delivery Initiative (GDI), http://www.globaldeliveryinitiative.org/

[50] E.g. the AdaptDev google group: https://groups.google.com/forum/#! forum/adaptdev

4.2 Swedish aid in numbers: principled yet pragmatic?

In line with the overall aims set out in the Policy for Global Development, which has been operationalised under subsequent Swedish governments, Swedish ODA finances cooperation through a variety of aid relationships. Principally, these are distinguished into bilateral and multilateral aid, while another key distinction concerns whether cooperation is financed in the form of distinct projects or provided as core funding in support of an entity's mandate and aims. As discussed in the introduction, these relationships greatly differ in the number of involved actors, including those with intermediary roles. Correspondingly, Swedish actors have more or less control over the relationships concerned and thus to promote ownership from the perspective of Swedish policies.

As shown by OECD statistics for the financial years 2015 and 2016, the Swedish aid portfolio compares favourably with other DAC members in terms of the focus on Least Developed Countries, funding through CSOs as well as core funding of multilateral organisations. At the same time, the most recent figures shown in Table 4 also points to considerable fluctuation from one year to the next.

Table 4: Recent trends in Swedish ODA

	2015	2016
1) Proportion of aid provided bilaterally	68.5%	71.2%
1a) Proportion of bilateral ODA allocated to projects implemented by multilateral organisations (multi-bi/non-core)	15.6%	27.3%
1b) Proportion of bilateral ODA channeled through CSOs	19.7%	26.8%
1c) Proportion of bilateral ODA that is programmed with partner countries	22%	33.3%

1d) Proportion of bilateral ODA to Least Developed Countries	17.8%	24.8%
2) Proportion of total ODA as core contributions to multilateral organisations	31.6%	28.8%

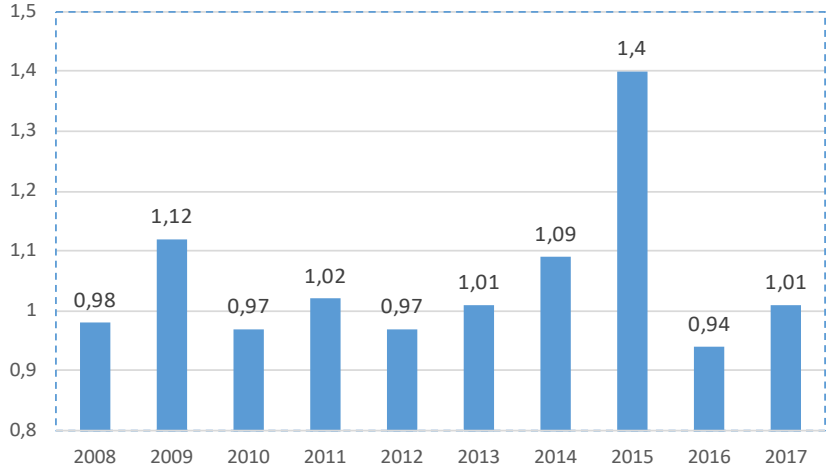
Source: OECD, 2017a: 269; OECD, 2018: 143

While these statistics show the present situation, there have also been interesting trends in Swedish cooperation over time, notably in the distribution of Swedish ODA via the various 'channels'. The government's OpenAid platform uses the following categories of cooperation types (definitions taken directly from the website, with authors' notes in *[brackets]*):

- Countries: Aid to a country either through specific activities or through non-earmarked budget support.
- Multilateral core support: Multilateral core support is non-earmarked support to multilateral organisations such as the EU, UN, the World Bank, regional development banks and global foundations. This means that the organisation's board (which Sweden is usually a part of) decides how the funds are to be used.
- Other bilateral / unspecified: Bilateral aid that cannot be categorised geographically and is not comprised by any of the other aid categories. *[This includes Swedish support to and through CSOs, as well as some of the multi-bi aid]*
- Regional: Aid to a region, usually as part of a regional strategy. *[This is additional to aid to countries]*
- Refugees in Sweden: Costs related to refugees in Sweden that are deducted from the aid budget, but are classified as aid by the OECD/DAC.

Using these definitions, the following table shows the trend over time, set out against the amount of total ODA as a percentage of Sweden's Gross National Income (GNI) in the years concerned.

Table 5: Swedish ODA levels and spending categories: 2008-2017[51]



Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Countries	33.7%	32.4%	31.2%	35.1%	30.3%	32.2%	28.9%	20.3%	32.9%	30.1%
Multilateral core support	33.7%	34.6%	35.7%	31.4%	32.2%	26.5%	21.7%	25.0%	23.5%	25.8%
Other (bi-lateral, un-specified)	13.3%	14.6%	13.6%	14.2%	14.5%	17.6%	18.1%	10.3%	18.3%	20.9%
Refugees in Sweden	7.9%	6.6%	8.8%	9.0%	10.8%	13.3%	19.9%	37.4%	19.6%	17.9%
Regions	6.3%	6.9%	5.5%	5.4%	7.8%	5.6%	7.1%	3.7%	5.7%	5.2%
Adminis-trative costs	5.0%	4.9%	5.2%	4.9%	4.5%	4.7%	4.4%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: OpenAid.se (N.B. Data for 2016 and 2017 not yet complete, mainly shown in missing data on administrative costs)[52]

[51] The Y-axis represents ODA as a percentage of Swedish Gross National Income.

[52] Figures on OpenAid.se, per spending category, may differ from figures available on stats.oecd.org (online). This is due to different counting practices

What the overview shows is that (1) the relative size of the various types of aid deviate over time, (2) that the country-specific bilateral aid has decreased over time, and that (3) regardless of the distribution, the amount of human resources available to engage in and manage these relationships has reduced over time. Actual administrative costs have been stable over time, yet, with the increase in the total aid budget, the relative cost for administration has been reduced. Across the board, these trends indicate an evolution whereby the country-based direct cooperation (which saw the greatest proportional cut in 2015 when refugee costs were highest) may gradually be de-emphasised over time.[53] This is significant in that debates on country ownership typically either imply or directly refer to situations of government-to-government cooperation.

Another key trend is is that the more direct and embassy-led cooperation saw a strong decline in relative terms, whereas the proportion of bilateral aid channeled via multilateral agencies increased. Relative growth, in turn, has been to both core-funding and earmarked multilateral funding.[54] More multilateral support does not necessarily decrease ownership, but calls for finding new and innovative ways of ensuring and upholding the ownership principle in Swedish cooperation efforts (see Box 4 below). In this case, Sweden brings its policies and priorities to a larger group of actors, with whom principles have to be reconciled and where compromises sometimes to be made. Such strategies may be proactive or reactive in nature, as shown in the following box.

with respect to capital subscriptions (payments to multilateral agencies in the form of notes and similar).

[53] Again, partly because Swedish ODA increased to about 1,4% of GDP and because the government used other money as well to cover the cost of refugees.

[54] Please refer to section 2.5 for a more detailed discussion of these trends.

Box 4: Swedish strategies to promote ownership in multilateral settings: two examples

1: Pro-active engagement in the Global Partnership for Education

One priority for Swedish development cooperation is to strengthen developing countries' voice and influence in global initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Sweden is a key stakeholder of the GPE and has so far contributed 7.01% of the GPE's budget. Given its contribution, Sweden, together with Denmark, represents the 'donor 2 constituency group' (of 6 donor groups) in the GPE's Board, and is a member of its strategic and impact committees.

In December 2014, an initiative was started where developing country partners' (DCP) constituency pre-Board meetings would be held ahead of the formal GPE board meetings. The goal of the DCP meetings were to provide the concerned GPE constituencies with the necessary tools to promote effective communication, decision-making and consensus-building, to allow them to effectively engage with the GPE Board and Board committees. Sweden has been a prominent supporter of this initiative.

An independent evaluation was completed in 2017 and found that, although their quality and management could be further improved, the pre-Board meetings had strengthened the voice of DCP constituency representatives on the GPE Board. Moreover, the pre-Board meetings were also an effective mechanism for consultations between GPE and DCPs and have facilitated alignment between GPE Board decisions and DCP constituency positions.[55] Efforts are underway to now also strengthen civil society's influence and involvement in GPE through a new Advocacy and Social Accountability funding envelope to be launched in 2019.

2: Reactive engagement in the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

A key feature of the EU's development cooperation since 2015 has been the creation of a dedicated trust fund to fund cooperation with African states with the aim to *"foster stability and to contribute to better migration management, including by addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration"*.[56]

[55] https://www.globalpartnership.org/about-us/donor/sweden
[56] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa_en

The fund is financed from the EU budget as well as the inter-governmental European Development Fund, in addition to bilateral contributions from most EU member states, Norway and Switzerland.

By March 2018, Sweden's additional bilateral contribution stood at 3 million euros, allowing it a seat in the governing structures of the trust fund.[57] Whereas some member states have been critical to the creation of the trust fund and the objectives it promotes, it is notable that Sweden has so far been the only member state to go 'on record' in publicly expressing its concerns. In an op-ed published on the EU news platform 'EU Observer', the Swedish development minister stated the following:

"In our efforts to identify urgent responses to migration, we must recognise that migration in itself is not a problem, and keep in mind that the main objective of development cooperation is poverty eradication.

Development cooperation often directly or indirectly addresses the root causes of forced migration. We welcome reinforced EU efforts to address the root causes of forced migration, however this should be done in a spirit of genuine partnership with countries of transit and origin (Lövin, 2016)*."*

While this strong signaling was commended by many concerned stakeholders both in and beyond Sweden, it also puts the government on the spot in that it would necessitate a stronger reaction in the future if the fund continues to focus on migration management and ignore partnership principles.[58]

Given that Sweden is among many other partners when engaging in multilateral development cooperation, it stands most chances of influencing successfully when operating in coalitions with likeminded states. It has specifically gained longstanding experience in doing so in international and regional Development Finance Institutions. Sweden for instance shares a constituency with other Nordic countries in the World Bank and in several of the regional development banks. The Nordic-Baltic Constituency at the World Bank Group consists of eight member countries, each with its own

[57] https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/donor_3.pdf

[58] For instance, a year after the Minister's op-ed an International Crisis Group report noted strong feelings of discontent among African interlocutors in relation to the way in which the trust fund is managed, including a low involvement on their part (ICG 2017). NGO reports on the trust fund (Oxfam 2017; Global Health Advocates 2017) similarly observe a low adherence to international effectiveness principles.

representative. The Nordic Baltic Office is led by an executive director, who represents the group at the World Bank Permanent Board and is supported by a team of advisers. Further research could look into to what extent partner-country orientation and the principle of ownership is pursued by the Nordic group, yet it is clear that there will be many themes and interests competing for speaking points at the respective Board meetings. At the same time, recipient country ownership is at the very core of multilateral development banks' operating model given that each loan requires recipient government commitment.

4.3 The Swedish global strategy for sustainable development and climate change

With a view to complementing two country cases that are presented in chapter 5, a case study was conducted on the Swedish strategy for climate change and sustainable development.[59] This case looks into a prominent feature of current Swedish development policy to further explore to what extent and how ownership features in more intermediated development cooperation relationships, i.e. outside the ordinary government-to-government or direct donor-recipient relationship that studies on ownership typically focus on (e.g. Edgren 2003; Whitfield 2010).

Introduction: the motivation and need for global thematic strategies

A notable aspect of Swedish cooperation under the previous two governments (resp. 2010-2014 and 2014-2018) concerns the introduction of global thematic strategies that enabled the government to increase ODA allocation in relation to specific themes or priorities. This form of cooperation is led by the MFA

[59] This is a shorthand formulation for the official title of the strategy, translated into English as "strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources".

and implemented by Sida in Stockholm, while the embassies are less involved. The following box gives a short overview of the strategies concerned.

Box 5: Global thematic strategies

1. The strategy for human security (*Resultatstrategi för globala insatser för mänsklig säkerhet*)
2. The results strategy for global contributions on sustainable environmental development (*Resultatstrategi för globala insatser för miljö- och klimatmässigt hållbar utveckling*)
3. The results strategy for global contributions for sustainable social development (*Resultatstrategi för globala insatser för socialt hållbar utveckling*)
4. The results strategy for global contributions for sustainable economic development (*Resultatstrategi för globala insatser för ekonomisk hållbar utveckling*)
5. The results strategy for specific contributions for human rights and democratisation (*Resultatstrategi för särskilda insatser för mänskliga rättigheter och demokratisering*)
6. The results strategy for Internation Civil Crisis Management (*Resultatstrategi för civil krishantering*)

Although most of these strategies had been introduced under the previous government, the 2014-2018 government strongly invested into further consolidating these. The government's renewal of the three global thematic strategies that respectively address the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development in 2018 are considered among the most significant policy outcomes under the 2014-2018 government. Interviewees asserted that they are rather central to government's engagement in development policy. Being implemented by Sida, the strategies are subject to Sida's mission statement and corresponding implementation approaches, which emphasise working catalytically, seeking relationships based on trust that add value and benefit poor and vulnerable people, and intentionally pursuing multi-stakeholder approaches (Sida 2018).

Interviewees further emphasised that the strategies should not be seen as 'vertical instruments', but rather as thematic global strategies

that emphasise normative work, global actors and global value added in relation to the equitable provision of global public goods.

The 2018 strategy on the environmental dimension of sustainable development

The strategy on sustainable development and climate change, which was presented to the parliament in the first week of March 2018, replaced the previous one covering the years 2013-2017. It is one of three strategies that each target a dimension of global sustainable development and was allocated a higher budget than the other two strategies.[60]

Long before the first strategy was adopted, environmental protection had gradually emerged as a key priority for Swedish development cooperation and was specifically prompted by the 1988 Brundtland report on sustainable development. A government report on results achieved in this area (GoS, 2009) observed that this sphere of development cooperation encompasses particular challenges from the perspective of ownership given that environmental challenges by nature transcend individual nation states, requiring transboundary responses. Given that many developing countries moreover give a low priority to environmental issues in their national budgets, Swedish development cooperation and their partners face the challenges of designing strong and effective programmes in a way that does not bypass or undermine ownership.

Notwithstanding this challenge, in 2009 a total of 61% of total Swedish bilateral assistance addressed environmental and climate-related concerns, while 14% of Swedish bilateral assistance that year did so as a primary objective (GoS 2009: 27). The adoption of a thematic results strategy was seen as complementing these ongoing efforts, with a specific focus on supporting multilateral

[60] The strategy was presented to parliament on the 1st of March 2018 with a budget of SEK 6.5 billion. The sustainable economic development strategy followed on the 31st of May 2018 with a budget of SEK 4 billion, followed by the sustainable social development on the 5th of July 2018 that was budgeted at SEK 1.4 billion.

organisations as well as dedicated vertical funds. A recent government decision did not introduce explicit guidance as to how the global thematic strategies relate to bilateral, multilateral and regional strategies (GoS 2017). A few basic facts on the current strategy are presented in the following box.

Box 6: The global strategy for a sustainable environment, climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources (2018-2022)

- The strategy has a total budget of SEK 6.5 billion.
- The strategy applies for five years: 2018–2022.
- The Strategy is to contribute to the following seven Sustainable Development Goals: Clean water and sanitation (goal 6); Affordable and clean energy (7); Sustainable cities and communities (11); Responsible consumption and production (12); Climate action (13); Life below water (14); Life on land (15)
- Synergies between the different areas of the strategy must be harnessed.
- The strategy will be followed up according to the principles and processes stated in the Government guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian aid.
- Reporting is to be conducted with reference to how activities contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Source: information adapted from Swedish government website[61]

It should be noted that the strategies were introduced in 2014, following the 2010 reorganisation of Sida that involved considerable staff cuts in Stockholm combined with the move of Sida officials to the embassies.[62] Commenting on the combination of staff cuts and increased disbursement pressure at Sida headquarters, several interviews considered that Sida was evolving from an implementing agency into an 'outsourcing agency': advisory positions were nearly categorically cut, evaluation and learning was de-emphasised, and

[61] http://www.government.se/articles/2018/03/new-strategy-to-increase-the-level-of-ambition-regarding-global-efforts-on-the-environment-climate-and-oceans/

[62] The reorganisation is analysed in more detail on page 84.

the main drive appears to have been the efficient and streamlined management of funds. The 2013 DAC Peer Review similarly observed that across Sida, thematic networks facilitated knowledge sharing on key cooperation topics, but that *"it is unclear how agency learning is feeding up to Sida's senior management to ensure that knowledge is being used as a tool for decision-making"* (OECD 2013: 89).

Preparing the new strategy (2018-2022)

The process through which the new strategy was drafted testifies to the importance of promoting ownership among Swedish interlocutors, principally Sida as the implementing agency. This was not unique to this specific strategy, but rather represents established working modalities among Swedish cooperation stakeholders. A key aspect of the guidelines is that all involved ministries and agencies need to periodically review progress made in implementing the strategy to *"create a consensus between the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and the responsible government agency on the conditions for the strategy's implementation and its results"* (GoS 2013: 16).

The drafting process for the present strategy started with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issuing instructions to Sida in June 2017, asking the agency to draft a proposal for the strategy that they would be tasked to implement. MFA asked Sida to work out two scenarios for the new strategy, these being (1) business as usual, and (2) high ambition. The MFA subsequently opted for the second scenario and prepared the strategy based on Sida's proposal. Once adopted, Sida was instructed to implement the strategy. It was noted that the Government's 2016 aid policy framework does not directly regulate Sida, hence the strategy enables government to do so by including and operationalising parts of this framework. Inviting Sida to prepare a draft is common practice as stated in government's guidelines for strategies (GoS 2017), but interviewees also considered it a means to promoting ownership in Sida.

There was some discussion inside the MFA on to what extent there should be reporting in relation to the general goals set out in the strategy. The current strategy includes ten goals that are in three sub-areas: environment, climate and oceans. There is no earmarking

of the overall budget in relation to these ten goals and grants are predominantly provided in the form of non-earmarked support. In a few cases soft earmarking is used, e.g. when the organisation concerned is partly active in countries that are not on the DAC list of aid recipients, and where actions are thus not ODA-eligible. In other cases, the soft earmarking relates to distinct programmes that were foreseen by the organisations themselves in their (multi-) annual budgets. As under the previous strategy, the funding will be in the form of grants, but specific provisions for private sector and innovative finance are included. A biennial meeting with Sida serves to discuss progress made on the strategy.

It is not clear whether the ownership principle will be a key topic for the biennial meetings, but interviewees acknowledged that ownership may require a rethink in this context, given the focus on global public goods that by definition are not owned by any one partner.[63] Another aspect is to what extent international grantees such as UN agencies and other international organisations are overstretched in responding to earmarked funding projects. If so to an unhealthy degree, then the core funding provided by Sweden may inadvertently subsidise them in meeting these projectised engagements with thin overheads. At the same time, it was suggested that providing core funding gives Sweden a strong voice when it comes to determining how the organisations operate.

Implementation: managing expectations?

The new strategy has been allocated a budget of 6.5 billion SEK over 5 years, and is designed to be separate from, yet complementary to, national and regional strategies. It is a continuation of the approach to cooperation as set out under the 'Results strategy for global action on environmentally and climate-friendly sustainable development' which covered the period 2014-2017. In contrast, the earlier strategy addressed five result areas as compared to the current

[63] This is in part a moot point, since discussions on the equitable provision of GPGs such as clean water do enter into ownership aspects. River basin management serves as an example.

seven, although this is in large part due to the different grouping of similar aspects under the various SDGs.

What remains consistent is that the strategy targets global action through international organisations, including multilateral and non-governmental organisations. The previous strategy asserted that this intended to *"channel support to several countries in the area more effectively than action via several bilateral agreements"* (GoS 2014: 2). Moreover, the strategy argued that supporting these organisations would serve to promote international standards in line with Swedish cooperation priorities. In addition to the international organisations, both strategies also require cooperation with a variety of Swedish actors, including the private sector. At the start of the previous strategy in 2014, Sida commissioned a portfolio review that mapped the spread of engagements across the goals, and on that basis invited several organisations to respond to calls for proposals. Table 6 gives an overview of the organisations that received funding through the strategy during the 2016 financial year.

Table 6: Beneficiaries of the thematic strategy in 2016

Area 1: Climate	
Multilateral organisations and banks	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
	The World Bank
	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
	United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)
Research institutes and think tanks	Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
	World Resources Institute (WRI)
	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
	Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)
Civil society organisations	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
	European Union Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility (EUEI/PDF)

	European capacity building initiative (ecbi)
Networks	Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)
Area 2: Ecosystem services	
Multilateral organisations and programmes	UNEP The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Quick Start Programme (SAICM/QSP) SP Sveriges Tekniska Forskningsinstitut (SP)
International organisations from civil society	IUCN The International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN) CSE
Academic institutions	Stockholm Resilience Centre/SwedBio (SRC) Göteborg university - Environment for Development Initiative (EfD)
Swedish agencies	Naturvårdsverket Kemikalieinspektionen
Research institutes and think tanks	WRI IIED SEI
Area 3: Energy alternatives	
Multilateral organisations and programmes	The World Bank - Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) UNEP UNCDF
International civil society	Energia SDI
Research institutes and think tanks	WRI SEI
Innovation competition initiatives	Powering Agriculture (with USAID)
Other types of cooperation	Energising Development (ENDEV) BoP Innovation Centre (BOP) EUEI/PDF
Area 4: Water resources	
Multilateral organisations and programmes	The World Bank/Water Global Practice United Nations Development Programme – Water and ocean governance (UNDP/WOGP) Global Water Partnership (GWP) 2030 Water Resources Group and UN-Water
International civil society	Water Integrity Network (WIN)

Academic institutions	Gothenburg University
Swedish agencies	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (HaV)
Research institutes and think tanks	Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) SEI IIED WRI

Area 5: Sustainable cities	
Multilateral organisations and programmes	UN-Habitat Global Partnership on Output-Based Aid (GPOBA) Community-Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF) UNCDF
Hybrids normative/operative organisations	Slum Dwellers International (SDI) Cities Alliance (CA)
Swedish initiatives	SKL SymbioCity Mistra Urban Futures Tillväxtverket
Research institutes and think tanks	WRI SEI IIED

A designated unit in Sida manages the implementation of the strategy, during which individual Sida officials take care of managing the funding to the respective beneficiaries by means of contribution agreements. These contribution agreements are broadly similar in structure and content, and refer to separate results frameworks or other accompanying documents setting out specifics for the support package as agreed. Summaries of annual performance prepared by the Sida programme officer in charge of the contribution agreement are posted on www.openaid.se. These assessments contain a standard question on ownership, as part of a risk management assessment and described as *"Risk of inadequate ownership and failure to sustain results"*. The assessment includes a few general guidelines, e.g. to involve stakeholders at an early stage so as to ensure buy-in, a risk

assessment (e.g. medium risk) as well as a management decision (accept or not accept).[64]

Interviewees noted that there were no specific guidelines or guidance to assist programme officers in entering into a dialogue with the grantees concerning the promotion of ownership, and that it therefore mainly depended on concerned individuals how and with what level of dedication this was pursued vis-à-vis other aspects of importance to the relationship. There were promising examples of good practices in this regard, such as cooperation with the Swedish ambassador to Kenya in the dialogue with UNEP, which could feed into a discussion on how to engage in dialogue with the partners under the various global thematic strategies.

Interviewees further considered a discrepancy between the expectations created by the strategy's adoption, and the implementation approaches chosen. The adoption of the global thematic strategies emits a strong signal of Swedish interest and policy priorities as set by government through these strategies. The implementation approach nevertheless gives advantage to those organisations with considerable funding absorption capacity, particularly UN bodies. Interviewees further noted that for Sida to be properly enabled to implement, it would not only need sufficient staff, but also adequate room for learning, as well as incentives to push additional concepts like ownership based on the principle of solidarity which some interviewees considered fundamental (and uncontested) operating principles of Swedish development cooperation. With such large grant portfolios centrally managed, Sida staff are not really in a position to nurture learning and adaptive management, but their functions become more administrative in nature and compliance focused.

[64] The study assed contribution agreements and accompanying documents for seven relations: IIED, IPEN, UNEP (2x), Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, IUCN, WRI.

4.4 Promoting ownership in practice: opportunities and challenges

With a dedicated policy framework prioritising ownership, as well as various channels and means to pursue this as an operative principle and value, Sweden encounters both opportunities and challenges in its efforts to promote ownership in its development cooperation. Some of these considerations are introduced and discussed in turn.

1) Ownership and capacity for change

Sweden's recently adopted strategy for capacity development, partnership and methods for supporting Agenda 2030 for sustainable development (GoS 2018a) includes several linkages between ownership and capacity development. The strategy specifically mentions the importance of anchoring new forms of cooperation relationships on partner countries' own priorities and to work in relationships that go beyond specific projects or time-bound interventions. It further highlights the need to align with the 2030 Agenda, in particular with SDGs 16 (accountable and inclusive institutions) and 17 (strengthened means of implementation). Furthermore, it puts a clear emphasis on working in multi-stakeholder partnerships to broaden and deepen local ownership, stressing that the nature of the interaction between different public institutions and other societal actors is important for strengthening the cumulative capacity to respond to social change that goes beyond the development cooperation. This clearly broadens the perspective beyond the notion of just strengthening capacity among counterparts to implement or handle a particular development project or program, to capacity that is linked to broadly anchored ongoing change or policy reform.

Mutual learning and exchange along with innovative and adaptive working methods are emphasised throughout the capacity development strategy. This is geared to both strengthening the Swedish resource base – defined as Swedish public institutions, non-profit or private actors who can contribute to the international implementation of Agenda 2030 – and to sustaining relations and

networks around Agenda 2030 in partner countries.[65] The strategy also seeks to strengthen Swedish representation and influence in international and multilateral organs and the EU to strengthen its ability to promote Swedish policy goals.

The current strategy is using the principles of development effectiveness and the international normative frameworks in Agenda 2030, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate as points of departure in its implementation. As such, it frames capacity strengthening as a means to create more equitable partnerships, develop innovative and adaptive working methods and increase mutual understanding between actors. This approach is deemed to facilitate 'joint' ownership or co-creation of results. Balancing the articulated focus on promoting Swedish thematic policy priorities and competencies in relation to Agenda 2030 with locally-led and owned problem identification could potentially also cause tensions. Nevertheless, Sweden's current approach to supporting capacity development illustrates an emphasis on the relational nature of capacity development across multiple actors and via multiple channels. It also stresses the importance of nurturing trusting and long-term relations that go beyond specific interventions over the more instrumental approaches to capacity development and ownership of the past.

2) Ownership by ventriloquism?[66]

An increasingly contracted and competitive aid sector globally (and in Sweden following various NPM reforms) relies on the type of 'solutions' that outside agents (NGOs, quasi-NGOs or think tanks who also act as consultants, or for-profit consultants) can sell to donor agencies, and the perceived predictability of success of their pre-packaged solutions, tools or 'products'[67].

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[65] Both Sida and the Swedish Institute, whose primary mission is to *"encourage interest and trust in Sweden around the world"*[65], are implementers of the strategy through separate budget allocations from the Swedish government.

[66] *"Ventriloquism (…) is an act of stagecraft in which a person (a ventriloquist) changes his or her voice so that it appears that the voice is coming from elsewhere."* Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ventriloquism

[67] In the logic of many social entrepreneurship innovation schemes, such solutions or 'products' should not only add value to public goods, but also be self-

For the competing entity, the extractive use of numbers of beneficiaries reached, or the selective use of qualitative feedback, can help the bidder gain legitimacy and tailor their offering to suit donor needs and desired solutions. However, this expectation of producing high beneficiary scores and numbers can result in *"selling beneficiaries by the kilo"* as a proxy for legitimacy, as recently discussed on the practitioner-led Pelican Platform for monitoring and evaluation professionals with a plea to move away from the practice of meaningless counting to please donors and impact investors.[68]

Ostrom et al. (2001: 163) also highlighted this phenomenon in their study on aid incentives, noting that: *"consultants are frequently involved in the project development process even before an initial inquiry is made from the recipient."* While this may serve in the interest of both parties and hopefully lead to mutual learning and increased understanding on both sides (donor and recipient) in the best of worlds, it can also predominantly serve the contracting agent (the donor) at the expense of embedded and rooted local ownership.

With more centralised aid (like global funds), the risk of such 'ownership by ventriloquism' by intermediaries may increase. There may well be a need for more intermediaries to help guide local groups who otherwise cannot access these pots of money. Although some intermediaries bring important opportunities for innovation to the process (e.g. using new technologies), these may generate new path dependencies and continued reliance on intermediaires to provide these.

3) Being value-driven and demand-led

One potential trade-off in promoting ownership in Swedish development cooperation could reside in the fact that development strategies are both value-driven and demand-led.

This situation prompts a question on how finite human resources and political energy is divided: should the focus be on the bilateral cooperation in which the embassy has more involvement, and where

sustained and self-financed over time, with the imperative of building profitable business models to be sold to the 'aid market'.

[68] See: https://dgroups.org/groups/pelican

Sweden has relatively more control over interventions? Or should the focus be on those channels where Sweden supports the operations of international organisations involved in influencing international normative frameworks that are resourced by multiple states? As is shown in the above discussion of the 2016 development policy framework, there is regular and strong support for development effectiveness principles in Swedish policies, yet there is no concerted effort to monitor to what extent and how these various channels 'fare' in terms of ownership promotion. Instead, it was acknowledged that development effectiveness principles, ownership included, strongly matter but that there were various other policy principles that can affect this, including for instance Sweden's feminist foreign policy (discussed below). As per these considerations, there seemed to be a limited basis for accountability on how ownership is promoted in Swedish development cooperation.

This can be traced back to the way the government sets policies and then delegates implementation to Sida as the executing government agency. Although Sida is being regularly asked, and prepares a process for feeding operational knowledge into the strategy formulation process of the MFA, the costs and limits of implementation of new policies are not always realistically estimated. This puts agencies such as Sida in a vulnerable position if they do not deliver on government-set policy objectives or do not reconcile conflicting policy objectives and principles, notably the tension between demand-led cooperation and a rights-based normative agenda.

4) Interpreting policy and deregulation

Swedish development cooperation system is in essence already highly decentralised and a high degree of trust exists between the centre and its embassies from where bilateral country strategies are managed. Consultations for this study highlighted the importance of considerable discretion and decentralisation in development cooperation so as to allow the respective officials to be responsive to their partners, within plausible interpretations of centralised policies.

While this is a key asset of the Swedish system when it comes to the bilateral cooperation where the embassies are primarily in charge, it needs to be considered to what extent a uniform and equally dedicated effort to respect ownership is conveyed in the context of other channels of Swedish aid. Alternatively, it could be made a clear ambition that 'on balance' Swedish cooperation is guided by ownership whereas in reality some aspects of its cooperation portfolio are more partner-oriented than others. De facto speaking, this is already the case.

For some interviewees, current practices are not sufficient and present a case for further deregulation in development cooperation. Generally speaking, though, regulation and protection of public funds – especially when spent in faraway places – is more easily to defend compared to deregulation. That said, development cooperation is less oriented towards and guided by stakeholder feedback compared to other areas of Swedish public policy.

5) Value-based pragmatism and 'gaming the system'

Interviewees used various examples to show that in practice, the 'Swedish cooperation soup is not served as hot as the policy documents suggest'. For instance, if the Policy for Global Development would be followed by the letter, there would potentially be few developing countries left to work with. When working in a setting such as Rwanda, where a 'pluralist society' that Sweden desires to support is rejected by government as a desirable development trajectory, obviously compromises have to be made in relation to the values that Sweden pursues. In this setting, Sweden may rather seek to nudge towards these pluralist tendencies by working on priorities that might not have full government ownership, with the expectation that this could potentially strengthen broader-based ownership in the medium- to long-term.

The sheer number of policy priorities to promote and enforce however may also promote a kind of pragmatism that borders on gaming the system. As one example given, Sida's internal systems of PLANit and TRAC allow for sector coding that are additional to the

ones used for reporting to the DAC's Creditor Reporting System.[69] Sida's own coding system codes activities based on both primary and secondary objectives, frequently resulting in rather high numbers (Sida 2017: p. 3). There are only so many objectives that can be met by one intervention, but the incentives to stretch its ability to do so are evident.

6) Justifying Swedish engagement in multi-donor initiatives

Swedish cooperation entails the participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives, both at the policy level (e.g. in the push for the 2030 Agenda) and development cooperation initiatives in specific contexts and areas. The EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was previously alluded to as an example that is not in line with Swedish policies and priorities, but where Sweden nonetheless decided to participate in order to have a seat at the table.

Another example concerns the Green Climate Fund, where Sweden has been represented on the Board. The Board has a key role in determining which organisations become accredited and may act as implementing partners to spend the funds available in line with the initiative's aims and strategy. Sweden's engagement sought to maximise the diversity and type of stakeholders, however other Board members wanted to play it safe and restrict participation to UN organisations and the World Bank. The risks of diluting policy priorities are intrinsic to any donor engaging in any such initiatives, but particularly so for Sweden given its ambitions in relation to ownership, even though it also provides an opportunity for policy influence.

7) Blended finance: how does one 'guarantee' ownership?

Discussions on ownership initially took hold in a context of grant-based cooperation, which in its very essence concerns a source of funding travelling from the provider to the intended recipient in whatever form. Ownership is equally well imaginable in the context of loan-based aid, for which it can be argued that the requirement

[69] Please refer to Nilsson and Lindgren Garcia (2017) for a description of the management systems concerned.

to repay a concessional loan only increases the seriousness with which ownership is pursued.

The discussion becomes more complicated when the development funds concerned are 'blended' with those pursuing a different purpose than those outlined in Swedish development policy. Blended finance takes various forms in Swedish cooperation, such as when Swedfund takes a share in a foreign investment project, or when Sweden co-funds operations by the European Investment Bank. Blending may entail subsidising interest rates, providing technical assistance to facilitate the attraction of investment, or the use of guarantees that are only invoked to 'cushion' losses of a company that otherwise would have considered an investment to be too risky (Lundsgaarde, 2017). Ownership is not a key principle guiding blended finance, although considerations are made in relation to the 'additionality' of the intervention, in other words to what extent it is likely that the investment would also have been made in its absence.

Beyond the specific approaches concerned, these recent experiences point to a need to reflect on whether ownership remains a valid principle in a future situation where the distinction between ODA and non-ODA activities has become much more blurred compared to the situation today. Recent policy discussions emphasising the nexus between development policy and other areas of public policy, such as migration and security, show that this direction is inevitable.

8) Rebalancing accountability and learning

There is a wide-spread critique, and an ongoing government-wide discussion, on determining appropriate forms and adequate prioritisation of result-based management. It was also realised, though, that fully rolling back the reforms that were introduced was neither possible, nor desirable. As per these considerations, the discourse on RBM-related processes in Swedish development cooperation is changing and some of the procedures are undergoing reform. Notwithstanding this appreciation on the direction of reform, interviewees considered that recent changes are cause for a discrepancy with a practice where a more linear or accountability

focused form of RBM still reflects the dominant approach to management, rather than one which is more learning-oriented. A way forward would be for government to set out its vision for accountability and learning in Swedish development cooperation, which could contribute to finding a balanced approach to effectively pursuing both aims.

9) *Rights based perspective, feminist foreign policy and ownership*

In addition to the rights-based perspective that features prominently in Swedish development policy, development policy also contributes to furthering the aims of the feminist foreign policy of which it is part. In October 2014, Sweden became the first country in the world to launch a feminist foreign policy, which pursues a total of 6 long term objectives. The policy is promoted by a 'rolling' action plan that was updated each year under the previous government (GoS 2018b). Although the term 'ownership' does not appear prominently in the action plan, its accompanying handbook guiding its implementation introduces ownership as one of four working methods for the Swedish foreign service. Specifically, the handbook refers to an 'inclusive co-creation process' and consultative processes within the service and across Swedish society which promotes ownership of the policy. The handbook further details how the policy agenda should be and anchored with focal points in every MFA department and Swedish mission abroad. Beyond stimulating a gender equality perspective to be integrated into all operations, including in decision-making and resource allocation processes, the role of listening to and involving local grassroots feminist groups in policy making is also strongly emphasised (GoS 2018c).

The feminist foreign policy strongly emphasises the importance of access to rights, which is why the current Swedish aid policy framework sets a long-term objective for counteracting the shrinking space for civil society. Specifically, the aid policy framework sets out the ambition that *"Freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly must be defended, and human rights defenders are to be supported. Union rights will be promoted"* (GoS 2016: 19).

From an ownership perspective, it needs to be acknowledged that the intermediated aid delivery chains do not always make it possible to answer the 'whose ownership?' question in a straightforward manner. Concretely, and in reference to the Policy for Global Development, there needs to be consideration of whether ownership is promoted in relation to key actors associated to the intervention, or rather the people living in poverty who are supposed to benefit from the intervention. While a 'user perspective' involving end beneficiaries of development interventions was seen as a way towards shifting the locus of ownership downwards by some, a rights-holder perspective was seen to be more inclusive and in line with local ownership by others. The two concepts are not necessarily the same as the 'users' of complex change processes can be contested and exclude important stakeholder groups whereas the rights-holders framework strongly falls back on the international normative human rights framework for inclusion and empowerment.

5. Promoting ownership in post-conflict countries: Liberia and Rwanda

Two country case studies were conducted with the aim to learn from a wide range of stakeholders about context-specific challenges and opportunities for promoting ownership. The African states chosen were previously at the forefront of international discussions on aid effectiveness.

First of all, Liberia was chosen as an aid-dependent and post-conflict state that could offer insights in various aspects related to multi-stakeholder ownership. The country presents a case where challenges to ownership promotion relate to a tendency to bypass government. Multi-stakeholder ownership approaches, such as via civil society involvement, is pursued with a pragmatic motive of *substituting* for perceived weak capacity and ownership on the part of the public authorities. Sweden ranks as the eighth largest donor in Liberia (as well as the fourth bilateral donor) and to a large extent relies on non-governmental and multilateral implementing channels.

Secondly, Rwanda is similar to Liberia in being a post-conflict as well as strongly aid-dependent country. Yet, in marked contrast to Liberia it has managed to sustain economic growth over time. It is also characterised by a strong government-control over the development cooperation relationship and over national development in general. When government's and donor's views diverge more fundamentally, this poses the challenge of how to promote *shared* ownership and partnership. Moreover, a main issue of *substantive dissent* between the state and its external partners concerns democratic participation and pluralism, which itself lies at the heart of ownership promotion. Sweden is not a financially significant donor in Rwanda, yet the case was chosen due to the different implementing strategies pursued compared to other donors.

The case studies were carried out by means of one week visits to the capital cities of the countries, Monrovia in December 2017 and

Kigali in January 2018. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted through semi-structured interviews that were conducted under the agreement that no findings would be directly linked to the organisations and/or individuals concerned. Interviews were captured by means of written notes and predominantly done 'face-to-face', while a few were conducted by Skype or phone. A key difference between the two cases was in how the interviews were planned. In the case of Liberia, most stakeholders were first informed of the study visit by the head of cooperation of the Swedish embassy, after which the authors followed up to set up appointments. In Rwanda, all interviews were arranged by the authors after having first consulted with government officials concerning the timing of the visit. In addition to the interviews, both cases relied on a wide variety of academic papers, official documents, media reporting as well as grey literature.

It should be emphasised that although both cases provide instructive and contrasting findings, they do not provide a basis for generalising findings on the promotion of ownership elsewhere. They nonetheless provide key pointers as to the state of play in the promotion of ownership in different situations and types of cooperation. The two cases moreover serve to operationalise considerations of multi-stakeholder ownership by describing and analysing the linkages between the context, institutions and actors in each case.

5.1 Liberia

Overview

Box 7: ODA trends in Liberia

Top ten donors (Gross ODA, 2016-2016 average, USD mill.)	
United States	457.2
International Development Association	151.7
IMF (Concessional Trust Funds)	65.1
EU Institutions	60.1
African Development Fund	48.3
Germany	29.7
Norway	28.3
Sweden	27.6
Japan	21.7
Global Fund	16.1

	2014	2015	2016
Net ODA (USD million)	749.6	1094.4	815.0
Net ODA as % of GNI	44.6%	62.4%	44.8%
Bilateral share of gross ODA	56.2%	57.7%	66.1%

Source: OECD data, table adapted from 'aid at a glance': http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm

As a post-conflict state where power passes by the ballot rather than the gun, until December 2017 governed by the first elected female head of state in Africa, Liberia attracts substantial optimism and goodwill. Having first gained considerable experience in multilateral organisations and the financial sector, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf played a decisive role in encouraging external partners to re-engage with the country. With its small population of over four million inhabitants, donors moreover expected to make a visible

difference in Liberia.[70] While initially showing positive economic growth and successfully qualifying for debt relief, subsequent crises such as the Ebola epidemic are symptoms of considerable inequality and lack of development progress.

In Liberia, the interaction between the recipient government and its external partners remains at the centre of development cooperation relations. Other actors – civil society, parliament, private sector – potentially play important, though secondary roles. In practice, the relation frequently entails a coordination among donors towards the government rather than a bidirectional process. De Carvalho et al. (2018: 12) moreover point out that within Liberian ministries, expatriate personnel have key roles in enabling ministers to manage relationships with donors through their ability to *"help ministers speak the UN or partner language"*.

Two issues beyond this traditional interface are key. First of all, because of its limited trust in channelling funds directly to and through government, several bilateral donors including Sweden channel support to Liberia through and to multilateral agencies. This provision of multi-bi aid, as the official term goes, raised questions as to its implications for government ownership. The second issue concerned the trade-offs associated to efforts seeking to make ownership more inclusive, particularly by involving parliament or civil society.

The case study further identified various aspects of development cooperation relationships in Liberia that have a bearing on the prospects for promoting ownership. The first aspect concerns vicious circles characterised by capacity deficits, lack of trust and ineffective cooperation approaches. The second concerns the dominance of realist, or pragmatic approaches in Liberia's post-conflict setting. Third and last is the varying interpretations of ownership by actors: donors mainly stress ownership of process whereas the government seeks ownership of substance, in particular where implementation is concerned.

[70] An article in the Economist (2017) noted that the country's economy was smaller than the Isle of Wight on England's south coast, making available ODA resources enormous by proportion.

Against this backdrop, four principal observations are discussed below.

Principal observations: Liberia

1) Government lacks a coherent development policy and donors do not sufficiently align support to national priorities
2) Several donor practices are detrimental to ownership promotion, which in part can be linked to their domestic incentive structures
3) Multi-bi aid takes different forms in Liberia, with consequent differences in ownership
4) Enabling conditions for effective multi-stakeholder ownership are not in place in Liberia

1) Government lacks a coherent development policy and donors do not sufficiently align support to national priorities

In recent years, Liberia has published several documents that outline medium to long-term development goals and priorities. These vision statements are complemented by several strategies at the sectoral level, such as a strategy for the health sector following the Ebola crisis (Fisher et al. 2016). Such strategies may not automatically reflect government ownership, in that they frequently have been developed with considerable input from donor-financed experts (de Carvalho et al. 2018). The website of Liberia's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning announced that an aid policy framework has been prepared and awaited adoption by the cabinet. It is broadly acknowledged that government does not have and does not apply a coherent development cooperation policy. The government is moreover seen to take little initiative towards

overcoming this situation and towards controlling donors and their engagement.[71]

Given the socioeconomic situation and the state's limited capacity to raise domestic resources, the gap between needs and available budget is considerable. One consequence is that the government is not in a position to reject offers from its external partners, and instead follows an implicit strategy of resource maximisation. Selection, or occasionally declining opportunities, does not appear to be an option.[72] In this context, it was observed that government-initiated institutional reforms saw a sharp decline – and moreover did not 'stick' – as soon as debt relief was obtained in 2010.

The government faces a wide range of donor priorities in terms of areas and cooperation practices. This translates into a broad spectrum of expectations towards government, both in terms of the portfolio of activities and of administrative workload entailed. The Liberian government would have preferred a much leaner development agenda but was not in a position to enforce it. The 2012 Agenda for Transformation was said to have largely been donor-driven, with the resulting wide-ranging strategy guaranteeing donor alignment by default.

There are also sources of incoherence on the Liberian side. Various donors consider the level of corruption a 'hopeless case', which is confirmed by Transparency International's ranking that considers Liberia among the most corrupt nations of the world (Signé and Korha, 2015).[73] Known corruption practices include diverting public resources for private use or for constituencies and dependents, as well as to powerful actors such as businesses. One recent case involved the country's central bank denying reports by

[71] At the time this study was finalised in November 2018, the aid policy had not yet been approved by the cabinet: https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/aid-coordination-management

[72] Similar observations of resource maximisation strategies have been made in other post-conflict states, such as Cambodia and Sierra Leone.

[73] In 2017, Liberia was ranked 122 (out of 180) on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

the country's information minister that a shipment containing the equivalent of USD104 million in Liberian currency, printed in Lebanon and Sweden, had gone missing.[74] These and other practices make it extremely difficult to uphold 'the Liberian agenda' and to convince donors to align to it.

Another source of incoherence concerns deviation from government strategies by its leadership. Some actors, most importantly the (then) President Johnson-Sirleaf, trust their own judgement and relationships sufficiently to deviate from established frameworks for public purposes, with a developmental motive. One example concerned the president's decision to take up new loans – imposing that decision on the Ministry of Finance' debt management department, which is in charge of the debt portfolio. Such a decision may have been motivated by public interest; it may have been based on expertise; it may even have been instrumental to maintaining long-term relationships with the loan-giving donor. Nevertheless, the deviation affects the legitimacy of the official rules.

Both sources of incoherence – corruption and leadership – seem exacerbated by various factors in Liberia. Johnson-Sirleaf's presidency started with a strong majority that allowed her to place trusted technocrats into important positions. During her second term, she had to make more compromises and increase political appointments to consolidate support.

Coordination between government and its international donors is neither systematic nor strategic. Donors' tendency to coordinate among themselves towards building a joint front against the Liberian side is not regarded as helpful. Worse, donors are observed to undermine even that intra-donor coordination by pursuing their own, often contradicting agendas.

Prevailing patterns of development cooperation may be linked to leadership interests and the political economy of aid. In addition,

[74] Sources: https://www.dw.com/en/disappearance-of-104-million-sparks-protest-in-liberia/a-45621713 (September 2018) and https://www.reuters.com/article/us-liberia-money/liberia-central-bank-denies-it-lost-100-million-idUSKCN1MC2RE (October 2018)

they may be related to levels of capacity in the public service. Two general aspects apply to Liberia as they likely do to many other LDCs. First of all, ministries and agencies differ considerably in terms of capabilities due to their leadership, access to development cooperation finance and other factors. Capabilities at the operational level are said to be low throughout. At middle levels, some civil servants were said to be quite experienced and (thus) well-qualified. At higher levels technical capacities vary, while political aptitude seems widespread.

Secondly, capacity means more than qualitative capabilities or knowledge and skills. The level and availability of human resources is constantly strained. Several causes for this were suggested. Some say people do not actually work because the low pay requires them to work elsewhere to complement their income; some say people are effectively sleep-deprived because of the long commuting distance from affordable housing into the centre of Monrovia. Others suggest that the administrative burden from donor programs with their particular requirements keeps people from keeping up with their core tasks.[75]

Some more specific capacity limitations were suggested to explain the perceived low performance of government in managing development cooperation. Regarding planning, a key limitation concerns the low ability to operationalise goals within a broader sector strategy. Such operationalisation would help prevent staff from constantly swinging between priorities – including those promoted by donors.

Related to this, the multitude of priorities resulting from donor engagement combined with the immediacy of the fundamental problems leads to an 'everything is a priority' approach. This

[75] An overview of the main factors of limited effectiveness of Liberian government institutions by USAID (2012: 22) is little surprising: insufficient accountability and thus effectiveness in hiring civil servants; dearth of skilled workers; low incentives to work towards public goods, to cooperate with other entities etc.; favouritism or the expectation to use public office for private benefits, often supported by relatively large discretionary funds; low institutional memory because of comprehensive replacements of key official when leadership changes.

plethora of priorities combined with the lack of operationalisation makes it also impossible to sequence the use of the organisation's resources, which overwhelms staff further.

Even if entities had adequate capabilities for planning and for integrating donor engagements into their overal operations, they often lack the necessary information. Implementers of donor-funded programs are said to hardly report to the respective sector ministry, let alone the Ministry of Finance, which accordingly lacks the overview. Accountability and reporting lines are instead shifted to the donor in question.

Moreover, ministries' management is sometimes not even aware of established mechanisms for coordination with (and of) donors. Using such mechanisms would provide some opportunity to overcome the problem that donors ultimately undermine harmonisation and alignment by pushing through their respective priorities and offers via bilateral channels.

One effect of all this is that the Liberian state struggles to coordinate and lead the national development process, and is being perceived as such by the electorate. A former minister recently argued that the donors' push to visibly brand the cooperation inputs they provide to Liberia has the unintended consequence of eroding the public's trust in government:

"As minister of public works in Liberia, I regularly encountered the negative impacts of aid branding when I appeared on radio talk shows to provide updates on development projects. Callers would consistently attempt to separate what was done by donor partners from what was done by the government. It was not uncommon for callers to refuse to give the government credit for securing the aid because the project was financed and branded by USAID, the World Bank, or the African Development Bank. They would argue that the government was merely incidental, that the partners would do the same work regardless of who was in power."[76]

This contributes to two vicious cycles. First of all, donors are unlikely to hand over administrative, planning and other

[76] https://www.cgdev.org/blog/case-against-branding-development-aid-fragile-states

responsibilities to the Liberian government and other domestic actors, which would be essential for these actors to take the proverbial driver's seat. Capacity challenges in the public sector are further aggravated by donors when they hire civil servants to manage development cooperation projects. Secondly, Liberian citizens commonly perceive the state as incapable to provide basic services, which reinforces a practice of every faction looking for itself rather than for the larger polity. It also feeds into narratives promoting privitisation of public services. Put more bluntly, once citizens observe that external partners deliver public services such as roads, they are likely to begin questioning the point of having a state (Economist 2017).

An additional challenge concerns the gap between the capital Monrovia and its county Montserrat and the rest of the country (see e.g. USAID 2012: 30). This has as much to do with infrastructural as with administrative disconnects, as well as access to ODA resources.[77] The hinterland is and remains remote in many respects. This means that Liberian ownership – even if it exists in the capital – is unlikely to stretch into lower administrative units, both in a hierarchical and geographical sense. This goes various ways. Local ownership in terms of *control* or upward influence on national engagement is limited. Because of this and Monrovia's limited control of rural areas, local constituencies as well as local public service offices are unlikely to *commit* much to central priorities and decisions. The decentralisation process that might change this deadlock has effectively been put on hold by parliament.

2) *Several donor practices are detrimental to ownership promotion, which in part can be linked to their domestic incentive structures*

Donor agencies often do not trust Liberian actors, especially when it comes to managing funds, including procurement and financial management. An IMF-commissioned study estimated that around 80 percent of public investment in Liberia is financed through external sources and executed outside government's budget. It is

[77] The Public Finance Management Act of 2009 does not allow counties to borrow funds (Fisher et al. 2016).

moreover observed that donor-funded projects that use the systems and procedures of the donors tend to be more effective than domestically-funded projects (Fisher et al. 2016). Although donors do enter into dialogue with government actors to determine cooperation priorities as aligned to Liberian priorities, they are much more reluctant to 'let go' regarding implementation and concrete allocation decisions. The risks that such shallow ownership presents are very real, as an analysis by Johnson Sirleaf acknowledged some fifteen years ago (see Box 8).

Box 8: Multi-stakeholder ownership as a basis for sustainable cooperation

"Traditionally, 'negotiations' between country representatives and those of the IMF and the World Bank on the country's economic plans and progress took place at the Fund/Bank headquarters in Washington D.C. or at the Annual Meetings and were limited to officials of the Ministries of Finance, Economic Planning, Budget and the Central Bank. Other sector ministries or agencies were involved only marginally. Little or no discussion, dialogue or exchange through the media, Parliament or, with those affected by or benefiting from the adopted policies and programs. As a result, when they failed to work many such policies and programs were reversed, sometimes inspired by public rioting."

Source: Johnson Sirleaf in Expert Group of Development Issues (EGDI), 2003: 164

In terms of explanation, actors also agreed that low trust was based on the perception or assumption of low capacities and corruption. There was disagreement as to how disruptive the problem of corruption is and whether bypassing Liberian actors in development cooperation interventions is the right response. Donors generally consider corruption a problem that is ubiquitous, structural, highly pronounced even by comparison with other low-income countries, and basically hopeless. Respondents did recognise that the increased evidence of corruption may in fact indicate a success in identifying it, and can be linked to enabling conditions for whistleblowing, such as freedom of speech and availability of social media.

While not seeking to trivialise the problem, government interlocutors considered donors as overly preoccupied with

corruption. Donors moreover too readily explain failures in programs in relation to corruption. Donors in Liberia do not actively seek and act on a systemic understanding of corruption and rarely consider the option of 'working with the grain' rather than against it. Alternatively, they could take informal redistributive practices based on social or loyalty ties to some extent as given when designing cooperation programmes with their counterparts.[78]

Some respondents who frequently interact with government interlocutors suggested that donors do not adequately understand the daily work realities on the Liberian side. What donors perceive as poor commitment and leadership in reality has much more to do with scarcity of capacities (resources, capabilities), problematic incentives and other structural conditions. It is of course difficult to generalise as to whether donors hold higher expectations because they are unaware, or because they deem addressing these to be within government's responsibility. What may be generalised upon is that many ODA-financed projects involve salary top-ups to civil servants. These projects typically speak of phasing out such top-ups after an initial phase, but in reality projects are often relaunched under a different name and continued. The use of top-ups and apparent lack of coordination of per diem rates among donors have intended as well as unintended effects on the capacity of the civil service.

In addition to problems between government and its external implementing partners on the ground, several intra-donor characteristics and their domestic requirements further complicate cooperation relationships. To start, various respondents emphasised the plethora of donor priorities and wide-ranging rules and procedures that Liberian counterparts have to work with. Related to this, donors differ in the degree of control they allow their counterparts over cooperation initiatives. This is in part related to the differing degrees of domestic pressure and parliamentary control 'at home'.

[78] This line of argument has been systematically pursued in a research project on Africa, Power and Politics conducted between 2007 and 2012: https://www.odi.org/projects/584-africa-power-and-politics-programme

There were also examples of donors either being unaware of or directly insisting on their domestic models of program design, in the sense that they insisted not only on priorities and procedures, but also on cooperation substance. One example was the EU's decision not to fund a primary education program with a private provider model, as desired by government.[79] Another example is that of a donor funding primary education program and insisting on teaching in the local language, while the Liberian side preferred teaching in English in order to overcome ethno-linguistic divisions. These examples correspond with a tacit conviction among some donors that they know what is best for Liberia's development. De Carvalho et al (2018: 11) similarly observed that *"it seemed to us that the international community thought that they knew best what local ownership was in Liberia"*. There are however encouraging examples to the contrary, such as the health pool fund that was initiated by the Liberian government and has attracted contributions from several donors. The programme has supported the Liberian health system to reach out to parts of the country not well-serviced by development projects, whilst also contributing to the health ministry's capacity (Economist 2017).

Liberian respondents observed that donors frequently do not engage in a transparent manner, including when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Government respondents indicated lacking the overview, and acknowledged that in many cases implementing agencies failed to report to the relevant line ministries. Explanations included that donors and implementers try to avoid government interference, whereas implementers feel predominantly accountable to donors. In view of the absence of a formalised dialogue platform between donors and governments, donors were moreover seen to coordinate only pragmatically while often engaging in an opportunistic manner. Such unilateral behaviour by donors is unlikely to be sanctioned by government.

Finally, it was argued that donors themselves do not have a long-term strategy, including an exit strategy to be pursued by gradually

[79] Note, however, that this was also a procedural problem: funds had already passed the machinery of approvals when the Liberian ministry decided to change the approach.

reducing and handing over to government. One donor suggested that the problem is the transition from short-term to long-term development. Social and economic recovery and institution building have progressed relatively slowly in Liberia. The continuing sense of everything being a priority and the associated unreliability of Liberian structures prevent such exit strategies from being developed.

3) *Multi-bi aid takes different forms in Liberia, with consequent differences in ownership*

The term multi-bi aid refers to donor contributions to multilateral organisations earmarked for specific purposes. Research on alloation trends in this cooperation appraoch finds that "*due to its earmarked nature, multi-bi aid risks neglecting recipient-country ownership as bilateral donors privilege their own priorities"* (Reinsberg 2017). Often, the meaning of the term is confined to special purpose trust funds (SPTFs) of bilateral donors that are hosted by multilateral agencies. The United Nations fulfilled important quasi-caretaker roles in the initial post-conflict stage in Liberia, and SPTFs can be considered a transitional approach allowing government to regain its role.

There are various paths to designing multi-bi cooperation programmes in Liberia, which can be described by two illustrative examples.

A first example involves a multilateral organisation taking the initiative of approaching government, and subsequently approaching a bilateral donor with a request to (co-)fund. This example corresponds to that of a program financed by Sweden and implemented by UNFPA in Liberia. In this case, UNFPA agreed with government on a programme in the education sector, including purpose, approach and target group, and then approached Sida for funding. Once Sida agreed to fund the program, possibly after asking for a few amendments, bilateral funds committed to Liberia were channelled directly into a multilateral agency to implement the programme targeting government. Although this may fit the category multi-bi, the allocation is not earmarked in the sense that Sida and the government had already decided on the approach. As Sida stated, there is no earmarking '*within* programs' but only *to* the

UN program as the multilateral agency. Earmarking it to the UN program makes it *multi*-bi, but the earmarking regarding a special purpose is more limited.

The second case would have the main initiative with the donor, which would design a programme concept and 'pitch' it to government. The funds would subsequently bypass government in every respect and be channelled directly to an international NGO. This NGO then acts like a multilateral agency in that it subsequently channels the funds to implement the projects. In this case, the funds are multi-bi but the earmarking by the donor is much more specific. This example has more resemblance to an SPTF as defined above, although not hosted by a multilateral organisation.

Both cases involve a degree of 'bypassing' government control over and involvement in direct implementation. However, the first case is premised on the assumption that the programme addresses cooperation substance agreed in considerable detail with government. As the funding partner, the donor may introduce some minor amendments to guarantee its full support, and which may or may not have an effect on the prior agreement between the government and the international organisation. In contrast, SPTFs are not necessarily driven by that motive, despite formally striving towards stronger partner country control over funds. In that case, bypassing the government and its ownership may be more an unintended consequence (or 'design feature') rather than a purposeful aim of the SPTFs concerned.

Finally, funding to strengthening civil society as an end in itself may necessitate deliberately by-passing government to ensure the broader ownership of a specific reform agenda among the population or specific population sub-groups.

4) *Enabling conditions for effective multi-stakeholder ownership are not in place in Liberia*

Several observations can be made about multi-stakeholder ownership in Liberia. First of all, donor-financed programs in Liberia are often set up as multi-stakeholder endeavours, in that various actors are involved and own the program to differing degrees and on different levels. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

and UN programs often act as implementing organisations, and their involvement may be conducive to promoting ownership at a technical level. They may also be involved in the definition of priorities, as was the case with UNFPA's program 'Empowered and Fulfilled'. This approach to multi-stakeholder cooperation does not primarily aim for inclusion, but rather results from the perceived need to include actors beyond government.

This multi-stakeholder ownership is pragmatic rather than programmatic and possibly also more 'by implication', in the sense that each actor takes on a different implementingrole. It is ultimately driven by donors and by their perception of government. Often, government is neither willing nor able to facilitate such multi-stakeholder processes on its own which further affects the government's agency and control. As seen in Liberia, the government's priority is instead to gain more control over the development cooperation process. Moreover, coordination and administrative burdens from actor diversity are already a problem in Liberia given the state's limited resources.

Parliament is a problematic stakeholder in Liberia's developmental efforts. This was partly attributed to the limited capacity of parliamentarians in terms of 'modern development', but also to these local representatives' interests and agendas that are considered not aligned to national development priorities. One explanation is that high turnover rates in parliament inhibits the legislature to exercise adequate oversight, with 13% of incumbent senators and 38% of the incumbent parliamentarians having managed to retain their seats during the 2011 elections. Another is the representatives' low level of educational attainment, which has been found to affect both their functioning in parliament as well as accountability towards their constituents (Signé & Korha 2015). Furthermore, women are vastly underrepresented. In 2017, only 12% of the seats in the national parliament were held by women. This is nearly 50% lower than the worldwide average of 23.6% of women-held seats in parliament.[80]

[80] The World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS

The law on decentralisation, which would affect how local/district representatives relate to and co-own national policy, has been put on hold by parliament. Respondents used this example to illustrate that they expect that involving parliament usually backfires, and hence a closer involvement of parliament was not expected to further multi-stakeholder ownership. Cases of rent-seeking by parliamentarians moreover indicate that some parliamentarians seek private gains from public office (Signé & Korha 2015). The Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2016 country report on Liberia observes an improvement in the public satisfaction of democratic institutions, yet remain at a low level of 59% in 2012 in 2012 compared to 51% 2008 (BTI 2016: 14). As for the representational and legitimacy function of multi-stakeholder ownership, it is not clear in the Liberian case if people feel represented by parliamentarians and if parliamentarians enjoy legitimacy. A more general question would be whether multi-stakeholder ownership can programmatically be pursued by donors as long as the key institution of democratic representation needs to be bypassed.

Civil society in Liberia is commonly described by observers in terms such as *"small but vibrant"* (USAID 2012: 31) or *"a visible and palpable part of public life"* (BTI 2016: 25). A key function shared by all CSOs is to provide employment. However, there are considerable differences among CSOs in terms of resources or wage levels. Importantly, the aforementioned division of Liberia into Monrovia/Montserrat and the rest of the country also reflects in civil society. A recent study confirmed that civil society organisations in the capital are considerably more professionalised (Search for Common Ground 2014). Moreover, *"aside from this relatively small group of educated and politically engaged people in the capital, (…) most of the population is preoccupied with survival. As such, they lack the resources to actively engage in civic participation"* (BTI 2016: 25). Even if CSOs are able to perform in their immediate scope of influence, the effect of this on participation of the population at large is limited.

The role of civil society organisations in terms of multi-stakeholder ownership in Liberia is difficult to generalise given the

various roles that CSOs play. Three types of CSOs can be distinguished. [81]

- Type 1 organisations are considered to be intrinsically motivated by local issues and concerns. They often have rather specific expertise and are thereby relatively effective although their resources and their level of professionalism are limited. These organisations are characterised by strong accountability relations towards their local beneficiaries, who are also frequently directly represented in the organisations. Their ownership in terms of participation in or control over program design may also be considerable, as per the policies and practices of international NGOs that support them.

- Type 2 organisations are said to be more professional, often based in Monrovia, and more strongly oriented to 'donor-defined issues'. They therefore tend to be more opportunistic and volatile, which limits their technical expertise despite relatively high levels of professional skills. Their ownership of priorities may be more limited and their commitment may be more contingent upon available funds than in the case of type 1. To the extent that their professionalism allows them to implement projects and funds rather independently, their ownership in terms of control over that implementation can be expected to be high.

- Type 3 organisations are said to be more or less direct instruments of vested interests. They may be professionalised in the sense of closely adjusting to donor discourses but are either less relevant or even detrimental to the role of civil society as a whole. These organisations do not own development in a sense of contributing to a public good. To what extent they own developmental activity in Liberia is very difficult to establish.

Respondents did not comment in detail on the role of the private sector, other than observing that companies were not strongly

[81] This differentiation was presented independent of civil society organisations' focus or main issues. Zanker (2017: 64) offers a categorisation of Liberian CSOs as political, religious, humanitarian, women and US-diaspora groups.

involved in a dialogue with the state concerning the provision of public goods and service or towards good (economic) governance. It was similarly observed in USAID (2012:33) *"the business community does not act as a meaningful constraint on good governance, nor as a push for good governance."* Rather, based on intimate, personal links between the two spheres, companies will get what they need via other means. It is therefore not clear what their role and their motivation to co-own development could be. Given the high level of informality of that relationship, state/private sector cooperation may be viewed sceptically in terms of its public or developmental orientation.

The state/civil society relationship is commonly framed in terms of public benefits, even if state and CSO are not always on the same page. This is not changed by the fact that the problem of favouritism persists (cf. USAID 2012: 29). Liberian official CSO policy explicitly states that civil society constitutes a space between the government and households. In practice, however, respondents at least from the CSO side suggested that civil society is perceived as an opposition party or structure rather than as mediator. This is little surprising given that civil society is connected to and financed by donors and constitutes a parallel structure diminishing government's control over development cooperation in the country. At the same time, USAID's governance assessment in 2012 concluded that pressures for accountability from civil society is weak (USAID 2012: 11).

Finally, academia and the press have the advantage of relative freedom of opinion and operation. Beyond this overall observation, there is no unequivocal picture of their potential to act as watchdogs of government performance and public service provision. The Liberian press is sometimes lauded as critical observer and source of public awareness; press legislation is regularly referred to as considerably pro freedom of press (CIMA 2016; USAID 2012: 32). At the same time, this relative freedom is just as regularly violated by repressive action on journalism that is critical in particular of government (CIMA 2016; BTI 2016: 9). To the extent this happens, the Liberian press is prevented not only from taking part in multi-stakeholder cooperation but also from reporting on the failure of such cooperation and the inclusion of stakeholders beyond government.

5.2 Rwanda

Overview

Box 9: ODA trends in Rwanda

Top ten donors (Gross ODA, 2016-2016 average, USD mill.)

International Development Association	263.3
United States	188.6
United Kingdom	123.8
Global Fund	88.2
African Development Fund	69.0
EU Institutions	67.5
IMF (Concessional Trust Funds)	50.1
Netherlands	48.4
Germany	41.6
Belgium	31.1

	2014	2015	2016
Net ODA (USD million)	1035.0	1085.3	1148.4
Net ODA as % of GNI	13.2%	13.5%	14.1%
Bilateral share of gross ODA	45.6%	50.8%	43.1%

Source: OECD data, table adapted from 'aid at a glance': http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/aid-at-a-glance.htm

Discussions on Rwanda's governance context and socio-economic approach are controversial, and its model of governance and development continues to be subject to somewhat polarised academic debate (Hasselskog 2017). Reflecting this level of polarisation, discussions in the literature and among practitioners can largely be framed in any of the following two perspectives:

The first perspective is one in which the governance system of the country is dominated by an autocratic approach, which does not tolerate questioning overall choices and strategy. There is openness

to discuss effectiveness (i.e. are we doing the things right?) but not to discuss relevance (i.e. are we doing the right things?). Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2012) note that Rwandan government officials are highly unlikely to question political priorities set by the leadership. International indices (like Freedom House, Bertelsmann Transformation Index and World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment) point to significant limitations for pluralism. Thus, external development partners cannot build on multi-stakeholder assumptions since political space is very limited.

The second perspective is one where the country does offer space for pluralism, while government subscribes to the vision that *"if economic and social progress occurs fast enough, a new generation will emerge who are capable of fully assuming their national identity as Rwandans rather than privileging what divided them in the past"* (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012: 391). Several publications (e.g. Crisafulli and Redmund 2014) consider that economic and social progress to be impressive, which would support this approach. Different stakeholders are represented in government today, and the role of parliament indicates that the country accommodates a pluralistic approach to some extent at least with regard to more technical discussions. In addition, informal networking allows for additional exchange of ideas and views which are not so easily presented 'in the open'. Restrictions to political views (parties, etc.) are deemed necessary in order to prevent what is referred to as 'divisionism'. The latter concept is understood as the risk that debates might be used for advancing radical positions based on socio-ethnic concepts.

Both perspectives share that they do not anticipate any major societal changes in the short to medium-term, whereas significant transformation would be needed and was introduced in post-conflict countries that pursued similar development trajectories (South-Korea and Singapore being oft-cited examples). The Rwandan National Strategy for Transformation (2017-2024) and its Vision 2050 does not foresee any such changes.

For any analysis of multi-stakeholder approaches in Rwanda, debating stakeholder diversity and representativeness is crucial. In Rwanda, the expectation is that all concerned actors engage in a way that is consistent with the overall priorities set out by the

government and the ruling party. This should be kept in mind when considering that in other contexts, broad-based national priorities are expected to emerge 'bottom-up' through the interaction between various stakeholders. This does not occur in the same way in Rwanda.

Overall, official Swedish development cooperation appreciate the socio-economic progress of the country. At the same time, views on relevant limitations for lack of open governance approach are widely shared: "*The democratic culture in Rwanda is weak. The country lacks an organized political opposition and the governing Rwanda Patriotic Front party has a strong grip on power. Politics is characterized by divisions of power and consensus decisions. Freedom of the press is limited and the desire not to open the wounds from the genocide is given as an excuse to justify censorship.*"[82] Sweden's operational approach is consistent with its political-economy analysis, and results in a bilateral development cooperation programme that largely focuses on (i) local and international NGOs and (ii) on academic partners. Government systems are used only to a limited extent and Sweden was the first bilateral donor to phase out budget support operations in Rwanda.[83]

Our findings suggest that the ownership of the Rwandan government is clearly dominant. This has several positive aspects, such as a consistent whole-of-country approach and speed of delivery. Negative aspects include limited space for discussing policy alternatives and other views and the potential long-term risks of a non-democratic approach. The involvement of other stakeholders beyond the state, as well as the extent to which they de-facto function beyond the state, differs to a large extent.

Finally, questions can be raised as to the Rwandan state's volition and capacity to effectively implement participatory governance involving different stakeholders. Recent empirical research on home-grown initiatives by Hasselskog (2017), Chemouni (2014),

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[82] https://www.sida.se/English/where-we-work/Africa/Rwanda/Our-work-in-Rwanda/ access: 19/02/2018

[83] *"The Swedish government assesses that general budget support is not an option at present."* http://www.government.se/48d880/contentassets/959af60e45374e2997d5e8e560869313/resultatstrategi-rwanda-engelska.pdf (p. 6)

Klingebiel et al (2016) and Behuria (2018) point to dominant top-down planning modes of community-based 'home-grown initiatives' as well as lack of transparency in the choice of local beneficiaries.

Against this backdrop, the following principal observations are discussed below.

Principal observations: Rwanda

1. Ownership: from donorship to partnership and back?
2. How to explain strong government ownership in Rwanda?
3. The contribution of CSOs and research to multi-stakeholder ownership in Rwanda
4. An evolving national aid architecture
5. Development finance: from grants, to loans, to investment?

1) Ownership: from donorship to partnership and back?

For the last 10 to 15 years, Rwanda frequently served as a role model for aid and development effectiveness debates. Rwanda's administration was keen to apply key principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in their aid management approach. It developed its aid policy a year after the declaration was adopted, and has for many years used it as a starting point for discussions and negotiations with development partners. National ownership[84] provides an essential point of departure:

"*Rwanda's Aid Policy is the guiding framework which sets out how the Government of Rwanda wishes to see the country's aid architecture develop. It outlines the Government's preferences in terms of the type of aid it wishes to attract from abroad, and the processes to be used in the management of external assistance. In the past, foreign aid has not always been provided to Rwanda in a way that enhances national ownership of development activities. Now, by*

[84] See for an overview on this debate Hasselskog et al. 2017.

setting out clear priorities and principles, the Government of Rwanda is seeking to ensure that all aid is used in a way that will maximize the benefits of such assistance for the Rwandan citizen." [85]

The aid policy was regarded as a consensus document reflecting views not only from national government but also from local government, development partners, civil society and the private sector.

The aid policy gave clear priority to general budget support (as priority number 1) and sector budget support (priority number 2). The government allowed for a broad dialogue with the donors on national development, including national budget priorities, a performance assessment approach of national policies, as well as donors' own performance in relation to agreed commitments. A number of donors were receptive to Rwanda's push to use the aid policy. Donors were trying to join the group providing budget support, expanding their budget support and 'budget support like' operations, or in the case of USAID at least sought to reform their approaches along those principles. The group of budget support donors enjoyed privileged access to information and policy dialogue formats.

This situation has changed in recent yeqars. Sweden first suspended its budget support in 2008, while other development partners had delayed or frozen those operations temporarily before (especially in the context of UN expert group reports on Rwanda's involvement in Eastern DRC). The year 2012 became a watershed moment because of a permanent reorientation of development partners in Rwanda. In hindsight, the change in donor practices was triggered by their reassessment of the governance situation, notably Rwanda's role in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as presented in several UN expert reports. Many donors would however have shifted away from budget support anyway as part of general policy reorientations. The fact that Belgium and the Netherlands were finalising sector budget support operations in

[85] http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/docs/Aid_policy/Aid_Policy_Overview.pdf

Rwanda, while no longer using the modality elsewhere in the world, testifies to its successful application.

As a response to development partners' shift to non-budget support operations, government initiated a new aid architecture in the country. What could be considered as 'privileges' of former budget support donors were revoked. The remaining budget support donors (especially the World Bank, AfDB and the EU) now rely mainly on a bilateral relationship to the government. Donors meet with Rwandan stakeholders regularly as a Development Partners Group and as a separate group of EU donors, yet cooperation relations have to a large extent 'bilateralised'. In January 2018, the government initiated a process of reviewing and revising the aid policy, which was still ongoing at the time this study was finalised.

Regardless of these shifts, the Rwandan govenrment continues to strongly engage on ownership, particularly on the inputs of cooperation. Donors with more stringent procurement requirements were were for instance confronted with government views as to what type of mosquito nets were to be procured. Whereas some consider this to be 'micro-management' on the part of government and analogous to the way in which government steers the domestic development process in Rwanda, others consider this to be a valid engagement for government and reflective of its commitment to ensuring ownership. An area where such discussions have resulted in somewhat more polarised viewpoints, but also reform on the part of some donors, concerns technical cooperation (see Box 10).

Box 10: Government's engagement on the provision of technical cooperation

Rwanda's aid policy includes a clear priority for budget support and other modalities supporting financial means for national programmes. Government's preference is based on a pronounced critique of technical cooperation approaches.[86] Several development partners with a strong

[86] This is not to say that government does not make use of technical cooperation provision, with some ODA-financed experts playing important supporting roles

technical cooperation component do regularly have controversial discussions with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance (MINECOFIN) about government's preference and the rationale of different aid modalities.

Rwanda's critical stance towards technical cooperation is based on the assumption that this support typically uses human resources outside Rwanda and not using competitive ways of procuring relevant and adequate human resources which implies high costs (e.g. for international experts). Moreover, technical cooperation is frequently observed to be rather unresponsive to government's needs and to bypass national systems and procedures including procurement. Moreover, the government has pushed for stronger control over the selection of experts: donors working on a 'no objection' basis sometimes saw their chosen candidate being rejected by the government, instead insisting on the Rwandan government being involved in the shortlisting or in the selection approach itself. This is not specific to technical cooperation, but rather shows government's interest and involvement on the *inputs* of development cooperation. Whether these inputs concern mosquito nets or foreign experts is not relevant from that perspective.

Overall, the 'post-budget support phase' has had a strong impact on the relationship between government and development partners. Dialogue formats, the intensity of dialogue and the openness of government have all been affected. High-ranking government representatives do explicitly express their disappointment about the shift by development partners. They regard those changes as a shift back from an innovative development partnership back to a rather traditional 'donorship' approach.

2) How to explain strong government ownership in Rwanda?

Rwanda's ownership for development cooperation is strong. More specifically, it is mainly the Government of Rwanda which shapes and pursues this ownership. Overall, the ministry in charge of development cooperation, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), has a clear guiding role.: MINECOFIN has a clear mandate to be the overall coordinating mechanism on

in key ministries including MINECOFIN and the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency / LODA.

development cooperation topics. This applies to Rwandan stakeholders and development partners as well.

Given the continuing aid-dependence in the country, guiding principles and the long-term approach to managing development cooperation are set by the President of the Republic. For example, President Kagame highlighted several times the need for a deadline by which the country would stop being dependent on foreign aid.[87] This deadline however remains to be determined.

In general terms, Rwanda's strong ownership is based on a strong 'developmental' approach of the country. Academic and other debates on Rwanda's development approach show specific features, which are supportive in terms of a developmental agenda of the government. A distinctive feature of the country is a high commitment to development which is not just reflected in strategies (such as the Vision 2020 and the new Vision 2050 and specific homegrown solutions'[88] but also to performance assessment tools at all levels (known as 'Imihigo'). The main indications of success include a shrinking share of (extreme) poor people in the country, a well-functioning public financial management (PFM) system which leads to a lower level (compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa) of corruption and a rather encouraging environment for the private sector (which is reflected, for example, in good rankings of the World Bank's Doing Business Index).

Conceptual debates on the developmental state (e.g. Routley 2014; Kagame 2015) such as on 'developmental patrimonialism' (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012) and 'output legitimacy' (e.g. Stroh 2007) might explain the strong government ownership in Rwanda. These explanations are seeking a main source of legitimacy of the Rwandan government and other public actors by producing development outputs. Those outputs might be crucial with regard to the Rwandan population and stakeholders but also a crucial aspect in the relationship with the international community. It also

[87] http://ktpress.rw/2016/12/kagame-wants-deadline-set-to-end-rwandas-aid-dependence/ access: 20/02/2018

[88] Such as 'Umuganda' and 'Gacaca' (see Klingebiel et al. 2016).

implicitly conveys a certain dependence of the electorate on the ruling party as the only possible source of long-term development.

Thus, one could say that Rwanda's government looks at external support basically instrumentally, in the context of implementing Rwanda's own development strategy. If this is the case, there is automatically a strong case of ownership for initiatives supported by development partners. Perceived this way, ownership for development cooperation in Rwanda implies a strong leadership role of Rwandan actors. There were no known examples of projects that were rejected by the authorities for not being 'on strategy', but most donors are familiar with how certain projects run smoother and are more successful when they are fully in line with government's plans and priorities.

3) *The contribution of CSOs and research to multi-stakeholder ownership in Rwanda*

In principle, the government is interested in orchestrating all actors involved in development in the country. This applies not the least to international and local CSOs. Government decided that faith-based, local and international CSOs should federate themselves separately from one another. The Rwandan Governance Board (RGB) plays a crucial role in that process. From the perspective of some observers, Rwandan NGOs cannot act without governments's agreement and may be sanctioned through technical means if that acceptance is no longer there.

Several Rwandan NGOs have their own identity and their own views on the development of the country. Domestic NGOs have limitations but at least to some extent communicate their own views. Yet, government maintains that their legitimacy depends first and foremost on their contribution to implementing national strategies.

Sweden's multi-annual strategy to development cooperation with Rwanda seeks to increase the level of pluralism in Rwanda by supporting the work of non-governmental organisations and research organisations. Sweden's main approach is to use the capacity of three international NGOs to support a number of local CSOs. As noted above, government offers space to non-

governmental actors depending on the topic concerned. Topics like 'gender based violence' with a high priority on the agenda of government are mainly uncontroversial. Other topics more closely related to the political governance of the country are considered much more sensitive.

Sweden's research cooperation with Rwanda is pursued through a long-term partnership with the University of Rwanda (UR) which is the product of a merger of seven former smaller public universities. Sweden is the university's principal external development cooperation partner, with a programme that includes capacity development support to the university and support to Rwandan students who have the opportunity to study in Sweden.

Sweden's collaboration with UR is direct, without the involvement of the Ministry for Education in the programme planning. Thus, Swedish support is not going through government structures to the university. At the same time, while UR has academic autonomy it is not an independent institution. It is up to the university to harmonise with government (e.g. how UR's research can contribute to the development of the country). Sweden further engages in dialogue with the university and government in relation to the quality and relevance of research.

The Swedish strategy to promote a pluralistic society in Rwanda is a risky one, given that government does not support such a strategy itself. A comprehensive evaluation of ownership in Swedish cooperation with East-African states conducted some fifteen years ago suggested that *"if differences are too big between donor and recipient regarding the choice of development strategies, the outcomes will be better for both if they refrain from engaging in a joint undertaking"* (Edgren 2003: 11). This consideration featured prominently in the Swedish development policy debate at the time, with the parliamentary committee considering that government-to-government partnerships should be built on mutual trust and shared values (Globkom 2003). Yet from a development effectiveness perspective, the relation is not so straightforward, as discussed in Box 11.

Box 11: Favourable projects in a non-favouring setting?

The evaluation study on ownership in cooperation with East-African states identified the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and Kenya as contrasting cases. It considered that the partnership with Tanzania was a long and close one, while in contrast the partnership with Kenya was deemed problematic at the time (Edgren 2003).

While the enabling environment is thus far from comparable, the partnership with Tanzania also went through difficult periods. A study on sustainability of Sida-supported projects in Tanzania identified a long list of unsustainable projects where ownership by the partner was considered low. Conversely, the evaluation study's chapter on Kenya identified several projects characterised by strong ownership (Edgren 2003).

Beyond the region concerned, the Swedish Policy for Global Development's reference to shared values does not seem to be a 'deal breaker' in practice when it comes to entering or reconsidering partnerships with developing countries. Instead, the long-term engagement and dialogue are considered key, through which the sharing of values can be brought closer. Yet, the question remains at what point values are not adequately shared to form the basis for a joint development cooperation agenda with Sweden.

4) An evolving national aid architecture[89]

In 2006, the aid policy adopted by the Rwandan government outlined the principles for cooperation with development partners, along with the objectives, modalities and institutional arrangements for the management of aid, and the mechanisms for dialogue and coordination. This constitutes a key instrument of government for promoting ownership, to a large degree understood as controlling donor contributions. In 2011, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) issued an Aid Policy Manual of Procedures, which was aiming for operationalising the policy and giving detailed guidance to government officials responsible for the negotiations, management, monitoring and evaluation of externally financed programmes and projects.

[89] Adapted and extended based on documents from MINECOFIN. Several paragraphs reflect only the analysis and views of the authors.

MINECOFIN also developed a Donor Performance Assessment Framework, which since 2009 evaluates the performance of donors against a number of aid effectiveness indicators stemming from the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Busan Partnership Agreement and locally agreed indicators. Another key agreement was also signed in 2009 on the division of labour, which requires development partners to work in no more than three sectors based on their comparative advantage and encourages the use of programme-based approaches and delegated cooperation arrangements. The Development Partners Retreat, the Development Partners Coordination Group (DPGC) meetings and the Sector Working Groups constitute key mutual accountability and dialogue mechanisms at a central level.

In addition, a Budget Support Donor Harmonisation Group was operational until 2012. This group was the main platform for dialogue between the Rwandan government and budget support development partners. It was regarded as a privileged access to information and a comprehensive dialogue since attendance was only granted for those development partners providing budget support above a defined threshold. MINECOFIN stopped to have this specific format after the suspension of budget support by several bilateral development partners.

5) *Development finance: from grants, to loans, to investment?*[90]

In July 2015, the global development community gathered in Addis Ababa for the third International Conference on Financing for Development and adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). This set the foundation for the implementation and achievement of the SDGs. The AAAA noted that "*cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, will be at the heart of our efforts*". Such integrated national financing frameworks can be understood as the policies and institutional structures that help governments develop and deliver a broader and more holistic vision to finance priorities considering

[90] The following three paragraphs are in part adapted and extended based on MINECOFIN documents.

private and public accessible resources. The frameworks are on the one hand expressions of ownership, while on the other hand also a source of ownership.

Rwanda is currently in a process of developing the Rwanda Vision 2050 and recently adopted its 7-year National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024. The Vision 2050 strategy is expected to integrate global and regional agreements in which Rwanda participates, including the AAAA, the SDGs, the Paris Declaration on Climate Change, the East African Community's Vision 2050 and the African Union Agenda 2063 and its 10 years implementation plan.

The financing landscape has changed significantly also in Rwanda since the government Aid Policy was adopted. Domestic resource mobilisation has become the main pillar for financing the budget and the government has managed to diversify its sources of external finance by partnering with South-South Cooperation providers, foundations and borrowing from the international markets, receiving foreign direct investment or concluding public-private partnerships. ODA is a strategic resource that supports this transformation. Rwanda receives about USD 1 billion per year in aid, which represents close to 13.3% of its GNI (2014) with the social sectors having the largest share of the total (health, social protection, education), followed by agriculture and energy sectors. The share of loans as total ODA is increasing in Rwanda.

6. Discussion of findings: promoting ownership in a changing world

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's findings and presents overarching reflections about the principle of ownership and its promotion in the context of development cooperation. The point of departure is that trends in global development and international cooperation have significant implications for the promotion of ownership, yet the nature of these implications is highly context-dependent. In each of these contexts, various dimensions and aspects of ownership distinguished in this study will differ too, as will the means employed to promote it. Two principal study findings emerge that can inform future efforts to promote ownership.

A first finding is that the promotion of ownership is complex, not only because of specific circumstances but because of the often contradictory rationales and conflicting goals that the concept of ownership encompasses. Study respondents in Stockholm, Monrovia and Kigali used various terms and metaphors to describe recurring challenges in promoting ownership, which included vicious circles, chicken-egg-questions and dilemmas. Actors interact both with each other and the system as a whole, i.e. one actor's (or group of actors') sense of ownership may affect that of another. The nature of the relations in the system and their respective trajectories of interaction is essential to overall system performance.

Approaching the promotion of ownership without awareness of such dilemmas is likely to lead to shortcuts or going into directions that are not sustainable. The dilemmas show that there is usually no choice without costs, yet in reality such choices are not mutually exclusive. Making and acting upon choices in practice involves trade-offs, since any chosen response strategy will have negative as

well as positive effects, or simply because one requires the other.[91] The act of resolving these apparent dilemmas in practice entails a careful balancing act by all actors concerned, as part of a broader engagement with effective cooperation. In this light, section 6.2 discusses key dilemmas encountered as a basis for balanced ownership promotion.

The second overall finding concerns a specific 'missing link' in discussions on the promotion of ownership that are inherent to the nature of the development cooperation relationship, namely the importance of trust. This missing link is key to ongoing efforts to gradually move away from Result-Based Management (RBM) and New Public Management (NPM) principles, which strongly informed OECD members' development policy during the past and present decade (Vähämäki 2017; Brolin 2017). Several of the changes that were introduced under the NPM umbrella moved away from central insights on the promotion and sustenance of ownership. Ownership depends on and is itself an expression of trust, and effective cooperation depends on both trust and control. Development cooperation relationships involve funds contributed by taxpayers, and the promotion of trust has to be 'organised' and be reconciled with arrangements for controlling the use of those funds. Trust itself is not opposed to, but depends on certain kinds and levels of control. Balancing trust and control requires using this complementarity to advance broad-based ownership. Section 6.3 explores sources of trust and trustworthiness and their relation to balanced ownership.

6.2 Balanced ownership

Trading off dilemmas

The idea of ownership has frequently been linked to the narrative that successful cooperation is based on self-determination of

[91] For instance, debates frequently assume a dichotomy between accountability and learning, whereas in reality it is not possible to learn without acknowledging and taking responsibility over what went right and wrong.

recipient parties. Metaphors such as 'putting countries in the driver's seat' abound in policy discussions. In reality, development cooperation is often influenced by donors' own development trajectories (or 'driving skills', as the metaphor goes) which nurtures a persistent unofficial narrative of development based on progress in OECD states (Haddad 2012; Rottenburg 2009). Taking the case of security sector reform in post-conflict states, Scheye and Peake (2005) suggest that it appears paradoxical that reform initiatives need to be locally owned, yet it is the previous actions of the presupposed owners that generate the need for reform in the first place. With varying degrees of success, donors manage to reconcile developing country stakeholders' priorities and policy choices with their own values, models and experiences. The result will be more or less favourable to developing country stakeholders depending on how ownership of the cooperation substance is agreed.

Similarly, when it comes to ownership of the cooperation process, stakeholders, intermediaries and intended beneficiaries will all have distinct preferences regarding the process and substance of cooperation. Successfully promoting shared ownership means navigating this inherent tension between control and trust. The case of Liberia shows an unfavourable ensemble of conditions, including capacities, context, rules and procedures including analytical tools informing decisions. In this context, development cooperation may gets stuck in a vicious cycle of low trust, low capacity, low ownership which in turn leads to poor performance. In contrast, other examples show that sometimes donors take 'leaps of faith', such as the European Union's past decisions to introduce general budget support in countries when eligibility conditions had been met (see ECA 2010).

Notwithstanding positive and encouraging 'pockets of ownership', the Liberia case shows how development effectiveness cannot advance because of insurmountable dilemmas. One such example is what Ostrom et al. (2001), drawing on Buchanan (1975), describe as the Samaritan's dilemma: once a recipient is aware of a samaritan's dominant inclination to help, the recipient will benefit most when making a low effort itself. If this situation is repeated, the recipient may lose skill and motivation over time and become less self-reliant. The 'solution' is to help but at the same time to

signal in a credible manner that support will end if counterparts on the recipient side stop their own efforts or contribution. The decline in government-to-government cooperation and commensurate increase in intermediated cooperation relationships means that the dialogue with non-governmental and multilateral implementers needs to emphasise and promote this balance.

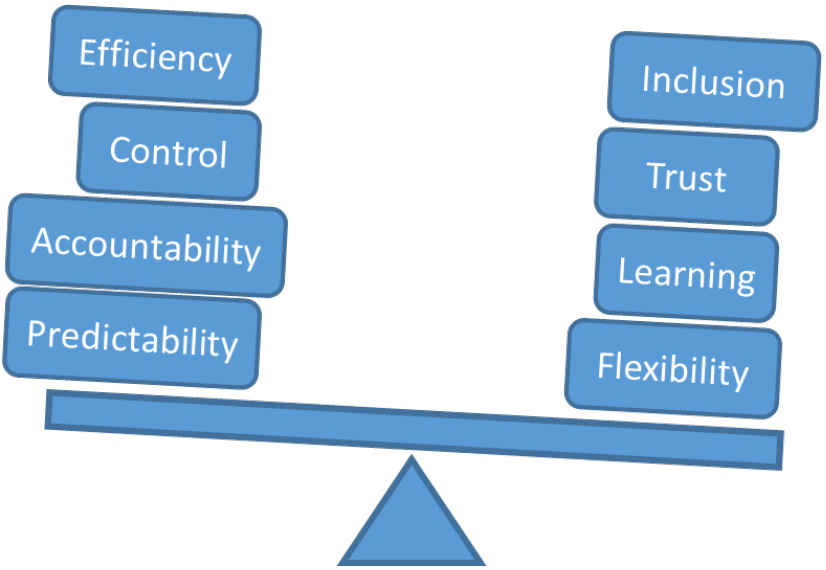
We argue here that analysing ownership challenges as dilemmas is conducive to respond to the political dimensions of the challenges concerned. It facilitates moving from short-term responses towards identifying a neuralgic point of an often deeper, potentially more diffuse challenge. When it comes to making operational choices in the messy setting of practice, the act of resolving dilemmas will involve making trade-offs (Table 7). Once one makes the necessary choice between two options that both have undesired effects, one has to do it in a way that balances the positive effects (on one goal) and the negative effects (often on another goal).

Table 7: Defining trade-offs and dilemmas

Dilemma: a situation in which one has a choice, but both options have bad effects, whether on one and the same goal, or a negative effect on one goal that might overcompensate positive effects on another goal	**Trade-off:** a measure that has positive as well as negative effects, or affects one goal positively and another goal negatively, such that it is necessary to weigh these effects or goals against each other

Dilemmas constitute a problem structure inherent to the very idea of ownership and its promotion in development cooperation. Dilemmas may in part be successfully navigated by conscious awareness and technical balancing of intended and unintended effects, in other words by approaching them as trade-offs. Figure 5 shows how such balanced ownership may be approached and gives examples of the types of aspects developing country stakeholders and their external partners may consider.

Figure 5: Balanced ownership



Addressing trade-offs and promoting balanced ownership involves taking uncomfortable decisions, which in turn require incentive structures that make the actors concerned comfortable in doing so. There are political and normative limits to be considered, since some sources of dilemmas are inherent to the very idea of ownership, external intervention and development cooperation. Within these boundaries, five dilemmas are discussed in turn below. Addressing them in concert facilitates the promotion of balanced ownership in the various contexts and approaches through which development cooperation relations are shaped.

1) Letting go or push and shape?

The first dilemma derives from the Samaritan's dilemma but refers more specifically to the process of partnership and implementation. Donors can choose to 'let go' and leave much of the process and decision-making up to the recipient government. The same applies to providing development finance to or through non-governmental or multilateral organisations. Similarly, implementation can be largely 'outsourced' to an implementing agency, which in turn may

leave ample space for grass-root organisations to determine priorities and forms of local implementation.

Letting go can lead to delays and dilutions linked to capacity, communication or inability to find consensus. All involved may either manage or fail to stick to their part of the agreement, the latter often due to circumstances beyond their control.[92] In development cooperation, time to invest in such relationships is often in short supply, and instead dominant stakeholders (often but not always the donor) may push for a program to materialise. Beyond undermining ownership of the programme concerned, such dominant engagement may also jeopardise relations with other actors and negatively affect the donor's legitimacy.

Genuinely letting go involves accepting that a cooperation or program then takes a shape that could conflict with one's own values such as equality of opportunity. Donors encountered this challenge in the case of the proposed private-sector involvement in primary education in Liberia. It may also conflict with one's own policies such as labour standards or inclusion of local stakeholders in the program design, which a recipient government may not always value or prioritise to the same degree. Finally, a more 'hands-off' approach may conflict with expectations in terms of technical effectiveness, e.g. when a recipient party favours an implementation mode that has not delivered in other contexts.

2) Shared or one-way ownership?

In line with the idea of cooperation, ownership should be mutually perceived and sustained by all concerned. This is not incompatible with the original idea of ownership as cooperation in the interest of the beneficiary, yet 'fully' letting go in this regard is not an option if ownership is to be shared. If ownership is pursued as full and unconditional support by a donor to its partner, whether a country or a small organisation, then the donor's own responsibility and accountability at home can be affected. While cognisant that a developing cooperation relationship is essentially an asymmetrical

[92] Swedlund (2017) describes cases where this applies as much to donors as to public authorities in developing countries.

one, all involved should have the trust to act as critical friends towards one another.

A case in point is the use of partner country systems, as promoted under Sweden's aid policy framework (GoS 2016). Some donors consider they can promote ownership without using developing countries' own national systems for planning, budgeting, monitoring as well as evaluation. They may argue so in reference to their own legal conditions and requirements, or because they consider the risk of doing so unacceptably high. In that case, letting go and aligning to the partner country is limited to the level of development priorities.[93] Respondents in Liberia repeatedly stated that 'ultimately they don't own the project'. These and other cases highlight that if donors decide to entrust the implementation of development programmes to non-governmental and multilateral organisations (including development banks), then they should continue the dialogue to make sure that all stakeholders are consulted and included throughout the programme's life cycle. Moreover, they should actively work towards withdrawing from this solution and invest into the development of capacity needed for future implementation through partner systems.[94]

The risk of one-way ownership is not restricted to donors. Strong counterparts, such as the government of Rwanda, may prevent donors from an effective dialogue and participation in shaping development plans. Instead, donors' commitment towards the objectives they co-fund is taken for granted. Such a setting discourages convergence between government and its external partners and a sense of shared ownership.

[93] There may however in practice also be other concerns influencing this decision, linked to other objectives promoted through development cooperation and involving (in)formal tying of cooperation.

[94] It should be stressed that discussions on the use of country systems tend to exclusively concentrate on the capacity of these systems, but it should not be forgotten that donor procedures themselves need change so as to promote and enable the use of these systems.

3) *Choosing implementing partners*

Especially when development cooperation programmes seek to involve multiple stakeholders, the question of whom to involve or whose ownership to respect and promote is key. The situation is often worsened by the intrinsic power asymmetries that exist across different partners. When it comes to the choice of a specific partner or cooperation approach, this question might take the form of a choice between different actors as *options*. The classic example is that of a donor agency facing a choice between direct cooperation with government, or via a multilateral agency or international NGO that better matches the donor's values, risk requirements or capacity expectations. Going through government might involve delays, corruption, value conflicts and failure. Cooperation through an intermediary organisation may reduce these problems but implies a parallel structure with inherent ownership risks. How much this dilemma plays out in practice depends on the broader relationship between the government and the donor concerned.

A related and more fundamental choice is between going through embassy-led geographic cooperation, or opting for thematic cooperation where the initiative emanates from donors' headquarters or via pooled global thematic funds. In the case of geographic programming, dialogue with (representatives of) intended beneficiaries and public authorities serves to determine cooperation priorities and approaches. In the case of thematic cooperation, that dialogue takes place at various levels. The determination of donor priorities for thematic cooperation, such as Sweden's global strategy for sustainable development and climate change, draws on international policy statements adopted by the United Nations. Here, however, the decision of what types of implementing partners to use is made mainly or solely by the donor. The donor then needs to enter into dialogue with the grantees, whether mainly core-funded as in the case of Sweden or when engaged as implementers of distinct interventions (as is often the case with projectised support), so as to exchange on the means of cooperation to be employed.

Dilemmas of choosing implementing partners are not only a challenge when it comes to involving different stakeholder groups

(e.g. government, civil society, private sector) in a given programme, but also within such groups. The typical case is the choice between cooperation with the central planning ministry versus a line ministry. Both options may have disadvantages by themselves, such as the central ministry being slow and the line ministry being little concerned with certain implementation standards. In addition, if both ministries compete or have diverging agendas, a choice between them will feed into a conflict and reduce the ownership of the 'neglected' one.

The question of whom to involve can also include or exclude specific groups or interests. In countries such as Rwanda, CSOs that primarily act as a 'watchdog' are deemed not acceptable by government. Instead, CSOs are expected to deliver public services in line with the national development plan. One consideration for development partners is whether to support CSOs when conditions for them to function as a civil society are not present, or to refrain from this and rather engage with government and other stakeholders to first promote more favourable conditions for civil society engagement 'ex-ante'. Again, both options come with risks affecting how ownership will be anchored in society at large..

4) Focused versus broad-based stakeholder inclusion

The questions of which stakeholders to include, and how broadly, can be approached on the basis of principles or function. Principled considerations legitimise broad-based ownership as an end in itself and consider that all relevant stakeholders are entitled to voice their ideas or concerns. Functional consideration would instead consider multi-actor involvement as instrumental to effective implementation and to ensure buy-in and sustainability of cooperation measures. In some cases, both considerations may inform the same breadth of inclusion. In many cases, however, the functional consideration will lead to more narrow inclusion, either by design or by implication.[95] Both principled and functional considerations come with risks attached, as discussed in Box 12.

[95] This may even relate to constraints by donors' own human resources on the ground. For instance, if an embassy avails of only one or two development

Box 12: Principled versus functional considerations

A functional approach is prone to make stakeholder participation contingent upon whether or not their inclusion will actually promote the initiative concerned. This in turn may make the buy-in of stakeholders dependent on access to short-term benefits. *Functionally selective inclusion* may also undermine the legitimacy of ownership promotion. Consulting a limited number of actors may be presented as multi-stakeholder ownership, but obviously raises the question of 'why them and not us?'

This last problem is particularly pronounced when the goal is not so much to involve different stakeholders, i.e. to go beyond government ownership, but to include them as *substitute* to or intermediary towards government. As the case of Liberia illustrates, doing so reinforces the perception that civil society is a competitor to the state rather than a complementary actor.

A principled approach, again, might be more credible but also implies a commitment to stick to principled and broad inclusion. This entails a risk. Based on principled reasons, the choice may be to take the official path through the central ministry responsible for aid coordination, rather than through a more approachable line ministry. Changing course down the road would inevitably involve trade-offs too.

Broad-based inclusion may be more in line with the general idea of multi-stakeholder ownership as enhancing the legitimacy, efficacy and sustainability of a cooperation or project. At the same time, it involves costs and trade-offs. Involving stakeholders with divergent interests often leads to a minimum consensus that may weaken the buy-in of all stakeholders. Moreover, even that limited minimum consensus brought about through a project or program may erode with time when underlying differences between stakeholders and their interests re-emerge. Finally, inclusion of more actors implies considerable time and effort to collect and combine actors' priorities.

Focused inclusion, on the other hand, might produce a higher degree of ownership based on larger preference convergence among a small set of actors. Betting on few partners at the cost of less legitimation via inclusion might become costly if the preference

cooperation officials, how can these determine the right civil society counterparts from a large quantity of active organisations.

overlap turns out to be transitory. This could for instance be the case when this hinges on a few like-minded staff in a counterpart organisation. Most importantly, focused inclusion may be driven by concerns of implementation and 'getting it done' without further contestation, adaptation to other stakeholders' preferences which may cause delay. Once a project is implemented and requires sustainable uptake by users or beneficiaries, the relative neglect of these groups may jeopardise actual success.

5) Attribution versus synergy

The choice of specific cooperation approaches also reflects a dilemma between attribution and visibility versus collective development effectiveness. The preceding dilemmas depart from development cooperation relationships involving one external partner. Following the sharp decline in the use of budget support and related programme-based approaches, there has in fact been a surge in projectised cooperation approaches. At the same time, there have been expanding efforts through vertical funds, trust funds, as well as various multi-stakeholder initiatives that include private sector actors and global philanthropy.[96]

One key question concerns the extent to which government and development partners should strive for an inclusive platform for dialogue, and what the trade-offs are with the perceived higher effectiveness of engaging with government by means of smaller 'like-minded' groups (e.g. EU Heads of Cooperation or fellow Nordic donors).

Recipient governments have a key role in either enabling or discouraging collective development cooperation efforts. In aid-dependent countries, public authorities may be inclined to discourage joined-up approaches with donors to (1) prevent them from 'ganging up' and (2) maximise available resources. This may urge donors to promote strong bilateral relations with government in order to compete for access. In turn, coordinated or multi-stakeholder ownership might suffer as a consequence and make it

[96] Lundsgaarde and Keijzer (2018) discuss how coordination may be understood and pursued in multi-stakeholder initiatives.

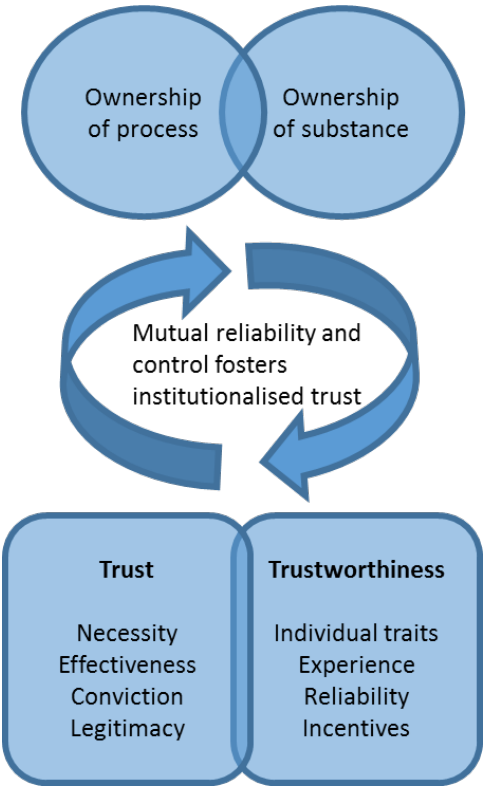
impossible for the recipient government to enforce a coherent policy towards international support.

6.3 Ownership and trust

Chapter 3 considered rationalist, constructivist and psychological accounts of the concept of trust, a concept that can be understood as accepted vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of other actors within a given relationship. The concept merited prominent treatment in this study due to the linkages and overlaps with ownership. These linkages have been further explored in the research inquiry into Swedish cooperation as well as the three case studies. Chapter 3 also considered that in view of its underexplored nature in development studies and policy debates, the present study would also seek to identify general insights and ideas in relation to trust that could inform future research and policy processes.

Figure 6 visualises the main ideas and aspects of the relationship between trust and ownership that emerge from this study. The study's key observation here is that trust-based management can be seen as an outcome of the development cooperation relationship. It is fostered over time by perceived reliability of and control over the relationship by all involved. This is also supported by recent research that highlights that distrust and lack of reliability are as often produced by donors as by developing country stakeholders (Swedlund 2017).

Figure 6: Trust-based management



The remainder of this section discusses four principal study findings in relation to how trust may be considered and nurtured so that it supports ownership.

1) Justifying trust in development cooperation

Motivations of people to trust are key to their general *disposition* to trust, often rooted in the socialisation that makes them 'trust people'. Motivations differ in terms of how conscious these are. If cooperation and ownership promotion are to draw more, or more consciously, on trust, understanding these motivations becomes crucial. Based on this study's findings, four distinct rationales are distinguished that may explain actors' engagement in this light:

Necessity. Not everything can be controlled; trust is a *necessary* element of interaction. This is especially so in contexts where administrative means are limited, oral communication is relied upon as heavily as written means, and the density of interaction constantly makes processes overlap, all of which applies to development cooperation contexts.

Effectiveness. People expect that promoting trust makes cooperation more *effective*. For instance, trusting an actor and a process rather than trying to control it fully allows for initiative, innovation and learning. Related to that, trust may make cooperation more *efficient* as well. Trust has a function of reducing the otherwise hardly manageable complexity of human interaction (Luhman 1973). Rather than investing energy into controlling cooperation beyond a reasonable or sufficient level, trust may allow for smoother interaction.

Conviction. People are convinced of entering into a given development cooperation relationship because of the goals it pursues. These goals play an explicit role in the case of relatively value-driven Swedish development cooperation. Trust may also play an implicit role: When people share a mandate and work setting and when they meet as actors of the same system, a shared basis and trustworthiness must be assumed to get interaction started at all.

Legitimacy. Framing cooperation relationships in terms of trust offers *reputational gains* within the field, but also towards domestic voters. This also applies to Sweden. By and large, Swedish voters seem to expect development cooperation to follow the tradition of cooperation based on solidarity and respect for local priorities, despite increasing concerns over effectiveness and accountability.

2) Facilitating increases in trust

To the extent that the above motivations generally lead to a *disposition* to trust, sources of and conditions for trust may enable *actual* trusting. Most generally, people can be expected to trust to the extent they assess the risk involved in trusting others while remaining responsible for administering public funds. Trust allows for cost-savings associated with excessive scrutiny and management.

This is not necessarily a purely rational and fully conscious calculation, as game theory would suggest. It can also be an intuition, a general attitude or approach to interaction. Implicitly or explicitly, calculated or perceived more diffusely, there is an *assessment of the trustworthiness* of the counterpart and of the intentions, signals and commitments.

Trust involves trust *maintenance* and re-building of relationships. Building trust in development cooperation relations goes beyond taking an initial leap of faith and involves re-ensuring oneself of attributes that make the counterpart trustworthy. This can be done consciously and based on objective evidence such as an implementation agency's reports and bookkeeping. It can also be done less consciously during interaction. Moreover, it involves both meeting and managing expectations. Four sources of trustworthiness emerge from the study's findings.

Individual traits. Attributes of the *counterpart* itself or of the individuals representing the organisation that make the partner trustworthy, whether in general or specifically regarding the expected interaction. These can be capacities, displayed values and attitudes, observable behaviour and interaction so far. Importantly, this includes evidence and track records specifically of what a counterpart – for instance an implementing agency – is expected to do in a partnership.

Experience. To the extent that people meet only on single occasions, trust may be more superficial or accidental. A trajectory of repeated interaction makes the assessment clearer and robust. The reason why Sweden is considered a trustworthy development partner in Liberia is not merely associated to its values and standards, but because these are practiced and maintained over time. Even a counterpart with attributes that are not very conducive to a trust-based relationship may be trusted because it shows these consistently.

Reliability. Characteristics of the *relationship* and a sustained trajectory of positive experiences are key to sustaining trustworthiness. Past cooperation is so important that some (rationalist) approaches assume that trust can only come after cooperation, which therefore has to come about for different

reasons than trust. Other approaches suggest that cooperation can only come about based on initial trust and an ensuing leap of faith. One problem here is that 'defection' as a reason not to trust may not actually be based on non-trustworthy intentions. Commitments that were credibly made by a donor can still be 'overruled' by other actors, such as the donor country's parliament (cf. Swedlund 2017).

Incentives. When the trustworthiness of the counterpart cannot be established based on these sources, trust may result from assessing features of the situation. In rationalist approaches, trust results from calculating low likelihood of defection. In this view, whether the actor 'itself' is trustworthy or not may not even matter as long as *incentives and rules* are there which will guide the (rational) actor and make her cooperate. Whether this should be called trust is a different issue; in any case, trust would be not towards the person but towards institutions, for instance the legal or administrative system.

3) Institutionalising trust

Ultimately, it is people who trust. Even when an agency cooperates with another organisation based on trusting relations, for instance by means of a signed agreement to co-finance, people within that agency have to act on it. At the same time, institutionalised trust is a key source of individual trust. For instance, organisational discourse and the way e.g. UN agencies are viewed within Sida can form a foundation for establishing trusting cooperation relations.

The point is not whether this generalised trust towards certain actors is adequate or not. Usually, such attitude is based on experience and assessment as much as on beliefs. In Liberia, Sida's trust in UN programs and NGOs seemed justified. It may also happen that institutionalised trust is not translated into practice, for instance because circumstances cause deviation of that organisation's planned actions and standards. The point is rather that the reasons of a person for trusting an organisation may lie well beyond the planning horizons and specific contexts concerned. This is important since high turn-over of local staff of development agencies leads staff to rely considerably on such generalised organisational trust.

4) Rules and control: a barrier as well as source of trust

An earlier contribution on trust and ownership (Pomerantz 2004) assumed a primarily negative or substitutive rather than complementary relationship between trust and rules. This is plausible in the area of development cooperation. Resources committed to public interest require mechanisms of control and accountability. Development cooperation requires these in particular to the extent that the use of funds needs to be justified not only within the operational partnership between donors and recipients but also to societal actors on both sides.

In this light, control and procedures for risk-management stand in some conflict to the development of trust and promotion of ownership. At the same time, control based on rules also provides some safety from which it is easier to trust. From the viewpoint of a donor agency staff, it is easier to trust an implementing NGO when it is clear that the organisation is not going to be personally liable for misuse of funds that lie outside its realm of control. Trusting individual staff members of development agencies is easier given that a whole arrangement stands behind that person, providing not only funds but also legal and administrative resources that make the promise of funding actually realistic. After all, trust and institutions are both mechanisms to absorb risks of cooperation (Elhardt 2015).

In terms of basing ownership promotion on trust and trust-based cooperation, the question therefore is how to arrange necessary institutional mechanisms in a way that is most conducive to and complementary to trust-building.

6.4 Implications for development practice

Development cooperation is a collective action challenge, where the sum of the parts is vastly more important than the quality of individual components. One partner's dedication to a long-term partnership with an international organisation is all too easily thwarted when confronted by ten other partners instrumentalising their engagements with that same organisation. Similarly, long-term

support to a developing country's national health system will be compromised when others set up parallel systems to directly deliver some of its functions. This tension between collective and individual efforts needs to be kept in mind when promoting ownership in practice.

A challenge in this regard is that ownership is not a topic likely to attract strong political traction, since, like participation or sustainability, the term seems intrinsically favourable. Instead, as with the concept of capacity, it is often invoked by donors to explain ex-post failure in a way that shifts blame towards developing country stakeholders.[97]

The study however did observe several examples of carefully managed and long-term development cooperation relationships that sustain changes in context, institutions and individuals. For this reason, it is possible to conclude that promoting ownership successfully requires both individual persistence and collective effort. Whether or not a waning collective resolve should be cause for individual efforts is a question that will be answered differently by each development cooperation actor, and is linked to the interests of its constituency.

[97] As one EU diplomat comments on ownership, *"For me, it's not a principle that is important in and of itself, because it stems from sovereignty. I don't care about it. It's important because of its practical effects and because there is no sustainability without local ownership"* (Ejdus, 2018 35).

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

This study concludes that the principle of ownership remains a valid guiding principle for international development cooperation, both as a legitimate aim in itself and as a means to effective cooperation. Nevertheless, in order to ensure its continuing relevance as a guiding principle, the understanding and process of promoting ownership needs to radically adjust to today's new realities. The global narrative and actor landscape has evolved fundamentally, which affects dominant approaches to development cooperation and the relationships shaped by these. National authorities govern external cooperation within their sovereign borders, yet today's development cooperation is gradually moving away from direct 'government to government' relations towards more intermediated cooperation relationships involving a multitude of stakeholders.

Although the case for ownership is universally accepted and endorsed, the principle is not self-fulfilling and in practice frequently overridden by other, more specific short-term concerns or policy priorities. The study observed several worrying trends, including (i) valuing project success over collective effectiveness; (ii) disbursement pressure and risk adversity that run counter to that value dialogue and partnership; and (iii) persistent practices to push risk and responsibility further down the implementation chain rather than engaging in more equal partnerships where risk-sharing and responsibility for results are distributed as a collective responsiblity. These practices are harmful to the sustainability of international cooperation, which is why further operational efforts to promote ownership are urgently needed.

As per these systemic challenges, the concept of ownership is most meaningfully promoted when incorporated into a broader reflection on how development cooperation should be done. Embedding the concept in a broader debate on 'doing development differently' – with emphasis on problems being nationally/locally defined and solutions nationally/locally owned – will stimulate more

equitable and adaptive ways of working across the chain of development actors involved. It will also help to reframe the ownership debate to put bigger emphasis on ownership among those who are the ultimate right holders or constituents.

As an input to such a debate, this study's principal recommendation is that ownership can only be meaningfully promoted in development cooperation relationships if it (1) consciously balances the dilemmas entailed by its promotion on aspects including inclusion and control vis-à-vis letting go, (2) takes into account other key dimensions of successful development cooperation partnerships such as transparency, capacity and addressing power asymmetries.

This requires donors to re-orient their own human resource capabilities and accompanying incentive schemes from one driven primarily by control and compliance to one based on learning alongside other partners in complex (and more unpredictable) processes of change. It could imply a gradual shift from result-based to trust-based management, and investing sufficient human and financial reasources in forming different types of cooperation relationships.

Based on this study's overall conclusions, the following seven recommendations are set out to inform further action to promote ownership as an underlying principle in development cooperation at large as well as in Swedish development cooperation.

7.2 Specific recommendations: global level

The first three recommendations provide means to reasserting the priority given to promoting broad-based ownership in current development cooperation trends. They identify opportunities for Sweden to engage both at the strategic level as well as in relation to specific actors and global initiatives where significant gains in promoting ownership can be made so as to ensure sustainable cooperation practice.

1. Initiate a DAC-hosted discussion and monitoring process on effective development cooperation practice that is locally owned, including by its ultimate constituents and/or rights holders

One of the reasons behind the success of the aid effectiveness agenda in the 2005-2008 period was that political momentum was reinforced by independent monitoring and evaluation processes. In view of the legitimacy and/or effectiveness challenges of other fora such as the Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation and the UN Development Cooperation Forum, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee remains best placed to host such a process today. Analogous to the run-up to the Paris Declaration, such a process is best conceived of as an ad-hoc working party that is OECD-supported but not OECD-led.

While addressing effectiveness more broadly, the process should emphasise the challenge of promoting ownership in relation to the 2030 Agenda, focusing on a broad-based and constituency-based ownership. Even from an effectiveness perspective, ownership needs to be conceived of in a sufficiently comprehensive and non-linear manner, covering the inherent dilemmas and trade-offs in ownership promotion. Finally, such process needs to address various understandings of partnerships and ownership, including those that could be described as contractual, based on overlapping self-interests, or 'agreeing on a deal', rather than as commitment to a broader goal or public good.

2. Establish an international code of conduct for development finance in line with agreed ownership principles to and through UN agencies

This study adds to a growing critical mass of research evidence that points out the detrimental effects of increased earmarked ODA to the effectiveness of the UN development system as a whole as well as its individual agencies. Such earmarking can lead to an increased 'projectisation' of aid even when it is being channelled through multilateral mechanisms. This in turn, can override national political or local stakeholder anchoring and risks 'instrumentalising' multilateral channels to serve primarily donor (and individual UN agency) interests over those of the national counterparts and its

constituents. These effects often concern ownership, a main source of effectiveness. The study moreover adds that the practice of earmarking tends to 'free-ride' on other donors' continued willingness to provide core contributions to these agencies, which are usually expected to allow for stronger partner orientation.

Assuming that these core contributions are not intended to cross-subsidise ambitious earmarked programmes, a dedicated evaluation could inform the establishment of a code of conduct to be adopted by key financiers of UN agencies and should consider overhead costs, coordination, as well as targets for core contributions. Furthermore, such an effort should be accompanied by an accountability and enforceability framework where joint monitoring and peer reviewing actively involves providers and recipients of funding.

3. A normative dialogue and agreed best practice on supporting recipient country representation in the governance of vertical funds and global initiatives with an assessment of the role and added value played by multilateral organisations

Given the increasing role of thematic aid allocation via vertical funding (as opposed to via decentralised country programs) there is a need to reflect on new ways to promote 'ownership' in new (or newly prominent) development cooperation relationships. Together with likeminded countries, Sweden should explore the feasibility of adopting a memorandum of understanding among those international and regional organisations that are legally empowered to set up and implement vertical funds and Special Purpose Trust Funds (SPTFs). The goal should be the agreement of minimum requirements on development country representation, as well as to agree on systematic budgeting for such participation in their long-term budgets.

Such international agreement should then also inform efforts to reform the use of EU trust funds as set up and managed by the European Commission. Finally, those standards should inform approaches to the assessment of multilateral organisations under the MOPAN framework, which has room for improvement as regards the assessment of the extent to which and how the organisations

apply the principle of ownership. In addition to supporting such international initiatives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Sida should adequately invest in independent monitoring of multilateral organisation's adherence to development effectiveness principles including ownership, and engage accordingly in boards and other governing structures.

7.3 Specific recommendations: promoting ownership in Swedish cooperation

The remaining four recommendations relate to possibilities for reforming Swedish development cooperation policy and practice towards promoting balanced ownership. The recommendations relate to managing expectations, operationalising ambitions, engaging with like-minded development partners, as well as readjusting incentives and human resources.

4. Sweden should more strategically manage expectations of its ownership ambitions in intermediated cooperation involving many actors and layers of implementation, such as via global thematic funds and other multilateral initiatives

There is a clear trade-off between having strong and ambitious thematic policy priorities, and choosing to deliver it through delivery chains involving many actors, such as e.g. via global funds or initiatives with more vertical programming rather than via direct support to country programmes. On the other hand, the study shows that Sweden can strategically benefit from using 'multiple pressure points' by using its seat at the table in global funds that are of policy importance also for setting the normative agenda, and that it can play a positive role in promoting ownership as a key principle for the governance of such initiatives.

Although there is merit to be at the table, there may however be a case for leaving particular vertical funds and trust funds in case there is a clear violation of Swedish policy principles on ownership. Conversely, further investment into dialogue with intermediaries as well as other donors on how to promote the principles of mutuality

and shared ownership between partners in global initiatives, including via multilateral organisations is needed.

5. Sweden should formulate an explicit policy and implementation guidelines around multi-stakeholder ownership promotion

Scepticism regarding multi-stakeholder ownership promotion often concerns the effectiveness that may be affected by overly broad inclusion. Another challenge relates to credibility and legitimacy. When partner country governments struggle with weak state capacity, supporting other actors such as civil society organisations may end up being substitutive rather than complementary.

Similarly, supporting civil society that operates only within the space 'licensed' by an authoritarian government risks indirectly supporting and legitimising the state concerned. Sweden should review such cases and consider addressing the related dilemma proactively, aiming at a clearer policy and implementation guidelines to ensure consistent handling of such cases. This would help clarify the concept of multi-stakeholder ownership in the political dialogue, linking it more explicitly to the social accountability of governments and mechanisms for citizen engagement. This, in turn, could help ensure that the credibility and legitimacy of its multi-stakeholder ownership promotion are not at risk and would also justify supporting recipient governments in setting up, or effectively using, engagement and dialogue mechanisms with key constituents of the assistance provided.

6. Increased Nordic+ and likeminded discussions to create momentum for international debate on trust-based management and ownership

Sweden should seek to facilitate further debate on ownership from a development effectiveness perspective in a Nordic+ and likeminded settings. This is particularly relevant given that the GPEDC and UN Development Cooperation Forum currently do not advance a political debate and accountability process on development effectiveness, while the DAC is largely preoccupied with ODA reporting.

These discussions should prioritise relational aspects of development cooperation, which would be consistent with Sweden's earlier engagement towards the adoption of the Paris Declaration. Such discussions could provide a political groundswell to either re-energise the existing global platforms or create new ones. Such platforms could be used to further explore and advance normative work around trust-based management and ownership, building critical mass for its adoption, and to develop principles for its implementation to ensure mutual accountability among parties.

7. Balancing process and substantive aspects of ownership requires prioritising and strengthening adaptive management skills and approaches within Sida and the MFA

Increasingly intermediated development cooperation relations and longer implementation chains should inform a rethink of current decision-making processes and accountability processes in Sweden. The working relations between the MFA and Sida have been clarified during the 2009-2014 legislature, yet the evolving patterns of cooperation merit further discussion on how to operationalise their cooperation, particularly with regard to the dialogue with intermediary organisations.

Those same intermediated cooperation relations increase the need to invest in continuous dialogue and direct relations with the various actors involved. Given a trend towards thematic rather than country-based ODA allocation and in light of Sweden's global strategies, Sida's human resource capacity, training policy and organisational structures should be reinforced to ensure that ownership is promoted and monitored along extended implementation chains. This would mean continuing to explore new approaches to building Sida's own organisational learning capacity, pursuing adaptive management in relation to capturing and handling results reporting jointly with partners, and more proactively engage its MFA counterparts on how to promote ownership in intermediated aid relations e.g. via multilateral channels.

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Appendix: List of interviewees

Stockholm

- Georg Andrén, Diakonia
- Robert Backlund, MFA
- Maria van Berlekom, Sida
- Jenny Björk, Sida
- Helena Bjuremalm, Sida
- Richard Bomboma, Sida
- Therese Brolin, Riksrevisionen
- Jan Cedegren, independent
- Lisa Curman, Sida
- Kerstin Jonsson Cissé, Sida
- Karin Metell Cueva, Sida
- Mikael Eriksson, MFA
- Jonathan Francis, Sida
- Alexander Adolfsson Grimsen, MFA
- Lina Hjalmarsson, Sida
- Eric Jonsson, MFA
- Rebecka Kitzing-Ivarsson, Sida
- Verena Knippel, Sida
- Marianne Kroneberg, Sida
- Jessica Lanrell, CONCORD
- Maria Melbing, Sida Partnership Forum
- Joakim Molander, International IDEA
- Lennart Peck, MFA
- Lisbeth Petersen, Forum Syd
- Karl Salgström, MFA
- Linnéa Richardson, MFA
- Torgny Svenungsson, Sida
- Åsa Thomasson, CONCORD
- Johanna Teague, MFA
- Janet Vähämäki, researcher
- Lennart Wohlgemuth, Gothenburg University

Kigali

- Markus Bär, KfW
- Abigail Booth, Kvinna vir Kvinna
- Mikael Boström, Swedish embassy
- Philip Cotton, University of Rwanda
- Johan Debar, Belgian Embassy
- Pieter Dorst, Dutch embassy
- Lenäic Georgelin, EU Delegation
- Mandy Hupfer, German embassy
- Bodo Immink, GIZ
- Aflodis Kagaba, Health Development Initiatives
- Leslie Marburie, USAID
- Amin Mirango, Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Rwanda
- Emilia Molnar, Swedish embassy
- Jani Moliis, Tony Blair Institute for global change
- Roger Mugisha, Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
- Egide Rugamba, Rwandan Association of Local Government Authorities
- Leonard Rugwabiza, Minecofin
- Stefan Sckell, German Embassy
- Anastase Anastase Shyaka, Rwanda Governance Board
- Saidi Sibomana, Local Administrative Entities Development Agency
- Annelyse Umunyana, KfW
- Stephanie Megies, BMZ

Monrovia

- Margaret Brownjohn, ODI fellow at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
- Anthony Chan, USAID
- George Cooke, Liberia Governance Commission
- Saliho Donzo, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

- Melanie Gräser, ODI fellow at the Ministry of Health
- Elisabeth Harleman, Swedish embassy
- Yacoub El Hillo, UN Resident Coordinators Office
- Stefanie Kolodziej, Welthungerhilfe
- Morris Kromah, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
- Hans Lambrecht, EU Delegation
- Larisa Leshchenko, World Bank
- Rie Lukowski, Kvinna vir Kvinna
- Nisha Makan, Tony Blair Institute for global change (by phone)
- Chris Maclulich, ZOA International
- Steven Menley, Governance Commission
- Gyude Moore, Ministry of Public Works
- Jackson Nabulah, BMZ project post Ebola health facilities
- Gunter Plambeck, German embassy
- Jonathan Said, Tony Blair Institute for global change
- Frantz Sawyer, Ministry of Commerce
- Rupert Simons, former Tony Blair Institute for global change (by phone)
- Remy Sogunro, UNFPA
- Yannis Tzartzas, EU Delegation
- George Werner, Ministry of Education
- Franzisca Zanker, Arnold Bergstraesser Institute Freiburg (by phone)
- René Franke, BMZ
- Clarence Moniba, program delivery unit at the Presidency
- Smile Kwawukume, World Bank (public sector modernization project)

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