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## **Development narratives in a post-aid era**

Reflections on implications for the global effectiveness agenda

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**Abstract:** This paper argues that the crisis facing the development effectiveness agenda is fundamentally derived from limited collective commitment to a singular model of development, one where a developed North serves as model and funder for a developing South. This is partly the reason for the lacklustre political support received by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) that emerged from the 2011 Busan High Level Forum. The discrediting of this North/South binary and the arrival of an era of multistakeholder-ism has generated a pluralism of development narratives better suited to 21st century geographies and global challenges. In this paper, I unpack three of these narratives, each framed by either supranational, nationalist, and solidaristic understandings of development. Building a political consensus around development effectiveness requires, as a first step, an awareness of these alternative framings of what global development currently stands for, including its objectives, modalities, financing channels, and stakeholders. This analysis foregrounds the ways each narrative holds different sets of actors accountable for conforming to effectiveness principles and empowers distinctive rights holder to hold these duty bearers to account. How far narrative pluralism can be accommodated within the universalist logic of development effectiveness remains to be seen.

**Key words:** development effectiveness, foreign aid, North South, international cooperation, global public goods, global public investment, nationalism

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## 1 Introduction

Development narratives are stories of how progress will be achieved and provide a backdrop for justifying engagement, setting agendas, establishing parameters of conduct, and defining desirable results. By any measure, studying the ways ‘ideas’ shape the contemporary development policy landscape is neither new nor novel (Cooper and Packard 1997; Finnemore 1997; Swiss 2016; Klingebiel and Gonsior 2020). An examination of dominant development narratives today offers a larger window into the directions the global effectiveness movement might evolve, including whether it can be universally applied in the face of multiple, overlapping and, in some cases, conflicting orientations.

To pursue this line of reasoning, in Section 2 I begin by reviewing literatures tracing the shifting fortunes of the global effectiveness regime, drawing on extensive academic reviews and policy accounts. In Section 3, I rely on this understanding to explain the lukewarm political support for development effectiveness today. This crisis derives from the rejection of the longstanding North/South geographic division upon which development was founded. Development as an act of charity by rich countries towards poor continues is now completely discredited (Sachs 2020). The collapse of an architecture built on a division between North and South has collectively lowered providers’ ambitions for development effectiveness. Alongside, the legitimacy and growth of multistakeholder policy-making widened development effectiveness agendas and interests without establishing a shared concept of its aims and stakeholders. This has disassociated effectiveness from a bounded territory of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into the almost limitless fuzziness of development. I argue these two dynamics are at the heart of explanations for the waning political momentum behind the development effectiveness movement.

In Section 4, I suggest efforts to move away from imagined (and geographically inaccurate) North/South division leave the door open to multiple narratives encompassing the geopolitical crisis of world order, the collective challenges of global public good provision, and the sustainable development challenges shared by all countries. These narratives are associated with what development geographers describe as the replacement of a paradigm of international development with an understanding of development as a universal, globalized endeavour (Horner 2020, 2022). They are also consistent with observations of the growing policy overlap between development, global challenges, and global public goods, with the ability to tackle all three the new *sina qua non* of the contemporary development project (Jayaraman and Kanbur 2001; Severino and Ray 2009; Severino 2010; Kenny 2020; Calleja and Cichocka 2022; Melonio et al. 2022).

In Sections 5–7, I identify several narratives associated with a paradigm of ‘global development,’ each one providing a framework through which facts are shaped and causal relationships are drawn (Narlikar 2020, 2021). These narratives broadly fall into three ideal-type categories: supranational, nationalist, and solidaristic narratives. The world of policy ideas draws inspiration from these narratives, sometimes showing a strong association to one, at other times simultaneously drawing on several. The desire to build a global consensus around development effectiveness requires, as a first step, developing an awareness of these multiple, cross-cutting, and occasionally competing narratives.

In the first narrative (Section 5), *supranationalism* underlines the necessity and mutual benefits arising from investments in global public goods. In a *nationalist* narrative (Section 6), development is understood through the prism of global geopolitics and diplomacy. Finally, in a *solidaristic* narrative

(Section 7), the focus is on the shared global challenge of inequality.<sup>1</sup> The paper presents these narratives to understand their policy orientations, channels of engagement, and accountability stakeholders, including those who bear a responsibility for ensuring effectiveness (duty bearers) and those with entitlements to hold duty bearers to account (rights holders).

In Section 8, I suggest that the universal principles of development effectiveness will need to show strength and relevance to each of these narratives, given it is likely all three will co-exist under the rubric of global development in the medium term and inspire policy engagements in divergent directions. In particular, the obligations and entitlements of duty bearers and rights holders within each narrative will need to be carefully considered to understand if the principles of development effectiveness can adequately ensure accountability for outcomes. If effectiveness principles are intended to be applied to all geographies and sectors, they should also strive to be robust and applicable to all three contemporary global development narratives in circulation.

## **2 The rise and fall of the global effectiveness regime**

Preoccupations with aid effectiveness existed throughout the noughties. The agenda was given a boost with the creation of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), set up in 2003 under the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This body elevated effectiveness concerns amongst this donor-only group.<sup>2</sup> The WP-EFF work organized itself around a series of High Level Forums (HLFs)—Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011). The principles of aid effectiveness were codified in two iconic international agreements negotiated in these forums, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). The zenith of the aid effectiveness regime was marked by the signing of the Paris Declaration,<sup>3</sup> consisting of five principles: country ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results, and mutual accountability. All were supposed to be comprehensively and regularly monitored against a set of targets and baseline measurements. Meanwhile, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) sought to improve the predictability of aid flows and encourage working through recipient country systems, untying aid, and reducing prescriptive conditionalities. While many welcomed scrutiny of the 'supply side' of the aid machine, the results achieved were somewhat disappointing with only one of 13 targets achieved by the time of the Busan forum in 2011 (Wood et al. 2008, 2011; Mawdsley et al. 2014).

### **2.1 The road to a post-aid world**

The lead up to the Busan meeting marked a push by DAC donors to socialize Southern providers of development cooperation (or South–South cooperation [SSC]) into the global effectiveness regime (Eyben and Savage 2013). SSC had long seen itself as distinct from Northern donor-driven aid, rooted as it was in post-colonial solidarity, a rejection of unequal donor–recipient relations, and a shared Southern identity respectful of state sovereignty. SSC was provided voluntarily and not limited to the wealthiest countries. It could include a range of instruments: small or large

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<sup>1</sup> While one may consider a fourth, anti-development narrative encompassing ideas of degrowth and decolonization, I do not review these here as they point towards complete dissolution rather than practical reconstruction of the development effectiveness regime.

<sup>2</sup> In 2005, the WP-EFF moved to a joint partnership with a large number of 'developing' countries, a change that Mawdsley et al. (2014) suggest was indicative of the imperative to confront the growing legitimacy crisis of donor-only forums.

<sup>3</sup> The declaration was signed by 35 donor countries, 26 multilateral donors, 56 recipient countries (including some which were also donors/development partners), and 14 civil society observers.

concessional and non-concessional flows, export credits, guarantees, secondments, and technical assistance. What it was not was a quantifiable obligation like Northern Official Development Assistance (ODA).

For these reasons, the South did not see aid effectiveness norms applicable to them in their role as providers. Thus, as a first step to socialization of the South, Northern donors framed their efforts as part of a broader concept of ‘development effectiveness’, adopted a relatively uncritical stance towards SSC at Busan (notwithstanding a lack of evidence to support this assessment), and joined the emerging South in their critiques of ODA (Eyben and Savage 2013). An alliance between Northern and larger emerging providers successfully resisted efforts to hold the South accountable as ‘donors’ at Busan, agreeing that SSC could only ever be complementary to Northern aid, never its perfect substitute (Mawdsley et al. 2014). A compromise was reached stipulating that the Southern providers could define at a later date their differential commitments to effectiveness and that would not be subjected to monitoring (Bracho 2017). The Busan Summit thus became the first important moment of the ‘post-aid’ world by definitively breaking with the donor–recipient framework of the Paris Declaration (Mawdsley et al. 2014). Northern donors perceived even this recalcitrant support by the South as a win for development effectiveness.

After Busan, the GPEDC was created as a joint DAC/UNDP Secretariat to indicate a stronger orientation to its Southern stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, at its first High Level Meeting in 2014, the division between the large emerging providers (eg. Brazil, China, and India) and Northern donors proved significant. Southern support for the compromise deal at Busan that favoured differential commitments by the South had vanished.<sup>5</sup> Opt-out clauses for emerging providers reduced incentives to comply with effectiveness principles among traditional donors too (Brown 2020). Traditional donors rejected differential commitments for North and South, seeking instead common identity and accountability standards for all ‘providers’. To achieve this, they abandoned ambitions to coax higher performance from the South and created a new looser and more flexible international regime for effectiveness, where they too could enjoy the privileges of minimal monitoring and ‘mutual prosperity’ enjoyed by Southern providers (Bracho 2017; Keijzer and Lundsgaarde 2017). The GPEDC did not ‘socialize’ Southern partners into Northern effectiveness norms and practices. Instead, the reverse happened as DAC donors downgraded their own standards, commitments, and responsibilities (Mawdsley and Taggart 2021).

With no ‘concrete actions or commitments’ or ‘specific targets or task dates’ (Brown 2020), the GPEDC has lacked ‘political punch’ (Bracho 2017). DAC and emerging providers alike have gradually lost interest in it as a forum for development policy-making, sending few high-level representatives to its meetings since Busan and abandoning comprehensive monitoring and accountability for outcomes (McKee et al. 2020). Development effectiveness under the GPEDC has become a vehicle for dialogue and knowledge sharing on almost any theme, with a voluntary, non-binding monitoring process led by recipient countries.<sup>6</sup> It is not a robustly institutionalized framework with the political capital to hold all provider and recipient signatories to account for

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<sup>4</sup> The GPEDC had four main tasks: two related to the ‘commitments agenda’ under Busan at the global and country levels, and two involving the facilitation of knowledge exchange and strengthening political momentum for development effectiveness (Bracho 2017).

<sup>5</sup> This occurred after China and India found themselves assessed in the 2014 monitoring reports of the GPEDC. See Bracho (2017).

<sup>6</sup> Recipient countries opt to conduct a monitoring exercise. Data is collected for 10 indicators, validated by representatives from across stakeholder groups in countries against the four effectiveness principles of country ownership, development results, inclusive partnerships, and enhancing transparency and mutual accountability.

the quality and impact of development spending. By all measures, development effectiveness has been in a state of gradual decline.

### 3 Explaining the failures of development effectiveness

Aid effectiveness has long rested on a template of Northern donor obligations to Southern governments (Esteban and Olivie 2021). Busan called this characteristic of international development governance into question (Eyben and Savage 2013; Ordóñez Llanos 2019; Taggart 2022). The collapse of an architecture built on these foundations has had two effects. First it has removed objective standards of effectiveness that has incentivized a ‘race to the bottom’ with less clarity on who the duty bearers of effectiveness should be. Secondly, the arrival of powerful new stakeholders has widened effectiveness agendas and interests without clarifying who has rights to hold duty bearers to account.

#### 3.1 The challenge of fluctuating North–South identities

Identity debates around who was the North and who was the South impinged on all aspects of the negotiations at Busan, including the degree to which commitments would be binding and on whom. For scholars of development geography, this blurring of North–South boundaries is related to the interconnectedness of late 20th and early 21st century globalization and capitalism, the global challenge of sustainable development (especially with respect to climate), and falling income inequalities between South and North, largely driven by China and India (Horner and Hulme 2019; Horner 2020, 2022). Development has traditionally been produced through a spatialized geometry of a powerful North that produces solutions and an underdeveloped South that serves as the object and space where interventions are directed (Mawdsley and Taggart 2021). This spatial geography defines who gives to whom, where expertise resides, and where poverty is located, and has been heavily critiqued as a powerful apparatus of control and Western intervention (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995). Development through aid is built on a neat division between North and South, where donors deliver capital, growth, and social policies to beneficiary countries (Gulrajani and Swiss 2017, 2019). Busan marked the beginning of the end for the idea that poor countries could use aid to follow the modernization and carbon-intensive pathways of industrialized nations to ‘catch up’.

Despite economic convergence, there is growing recognition of divergences *within* countries that spread the benefits of globalization unevenly. Pockets of elites and deprivation in *all* countries strip away the idea of a model North and a backward South. The blurring of these boundaries can justify wealthy donors’ withdrawal from development commitments and targets (including but not limited to effectiveness) in order to tackle domestic challenges (Deaton 2018). Discrediting of development as Northern neocolonialism lends legitimacy to all for withdrawing from fora and initiatives that still appear tethered to a donor–recipient framework. Meanwhile, larger powers of the emerging South can exploit these fluctuating geographies by clinging to their identities as recipients, and in this role call for the North to fulfil their aid quantity and quality targets. They can also distance themselves from any prospective commitments and accountabilities, notwithstanding their ever-increasing capacity and influence.<sup>7</sup> Powerlessness thus operates as a

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<sup>7</sup>This is in keeping with a broader trend during the first decade of the 21st century, when developing countries pointed to their lower per capita incomes (notwithstanding growing middle classes and wealthy elites) as reasons to refuse global responsibilities in areas like trade and climate change mitigation.

formidable political weapon in international negotiations that has left developed countries with few rebuttals (Narlikar 2020).

### 3.2 Multistakeholder-ism as a source of development pluralism

Development has been described as a ‘plastic word’ by critical development scholars, carrying multiple and contested meanings, which can adapt as an amoeba would to its different settings and contexts (Esteva 1993; Pieterse Nederveen 2001; Rist 2002; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Sachs 2020). Consider how the meaning of development has evolved since its post-war inception; from an early development as growth paradigm, to its embrace of basic needs, then to neoliberal Washington consensus, and to the poverty reduction paradigm at the turn of the millennium. These transformations map dominant development theories that were also the product of the global power relations at specific historical and political junctures (Pieterse Nederveen 2001).

The multistakeholder framework of Busan disassociated effectiveness from the somewhat bounded territory of North–South aid aligned to eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>8</sup> into the almost limitless fuzziness of development. ‘The true achievement of the Busan HLF4 is the shift from talking about aid to talking about development,’ triumphantly tweeted OECD Secretary General Gurria from the Busan Forum.<sup>9</sup> However, no agreement was obtained on a common meaning of development upon which effectiveness principles were to be built (Eyben and Savage 2013).

This problem has only worsened since Busan. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) arrived on the scene, representing ‘an agenda of unprecedented scope and significance’ involving 17 goals ‘which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike’ (United Nations 2015). The SDGs offer a model in which actors can leverage a range of sources of support beyond ODA for a relatively bespoke vision of how to take development forward. On top of this, the emergence of new priorities and challenges like climate change and refugee flows, and the asymmetrical burdens and costs that this places on states, works against a shared understanding of the purposes of development (McKee et al. 2020). This fragmentation is perhaps why the ‘what’ of development, including its thematic and geographic priorities, has occupied more attention since Busan than the ‘how’ of its disbursement, monitoring, and allocation processes (Lundsgaarde and Engberg-Pedersen 2019).

Development pluralism contributes to disputes over the objectives of effectiveness among donors, recipients, and Southern providers, exacerbated by the arrival of more actors including civil society and the private sector. The multistakeholder governance framework of the GPEDC, coupled with the wide expansive aims of the SDGs, leaves no dominant understanding or theory for what development is, how it will be achieved, and who it is accountable to. Official statements underline the rights of those at the ‘country level’ whose ownership matters the most. And yet, this does not unpack the reality of contestation and difference at the country level, including between central and subnational levels of government, communities from varying economic classes, or citizens with different socio-racial demographics. This leads to uncertainties about whether *all* stakeholders in multistakeholder partnerships championed by the GPEDC can ever be satisfied (Ordóñez Llanos 2019; Taggart 2022).

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<sup>8</sup> These were halving poverty by 2015; universal primary education by 2015; eliminating gender disparity in schools by 2005; reductions in infant, child, and maternal mortality by 2015; universal access to reproductive health services by 2015; and adequate national strategies for sustainable development in place everywhere by 2015.

<sup>9</sup> As cited in Eyben and Savage (2013).

#### 4 Making sense of multiple narratives for an era of globalized development

We are living in a world where a North/South division of the world is delegitimized, and the territory of effectiveness has tethered itself to an almost limitless understanding of development. These trends are partly driven by interconnectedness spurred by globalization that has increased both the number and linkages between actors; the global challenge of sustainable development, especially climate change; and patterns of inequality that involve convergence between countries alongside divergence within countries (Horner 2020, 2022). In such a world, development is increasingly being framed as a globalized intervention in terms of its scale and scope.<sup>10</sup>

This shift has become even more apparent in the world of policy, where a strong overlap between development, global challenges, and global public goods is now observed (Severino 2010; Kenny 2020; Calleja and Cichocka 2022; Melonio et al. 2022). The implications for the development effectiveness regime have perhaps been most thoroughly explored by Calleja and Cichocka (2022). They suggest the simultaneous pursuit of global challenges alongside local poverty-focused objectives is a ‘new normal’ for all development providers that risks undermining established rules of effectiveness. Their survey points to a development effectiveness agenda that will have to adapt to new actors, modalities, and purposes.

The rest of this paper aims to take their analysis one step forward, dissecting three emerging development narratives which are all seeking to extricate development from a discredited ODA regime, pave the way for a different kind of relationship between low and high-income countries, and chart a course between the objectives of tackling poverty reduction in countries and resolving broader transnational challenges. Narratives are the product of norms and identities but operate at the level of ‘stories’ where facts are shaped, acquire meaning and relevance (Narlikar 2020, 2021). As Narlikar writes, ‘sitting between higher-order questions of worldviews, identities and norms on the one hand, and more tactical issues of framing on the other, narratives are a powerful and pliable tool for policy intervention.’ They are heuristic devices that frame how causal relationships can be understood, which is then the basis for taking certain kinds of policy choices forward. At the same time, they can also be misused and prone to misinform as they are appropriated and hijacked by multiple players. Winning ‘narratives’ emerge from stories emanating from multiple sources engaged at many layers of society. They are never produced by scientific evidence alone and often rely on emotive content in addition to meticulous detail. Narratives can co-exist even as they vie for dominance, with policy capable of drawing on multiple narratives even if ideas tend to be strongly associated to a particular formulation.

There are at least three narratives of global development currently at play, all of which will have implications for development effectiveness. Effectiveness champions will have little freedom to choose between them but will have to ensure principles can be relevant to all, at least until such time as it becomes obvious one will triumph. First, a *supranational* narrative underlines the necessity of investing in global public goods for the benefit of all. Secondly, a *nationalist* narrative that understands development through the prism of global geopolitics. And lastly, a *solidaristic* narrative focused on addressing global inequality. In the presentation of each narrative below, I discuss the nature of the global challenge that each narrative tackles, associated mechanisms of intervention, and the stakeholders targeted, foregrounding the way each narrative considers the obligations of

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<sup>10</sup> On scale, development is becoming a universal transnational territory in ways that downplay international, national, and local dynamics. It is associated with global public goods and integrated collective action at the international level. In terms of scope, global development is related to the shared sustainable development challenges that unite all countries, recognizing that these challenges are both relational and structural. See Horner (2020: 424–26).

both duty bearers and rights holders for delivering outcomes. It is worth noting that none of these narratives are mutually exclusive; for example, policy efforts supportive of global public goods (GPGs) can draw on supranational and solidaristic narratives, as is done by those advocating for greater climate justice, while demands for large infrastructure investments can be a modality for both nationalist and supranational narratives.

## 5 A supranational development narrative to provide global public goods

A supranational narrative oriented towards global public good provision is not a new way to frame the purpose of development (Jayaraman and Kanbur 2001; Anand 2004; Severino 2010; Kaul 2013), even if the visible, border-transgressing nature of COVID and a warming planet have given it renewed momentum.

Global public goods (GPGs) are defined as ‘institutions, mechanisms, and outcomes that provide quasi-universal benefits to more than one group of countries, extending to both current and future generations’ (Birdsall and Diofasi 2015).<sup>11</sup> The underprovision of transnational public goods arises from the tendency towards global free-riding, raising questions about how to allocate financing responsibility for GPGs through equitable global burden-sharing regimes to control things like global communicable diseases, ensure international financial stability, commit to nuclear non-proliferation, and mitigate against climate change.

A supranational narrative responds to growing ‘aid fatigue’, with GPG underinvestment an opportunity to rebuild aid around its collective financing (Melonio et al. 2022). Nevertheless, financing GPGs through ODA has been a source of some consternation as it has traditionally been understood as a transfer based on altruistic principles of reciprocity and humanism, whereas the financing of GPGs is based on the self-interested management of interdependencies for the collective good (Gulrajani and Silcock 2020). Some argue GPGs are different from the altruistic formulation of poverty-focused development and should not overlap with ODA out of fear of ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’, while others suggest GPG spending could count as ODA so long as it is consistent with the ultimate purpose of maximizing the welfare of developing countries (Kaul 2013, 2017; Kenny 2020). Either way, public expenditures for GPGs have been increasingly encroaching on ODA budgets, partly due to changing donor motivations and domestic fiscal pressures.<sup>12</sup>

A supranational narrative reinvigorates the case for investment in multilateral bodies as channels for global collective action.<sup>13</sup> Conceived as instruments of global burden-sharing and policy-making, international institutions can minimize GPG free-riding and bring high quality technical expertise and data to bear on delivery and implementation (Martens 2005; Milner and Tingley 2013; Gulrajani 2016). Current policy efforts, on repurposing the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to better tackle climate change or improving access to predictable finance for the World

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<sup>11</sup> They are often identified as nonrival, which means that one country’s use of the good does not affect others’ usage, and nonexcludable so that no country can be excluded from the benefits of the good once it becomes available.

<sup>12</sup> Birdsall and Diofasi (2015) estimated that about US\$12 billion was spent annually on GPGs, much of which was reported as ODA, while Development Initiatives estimate US\$13 billion in ODA to GPGs in 2014 (mostly to the environment) (Kenny 2020). More recently, about one fifth of total Norwegian bilateral aid over the past six years has gone to GPGs (Hegertun 2021), while the OECD estimates that 27.2 per cent of ODA can also be counted as climate-related finance (OECD 2021).

<sup>13</sup> International institutions are not only channels for GPGs but also, in and of themselves, a fundamental global public good (Kaul 2013; Reid-Henry 2022).

Health Organization (WHO) to improve its performance in advancing global public health, highlight how supranational narratives strengthen the positioning of certain kinds of international institutions.

## 5.1 Duty bearers in a supranational narrative

In a supranational narrative, responsibility for effectiveness is shared across all nation states. But the current international financial architecture offers no formal system of governance to robustly oversee GPG investment and accountability for effective delivery. Failures by the North to reach their US\$100 billion climate finance target by 2020, the growing gap between targeted global emissions and pledged national emission reductions, or wrangling over global liabilities for loss and damage from climate-induced natural disasters point to some of the difficulties even where there is multilateral monitoring. Not only is it unclear who bears duties towards GPGs, it is also matter of some debate how to calculate the nature and quantum of liabilities to resolve them.<sup>14</sup>

Given these difficulties, the supranational narrative is increasingly converging to the role that ‘country platforms’ might play for ensuring accountability of GPG funding from multiple sources. A country platform is defined as a government-led, multistakeholder partnership that is used to attract and coordinate international public and private finance in support of common goals (Hadley et al. 2022). It is a relatively new concept with continuities to older ideas like donor coordination and programmatic approaches, largely articulated as an opportunity for ensuring accountability of global finance in partner countries of the South.<sup>15</sup> The Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) is the illustrative example linking the government of South Africa to finance by several G7 countries that will bring around US\$8.5 billion to support the country to decarbonize its energy sector, which is currently dominated by coal produced by Eskom, its debt-laden state power company.<sup>16</sup> JETP represents a coordinated multisector response to a specific global problem that supports a systemic, programmatic solution by fronting a credible plan and ensuring donor coordination. Such country platforms are intended to connect global efforts to deliver more and better GPG finance (in this case to achieve international climate goals) with national development plans. South Africa’s JETP has been described as a signal that a ‘sub-group of the world’s richest economies were committed partners in the collective global effort to fight climate change while supporting the economic and social aspirations of major emitters in the developing world.’<sup>17</sup> One increasingly expects they will also incur some responsibility for delivering on the deals struck given the transactional focus of the partnership itself between public and private creditors and national elites.

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<sup>14</sup> For example, who should be held responsible for global emissions: fossil fuel companies contributing to loss and damage arising from a warming planet, Northern states who are historical atmospheric polluters with higher emissions per capita, Southern states with lower emissions per capita but higher and ongoing reliance on dirty energy sources, or small island states that are facing the more immediate consequences of a warming planet? This question has become critically important with the agreement at COP27 to set up a funding window for loss and damage. See: <https://theconversation.com/loss-and-damage-who-is-responsible-when-climate-change-harms-the-worlds-poorest-countries-192070>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.globalfinancialgovernance.org/assets/pdf/G20EPG-Full%20Report.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> A second JETP was agreed at COP27 between Indonesia and international actors to provide US\$20 billion for cleaner electricity generation, with negotiations occurring in India, Senegal, and Vietnam.

<sup>17</sup> <https://odi.org/en/insights/whats-the-state-of-play-on-just-energy-transition-partnerships/>

## 5.2 Rights holders in a supranational narrative

Citizens in both the North and South, but especially those most affected by GPG failures, remain the ultimate rights holders in supranational narratives. Nevertheless, in a supranational narrative, representation and aggregation of diverse citizen interests occur through global institutions, especially independent monitoring and assessment bodies. For example, the G20 High Level Panel on Financing the Global Commons for Pandemic Preparedness and Response identifies the role of a global threats board anchored within the G20 to ensure the coordination of health and finance institutions, provide systemic financial oversight to ensure proper and timely funding for pandemic preparedness and response, and guarantee the most effective use of funds (G20 High Level Independent Panel 2021).

However, international work on global public goods has, to date, not given partner countries the same decision-making authority as donor countries (Hegertun 2021). While country platforms could be an alternative vehicle to represent the interests of recipient rights holders (i.e. they have been designed to reflect national priorities and intersect with industrial policy agendas), current approaches seem more focused on their role as a form of upward accountability to funders and creditors. While it may be too soon to assess, the indication is a weak connection between global aims and downstream national trajectories and dynamics. So, while the JETP has been presented as ‘a model of North–South cooperation’, it has been plagued by domestic frustrations over the financial terms agreed for the US\$8.5 billion investment, national opposition to the rapid timetable for the shift to renewables, and labour concerns that the transition pathway will have adverse consequences for workers and communities.<sup>18</sup> Overall, a supranational narrative oriented towards GPGs engagement offers minimal understanding of national and subnational stakeholders as rights holders for effectiveness, with a much stronger focus on the rights of global institutions and intergovernmental mechanisms to police inputs, externalities, and consequences.

## 6 A nationalist narrative to pursue geo-economic interests

Over the last decade, a transactional concept of development as a win-win that accrues to all nations, irrespective of their size or power, encouraged greater consideration of the domestic advantages that development can bring. Nationalist narratives are positioned within such a strong interest-based conceptualization of development (Gulrajani and Silcock 2020; Gulrajani and Calleja 2021). While the national interest has always been an important motivation for development, contemporary nationalist narratives emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, where fiscal constraints in many wealthy countries put downward domestic pressure on development budgets. The trend grew with the arrival of populist forces in Europe and North America that found electoral success by reframing international generosity as incompatible with a strong focus on domestic economic concerns and geosecurity priorities (Deaton 2018; Gulrajani 2019).

These optics worsened with the growing influence, wealth, and power of emerging markets, and most notably China (Mawdsley 2012, 2019; Mawdsley et al. 2017). China has become the lender of first resort for many low-income and middle-income countries, with a global infrastructure

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<sup>18</sup> [www.ft.com/content/3c64950c-2154-4757-bf25-d93c7850be8f](http://www.ft.com/content/3c64950c-2154-4757-bf25-d93c7850be8f)

lending programme under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) estimated at US\$1 trillion.<sup>19</sup> Under the BRI, commercial, concessional, and semi-concessional Chinese debt is provided by China EximBank and China Development Bank (state-owned policy banks) and largely tied to sole-source procurement contracts with preselected Chinese contractors (Dreher et al. 2022). Moreover, China has not historically insisted their contractors or government partners adhere to global standards of environmental or social safeguards. Despite recent cracks appearing in its lending model, it remains a deep-pocketed, flexible, fast, and demand-driven lender willing to support big-ticket infrastructure project Western aid agencies and MDBs are likely to reject.<sup>20</sup> Whether by design or by accident, this has also given China a diplomatic edge in several geostrategically important countries (Custer, Schon, et al., 2021; Custer, Sethi, et al., 2021).

Freedom from DAC norms and standards gave China leeway and competitive advantages that have been the envy of traditional donors for some time. There have been growing pressures on Northern governments to follow China's example and instrumentalize public development finance with an eye on advancing global economic competitiveness. This partly initiated greater cross-over between donors' development policy and foreign policy interests, renewing development diplomacy efforts that had largely been dormant since the end of the Cold War (Gulrajani et al. 2020). The practice of development diplomacy became a conduit for securing 'shared prosperity', advancing 'mutual interests', and achieving 'win-wins' (Keijzer and Lundsgaarde 2018). Fulfilment of the 'national interest', while always an implicit rationale for aid-giving, became a central and explicit analytic in the practice of contemporary development (Carter 2016; Gulrajani 2017; Bermeo 2018; Girod 2019).

As countries now scramble for influence, alliances, and priority access to strategic resources, the 'Great Game of the 21st century' now lies in multinational development infrastructure schemes that partly ape China (see also Kroenig and Cimmino 2020; Szlapek-Sevillo 2021). In 2021, two multilateral counter-responses to the BRI emerged: the G7's Build Back Better World (B3W, now known as the G7 Partnership for Infrastructure and Investment [PII])<sup>21</sup> and the European Union (EU) Global Gateway.<sup>22</sup> In both cases, investments are focused on supporting green transition and next-generation infrastructure in digital, energy, transport, and health security.<sup>23</sup> These multistakeholder infrastructure schemes suggest a degree of consensus in the West for a more

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<sup>19</sup> China's evolution into a global banking powerhouse was largely motivated by domestic economic challenges like domestic overproduction, excessive foreign exchange reserves, and limited access to natural resources at home. See Dreher et al. (2022) for an extensive discussion.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Dreher et al. (2022) suggest Tanzania's 2011 Five Year Development Plan would not have attracted support from traditional sources.

<sup>21</sup> The B3W was rechristened as the G7 Partnership for Infrastructure and Investment in June 2022. See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/12/fact-sheet-president-biden-and-g7-leaders-launch-build-back-better-world-b3w-partnership/> and

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1038224/G7\\_LEADERS\\_STATEMENT\\_-\\_PARTNERSHIP\\_FOR\\_INFRASTRUCTURE\\_AND\\_INVESTMENT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038224/G7_LEADERS_STATEMENT_-_PARTNERSHIP_FOR_INFRASTRUCTURE_AND_INVESTMENT.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway\\_en#documents](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en#documents)

<sup>23</sup> Demands for 'big push transformation' to low-carbon economies in developing and emerging markets that are seemingly stripped of their geopolitical moorings are also at play here (Kharas and Dooley 2021; Government of Barbados 2022; Songwe et al. 2022) The target of most is to stimulate climate investments (aforementioned proposals all converge in the region of US\$1.5 trillion) through combinations of concessional climate finance, domestic resource mobilization, private capital finance, the release of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and further expansions in MDB lending. Such efforts can accelerate green, inclusive, and resilient growth by delivering and supporting countries in their low-carbon transition, ending support for fossil fuel exploration, and in some cases compensate countries imperilled by climate disaster.

strongly interest-driven form of economic diplomacy aligned to a Western framework of sustainability, good governance, and transparency. For example, the Global Gateway provides a geostrategic framework reflecting European value and preferences, challenging Chinese subsidies that undercut EU contractors (Gavas and Pleek 2021). Such schemes represent a harder line towards China and are intended as a competitive Western offer to the BRI.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year added yet another dimension to the nationalist framing of these multilateral investment schemes. In the US, geopolitical competition and conflict with China and Russia are now being elevated to the status of a global challenge like climate and pandemics (Slaughter 2022). With a growing schism between liberal Western democracies and illiberal, authoritarian states (Foa et al. 2022), American allies are now also seeking to follow this template for linking global development strategy, domestic policy priorities, and national security imperatives (Freeland 2022). The purpose of development diplomacy is perceptibly shifting from the cultivation of national competitive advantages against China and its Southern satellite states towards the creation of robust security perimeter in areas like energy access, 'friend-shored' supply chains, and digital infrastructures. Development is becoming an instrument to win the allegiances of countries 'in-between' US and Chinese poles of influence,<sup>24</sup> evoking alliance-building strategies used at the height of the Cold War.

## 6.1 Duty bearers in a nationalist narrative

Northern donor governments bear responsibility for ensuring that nationalist development narratives deliver outcomes in a manner that will deliver on both their interests and their values. While still early days, limited progress has been made in delivering on initial commitments within multilateral infrastructure offers meant to counter the BRI, let alone achieving downstream results in terms of weaning countries off Chinese bilateral relations. Donor investment strategies remain vague, uncertain, and paltry compared to the BRI's investment scope and scale in hard physical infrastructure. Meanwhile, China's willingness to accept higher project costs, assume greater project risk from countries with poor governance, and absorb project losses is unlikely to be copied by Western allies (Liao and Beal 2022). This may leave G7 and the EU unable to pragmatically compete with China's infrastructure offer, and thus deliver on its geo-economic and geopolitical objectives. Recipients themselves are also likely to be acutely sensitive to Western geopolitical motivations for their investments and look to strategically play Great Power rivals against one another (Soulé 2021).

The expectations of robust global partnerships among like-minded nations under the PII and the Global Gateway may also prove difficult to meet. It is hard to square enthusiasm for multilateralism with the reality of large donors like the UK and Germany and progressive Nordics like Sweden and Norway cutting both the size of their overall development spend, and within that the reallocations to bilateral channels. Moreover, as multilateral investment schemes are largely amalgamations of bilateral and minilateral efforts, many of which are post hoc branded as G7 and

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<sup>24</sup> For example, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, recently described the situation of these in-between countries in the following way: 'And in the middle of that, we have the Global South. These people do not want to be forced to take sides in this geopolitical competition. More [importantly], they feel that the global system does not deliver, and they are not receiving their part. They are not receiving enough recognition. They do not have the role they should have according to their population and their economic weight. And when facing these multiple crises – these multipolar crises - financial, food and energy crises – it is clear that they are not there following us because they blame us, rightly or not.' Available at: [https://www.ecas.europa.eu/eas/eu-ambassadors-annual-conference-2022-opening-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell\\_en](https://www.ecas.europa.eu/eas/eu-ambassadors-annual-conference-2022-opening-speech-high-representative-josep-borrell_en) (accessed November 2022).

EU initiatives,<sup>25</sup> fragmentation and parallel initiatives at the level of countries pose a real risk. The question of how the G7 and EU offers hang together, given overlapping membership of France, Italy, and Germany across both initiatives, is also a concern (Scull and Healy 2022).

## 6.2 Rights holders in a nationalist narrative

Under a nationalist narrative, the ultimate rights holders for effectiveness are the citizen-taxpayers underwriting interest-driven development cooperation. The search for collective benefits to the wider family of Western democracies and their allies' privileges upward accountability rather than downward accountability towards those at the receiving end of the multilateral infrastructure schemes. An orientation towards Northern taxpayers as rights holders does not bode well for either the principles of development effectiveness or their downstream impacts.<sup>26</sup>

Multilateral investment schemes are likely to be overly driven by supply-side considerations relating to geo-economic preferences. As priorities, attention, and resource shift towards cultivating domestic returns and advantages, donors become more tolerant of exposing themselves to the risk of not achieving their development goals; in other words, the risk of donor moral hazard grows (Collier 2016).<sup>27</sup> Certainly, donor commitments to country ownership and equitable partnerships in the context of the EU Global Gateway and the G7 PII remains patchy (Furness and Keijzer 2022; Liao and Beal 2022). This is notwithstanding the fact that the process of winning allies away from China is likely to require more than lip service towards the principles of non-interference, equality, and reciprocity that are central to Southern cooperation.

## 7 A solidaristic narrative to reduce global inequality

Within solidaristic narratives, aid is built on an obsolete logic premised on a false hierarchy of nations and paternalistic charitable motivations that are used to bully countries to adopt policies against their will. Growing calls to decolonize development can either mean ensuring more equitable ways of channelling assistance or ending aid altogether.<sup>28</sup> On the spectrum between radical dissolution and reform and improvement (Gulrajani 2011), one policy idea drawing on solidaristic narratives calls for reframing aid as Global Public Investment (GPI).

GPI invites the reconstruction of aid in such a way that tackles the wider power dynamics that leads countries to require aid in the first place. Advancing solidarity requires a source of international public finance like ODA, but can do without its paternalistic norms, gap-filling

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<sup>25</sup> For example, the UK's Clean Green Initiative (CGI) which launched at COP26 is listed as an example under the G7 initiative. This initiative is meant to deliver over £3 billion in climate financing for green growth via the rollout of sustainable infrastructure and revolutionary green technology in developing countries over the next five years.

<sup>26</sup> Research has been unequivocal in pointing out that donor motivations that are oriented towards narrowly conceived strategic interests generate suboptimal aid allocations. This is because aid is directed to states and sectors for reasons other than achieving development (Girod 2008; Steele 2011). Aid to advance geopolitical interests has also been shown to be less effective (Kilby and Dreher 2010; Stone 2010; Dreher et al. 2016). Conversely, where donors are shown to have little strategic interest in countries, the scope for development impact is higher (Girod 2012).

<sup>27</sup> One might understand the trajectory of UK development policy over the last decade in this vein, where its 2015 development policy that justified the provision of aid in the national interest has justified a bureaucratic merger of the Department of International Development into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, rescinded a legislative commitment to annually meet the 0.7 per cent ODA/GNI target, and moved ahead with a 21 per cent reduction in ODA flows in 2021 (compared to 2020) (Loft et al. 2022).

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/the-wrap/2022/08/11/Decolonising-aid-racial-justice-humanitarian-reform>

modalities, and unequal governance systems (Glennie 2019, 2020). GPI thus separates the value of ODA as a financial flow from its historical moorings in North–South conceptions of 20th century international development.

Rebaptizing aid as GPI requires it to be understood as a permanent investment in the shared, common good of development. GPI represents an ongoing commitment to investing in public returns, rather than a pledge that suddenly stops once a country has achieved a certain growth level. It is an obligation of all nations, rich or poor, that encompasses international concessional flows like ODA and SSC and that deliberately seeks social and environmental returns. As a narrative, GPI has obtained considerable buy-in from activists and political figures alike, though it has yet to be practically implemented in any meaningful way.

GPI moves beyond the donor–recipient model of international public finance and focuses on the long-term objective of tackling inequality everywhere in such a way that countries eventually converge to higher living standards. Inequality arises from the modern capitalist system that concentrates wealth in the hands of a few. While tackling global challenges is also an objective of GPI, this is driven by a commitment to humanism that recognizes daunting and unprecedented global challenges that hit the most vulnerable first. GPI thus also represents an effort to repurpose a traditional aid narrative for an era of transnational challenges, one where eradicating extreme poverty, while still important, can no longer be the only priority (Glennie 2020: 5, 8). As aid pots are increasingly raided to fund global challenges, GPI intends for these to be additional to ODA obligations and based on fairly allocated responsibilities based on specific circumstances, vulnerabilities, and capacities. This concept of differentiated universality is at the heart of solidaristic narratives (Haug et al. forthcoming).

### **7.1 Duty bearers in a solidaristic narrative**

In a world where everyone bears responsibilities for addressing global inequality, all countries would provide statutory contributions to GPI based on fair-share principles, and all countries can benefit from these contributions based on need (Glennie 2020: 13, 75; Reid-Henry 2020). The idea that poor countries contribute to international causes is not without precedent, whether in terms of their assessed dues to UN funds and agencies or voluntary contributions to vertical funds like the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Glennie 2020; Sumner et al. 2020; Haug et al. forthcoming)

Universal contributions, albeit on a differentiated basis according to an agreed formula, empower both large or small actors with material dominance, earning them a seat at decision-making tables that can translate into greater social and moral power (Glennie 2020: 71, 95). GPI envisions an agreed-upon formula for differentiated commitments that would put the heaviest burdens on the North (Glennie 2020: 103). A universal contribution system could potentially raise more funding overall, ensure the allocation of resources to areas where they might make the most difference, and incentivize greater concern about the quality of spending (Expert Working Group on GPI 2021). This is the principle of ‘sustained coresponsibility’ where rich and poor countries work together and gain meaningful voice, oversight, and responsibility over policy priorities and enactment.

### **7.2 Rights holders in a solidaristic narrative**

In solidaristic narratives, global challenges are attached to concerns about poverty and inequality by ensuring frontline recipients in need believe that problems being addressed are of critical importance and that solutions are delivered satisfactorily (Hegertun 2021). Solidaristic narratives from which GPI draws foreground the role that civil society actors can play in strengthening

socially led accountability by encouraging their involvement in decision-making at all levels, their facilitation of citizen-led monitoring, and their scrutiny of state commitments (Glennie 2020: 93).

At the same time, GPI views any domestic challenge as a vehicle for tackling bigger, transnational challenges too (Glennie 2020: 112). For example, the fight against climate change will sit within communities susceptible to flooding or drought, while tackling COVID necessitates grappling with structural inequality within health systems. The success of GPI thus hinges on fostering greater consciousness among a disparate global public about the value of international transfers given the shared destinies and problems facing all citizens. In a world where ‘we are all developing countries,’ the notion of rights holder is also universalized.

## 8 Implications of narrative multiplicity for development effectiveness

Building a political consensus around development effectiveness requires, as a first step, an awareness of the various narratives of global development, including their objectives, modalities, financing channels, and stakeholders. This is because a post-aid landscape that rejects a formulation built on donor–recipient relations has ushered in more than one purpose for development cooperation. Under the expansive agenda of the SDGs, this has allowed several narratives to bloom. Table 1 offers a summary of Sections 5–7 that teases out the similarities and differences across all three narratives discussed earlier. While narratives can be equated to stories with causal relationships and thus to some degree exist as caricatures, they nonetheless provide a guide to the logics that currently animate global development policy in a ‘post-aid’ world.

The shift from aid to development has arguably been less a source of triumph and more a source of confusion. With multiple narratives in circulation, the pursuit of global development effectiveness has understandably taken on a voluntary, uncertain form, with limited shared or bounded understanding of the contemporary development project. Yet, it is only with some collective common conception(s) of development that one can robustly define effectiveness, how it will be delivered, and who should be accountable for delivering it to whom. Ignoring the contestation between development narratives risks another decade of decline for the development effectiveness movement.<sup>29</sup>

While the purpose here is not to assess narrative longevity per se, it is worth noting that the solidaristic narrative framing of the GPI captured by the phrase ‘we are all developing countries’ offers the closest approximation to the ideal of global development presented in Section 3. This narrative is also the least likely to be a simple rebranding of traditional development policy formulations and practices, recognizing that sustainable development unites all countries and citizens, acknowledging that global challenges have been created by historical, geo-economic, and relational inequalities that have their source in the North, and concentrating attention on the South as a place where macrostructural disadvantages are felt most strongly, while at the same time acting as a source of learning and knowledge for all nations (Horner 2020; Oldekop et al. 2020). In contrast, nationalist and supranational initiatives are more likely to represent efforts to rebrand and replicate structural disadvantages at all levels, rather than transforming them to accommodate

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<sup>29</sup> Not all narratives are in conflict or mutually exclusive. For example, all three narratives maintain a commitment to concessional international public finance, albeit not always a singular one and not always framed as ODA. At the same time, possibilities of narrative clash are not insignificant. For example, nationalist and solidaristic narratives consider geopolitics and geo-economics as global challenges for different reasons (i.e. for Northern security or for the South’s decolonization) and thus conceptualize duty bearers and rights holders distinctively.

global multiplexity, where power centres and international order are not exclusively defined by American hegemony and Western liberalism (Acharya 2017).

Table 1: Three global development narratives—a comparison

<b>Narrative type</b>	<b>Nationalist</b>	<b>Supranational</b>	<b>Solidaristic</b>
<b>Global challenge targeted</b>	Geopolitics	Global public goods/bads	Global inequality
<b>Modality</b>	Infrastructure	Multilateralism	Global public investment
<b>Financing channels</b>	Public (concessional and non-concessional), private finance, MDB lending	Public (concessional ODA) + beyond ODA (non-concessional, MDB lending, private finance)	Public (concessional)
<b>Duty bearers</b>	Nation states (North)	Nation states (Southern country platforms)	Nation states (North and South)
<b>Rights holders</b>	Taxpayers (North)	Citizens (global)	Poor citizens and civil society (global)

Source: author's elaboration.

What does all this mean for the trajectory of development effectiveness? First, effectiveness principles will need to accommodate the distinctive objectives, modalities, financing channels, and stakeholders within each narrative. While the GPEDC has taken considerable pains to underline that development effectiveness principles can apply in all geographic and sectoral settings (GPEDC 2022), it must also demonstrate its applicability across the multiple narratives associated to post-aid conceptualizations of development. This is because these narratives co-exist and are likely to do so for some time given the polycrisis of fuel, finance, and famine occurring against the backdrop of shifting geopolitics which contribute to donors' mixed motivations. Narratives cannot be chosen by decision-makers like one chooses a pick-and-mix bag at the local cinema; instead, they need patient cultivation by many gardeners until such time as it becomes clear which seeds will bloom.

Secondly, development effectiveness should have in its sights the location and nature of duty bearers and rights holders within each narrative as it sets new standards and consider the role of specific actors. This is the main missing ingredient in Calleja and Cichocka's (2022) analysis of the four choices the GPEDC now faces (i.e. double down on alignment with the SDGs, transform the effectiveness principles entirely, develop parallel principles according to specific challenges, or refocus on aid effectiveness).<sup>30</sup> Although accountability is clearly a thorny issue to grapple with, it has contributed to the political failures of development effectiveness in the past and will likely continue to do so if left unaddressed or unambiguous within the GPEDC's future framework. The failures of Busan were largely driven by the fact that Northern and Southern states rejected their duties to robustly monitor their activities and collectively target higher standards of performance. Additionally, the growth of multiple stakeholders in the context of an expansive SDG agenda makes it harder for rights holders to hold duty bearers to account against shared, specific objectives. It is unclear whether these conditions have materially changed since Busan; in fact, they may have worsened given strained global relations in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

<sup>30</sup> For example, there is no discussion about who will or should bear responsibility for effectiveness in each of their four possible scenarios, nor an elaboration of who possesses entitlements to hold duty bearers to account (though perhaps identifying each scenario with either 'renewal' or 'reform' is meant to hint at some of these difficulties).

It is worth pointing out that in all three narratives, the duty bearers for effectiveness are nation states. It is also only in the solidaristic narrative that Northern and Southern states are intended to possess equal levels of responsibility. Supranational narratives delegate accountability to states only because of the limits to multilateral accountability, expressed so far as country platforms in support of climate transition. Meanwhile, in nationalist narratives it is Northern states who bear responsibility for resolving the geopolitical challenges that threaten their national economic competitiveness and security. Perhaps it is here that the GPEDC can offer the most value given its institutional moorings in the North and roots in the DAC: monitoring interest-based development cooperation in action among DAC members. Doing so with greater robustness might even be a strategy to regain trust amongst the South.

In terms of rights holders, again we see some divergence in terms of the location and condition of citizens with the power to hold duty bearers accountable. For nationalist narratives, taxpayers in the North are the ultimate rights holders, while supranational narratives take a wider understanding by underlining obligations to global citizens. Solidaristic narratives underline the importance of developing a ‘global public’ as rights holder, though the stronger commitment is to needier segments of this public whatever their geographic location. For solidarists, these are the local interests that civil society organizations will aim to represent and defend. Across all three narratives, citizen and citizen-taxpayers are the ultimate rights holders. This may give additional impetus to consider how development effectiveness principles intersect with subnational dynamics in ways that support localization agendas. Generalized monitoring at this level in the hopes of advancing mutual accountability is not enough. Rather, the ambition should be for monitoring efforts that act as compliance vehicles for ensuring the exercise of rights and the fulfilment of duties within each narrative, where each narrative has its own purpose, configuration, and stakeholders.

Making sense of effectiveness objectives today is complicated by multiple development narratives. The dissolution of a North/South binary in development and the rise of multistakeholder platforms have contributed to the emergence of several co-existent narratives from which several policy ideas draw. In this paper, I presented three archetypal narratives defined by nationalist, supranationalist, and solidaristic logics. While each has their own objectives, modalities, financing channels, and stakeholders, they also share commonalities and can overlap. In particular, the obligations and entitlements of duty bearers and rights holders within each narrative will need to be carefully considered to understand if the revamped principles of development effectiveness that will be discussed at the upcoming GPEDC High Level Meeting in Geneva are sufficient to adequately ensure global accountability for outcomes.<sup>31</sup> It remains to be seen how far these three emergent narratives of global development can be accommodated within the universal and voluntary framework of global development effectiveness.

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<sup>31</sup> Current proposals recommend replacing the old principles of development effectiveness agreed at Busan (country ownership, inclusiveness, results, mutual accountability, and transparency) with an alternative framework organized around four focus/thematic areas (collective accountability and whole-of-society approach to development, quality and use of country systems, transparency, and leave no one behind) (GPEDC 2022).

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