



THE POWER OF **Ownership**

Transforming US Foreign Assistance

Literature Review on aid ownership and participation

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Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. A historical overview of the concepts of aid ownership and participation	5
3. Defining the concepts of aid ownership and participation	8
3.1 How has country ownership been defined with regard to aid?	8
3.2 How has local ownership been defined with regard to aid?	16
3.3 Conclusion	19
4. Insights from the empirical literature on the effectiveness and impact of country ownership and local participation approaches	22
4.1 Purist vs instrumentalist approaches	22
4.2 Empirical evidence on the impact of country ownership approaches	24
4.3 Empirical evidence on the impact of local participation approaches	26
4.4 Conclusions	30
5. Identifying the key constraints to pursuing country ownership and local participation approaches	32
6. Conclusions	37
References	40

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
BACG	BetterAid Coordinating Group
BPEDC	Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategies
GHI	Global Health Initiative
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
(I)NGO	(International) Non Governmental Organisation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PD	Paris Declaration
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Programme for Aids Relief
PLA	Participatory Learning Approaches
PRA	Participatory Research Approaches
PRS(P)	Poverty Reduction Strategy (Paper)
SAL	Structural Adjustment Loan
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

In the extensive research and policy literature on international aid, “ownership” and “participation” have emerged as amongst the most fundamental ingredients for ensuring that this tool of international cooperation can effectively support improvements to people’s lives in the developing world. This report reviews the literature on these themes and is structured as follows:

- Section 2 briefly presents a general overview of the history of the ownership and participation agendas, exploring their development and evolving significance within the international aid community.
- Section 3 explores the conceptual and policy literature which has emerged on these themes, attempting to illustrate the diversity of definitions and practices applied in promoting ownership and participation.
- Section 4 reviews the empirical literature which assesses the significance of a number of ownership and participation practices for promoting the effectiveness of international aid, attempting to identify the practices which are most critical to aid effectiveness as well as the factors which act as constraints to deepening the link between ownership and aid effectiveness.
- Section 5 explores the literature on the constraints which have emerged both at the country level and from the donor side in taking forward ownership practices more ambitiously.

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- Section 6 concludes the report by identifying the main conceptual, policy-related and empirical themes emerging from this literature review and some of the dilemmas and tensions donor agencies face in pursuing ownership and participation in relation to aid.

This literature review focuses squarely on the concepts of ownership and participation as they apply to the interaction between aid providers and recipients. It does not address the related but distinct concepts of ownership and participation as they have been applied to analysing the development process more generally, e.g. through themes such as democracy and governance.

It had initially been planned to focus this literature review simply on the theme of ownership. However, during the course of planning for this research it was acknowledged that there was much to gain from exploring the roots to the ownership agenda – which emerged in the 1990s – in earlier literature on related concepts. It was therefore decided to widen the scope of this literature review to also address the concept of “participation”¹ which in its most progressive conceptualisation (see section 3.2) is arguably an analogous concept, or is at the very least one of the most fundamental elements of ownership (Interaction 2011; BACG 2011). In addition to having a longer history in the literature (starting at least in the 1970s) than ownership the concept of participation is more thoroughly and diversely addressed by the conceptual and (especially) empirical literature. It therefore provides us with a broader frame of reference from which to explore the key issues relating to the role, value and impact of beneficiaries in shaping the use of aid.

Finally, it is important to note that whilst this literature review does not limit itself to addressing the question of how donor agencies can operate more effectively to promote ownership and participation relating to aid, because it is the first phase in a project attempting to build an analytical framework to engage with donor agencies (in the US context) on the themes of this review, it does display a bias towards a donor-oriented perspective rather than the beneficiary-oriented perspective.

The conceptual and empirical research literature reviewed in this paper was identified using a two-step process. Firstly, key phrases² were used to explore the “google scholar” and the “IDEAS” database (which includes research papers in Economics, RePEc papers) both of which incorporate academic and grey sources of literature. A range of key phrases

¹ To some degree the choice of including “participation” alongside “ownership” in this literature review and not other similar concepts (e.g. partnership) or concepts which also contribute to ownership (e.g. empowerment and accountability) is arbitrary and subjective. Having said this, three main justifications could be posited for this decision: i) arguably, many definitions of participation incorporate some these concepts explicitly, or more implicitly; ii) arguably, amongst these other concepts participation is the most analogous to that of ownership; iii) due to the time and resource constraints faced in undertaking this review there were limits to its scope.

² To identify conceptual literature focussing on the definitional aspects of aid ownership/participation the following phrases were used – “aid and ownership”, “ownership and development”, “aid and participation”, “ownership and development”; to identify empirical literature focussed on the effectiveness and impact of ownership/participation approaches the following combinations of search words were used – “aid, ownership, impact”, “aid, ownership, sustainability”, “participation, project, impact”, “participation, project, sustainability”; in all cases the first 100 search items generated were reviewed to identify relevant studies.

were selected to facilitate the identification of literature on all of the themes addressed by this literature review. The second step involved reviewing a number of the most relevant studies³ referenced by those identified in this first step. With regard to the policy literature, simple and non-systematic searches using “google” were carried out, and focussed largely on internationally agreed aid effectiveness frameworks and US Government agencies (namely USAID, MCC and PEPFAR).

2. A historical overview of the concepts of aid ownership & participation

From the very beginnings of international aid its providers have considered the importance of recipients being involved in shaping and directing the use of such assistance. Cornwall (2006) illustrates how in the 1950s British officials were exercised by questions about supporting its ex-colonies to plan their own development processes, albeit based on an approach which circumscribed the role of country institutions and actors. Cornwall (2006) also highlights the emphasis placed on local participation in the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1966 , as well as statements emerging from the United Nations promoting participation in the 1950s and 1960s. Mansuri and Rao (2013) draw attention to the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) support to community development projects during the 1950s, which encouraged the spread of such projects to more than 60 countries before donor interest in these approaches waned by the early 1960s.

³ Due to time constraints not all of the relevant studies quoted by studies identified in step one were reviewed, and a judgement was made as to which were the most relevant. The articles most used were Mansuri and Rao (2013) and Gaventa and Barrett (2010).

However, it wasn't until the second half of the 1970s that questions about involving recipients in the management of aid programmes began to be a significant pre-occupation of aid practitioners and the academic community (Cornwall 2000). This agenda was initially developed through the lens of "participation", a concept which was inspired by the likes of Paulo Freire in Latin America and the emergence of community development approaches in Africa (Chambers 2005). According to Reed's (2008) potted history of the development of the participation agenda its initial emergence focussed on raising beneficiary awareness about the projects, before moving towards focussing on incorporating local perspectives into data collection and planning in the 1970s.

By the 1980s academic debate on participation was intensifying and participation began to receive attention from some of the major aid agencies, including UN agencies and the World Bank. Other major sign-posts in the development of the concept of participation included the emergence of localised planning and programming tools such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the early 1980s and participatory learning and action (PLA) approaches in the mid-1990s (Chambers 2005). For Reed (2008) these techniques initiated an era when a key role for participation was to use local knowledge to identify the most marginalised and needy beneficiaries to ensure they benefitted from development interventions.

Tools, approaches, and policies which aimed to support participation at the local level in developing countries were gradually adopted and promoted by donor agencies during this period. As a result, by the 1990s participation was reportedly being "preached about and promoted by lenders, donors, INGOs and governments alike" (Chambers 2005, p 101) and a norm in the sustainable development field (Reed 2008).

The concept of "participation" was therefore already well-developed when that of "ownership" began its rise to prominence from the mid-1990s onwards (OECD 1996). The concept of ownership was first discussed widely by the World Bank, as it reflected on the weaknesses of its Structural Adjustment Loans (SAL) programme with developing country Governments and revised its approach to lending (World Bank 1993). Already in the late 1980s the World Bank had concluded that the sustainability of reform programmes supported by its lending required "the government's commitment to and ownership of the program and some degree of popular support for its implementation" (World Bank 1988, p6). By the early 1990s the World Bank had developed analytical tools for assessing country ownership (World Bank 1993), and in the late 1990s it began to institutionalise efforts to promote ownership in national level policy-making and planning through its introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs). As the 1990s progressed the concept of ownership began to be addressed more widely, including within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (OECD DAC 1996) and by a number of bilateral donors (Johnson and Wasty 2003).

By the early 2000s consensus on the significance of ownership for successful aid efforts had emerged. This was signalled by the international development communities' commitment to the 2003 Rome Declaration on Harmonization, which referenced the importance of "a country-based approach that emphasizes country ownership and government leadership" (RDH 2003). The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

further strengthened this consensus by identifying “ownership” as one of the five principles of effective aid and mapping out a policy agenda for pursuing this principle. The emphasis of the Rome and Paris agreements largely on government ownership, was then supplemented by the call for ownership to include a role for parliaments and civil society in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) created in 2011 in Busan, South Korea.

As can be seen from this brief historical overview, the concepts of participation and ownership have generally been developed through a focus on different spheres of action. The literature on participation has largely focussed on developing an agenda for aid recipient engagement at the local level, i.e. at the level of projects and / or communities. In contrast, the literature on ownership is largely focussed on exploring the dynamics of aid recipient engagement at the national level, i.e. national development programmes and / or institutions (especially those of governments). These distinctions have driven the emergence of a somewhat separate literature on each of these concepts.

This literature review therefore attempts to draw on both of these bodies of literature in exploring how the agenda on recipient engagement on aid has been defined (section 3), the constraints that have emerged in taking forward this agenda (section 4) and the contribution related approaches, policies and practices have made in supporting more effective development interventions (section 5). Following the general approach of the literature, this review addresses ownership from a national-level perspective (which it refers to using the term “country ownership”), whilst focussing on participation through a local / community level perspective (which it refers to using the term “local participation”).

3. Defining the concepts of aid ownership and participation

3.1 How has country ownership been defined with regard to aid?

A wide variety of definitions of country ownership as it relates to aid have been proposed in the conceptual research and policy literature, and this is a highly contested term. As Jerve (2002) points out, this contestation is fundamentally due to the fact that this is essentially a political concept and not an analytical one for which objective definitions could be more confidently proposed.

Another important factor driving this definitional debate is that aid is an incredibly diverse instrument of international cooperation. It is utilised across a wide variety of contexts, delivered for many different purposes, supporting a diversity of actors and partnerships and administered at many different levels. As a result ownership in one context/sector/partnership/administrative level may mean something different in another (Buiter 2007).

This section attempts to illustrate the diversity of definitions of country ownership which have emerged in the conceptual research and policy literature but also to conclude by identifying the elements and principles which seem to be most commonly proposed across these definitions.

World Bank approaches to country ownership

As already highlighted (in section 1) the World Bank was the first major actor to use the term ownership extensively. It began using this term in the context of its national-level lending and reform programmes, and therefore its approach to this term was conceptualised within the confines of the challenges it faced within these programmes. In a 1993 Discussion Paper the World Bank attempted to identify for the first time the key elements of country ownership it required for its national reform programmes. It proposed an approach with four main elements, including: i) locus of the reform initiative (ideally from the borrowers); ii) level of intellectual conviction amongst policy-makers (ideally a strong consensus to act); iii) expression of political will by the top leadership (ideally with there being a pre-existing commitment to act); iv) efforts towards consensus-building among various constituencies (ideally a broad-based outreach process and consensus) (Johnson and Wasty 1993). This approach was therefore strongly state oriented, albeit with an awareness that broader societal engagement and consensus on reforms attached to loans was important.

The World Bank's approach to promoting country ownership in its programmes was formalised and developed further by the introduction of its Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) in 1999. The CDF is a framework aimed at helping to improve the effectiveness of development assistance in support of poverty reduction. It is structured around four main principles: a long-term, holistic development framework; results orientation; country ownership; and country-led partnership.

In addressing the concept of country ownership the CDF's staff guidance document emphasises that a countries' development cannot be driven externally. It also identifies an important role for efforts to promote a broad-based consensus on development policies. This is a priority which was to be supported by Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), the production of which were made a condition for receiving World Bank (and IMF) funding. These PRSs were to be produced through processes which were controlled by local actors, build on existing national dialogue structures, involve wide participation (especially of the poor) and be fully transparent. Importantly this document also emphasises the importance of ensuring that the policies that emerge from these process meet the World Bank's due diligence standards, including an assessment of whether the intervention will contribute in a sustainable way to the country's development. In addressing this issue the Bank acknowledges that it introduces an inherent tension between country ownership and the Bank's requirements in terms of project quality and sustainability. Furthermore, in addressing the importance of country-led partnerships the CDF emphasised that donors should be actively managed by recipients, country not donor priorities should drive cooperation and partnerships should address challenges such as asymmetrical power relations (World Bank 2004).

The World Bank and IMF's own analysis of implementation of PRSs suggests that these institutions were generally not able to live up to the standards of country ownership they set for themselves. It seems as though a large part of the problem was that they were unwilling to allow an open debate on policy options, especially with regard to macroeconomic and growth policies (World Bank 2003b, IEO 2004). It is also apparent that

they failed to promote adequate levels of participation of local actors in its programmes (World Bank 2003b, IEO 2004). This outcome may though have emerged in part because of the inherent difficulty in influencing complex political contexts in developing countries (Piron and Evans 2004).

Country ownership as defined by the international aid reform agenda

As already highlighted (in section 1) the international aid reform agenda – led initially by the OECD, and latterly a partnership between OECD and UNDP – has been influential in shaping the concept of country ownership as it applies to aid. Through a series of international aid reform agreements – in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), Busan (2011) and Mexico (2014) – ownership has become enshrined as one of the central elements of effective aid. The meaning and approach proposed for pursuing ownership have also evolved over the course of these agreements.

The 2003 Rome Declaration on Harmonization addressed ownership in a brief way, simply by stating the importance in relation to aid of “a country-based approach that emphasizes country ownership and government leadership” (RDH 2003). These terms were left undefined, but importantly their use emphasises that although governments often lead aid management efforts country ownership goes beyond the role of governments.

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness identified five principles of effective aid, the first of which is ownership, which is addressed extensively by this agreement. The Paris Declaration addresses ownership as mainly a country responsibility, to be pursued through developing national strategies facilitated by consultative processes, translating these strategies into budget processes and leading aid coordination. It is through the “principle” of alignment that donors adopted commitments to respect and build on country ownership. In order to pursue this principle donors committed to base their support (including any conditions applied) on national development strategies, use government (financial management and procurement) systems for delivering aid, avoid use of parallel implementation units, address capacity and systems constraints facing recipient countries, ensure aid is predictable and to untie their aid (OECD 2005). This approach to country ownership therefore emphasises the critical role of governments, but also addresses a set of specific aid practices which help or hinder achieving this goal.

The 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, reaffirmed the core agenda of ownership and alignment addressed in the Paris Declaration. From the perspective of country ownership its main contribution was to identify an agenda for broadening country-level policy dialogue on development. To pursue this agenda governments committed to more actively engage parliaments, local authorities and civil society groups in development policy discussions, with donors helping to build capacity of local actors to engage in development policy processes. Both governments and donors also committed to pursue development policies and programmes which are consistent with gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability (OECD 2008). This latter set of commitments emphasises the importance of addressing the needs of marginalised groups, helping to promote a more inclusive approach to ownership.

The 2011 Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) again reaffirmed the core aid reform commitments addressed in the Paris and Accra agreements. It also addressed a wide range of ownership issues, building on commitments emerging in Accra. In addition to reaffirming commitments made in Accra to engage parliaments and local authorities, the BPEDC addressed commitments to promote gender equality and to safeguard the rights of civil society organisations to exercise their roles as independent actors (GPEDC 2011a). The BPEDC therefore represents a deepening of the agenda around engagement with country stakeholders. The BPEDC commitments were also reaffirmed at the first high level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in Mexico in 2014 (GPEDC 2014).

The Paris Declaration led to the adoption of a framework of indicators which were used to monitor implementation of a select number of the Paris commitments through international monitoring surveys carried out in 2006, 2008 and 2011. The adoption of the Busan Partnership Agreement led to a revision of these indicators, which were used for a further round of monitoring in 2014. The current list of indicators being used to monitor delivery of aid/development cooperation commitments across donors and developing countries are list in the box below:

THE MONITORING FRAMEWORK OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Policy area	Indicator
1) Development cooperation focuses on results	Extent of use of country results frameworks by co-operation providers
2) Civil society enabling environment	Assessment of CSO Enabling Environment building on qualitative, multi-stakeholder information
3) Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development	Index on the quality of public-private dialogue
4) Transparency: information on development co-operation is publicly available	Implementation of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)
5) Development co-operation is more predictable	a) Proportion of committed annual funding delivered b) Proportion of aid committed over 3-5 year timeframes
6) Aid is on budgets which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny	Proportion of aid incorporated into country budgets
7) Mutual accountability amongst development cooperation actors	Proportion of countries that undertake inclusive mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments
8) Gender equality and women's empowerment	Proportion of countries with systems that track and make public allocations for gender equality and

	women's empowerment
9) Developing countries' systems are strengthened and used	a) Quality of country public financial management (PFM) systems b) Proportion of aid delivered using country PFM and procurement systems
10) Aid is untied	Proportion of aid that is untied

Source: GPEDC 2011b

These indicators address ownership from a variety of perspectives, including the role of civil society (enabling environment), parliamentary reporting (aid on budget), mutual accountability of donors and partner countries to each other and use of country systems. It is though important to note that the focus of the indicator on the role of civil society is on the general enabling environment for civil society organisations in-country. The indicator does little to focus attention on how aid and donors engage civil society. It is also the case that a range of important issues related to ownership have not been formally monitored by these processes, including conditionality, alignment to national priorities, and how actively parliaments have been engaged in oversight of aid programmes.

Taken together these aid/development cooperation effectiveness agreements and monitoring frameworks represent an evolution from a strongly state oriented approach to country ownership (in Paris), towards a focus on the role of parliaments, local authorities and civil society (from Accra onwards) and then a deepening of a more inclusive approach with the focus on the enabling environment required to allow civil society to play its development role and addressing the challenges facing marginalised groups (in Busan). They also introduce a strong focus on a number of aid practices required to support ownership, including use of new aid modalities.

US Government approaches to ownership

This sub-section presents an overview of the approaches to aid ownership being pursued by the US Government. It focuses on three of the most significant US Government agencies - USAID,⁴ the Presidents Emergency Programme for Aids Relief (PEPFAR),⁵ and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)⁶ - and is informed by a review of how ownership is addressed in their latest strategic documents.

In 2010 USAID embarked on an ambitious reform programme entitle USAID Forward, which aimed to transform the way the agency provides development assistance. Ownership is one of the central elements to the reform programme, and two main sets of policies have been introduced to directly address ownership. Firstly, USAID committed - through the Implementation and Procurement Reform (IPR) agenda (later re-named the Local Solutions Initiative) - to increase the proportion of its programmes procured through and delivered

⁴ www.usaid.gov

⁵ www.pepfar.gov

⁶ www.mcc.gov

by organisations based in partner countries to 30% (USAID 2010). Secondly, USAID re-introduced Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS), which aimed to strengthen strategic planning in the agency, but also to align with country priorities and takes into account the needs, rights, and interests of the country's citizens (USAID 2013). These approaches point towards USAID prioritising delivery through local organisations, alignment to country priorities, and participation of country citizens as key elements of ownership.

Efforts have also been made to strengthen PEPFAR's approach to country ownership during the second (2008-12) and third (2013-19) phases of this programme, largely driven by the imperative to ensure that more sustainable country approaches to tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic emerge. Since 2009 PEPFAR's procedures have required it to develop Partnership Frameworks (PFs) and Partnership Framework Implementation Plans (PFIPs) to guide its cooperation with countries. These documents are required to identify steps to harmonise with national HIV/AIDS strategies and actions to be taken by stakeholders to pursue ownership, as well as metrics for documenting progress toward this goal. In addition, the latest guidance for the design of PEPFAR country / regional operational plans countries is to assess progress over time in five domains of sustainability, including local leadership in service delivery (PEPFAR 2015). A final but important point to make is that as PEPFAR is part of the US Government's Global Health Initiative (GHI's) it has also been guided by its approach to country ownership, which it defines as "...the continuum of actions taken by political and institutional stakeholders in partner countries to plan, oversee, manage, deliver, and finance their health sector" (GHI 2012). Taken together these approaches to country ownership suggest that PEPFAR views this concept through the lens of aligning to national strategies, local leadership of programmes, and co-financing by partner countries.

The legislation establishing MCC in 2003 addressed country ownership directly in requiring country compacts (the main tool for guide MCC's cooperation with countries) to build on the national development strategies of the country and to take into account the perspectives of the poor and a variety of local stakeholders. A number of other aspects of MCC's policy and procedures promote ownership, including requiring countries to identify their own priority interventions and local leadership of programme delivery (through establishing a compact accountable entity with its own board of local actors) and the use of five year funding tranches free from Congressional earmarking. It is though also the case that MCC projects have to meet strict eligibility criteria (e.g. they need to address key constraints to growth and have an adequate economic rate of return) set by MCC, which narrows the potential focus of programmes it supports (CGD 2015). Taken together these approaches to country ownership suggest that MCC sees alignment to country priorities, consultation and participation and longer term flexible funding approaches as critical to promoting country ownership.

Academic perspective on country ownership

By the early 2000s a dynamic debate was emerging within the academic and wider policy community on how to approach national ownership relating to aid. Many of the approaches

that emerged attempted to respond to the growing critiques of donor programmes linking aid to policy reform programmes and propose alternative approaches to such programmes.

In exploring weaknesses in the PRSP approach to participation and ownership and identifying ways forward, Eberlei (2001) proposes that it is institutionalised participation which creates ownership. In developing such an approach this study suggests that genuine ownership can only exist where the majority of society has participated in relevant policy processes directly or indirectly (primarily through parliaments, but also civil society); has identified itself with goals and elements of the finally formulated strategy; and will participate in implementation and ongoing strategy development. Similarly, Koeberle (2005) emphasises that country ownership requires the majority of citizens as well as the Government to be committed to a development programme. These approaches effectively set a standard of democratic endorsement through national political structures for ownership of aid efforts.

Johnson (2005) proposes that a citizen-centric approach to defining country ownership in the context of development cooperation is pursued over a government-centric approach. In promoting such an approach this study proposes that the degree of ownership should be determined largely on the basis of: (i) the right of the country representatives to be heard in the process of diagnosis and programme design, and (ii) the freedom and ability of the country to choose the programme to be implemented, without coercion. In addressing these themes this study makes the case for putting less emphasis on 'who designs the programme', as this factor is less fundamental to how a citizen might judge the ownership a country has over its development process.

A similar perspective is presented by de Renzio et al (2008) in presenting a definition of country ownership developed on the basis of findings from a study exploring the experiences of a range countries in managing relationships with donors. They conclude that country ownership should go beyond commitment to a certain development agenda, and address the degree of control recipient governments are able to exercise over policy design and implementation.

Morrissey and Verschoor (2006) go further in proposing an agenda for analysing ownership. In the Ugandan context, where aid has been attached to policy reform programmes. They suggest that this should mean more than just the autonomy to freely adopt policies, i.e. to commit to policy reforms. They propose that ownership should imply that the policy option adopted and / or a significant part of its content has originated from national policy-makers.

Castel-Branco (2008), in developing a framework for analysing ownership of aid in Mozambique, identifies a set of ideal characteristics of country-owned aid. Such aid would be used for priorities originating from the recipient, with limited political influence from the donor; untied, unconditional, un-earmarked and predictable; supported by locally owned technical assistance; and overseen by a recipient agency which is fully informed about policy choices.

For Girvan (2007), it is the control of knowledge by Northern (developed country) institutions and Governments which prevents genuine local ownership in policy making in

the South (developing countries) and maintains North-South power imbalances. This study therefore recommends that reversing this dynamic (e.g. through deeper investments in knowledge creation in the South and a greater respect for alternative policy agendas promoted by developing countries) is required to promote ownership.

Civil society perspectives on country ownership

Civil society actors have also been active in engaging in the debate on country ownership, especially in promoting alternative, rights based and participatory approaches involving significant roles for citizens and civil society organisations.

Interaction, the umbrella organisation of development NGOs in the United States has proposed that ownership involves five critical elements. These include: i) an enabling environment for NGOs (allowing them to operate free from political obstacles and interference); ii) transparency and accountability; iii) consultation; iv) participation; and v) capacity-building (Interaction 2011). This approach introduces a recognition of the role of civil society, information availability, going beyond consultation to ensure genuine participation, and that stakeholders need adequate capacity and expertise to advance ownership.

For Oxfam, the importance of donors promoting ownership emerges from their responsibilities to promote human rights, strengthen the voice of poor people, and the improve responsiveness of the state. In order to support this vision for ownership Oxfam proposes a variety of key principles that donors need to address including: i) making information available through transparency; ii) building capacity to help countries lead; iii) allowing countries the control to lead; iv) taking a context-driven approach to ownership (Oxfam 2009).

Save the Children's approach to ownership is centred on the importance of ensuring that developing country institutions rather than donors are able to take the leadership role at all the key phases of a development intervention. Local institutions should take the lead in defining their own development priorities, designing their own strategies to implement them, and managing their own development processes (STC 2014).

Ahead of the 2011 Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness the Betteraid Coordinating Group (BACG) of civil society organisations called for focus of international action on aid and development to be reoriented away from a focus country ownership towards addressing the concept of "democratic" ownership. For BACG democratic ownership requires ensuring that citizens' – including women, men, girls and boys – voices and concerns are the primary basis for national development plans, policies and processes. In promoting this vision the BACG called for donors and governments to give priority to protecting and deepening open and inclusive processes for engagement and accountability with all development actors, especially beneficiary populations (BACG 2011).

The Reality of Aid network, another coalition of global NGOs, adopted the BACG agenda on promoting democratic ownership and developed their own definition for pursuing it. This focused on the following elements: 1) progress in creating multi-stakeholder formal bodies

and effective broad consultation processes to determine and monitor development policies, plans, and strategies, which are inclusive of women and marginalized populations; 2) the existence of an enabling environment for CSOs; and 3) transparency and access to information on development plans, accountability for the use of development resources, and aid provided to the government; 4) progress in poverty indicators for sustainable development outcomes for poor and vulnerable populations, including progress in realizing conditions for gender equality and women's rights as an essential foundation for development (RoA 2011). For Reality of Aid ownership is therefore to be assessed not only on the basis of set of required practices (i.e. consultation, transparency and an enabling environment) but also on the extent to which the poor and marginalised realise improvements to their lives.

The "Listening Project", which gathered views on aid from the beneficiaries of development interventions across the world, has also proposed a definition of ownership based on synthesising these views. It proposes that ownership includes a number of elements, including the importance of: engaging communities in decisions; sharing information, responsibilities and control; promoting effective relationships between citizens and national and local governments; strengthening local capacity; and (somewhat uniquely) planning development interventions over appropriate timescales, in order to ensure communities don't become dependent on aid. In addressing the issue of aid dependency, communities also emphasised the importance of communities contributing their own resources to development interventions and gradually resourcing them locally (Listening Project 2015).

3.2 How has local participation been defined with regard to aid?

As with the term country ownership, 'local participation' is a term which has been intensively debated and contested since its emergence as a theme of discourse within the development community in the late 1970s (Cornwall 2006). For Lawrence (2006) such debate and contestation is driven by the fact that the concept of participation has "become loaded with ideological, social, political and methodological meaning". Cornwall (2006) identifies one of the dangers of such a diverse and open debate on participation in describing it as a term which "can be used to evoke and to signify almost anything that involves people" (Cornwall 2006, p63). This section explores the literature which has attempted to define local participation in conceptual and practical terms.

Framing local participation in terms of power and control

Perhaps the most dominant definitions of participation have focussed on its function in supporting groups to gain power and control over development policies and resources. For example, in exploring the theme of participation in the late 1970s the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) defined participation as "the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social

situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control” (Cornwall 2000, p21). Similarly, the World Bank and the African Development Bank have defined this concept as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank 1994, pi; AfDB 2001).

A number of models have been developed to articulate and define the various levels of participation that can be pursued from the perspective of empowering stakeholders to influence relevant decision-making processes.

One of the earliest expositions of such an approach to defining participation was developed outside of the development sector by Arnstein (1969), but has been utilised by development practitioners. This model identifies eight ascending levels of participation: 1) manipulation; 2) therapy; 3) informing; 4) consultation; 5) placation; 6) partnership; 7) delegated power; and 8) citizen control. For Arnstein the bottom two rungs are actually forms of “non-participation”; rungs 3–5 are degrees of participation that represent “Tokenism”; while rungs 6–8 are degrees that represent “citizen power”. Rungs 6–8 also illustrate a gradual handing over of decision-making power from donors to stakeholders, concluding with citizens taking full control of the intervention.

A similar approach is taken by Petty (1995), in exploring the various degrees of participation that can be applied in supporting the development of sustainable agriculture. This model identifies the following seven ascending level of participation: 1) token participation or manipulation; 2) passive participation; 3) participation by consultation; 4) participation for material incentives; 5) functional participation (i.e. supporting more effective programme implementation); 6) interactive participation; and 7) self-mobilisation. This model emphasises more strongly the various motivations and drivers of participation. Lower levels involve no self-motivated engagement from stakeholder, level 4 involves motivation driven by material incentives and the top rung (7) represents participation purely driven by the citizen’s own interests outside of relationship with external actors.

Kanji and Greenwood (2001) propose a similarly structured model of participation, but one which recognises that in the context of aid donors will always be present and active participants, and therefore emphasises the joint nature of participation (emphasised by the pre-fix “co”). This model has five ascending levels, including: 1) compliance; 2) consultation; 3) cooperation; 4) co-learning; and 5) collective action.

The influence of these models over the aid and development mainstream can be illustrated by reflecting on their similarities with approaches to participation which were developed by the World Bank and the African Development Bank. For the World Bank participation proceeds through the following levels: 1) information sharing through disseminating documents and meetings; 2) listening and learning to beneficiary stakeholders; 3) joint assessments of needs; 4) shared decision-making in planning development interventions; 5) collaboration with beneficiaries to implement development interventions; and 6) empowering beneficiaries and building their capacity to play their role (World Bank 1995). Importantly, this approach to participation adds a recognition of the importance of promoting this agenda through every stage of the development programme cycle.

For the African Development Bank (based on its 2001 guidance for programme implementation) a number of practical actions are required to realise participation. Their approach identifies the significance of action to: identify relevant stakeholders, share information with them, listen to their views, involve them in processes of development planning and decision-making, contribute to their capacity-building and, ultimately, empower them to initiate, manage and control their own self-development (AfDB 2001).

Framing local participation in terms of its motivations

A number of models of participation are structured around the motivations of development actors in pursuing participatory approaches.

In Chambers' (2005) multi-dimensional framework of participation these motivations are judged to include: 1) state political (i.e. based on the whims of a totalitarian government) through: 2) cosmetic legitimisation; 3) obtaining local knowledge to support better planning; 4) gain action through material incentives; 5) improve the effectiveness and efficiency of development interventions; 6) share responsibility; 7) facilitate sustainable development by local people; through to 8) to support spontaneous action. In presenting this model Chambers (2005) emphasises that practices which are higher on the ladder are not necessarily better, as there are times and contexts when one particular approach is most suitable, and issues like equity (e.g. the role and influence of marginalised actors) can undermine the real value of participation at any of these levels.

Other conceptions developed along these lines include that of Okali et al (1994) which distinguishes between "research-driven" versus "development-driven" participation; Michener (1998), who contrasts "planner-centred" participation which focuses on outcomes with "people-centred" participation, which attempts to build the capacity of and empower stakeholders to define and meet their own needs; and Warner (1997), who proposes that an important category of motivation is that of building consensus, which he defined as "a condition in which all participants can live with the result" (p. 417).

Framing local participation from the perspective of equity and who participates

From its beginnings, there has been an active debate within the community of actors developing participation approaches on the degree to which these had been successful in promoting genuinely inclusive development and in ensuring equity of representation across society. Concerns about whether participatory approaches were largely empowering elites and more influential actors in communities were already emerging in the 1970s (Chambers 1974). However, by the 1990s these concerns were forcing a notable rethink about how participation should move forward and adequately address equity concerns (Reed 2008). Out of this debate a number of practitioners have developed conceptualisations of participation which put the promotion of equity, inclusive participation and the promotion of justice at their centre.

Prominent amongst such contributions has been the work of Hickey and Mohan (2004; 2005). These works promote an approach to participation which engages wider structures sustaining inequity, not just local ones. These works incorporate an understanding of how power operates and is constituted and treats promoting participation as a political, not a technical, undertaking. This is an approach to participation which “directly challenges structural inequalities” (Hickey and Mohan 2005, p244), involves engaging more closely with social movements to “extend the boundaries of citizenship to marginal groups” (Hickey and Mohan 2005, p248) and looks beyond engagement with immediate interventions being supported towards “a close engagement with underlying processes of development” (Hickey and Mohan 2005, p251).

Framing local participation as material contributions

Other definitions of participation have focussed on this concept through the lens of material contributions of communities to development interventions. Paul’s (1987) review of World Bank participatory projects illustrates how these emphasised cost-sharing and co-production of services by communities with little reference to capacity building or empowerment objectives. Bowen (1986) and Ribot’s (1995) analysis of development interventions in Indonesia and Senegal respectively concluded that participation was interpreted as some form of forced labour, i.e. a material contribution from the community to these interventions (quoted from Mansuri and Rao 2013). For Cornwall (2006) this approach to participation has its roots in the emergence of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, with its emphasis on self-reliance and communities doing development for themselves without interference from an inefficient and corrupt state.

3.3 Conclusion

The table below illustrates the approaches taken to country ownership and local participation across the conceptual and policy literature reviewed above. The literature addresses these concepts from the perspective of what principles need to be pursued, but also in terms of identifying the practices which are inherent to taking these agendas forward.

In the case of country ownership the main principles which have been the focus of the literature include the degree of ownership by local actors (on a continuum from donor control through to local initiative driving development agendas), who engages and gains ownership (on a continuum from the executive/government, through to wider citizen ownership and the poor and marginalised), ownership across all stages of the programme cycle and the degree to which poor and marginalised groups benefit from development interventions. In addition, a wide ranging policy and practice agenda has developed, which has been given significant support by the international aid effectiveness agenda agreed in Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan and Mexico.

In the case of local participation, the literature has extensively developed principles relating to the degree to which participation involves local actors gaining power and control vis-a-vis donors. This has led to the development of a continuum from local actors being manipulated and used to further donor needs, all the way through to them being empowered to take full control of development interventions. Alternative approaches have been developed around the purpose of participation, recognising that participation can serve the purposes of external or local actors. The literature also proposes that genuine participation requires engagement of an expanding circle of actors (from elites through to the poor and marginalised), engagement across all phases of the programme cycle and material contributions from beneficiaries to development efforts. The policy and practice agenda relating to local participation seems to be a little less formally developed than that of ownership (certainly in terms of internationally agreed norms), but includes information sharing, consultation, capacity building, and approaches which pro-actively engage the poor and marginalised.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION

Country ownership	Local participation
<p>Principles (continuum perspective):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local ownership of priorities – donors limit agenda, freely adopted policies, designed at initiative of local actors; - Ownership by whom – government, citizens/enabling environment, marginalised groups; - Development outcomes – how far do they reach across society? Do they reach poor and marginalised?; - Programme cycle – Ownership across diagnosis of development challenges, programme design, programme delivery and oversight. <p>Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency relating to decision-making and outcomes; - Alignment to national development strategies and priorities; - Consultation with and participation of citizens; - Adoption of supportive aid modalities and practices, including use of country systems, aligning with national development strategies, untying aid predictability; 	<p>Principles (continuum perspective):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local power and control – manipulation, information sharing, consultation, partnership, local control/empowerment; - Who participates – elite capture, popular engagement, poor and marginalised; - Purpose of participation – control, legitimation, information gathering for programme planning, improve effectiveness of programme, empowerment; - Programme cycle – Participation diagnosis of development challenges, programme design, programme delivery and oversight; - Material contributions from communities. <p>Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information sharing; - Consultation with and participation by citizens; - Capacity building and empowerment to effectively pursue participation; - Policies and practices which actively strengthen the role of the poor and marginalised; - Co-funding / cost sharing by beneficiaries.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Capacity building support to enable citizens to take ownership and develop their own knowledge and policy agendas;- Co-funding / cost sharing by beneficiaries.	
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There is clearly also much in common across these two agendas. From the perspective of principles, they both address the need to emphasise the degree of ownership or control being exerted by local actors, recognise that there is a concentric circle of actors who can be involved, and focus on the importance of pursuing these agendas through all phases of the development programme. There are also a number of common policies and practices emphasised across these agendas, including information sharing/transparency, consultation, capacity building and cost-sharing.

4. Insights from the empirical literature on the effectiveness and impact of ownership and participation approaches

4.1 Instrumentalist vs purist approaches to ownership and participation

As has already been hinted at in the analysis in section 3, amongst the issues that are debated in the literature on country ownership and local participation is why these concepts are important and what value they add to development efforts. In addressing

these questions two main schools of thought have emerged. The first views ownership and participation as goals in and of themselves and a fundamental right, so that the main aim for country owned / local participation approaches is “to initiate mobilization for collective action, empowerment, and institution building” (Pretty 1995, p1251) (hence referred to as a “purist” approach). The second school of thought views these concepts as important largely due to their ability to further broader development objectives, such as the sustainability of development interventions, poverty targeting and even progress on development indicators (hence referred to as an “instrumentalist” approach) (Pretty 1995).

Amongst others, civil society actors have been prominent in calling for “purist” approaches to ownership and participation to be adopted. Betteraid have emphasised that pursuing these concepts should be driven by the goal of ensuring that democratic processes are strengthened and that the poor and marginalised are empowered to realise their rights (BACG 2011). Similarly, Oxfam’s perspective on country ownership is that the imperative to promote this concept emerges from the responsibilities that development actors have to promote human rights, strengthen the voice of poor people and the improve responsiveness of the state (Oxfam 2009). Purist approaches have also been promoted by popular movements active in the 1960s and 1970s for whom self-determination was the main purpose for participation and popular engagement (Cornwall 2000).

Most presentations of the case for pursuing ownership and participation reference instrumentalist perspectives of one kind or another (often alongside purist perspectives). The concept of country ownership emerged from the World Bank’s efforts to improve the impact of its lending and reform programmes (World Bank 1988), and the elevation of ownership as a fundamental principle for aid over the last decade has been framed within the agenda of making aid more effective (OECD 2005). Similarly, as highlighted in section 2, the spread of the participation agenda was driven largely by the goal of supporting planning and monitoring efforts in the 1970s and ensuring that the poor and marginalised benefitted from development interventions in the 1980s (Reed 2008).

This literature review does not address these debates any further, nor does it take any view on which of these approaches has more validity. This section does though interrogate the instrumentalist view in so much as it reviews the empirical literature which attempts to explore the contributions that country ownership and local participation approaches have made to achieving other development goals beyond a purist approach aiming to promote these values. In doing so it also identifies some tensions that can emerge between pursuing these perspectives.

This section draws on studies taking both a quantitative (impact evaluations using statistical methods) approach to exploring the relationship between ownership and participation approaches, as well as more qualitative case study approaches. Each of these categories of studies has its comparative advantage and can add value to exploring these questions. Quantitative impact evaluations are valuable in that they attempt to utilise randomised statistical models (Mansuri and Rao 2013) although they are not suited for identifying pathways of impact nor findings which are generalisable across contexts (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). The strength of qualitative case studies is that they can help

to explore contextual issues and pathways of change in more depth (Gaventa and Barrett), but they can lack robustness in their methodologies.

This section explores empirical evidence on the impact of country ownership and local participation approaches separately, before identifying some of the common themes that emerge across both these literatures.

4.2 Empirical evidence on the impact of country ownership approaches

To date there has been only limited research exploring the degree to which country ownership efforts related to aid have helped to improve its contribution to development objectives, although the evidence generally supports this conclusion.

Government ownership, aid and the success of policy reforms

The earliest studies exploring the impact of country ownership approaches were undertaken by the World Bank to assess the factors determining the success and failure of its lending and policy reform programmes. These studies attempted to explore statistical relationships between a measure of country ownership and the implementation of agreed reforms. For example Johnson and Wasty (1993) assessed the ownership of country reform programmes using a measure consisting of four different criteria (see section 2.1), each of which were scored at four different levels. The aggregate ownership scores which resulted for each programme were then analysed against a measure of programme success (measured on a four point scale). This study found that in 73% of cases levels borrower ownership were strongly predictive of overall program success.

Killick et al's (1998) study, exploring insights from twenty-one detailed qualitative case studies came to similar conclusions. This study reported that country ownership was an explanatory factor in the outcome of eighteen of these cases. This study also concludes that ownership is a strong explanatory factor because it is a proxy for whether policy reforms addressed are perceived by those who must implement them as being in their own interests and those of the country as a whole.

These studies of course only focus of government ownership and they only measure the success of aid programmes on the basis of the degree to which reforms linked to them were implemented. As a result their results are only of limited use in querying the impact of ownership approaches. Nevertheless, the story they tell is that without government ownership reform agendas linked to aid are less likely to be implemented.

The evaluation of the impact of the Paris Declaration

In 2011, the OECD published an evaluation of the impact of implementation of the Paris Declaration (PD)'s principles and commitments over the period 2005-10. This evaluation, which relied mostly on qualitative analysis, focussed on exploring the impact of all of the five principles of aid effectiveness. It therefore does not provide a clear insight on the distinct impact of the ownership (and alignment principle). The evaluation reported that the PD contributed to the strengthening of aid partnerships, based on strengthening levels of transparency, trust and partner country ownership. It was noted that national development strategy processes had improved, and that two-thirds of countries credited the PD campaign as having made some contribution to this progress. There was also evidence that the PD had contributed to more focused, efficient, and collaborative aid efforts, particularly at the sectoral level, and that these outcomes had also contributed in some way to sustained development results. The evaluation did though also conclude that the PD had only had limited success in giving greater priority to the needs of the poorest people, and that there was mixed evidence on whether the PD had helped to improve the overall efficiency of aid (Wood et al 2011).

The impact of ownership oriented aid modalities and approaches

The Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan and Mexico agreements identified a range of aid practices, modalities, and reforms which were supposed to support efforts to improve the ownership (amongst other objectives) of aid. This sub-section presents a brief overview of research exploring their contribution to supporting ownership and development progress. It focuses specifically on the use of country systems and budget support and efforts to strengthen predictability, transparency, and the untying of aid.

The donor commitment to provide aid through country (i.e. government) systems is aimed at promoting the building of local rather than parallel donor systems, thereby helping to promote ownership and the sustainability of aid interventions, and thereby improve the impact of aid on development. A recent study testing these theories of change found evidence that donors who use systems more extensively are more focussed on understanding and addressing the weaknesses in these systems and are therefore more likely able to strengthen them (Glennie et al 2013).

The most developed evidence base on the actual impact of using country systems relates to the use of budget support – the provision of aid directly to the budget of developing country governments. Budget support makes the most ambitious use of country systems, and it also directly supports country ownership of aid. Over the last decade there have been a number of evaluations of this form of aid, which has provided important insights on the impact and limitations of this instrument. Budget support has generally been found to strengthen financial management, budget and other important government systems, thereby also helping to strengthen their use for managing public funds. It has also been found that budget support has helped to extensively scale-up the provision of services in sectors such health and education. However, these evaluations have been more critical about the success of this instrument in improving the quality of services delivered and in

addressing accountability and governance challenges. There has also been limited evidence linking the use of this instrument to poverty reduction and other broader development outcomes (IDD and Associates 2006; Williamson and Dom, 2010; IOB 2011; Lawson 2014).

The evidence base on the contribution of efforts to strengthen aid predictability, transparency and the untying of aid on development efforts has been even less extensively researched, and relevant studies only focus on the cost saving and efficiency impacts of such practices (e.g. Kharas 2008; Actionaid 2004; and Collins et al 2009).

4.3 Empirical evidence on the impact of local participation approaches

Although efforts to support local participation in development interventions have a long history, it is only in the last decade or so that questions addressing the degree to which such efforts have helped to improve the contribution of aid to development objectives have begun to be extensively addressed by research (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Overall this research identifies some very significant contributions that local participation efforts have made to aid effectiveness, although limited connections have been made to progress on development results. This research also identifies some important reasons for caution with regard to promoting participation, which suggests that tensions between purist and instrumentalist approaches to this concept are real.

This section explores the evidence base linking local participation processes being promoted by development interventions to impacts related to targeting of the poor, programme effectiveness, sustainability, and building the capacity of civil society. The limited evidence base exploring links to development results is also briefly referenced.

Targeting of development interventions on the poor

One of the claims for the benefits of participatory approaches to development interventions is that they can help to improve the focus of development interventions on the poor. The logic to this claim is that bringing projects closer to communities makes it easier to identify poorer beneficiaries and to ensure that they these groups benefit from interventions (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Overall there are some important qualifications to this claim which are instructive as to the key factors helping to build an enabling environment for participatory approaches to be effective.

Studies exploring the poverty targeting impacts of community-driven development projects raise important concerns about the degree to which the poor benefit from them. Pradhan, Rao, and Rosenberg (2009) analyse how the benefits of Indonesia's Second Urban Poverty Project (UPP2) were shared across project beneficiaries, who were required to form groups to access funding to implement community development plans. They found

that groups managing fund allocations were more likely to be educated, affluent, politically connected, and male. Similarly, Mansuri's (2012) analysis of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) found that its beneficiaries were more likely to own land, to have some schooling, and to belong to politically well-connected families. Research by Arcand and Fafchamps (2012) in Burkina Faso and Senegal found that members of community organisations formed by donor funded projects were more likely to be older and own more land.

A number of studies have though shown more progressive targeting results from programmes involving government helping to set objective rules for targeting at the macro level, with communities playing an important role in targeting at the micro level. Coady's (2001) study of a Mexican cash transfer programme in Mexico found that although the state was able to perform well in identifying eligible poor communities, community engagement was critical to efforts to identify poor households in eligible communities. Galasso and Ravallion (2005) came to similar conclusions regarding a Food-for-Education programme in Bangladesh. A variety of studies in India find evidence that participation in village assemblies (gram sabhas) has supported better targeting of resources to poorer communities (Besley, Pande, and Rao 2005, 2007; and Bardhan et al 2008). These studies suggest that implementation through government overseeing the targeting process can be helpful and so too can linking participatory interventions to local accountability systems (Mansuri and Rao).

Usefully, the research literature notes a number of donor policies and practices which can help or hinder achieving poverty targeting. Mansuri and Rao (2013) suggest that it may be the case that the short-time frames quick impact demands of donors can result in donors ending up supporting communities, groups and individuals who can more easily engage with project activities. This may all too often rule out poorer beneficiaries who may have less time to spend on engaging with projects and possess weaker technical skills to support their active participation in projects.

Finally, the literature also suggests that where potential beneficiaries are expected to compete to win funding and to provide co-funding of development projects that this can lead to lower levels of engagement from poorer and more marginalised groups (Mansuri and Rao 2013). This points to the importance of donors ensuring that these measures are used cautiously and carefully.

The effectiveness and sustainability of development interventions

Another of the most prominent claims for the benefits of participatory approaches to development interventions is that they can help to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their implementation. The logic to this claim is that bringing projects closer to communities supports efforts to identify their needs, and that projects in which local actors are actively involved are more likely to be sustained (Mansuri and Rao 2013). There is some evidence to support this claim, although again these findings are qualified in ways

that help to illustrate broader insights on how to ensure participation can support effective programme delivery.

Mansuri (2012) uses data from Pakistan to compare the effectiveness of infrastructure implemented through regular government programmes with that built by local communities through support from the National Rural Support Program. Mansuri finds that infrastructure built by communities was better designed and constructed.

Using data from 132 infrastructure projects in 99 randomly selected rural communities across northern Pakistan Khwaja (2004, 2009) compared infrastructure developed through communities based on support by Agha Khan Rural Support Program to that supported through regular government programmes. These studies found that community engagement helped to strengthen the maintenance of infrastructure but only when communities engaged in the non-technical aspects of the project. They also found that communities were less able to maintain projects that were technically complex or new. In addition to providing support for value of participatory programmes in supporting effectiveness, this study suggests that such outcomes require focussing the role of communities in areas which suit their knowledge and capacity (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

Kleemeier's (2000) study on the long term sustainability of a participatory rural infrastructure project in Malawi reported very similar findings. It discovered that smaller and new water facilities were being maintained by communities but not older and larger schemes. These results indicate that participatory approaches can help to sustain the impact of development interventions. At the same time they also suggest that such impacts can be limited in the cases of larger more technically challenging interventions, where communities may well lack the resources and expertise to carry out the maintenance required to sustain them.

These latter two sources are therefore illustrative of the importance of capacity and knowledge in ensuring that participatory projects can achieve their potential. This conclusion is also supported by a wide range of studies which find that inadequate capacity can undermine the success of participatory projects (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

Building civil society capacity

Participatory development interventions often aim to build the long-term capacity of the communities they engage with to cooperate in advocating for their rights and addressing collective action problems alongside their activities in supporting community development priorities (Mansuri and Rao 2013). A range of studies have attempted to explore the degree to which these impacts have emerged from such interventions, a challenging undertaking given the difficult methodological issues involved. The evidence suggests that some positive capacity building impacts have been achieved.

In presenting their review of evidence on the impact of participatory development interventions on building civil society capacity Mansuri and Rao (2013) begin by emphasising how challenging the methodological issues involved in such studies are. They

emphasise the difficulty in measuring social outcomes linked to participatory efforts when such interventions often pursue a variety of other activities and objectives in addition to community mobilisation. There are also challenges in measuring subtle capacity and social changes, as well as in identifying comparator communities to include in impact evaluations.

As a result of these challenges only a limited number of impact evaluations on civil society capacity building and participatory development have been undertaken, and their findings are not definitive (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Fearon, Humphreys, and Weinstein (2009) report that marginalised groups involved in a community reconstruction project in northern Liberia were more likely to participate in general decision-making processes. However, these impacts were driven mainly by villagers who had benefitted from resettlement processes, so it is not clear which activities drove these impacts. Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov (2011) report preliminary findings from another community driven reconstruction programme, this time in Afghanistan. They found significant changes in political attitudes supportive of community mobilisation and improved social cohesion, although these results come mainly from the self-reporting of beneficiaries with little corroborating evidence. However, a less positive study is that of Casey, Glennerster and Miguel (2011), which found no impact of a participatory on development programme in Sierra Leone on social cohesion or collective action.

The best developed and most positive evidence base on the impact of community mobilisation efforts on community capacity for engaging in broader mobilisation and participation is from analysis of programmes with a primary focus on strengthening citizen engagement. Gaventa and Barrett (2010) undertook a systematic review of evidence from 100 research studies on citizen engagement programmes in 20 countries. They found positive impacts in three quarters of cases, with the most common positive outcomes emerging at the micro-level, “as citizens’ awareness, sense of citizenship and positive changes in dispositions and attitudes increased” (p26).

Another major recent review of the impact of citizens voice and accountability programmes (Rocha-Menocal and Sharma 2008) found that these had achieved some modest positive impacts at the level of changes in behaviour and practice, especially in terms of raising citizen awareness, empowering certain marginalised groups. However this study also emphasised the fundamental challenges involving in achieving such impacts and cautioned donors to be more realistic about what is possible in engaging in efforts to influence complex political and societal issues.

To take this latter point further, the more cautionary conclusions of the limited number studies which have explored the impact of participatory development programmes on civil society capacity may point towards the importance of donors being even more realistic and patient in pursuing civil society strengthening outcomes from these types of projects. It also suggests that there may be trade-offs between efforts to achieve the primary development outcomes (e.g. service delivery or infrastructure construction) being pursued from these projects and outcomes related to community capacity.

Achieving development results

This sub-section presents some brief remarks on the literature exploring the degree to which participatory approaches to development interventions have helped to improve the contribution these development interventions have made to achieving development results (e.g. poverty reduction and improved welfare). In general the literature in this area and on the impact of voice and accountability programmes has struggled to identify clear links between these interventions and development results. Only a small number of studies have explored these links, and those which have tend to test for development impacts over a relatively short time scale, when such impacts may take a longer period to emerge (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

4.4 Conclusions

Overall there is a stronger evidence base on the development impact of aid policies and practices which aim to support or are associated with local participation than is the case with country ownership. A large part of the challenge for research aiming to find linkages between country ownership efforts and development impact is that it is extremely difficult to define the term country ownership in an operative way (Buiter 2007), which in turn poses enormous obstacles to research methods assessing its contribution to development. In addition, as is pointed out in the Paris Declaration evaluation (Wood et al 2011), when looking at the impact of aid reform agendas at a macro level there are so many actors, policies and contextual factors which shape outcomes, that it is hard to trace the contribution of a single factor such as ownership. What evidence there is suggests that effective government leadership is a critical component of ownership, and that ownership-oriented aid reforms and modalities have made some contributions to improving aid effectiveness (largely on the basis of helping to strengthen partnerships, efficiency and country systems at the sector level) but have potential to do more. Evidence on the contributions of ownership approaches to achieving development outcomes such as poverty reduction and welfare improvements is especially weak.

Evidence on the impact of local participation efforts on development outcomes is largely positive but is generally qualified in ways that help to identify some important complimentary factors which can help to achieve such outcomes. The strongest evidence supporting the impact of participatory approaches relates to its contribution to programme effectiveness and sustainability. These impacts are more likely where community groups have been able to develop all the appropriate knowledge and skills they require to engage effectively with development programmes, and where efforts have been made to ensure that programmes aren't captured by local elites.

There is also some positive evidence linking local participation to improved poverty targeting of development interventions. However the literature recognises that donor interventions often struggle to avoid elite capture at the local level and to effectively

target the poor. The literature suggests that ensuring that participatory projects develop links to local accountability structures (e.g. political and traditional community systems) is important in strengthening poverty targeting and reducing the extent of capture. The literature also identifies a range of donor practices which can undermine the impact of participatory approaches, including short project timeframes and failures to take better informed and locally relevant approaches. Finally, the literature suggests that approaches such as cost-sharing and competitive project design processes may also undermine the ability of participatory development interventions to reach the poor and marginalised.

Evidence linking participatory development programmes to the building of civil society capacity for political mobilisation and participation isn't extensive, although there is some supportive evidence from dedicated civil society voice and accountability programmes.

In general the evidence linking participatory development programmes to development results such as poverty reduction and welfare improvements is weak, partly due to methodological challenges and a limited number of studies exploring such questions.

5. Identifying the key constraints to pursuing ownership and participation approaches

This section draws on the research literature reviewed in the rest of this paper to identify the main constraints which have emerged to more ambitiously pursue ownership and participation approaches across the development community. The research quoted to illustrate these constraints includes references to relevant insights from US Government development agencies.

Donor risk aversion

Although the Paris Declaration evaluation found that ownership had advanced furthest amongst the Paris Declaration's five principles, this finding related mainly to developing country responsibilities and it was reported that in areas of donor responsibility – e.g. alignment – less progress had been made. Amongst the key constraints to further donor progress was a focus on compliance and a risk-averse culture, which undermined the

ability of donors to strengthen partnerships with developing countries. In response to this finding the PD evaluation recommended that efforts be made to promote joint-risk management in aid programmes (Wood et al 2011).

The issue of risk has also been prominent in discussions relating to budget support, the aid modality most closely associated with country ownership. Fiduciary and political risks have been a significant concern for donors providing budget support since its emergence as a major aid modality in the 2000s. In many contexts, donors have been justified in deciding not to use this instrument due to concerns around governance, corruption and human rights. It has though been suggested that recent cuts to budget support by European Governments have been made partly in response to a growing aversion to risk resulting from pressures on public spending in donor countries following the global financial crisis (Tavakoli and Hedger 2012).

Risk aversion was also identified as one of the factors which drove high levels of oversight and micro management from MCC's headquarters in its early years (CGD 2015), which may well have undermined efforts to promote local ownership. Strict US Government fiduciary standards also limit the ability of MCC to use local procurement systems in developing countries (CGD 2015), and have virtually eliminated the use of budget support across US Government aid programmes in recent decades (Natsios 2010).

Donor control, and inherent tensions in aid relationships

Whilst donors have legitimate reasons for maintaining oversight and control of their development interventions, it is clear from the literature that there is far more they can do to address the power imbalances which are a feature of aid relationships and undermine ownership.

As already mentioned in section 3.1 the World Bank and IMF's approaches to promoting country ownership and participation have been undermined in large part by their unwillingness to cede control of the policy agenda – especially in areas such as macroeconomic policy – to developing countries (World Bank 2003b, IEO 2004). As a result these institutions have only been able to promote a narrow and heavily circumscribed approach to country ownership.

The reports of the "Listening Project", which synthesised views gathered from the beneficiaries of development interventions across the world on aid practices also gave prominence to questions about whether donors are really prepared to share control of aid programmes with beneficiaries. Aid beneficiaries consistently raised concerns about the failure of donors to share information, responsibility, and decision-making powers with them, in order to empower them to take ownership of aid programmes (Listening Project 2011).

Some commentators have though been prominent in highlighting that there are inherent limits to the degree to which control over aid will be ceded by donors, due to the fact that the aid relationship is a fundamentally unequal one in which donors only allow recipients

control voluntarily (de Valk 2004). This point is also echoed by research which identifies recent reductions in the dependency of many developing countries on aid (especially from OECD donors) as critical in helping them to gain greater levels of control and ownership in aid relationships (de Renzio et al 2008).

Governance and accountability challenges at national and local levels

In promoting government ownership of aid levels of governance and accountability have been critical factors in determining the degree to which donors will allow governments to control development interventions. This constraint is most visible when it comes to budget support, which has only really been a marginally used aid modality (even during its heyday in the mid-2000s it constituted less than 5% of global aid flows – OECD 2015) in part because concerns around the governance and accountability of partner countries have been a constant concern (Tavakoli and Smith 2013). In recent years there have been a number of notable examples of budget support funds being misappropriated, which have led donors to (often collectively) suspend this assistance in an effort to hold relevant governments accountable. It is also the case that donors have been disappointed with the impacts of budget support on poverty and growth, which has (rightly or wrongly) raised their concerns about how effectively these resources are being managed by countries (Tavakoli and Smith 2013).

It is also clear from the research on participation that governance and accountability issues are just as relevant at local levels as they are at national levels. There has been a tendency in some parts of the literature on participation to take the view that if only donors stopped cooperating with self-serving governments and institutions and worked more directly with communities then we could achieve much more progressive on development (Cornwall 2006). However, the research suggests that systems of power, patrimonialism and exclusion exist at all levels of society and pose very significant challenges to efforts to promote local participation and development. As highlighted in section 4.3 participatory development interventions have all too often fallen foul of local politics and power structures and been captured by local elites (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

Donors therefore face fundamental challenges in traversing these governance and accountability issues at every level of society in order to identify an appropriate approach to promoting country ownership and local participation. All too often this leads to donors facing tensions between pursuing these goals and ensuring that their aid is used effectively and is adequately accounted for.

Short time horizons and quick impact expectations of donors

Mansuri and Rao's (2013) review of the research on participatory development approaches identifies the short time horizons of donors and their expectations of quick linear quick

impacts as one of the factors holding back efforts to deepen participation amongst the poor and marginalised. This is because it is local elites who are often best positioned to engage with development projects (due to their higher levels of education, their greater visibility in communities etc) and support rapid implementation. In contrast work to support marginalised groups to challenge local power structures in order to advance their interests is more time consuming, involves less linear paths towards impact, and requires longer time horizons.

Natsios's (2010) analysis of the impact that the expansion in the US Government oversight apparatus has had on USAID in recent decades also brings attention to these issues. Natsios notes that before the 1990s, it was common for USAID to implement programmes over 10 years, allowing it to pursue longer-term programmes with transformational objectives, such as the building of local self-sustaining institutions. He contrasts that with the current period where USAID programmes can be as short as one year and face significant demands to produce tangible results, a context which ends up "compromising good development practices such as local ownership" (Natsios 2010, p3).

Similarly, a recent evaluation of PEPFAR reported that the pressure its implementers face in achieving annual targets precluded their efforts to undertake the time consuming and demanding work required to build capacity and genuinely support country ownership (IOM 2013). PEPFAR and other US government development agencies are currently working to place more of a focus on delivering through and strengthening local institutions. However, they face very significant challenges in battling against the obstacles that the US government oversight apparatus poses to pursuing such objectives.

Lack of contextual and flexible approaches by donors

One of the main conclusions from Mansuri and Rao's (2013) review of the research on participatory development approaches is that knowledge of context and an ability to adapt development interventions to respond to contextual challenges and change trajectories as they evolve is vital to efforts to effectively promote participation. They therefore raise concerns about how most development agencies fall short of meeting such operational requirements, a point they illustrate by bringing attention to the World Bank's all too common use of blueprint approaches to their projects.

Questions about responsiveness and adaptability to context are certainly relevant in the case of US development agencies. It is widely recognised that high levels of control from the US Congress undermine the ability of agencies such as USAID to respond to local contexts flexibly. A prominent example of this dynamic is the fact that at least two thirds of USAID's funding is earmarked to various sectors by Congress (Veillette 2011). Amongst other consequences, this has undermined the impact of introducing Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) on supporting country ownership as most USAID missions in effect have little if any flexibility to identify their priorities based on partner country perspectives (OIG 2015).

The work of a group of development practitioners who have organised under the banner of “Doing Development Differently” has been prominent in raising concerns about how effectively development interventions have been designed and delivered to address the complex social and political challenges they face in contributing to sustainable change. This group have developed a range of principles and approaches which they claim are vital to achieving successful development initiatives. Promoting local initiative, legitimisation, facilitation and ownership is at the heart of these principles, as illustrated in the box below:

6. Conclusions

This paper has sought to review the literature on the concepts of country ownership and local participation as they have been applied to international aid and the relationship between donors and developing country actors. It covered both of these concepts in recognition that they are part of a common agenda addressing the role, value, and impacts of developing country actors in engaging with development interventions. In doing so, it also aimed to provide a broad and diverse conceptual and empirical base from which to identify the key principles and practices which are critical to promoting such engagement and ensuring it can support better development practice.

Common principles and practices

A range of common principles and practices have been identified as critical to promoting country ownership and local participation. Firstly, there is the recognition that there are varying degrees of ownership, power, and control that country actors can exert. It is

therefore important to focus attention on creating an environment which allows local actors to gradually realise higher levels of such ownership, power, and control.

Secondly there is the importance of recognising that ownership and participation can be realised by a concentric circle of local actors. Ownership and participation are all too often promoted amongst a narrow group of actors (e.g. the executive/government or elites), and that genuine ownership and participation require widening the scope of actors who are able to exert their influence. It is especially challenging to ensure the poor and marginalised are adequately engaged and this is where most ownership and participation efforts most often fall short of best practice.

Thirdly there is the importance of ensuring a comprehensive approach to ownership and participation is pursued in terms of addressing these concepts at all stages of the programme cycle of development interventions. This ensures that a consistent and mutually reinforcing approach to pursuing these concepts is undertaken across all aspects of a development programme.

In terms of practices which are thought to support ownership and participation, there is also much commonality, including the importance of transparency/information sharing, consultation, capacity building, and cost-sharing/co-funding.

Ownership and participation approaches which support effective development interventions

It is also clear from the literature that a number of approaches to ownership and participation interventions are recognised as being critical to strengthening their impact.

Ownership and participation approaches can make an important contribution to the sustainability and effectiveness of development interventions, especially where communities are empowered and supported to play their role effectively.

Ownership and participation approaches can help to improve the targeting of development programmes on those most in need and strengthen civil society, especially where programmes develop strong links to local accountability and governance structures, take context-specific, patient and flexible approaches to programme implementation, and carefully address issues such as cost-sharing and competitive bidding.

Pre-conditions and constraints to pursuing ownership

The literature also identifies a number of pre-conditions for ensuring ownership and participation can be realised, as well as constraints that have undermined efforts to deepen their pursuit.

Perhaps the most important pre-condition for pursuing ownership and participation effectively is knowledge of context. If donors don't understand the local political, social, and cultural context, their abilities to traverse this context, probe for entry points to achieve change, and to address challenges facing the most marginalised are severely undermined. A lack of attention to building this capacity and applying it to development interventions has arguably led to participatory development programmes all too often being captured by local elites and blunted in their political ambitions.

In terms of constraints, these apply on the side of both donors and developing country actors. For donors, a number of constraints appear most relevant. Firstly, there is aversion to risk which undermines efforts to handover control to developing country actors. Secondly, there is resistance from donors to handing over control of aid programmes to beneficiaries. Thirdly, the short time frames and expectations of quick results of donors weaken incentives for longer term, more transformative approaches, which can more ambitiously support ownership and participation. It is also the case that donors all too often fail to work in flexible and context specific ways.

In terms of constraints at the country level, it is clear that governance and accountability issues pose major challenges in promoting ownership at all levels of society. At the national level, donors have faced challenges in expanding the provision of aid through governments (e.g. budget support) from issues such as corruption, weak accountability, anti-democratic practices, and human rights concerns. At the local level, participatory programmes have all too often struggled to recognise and deal with the complex structures of power, control, and patronage that sustain poverty and marginalisation.

Tensions and trade-offs facing donors

Finally, it is important to note important tensions that donors face in identifying appropriate approaches to addressing ownership and participation. It is apparent that donors face questions about the levels of: i) accountability and governance; and ii) capacity and capabilities they require from local counterparts (national and local, governmental and non-governmental) in order to take steps to further ownership and participation. This inevitably leads to donors facing questions about the degree to which they will trade-off the objectives of ownership/participation against the compliance and capacity demands they have of local actors. These trade-offs cannot be avoided and are real, but it is in addressing these questions in a balanced, open-minded and progressive way that the causes of ownership and participants can be furthered.

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