

'Ownership,' Sovereignty and Global Governance

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Managing Aid Dependency Project



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## **Abstract**

In recent years western aid agencies have come to embrace the language and practices of 'ownership'. This signals a shift away from conditionality as the dominant mode of relationship between these agencies and recipient states. The principle concern of this paper is to locate this shift in the changing international political context. It argues that we should see 'ownership' as intimately connected to an expanding global governance regime. Seen in this way the stress on 'ownership' reflects a concern to configure and reconfigure patterns of governance. The emergence of a global governance regime has important implications for our understanding of development and for the future of political accountability in developing countries.

## Introduction: International Relations and the Study of Development<sup>1</sup>

The disciplines of Development Studies and International Relations rarely, if ever, talk to each other's concerns in a productive manner. International Relations has tended to view the world's poorest states through one of two lenses. On the one hand they are seen as 'data' that is used to help confirm or refine International Relations theory.<sup>i</sup> On the other hand, and in its more policy-orientated mode, International Relations has approached these states as the actual or potential source of a whole host of policy problems that threaten the settled well being of western states (AIDS, drugs, refugee flows, smuggling, state collapse).<sup>ii</sup> The actions of 'development agencies' similarly receive scant attention within International Relations. What attention is paid to them, again tends to be in terms of whether what they do can be understood through the lens of International Relations theory.<sup>iii</sup>

Development Studies too is pretty insular – despite its supposed 'multi-disciplinary' approach. International Relations as an academic discipline is seen as too distant from the pressing practical problems of development to be of much interest, and the fact that International Relations is generally unconcerned with the fate of the poorest countries simply reinforces the idea that it does not have much to offer thinking about development.

This mutual estrangement is understandable given the all-pervasive academic specialization that characterises the modern university. But it is also intellectually indefensible. The world's poorest states are as much part of international society as any other, and what happens to these states tells us important things about the dynamics of international society – about how it is governed, what its preoccupations are, and what its rules and norms consist of.<sup>iv</sup> Looking at these states would help overcome the idea that the world can be divided into a 'domestic' and an 'international' realm: this makes not the slightest bit of sense when considering the historical trajectory of these states. It would also help overcome the equally empirically implausible view that international politics is best conceived of as an 'anarchic' realm; in fact, of course, for the vast majority of states it is a profoundly hierarchical one.

For Development Studies a focus on the international political dimensions of development is long overdue. For too long the practical policy concerns of students of development have turned them away from a systematic focus on how 'development' is connected to wider changes in international politics. Indeed, there has been a reluctance to engage with the idea that development *is* international politics; despite the fact that right from its origins as an institutionalised activity it has been bound up with the dynamics of international relations. And, as we shall see, the end of the Cold War did not fundamentally alter this fact.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the participants at the Global Economic Governance programme seminar where some of these arguments were first made. Thanks to Ngaire Woods for inviting me and for some useful comments. Thanks are also due to Sarah Mulley, Lindsay Whitfield, and Alastair Fraser.

These rather sweeping remarks cannot be substantiated here, but the ideas and practices of 'ownership' illustrate some of these broader themes. A concern with generating 'ownership' of development policies and programmes – by borrowers, 'stakeholders' and governments – generates a relatively novel set of policies. There is obviously a history internal to 'development,' which helps explain why 'ownership' has come to the fore. The most significant parts of this history are the recognition that conditional lending did not work very well to induce policy change, and the recognition that some kind of effective administrative authority is required if development projects and programmes are to be successful.

But this internal history has to be placed in a broader context if we are to understand the significance of the 'ownership' agenda. The emergence of 'ownership' is intimately connected to two inter-linked changes in the international political context. The first is a shift in the way the sovereignty of the world's poorest states has been understood. The 1990s saw the end of sovereignty as a political value for these states: development agencies and western states no longer thought that the sovereignty of these states was something to be desired, and no longer considered that the practices of 'development' should be mediated through sovereignty as a political institution. The second shift, obviously related to the first, is the emergence of an aggressive and expansive global governance agenda led by the powerful western states. This has placed a new emphasis on establishing effective administrative authority in developing countries as an important part of establishing effective networks of global governance.

This paper begins with a discussion of one of the most important historical shifts in the constitution of sovereignty – the emergence of a connection between sovereignty and self-determination. This provides the context for a discussion of the place of development in what we are going to be calling here the 'sovereignty regime' that emerged after World War Two. The paper then traces some of the problems that emerged within this regime in the 1980s and 1990s that in turn helped generate the idea of 'ownership'. The policies and practices of ownership are then located in what we will be calling here the emerging 'global governance regime'. The paper concludes by suggesting some of the tensions and ambiguities that emerge from the way development activities have become incorporated into this regime of global governance.

## **Sovereignty and Self-Determination**

In the settlement of Westphalia the rights associated with territorial possession were claimed by and on behalf of sovereigns. The various treaties associated with the settlement did attempt to place some limits on what rulers could do within their territories (mostly concerned with allowing some degree of freedom of religious worship), but state sovereignty as it emerged alongside the consolidation of the European state system was largely about providing a principle that could regulate conduct between sovereigns, and was not generally connected with what governments or rulers might do within their states.<sup>v</sup> That is, the idea of state sovereignty was originally primarily about defining a territorial realm within which the sovereign had political autonomy. This situation has been transformed into one in which sovereignty is claimed by and on behalf of a people

or nation, rather than a sovereign, and it is claimed in order to pursue certain goals within the state.<sup>vi</sup> This is bound up with the dramatic change in the language of political argument in Europe, whereby appeals to the 'people', the 'public', 'public opinion', and 'civil society' become increasingly persuasive.<sup>vii</sup>

In the modern era these developments fed into the claim for self-determination. There emerged a close connection between the idea of state sovereignty and the claim for self-determination, where being self-determining as a people largely came to mean possession of sovereign statehood.<sup>viii</sup> This raised the difficult question of what constituted a people who were entitled to self-determination, but part of the close connection between self-determination and sovereignty was the more or less fictitious view that those within sovereign states were or would become a 'people', and that this identity formed the basis for a claim to sovereign statehood. As the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples put it, 'all peoples have a right to "self-determination"', and no 'inadequacy of political, economic, social, or educational preparedness should ... serve as a pretext for delaying [their] independence'. The flip side of this claim was the idea that governments should in some fundamental respects represent the wishes and aspirations of its people. Governments became seen as the principal agency that could fulfill the promises of self-determination. This is part of the reason why, in some instances, forms of rule could be seen as illegitimate because they manifestly did not represent the wishes and aspirations of the governed, and this is clear most obviously in arguments for decolonisation.<sup>ix</sup> As James Mayall has argued, '[t]he nationalisation of the concept of self-determination ... placed a time bomb under the concept of empire as a legitimate political form'.<sup>x</sup> While the colonial powers could argue they were acting in the best 'interests' of the colonised peoples, they could not argue that they were 'representative' of those people.

Once the idea emerged that the basis of sovereignty was a (more or less fictitious) claim to self-determination by or on behalf of a collective 'people', intervention in the affairs of other states took on a new significance because it would be intervention in the 'national project' of a nation, not simply a refusal to respect the territorial rights of rulers. Thus the normative claim of state sovereignty came to include the view that it was wrong, in some moral or ethical, and not just legal sense, to intervene in a country's internal affairs.

The view of sovereignty adopted here is drawn from the more 'constructivist' approach to thinking about international politics.<sup>xi</sup> One of the most significant contributions of this literature has been to show how changes in the way sovereignty has been understood are related to changes in the moral purpose of the state.<sup>xii</sup> In this view sovereignty does not just define a sphere of freedom, understood with the advent of self-determination as a sphere of collective freedom; sovereignty also came to be justified on the basis of what states do with it. Just as with individual freedom, we can ask of state freedom, 'why is it good'? And the answer must make reference to something that can be done with the freedom that is granted. The purpose of sovereignty has changed over time.<sup>xiii</sup> But in any historical period there are 'hegemonic' beliefs about what sovereignty is for, and these beliefs constitute 'the prevailing socially sanctioned justification for

sovereign rights'.<sup>xiv</sup> In the Twentieth Century one of the most important of these socially sanctioned justifications for sovereignty has been the provision of material well-being for the population of the state; and this has generally been understood in terms of promoting 'economic development'. While there have been extensive arguments about exactly how states should do this, there has been almost no debate about whether they should do it.

The modern understanding of sovereignty then had at its heart a tension. On the one hand it promised collective freedom and autonomy, and this aspect of sovereignty was most vividly expressed in the demands for decolonization. On the other hand, the achievement of this sovereignty was laden with expectations; becoming a sovereign state meant pursuing a project of national development. This tension has its origins in the linking together of sovereignty with the idea of self-determination. Self-determination grounds sovereignty in the idea of a *collective* freedom, while at the same time providing a justification for sovereign rights in terms of what governments do *for* their people. Being a sovereign state has become bound up with the pursuit of 'the national economic project'. As Thomas and Lauderdale have argued, 'the state is chartered with the responsibility for "national welfare" ... which means a national economic policy that stimulates gross national product and a national welfare programme'.<sup>xv</sup>

## Development and the 'Sovereignty Regime'

Just as this became a central norm for domestic politics, so an increasingly wide range of international organisations and practices came to express this norm at the international level.<sup>xvi</sup> These ranged from functional agencies such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and the ILO, to the numerous treaties and protocols designed to regulate and expand international economic activity, and the increasingly large numbers of 'development' agencies of both the governmental and 'non-governmental' kinds.<sup>xvii</sup> That is, the achievement of economic development became an internationally sanctioned objective after World War Two; something that international society *demand*ed of states, rather than something that simply came from the demands placed on states by their society. Of course it did come from domestic pressure – but it is notable that where this domestic pressure was ineffective, international agencies were prepared to step in.

When colonies gained formal independence, then, they did not just experience a new (albeit constrained) freedom, they also became enmeshed in the institutions and practices that demanded of them that they pursue a national development project. There is an obvious tension here.<sup>xviii</sup> On the one hand international society opened up the space for these states to pursue their collective freedom; on the other hand international society delineated at least what the basic elements of the national project should be. This tension characterised the 'sovereignty regime' that emerged after World War Two.<sup>xix</sup>

In the period up to the late 1970s this tension was resolved in practice through a set of assumptions about the role of the state in the development process. Development agencies, such as the World Bank, saw their role as assisting in, and not directing, the development of their client states – development strategy was the job of the state.<sup>xx</sup> It was expected that governments would take the lead in coordinating the development

process.<sup>xxi</sup> And development agencies operated with the assumption that governments would use the aid to further the national economic project to the benefit of their societies. Finally, the general view of development during the 1950s and 1960s meant that development agencies did not concern themselves with the macro-economic policy environment or the social and institutional structure of their recipient states.

During the later 1970s and 1980s these assumptions came under increasing strain, and the sovereignty regime that had operated until then started to unravel. As a result of economic 'failure' and a changing intellectual climate, the old assumptions about the role of the state in development changed.<sup>xxii</sup> Governments were no longer assumed to be acting in the best interests of their societies. They were in fact increasingly seen as 'actors' in their own right who had their own set of interests, many of which were antithetical to the interests of their societies.<sup>xxiii</sup> In this way governments were increasingly seen as part of the problem of underdevelopment. As aid donors began to get more and more involved in the world's poorest states so the 'weaknesses' of these states became apparent, and this in turn led to a new focus on bureaucratic, institutional and 'governance' issues.<sup>xxiv</sup> By the late 1990s, the aid donors' development agenda for the world's poorest states had expanded enormously to include a whole range of political, social, and institutional issues, and they continue to pursue very intricate and detailed interventions in many of these areas.<sup>xxv</sup>

The combination of a vastly expanded development agenda and a rapid rise in the number of development organizations at work in the world's poorest states stripped the governments of many developing countries of whatever control and authority they did have over the 'actions and policies of development agencies at work within their borders. Governments were not powerless, of course. Many of them complied with some of the demands of external donors, but when it came to more politically difficult reforms many governments, particularly in Africa, simply resisted, or subverted donor demands. For example, throughout the 1980s most African governments simply did not engage in privatization of their state owned enterprises, despite being pressured to do so.<sup>xxvi</sup> Even when privatization was undertaken, governments have often tried to control the process for their own political ends. As Roger Tangri has put it, 'high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats have been centrally placed to ensure that the pace and scope of privatization as well as certain specific divestiture transactions have been congruent with their political and personal interests'.<sup>xxvii</sup> Much the same thing happened in other countries too.

It is important to realise, however, that this kind of 'sly' power, the power to resist, subvert and evade, is not at all the same thing as having effective control and authority over development policy-making and implementation. Most donors were quite unwilling to give governments this control and authority – perhaps for very good reasons. The trouble was the donors could not be an effective substitute for sovereign authority. The donors were unable to 'stand in' for the political and administrative power of the state. This led to a situation where little effective control was being exercised over development policy-making and implementation in many of the world's poorest countries.



Many of the reasons for this are well known.<sup>xxviii</sup>

1. The World Bank was the 'lead' agency for most of the world's poorest states. However, its ability to control the development policy formulation and implementation was hampered, among other things, by its 'lending culture'. This was particularly evident during the pursuit of structural adjustment lending in the 1980s. Countries that received a structural adjustment loan, but which did not implement many of its conditions would, nonetheless, receive more loans.<sup>xxix</sup> So while the World Bank was pressuring governments to undertake policy change, the Bank itself was undermining its capacity to effectively influence this policy change. The use of conditional lending was more like an elaborate dance than an effective attempt to control development policy.

2. Development interventions tended to become more complex.<sup>xxx</sup> This increased the administrative burdens on both donors and governments. One result of this was that projects and programmes simply were not implemented properly. As Lancaster has argued, 'complex interventions that have included multiple activities or required behavioural, institutional, or political changes on the part of Africans' have been particularly problematic.<sup>xxxi</sup>

3. The use of bureaucratic 'enclaves'. This is where the donors work closely with a select group of politicians and bureaucrats, often in the ministry of finance. The idea behind this is to get the support of certain influential bureaucrats in the hope that these people will be able to use their political power to get the rest of the bureaucracy to fall into line. There are a number of potential problems with this. First, this select group of bureaucrats often finds itself spending more time talking to donors than it does talking to other bureaucrats, and so their influence on the overall process of policy change can be minimal.<sup>xxxii</sup> Second, it can lead to a dual policymaking process whereby the bureaucratic enclave has one set of policies and priorities, but the rest of the bureaucracy has quite another.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In this situation no one exercises effective control over development policy:

'donors have tended to unduly personalise relationships they have with a number of institutions when they have found individuals competent and cooperative. In a situation where all donors would like to deal with one person, often the coordinator, little time is left for carrying on the normal business of pursuing a comprehensive programme for the institution. The end result is more chaos in the programme'.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

4. The proliferation of donors led to a huge problem of aid and donor coordination. According to Carol Lancaster, as of 1996 there were at least forty major bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, and many more NGOs active in Africa.<sup>xxxv</sup> This creates huge problems. For the World Bank it reduces their influence if governments have access to resources from other donors. For governments it creates a huge problem of dealing with and monitoring all these external agencies. The World Bank, along with the UNDP, has attempted to coordinate the actions of donors in particular countries.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In practice actually getting other donors to work within the agreed development framework has been difficult.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Uncoordinated donor activity distorts investment and government

development priorities, and places demands on government budgets for counterpart funding (limiting funds available for other purposes).<sup>xxxviii</sup>

5. Aid dependence. Two World Bank staff members concluded that 'the continued functioning of many governments has become dependent on continued aid flows'.<sup>xxxix</sup> This aid dependence gives external donors extensive leverage over development policies of course, but it does not thereby give them control over the implementation of policy. In fact, as a World Bank paper has argued, aid dependence can weaken political accountability, encourage rent-seeking and corruption, and foment conflict over the control of aid resources.<sup>xl</sup> That is, aid dependence leads to the further fragmentation of policy implementation. In addition, aid dependence can undermine a government's domestic legitimacy (if aid is seen by the populace as a symbol of external control) and thus further erode the capacity of governments to enact and implement policy effectively.<sup>xli</sup>

6. Many governments, and many ministries within governments, became orientated towards satisfying external donors. This leads to a fragmentation of the overall development priorities for ministries, and means that many civil servants spend more time talking to donors than to other civil servants.

7. Many states simply lacked the administrative capacity to take effective control of the national development project.<sup>xlii</sup> As Lancaster argues, 'planning ministries rarely had the authority or power to coordinate spending ministries effectively or the will to coordinate the forty or more foreign donors operating in their countries'.<sup>xliii</sup>

8. Finally, politicians and bureaucrats, particularly in Africa, are themselves enmeshed in practices and routines that militate against the effective implementation of development policies. However one characterises the state's relationship with its society ('neo-patrimonialism', clientelism, the 'penetrated state'), it seems as if these relationships can lead to the further fragmentation of development programmes, as resources are directed less by development and more by political and social 'logics'.<sup>xliv</sup>

These problems are becoming more widely acknowledged within the 'development community'; and not before time. They created a situation in which effective control and authority over development activities vanished. In terms of development effectiveness, and in terms of the political developments donors wanted to see (good governance, accountability etc.) this was highly undesirable. Under these conditions the sovereignty of many developing countries was severely compromised. Governments quite clearly did not exercise sovereignty authority over development, and what's more they were delegitimised as sovereign authorities in the eyes of many donors.

## Development and Ownership

The sovereignty regime for developing countries that emerged after World War Two had unraveled.<sup>xlv</sup> The problem, however, was that the institutions and practices of international society that had always demanded of developing countries that they pursue an effective national development project were in not in a position to actually pursue this project within these countries. What this started to generate was a concern with overcoming some of these practical problems; and this how we should begin to understand the policies and practices of 'ownership'.

Exactly what 'ownership' means is unclear. 'Ownership' is just one in a long line of words – 'participation', 'governance', 'market', 'civil society', 'democracy', and, yes, 'development' itself – that is often used in the policy literature as if it had a transparently clear meaning, but whose meaning in fact become utterly opaque under the slightest analytical probing. Some obvious questions to ask are: ownership by whom? Ownership of what? What does 'ownership' itself actually imply? Is it 'commitment', 'belief', 'internalisation'? Is 'ownership' a psychological concept or a political concept? These problems are evident even before we ask more political science- type questions about how we know when people have 'ownership', and why they come to have it. Do people really believe in the things they supposedly 'own'? Does it matter if they do or do not?

These difficulties with the term 'ownership' emerge, of course, because it is a term of rhetoric not analysis. It is a kind of 'management speak' that borrows a term whose meaning has at least some kind of fixity – in this case in the language of property rights – and applies it to a quite different field (in much the same way as 'partnership', for example). And of course 'ownership' is particularly well-suited here because it has a kind of 'neutral' quality and because it invokes the ideas of freedom (non-coercion) and reasoned commitment.<sup>xlvi</sup>

Given these difficulties it seems misguided to ask questions about what 'ownership' *actually* means or *actually* can mean, or indeed questions about whether recipients 'really have' ownership. Rather we should accept that it is a term of rhetoric and instead ask questions about the kinds of practices and strategies that are wrapped up with attempts to create it. We should look at what kinds of things those who profess to be concerned with generating ownership actually do. Viewed in this light 'ownership' is not a word that describes some kind of concrete reality, but rather a discourse and a set of practices directed at overcoming certain problems associated with the fragmentation of control and authority over development.

Seen in this way 'ownership' seems to be about two related objectives. First, it is about getting politicians, bureaucrats and societal groups to 'internalise' donor objectives and policies. They come to have 'ownership' when they come to see that the donors are right after all. Second it is about attempting to get recipient governments to exercise more effective coordination and administrative control over development activities, and to take responsibility for this coordination and administrative control.

Country ownership means that there is sufficient political support within a country to implement its developmental strategy, including the projects, programs, and policies for which external partners provide assistance. Country ownership requires that the government has achieved sufficient support for the strategy among stakeholders within and outside of the government. This likely includes line ministries, parliament, sub-national governments, civil society organizations, and private sector groups. ... Ownership requires that a country has sufficient institutional capacity for defining and implementing a national development strategy.<sup>xlvi</sup>

This is an acknowledgement that aid donors are unable and/or unwilling to exercise this control. But it also suggests that the generation of effective administrative control is now one of the key objectives of 'development'. And it is here that we can begin to see the links with the emergence of a much more expansive global governance agenda.

## **Ownership and Global Governance**

This argument begins by stressing those aspects of the contemporary development agenda that are concerned with governing – that is with the ability of the state to impose an order on aspects of social, political, and economic life. This aspect is manifest in the concerns with such issues as tax raising, customs and excise systems, government budgetary systems, and regulatory, legal and institutional reforms. It is concerned above all with the capacity of the state to govern social, political and economic processes.

This 'governmental' aspect of the development agenda is sometimes overlooked in the concern with more overtly political issues such as accountability, transparency, participation, and even democracy.<sup>xlvi</sup> These are certainly part of the very grand ambitions that development agencies have for many developing countries. But even here there is a concern with governing – a concern with making the state more effective, by on the one hand making it more 'efficient' and more 'responsive', and on the other hand by insulating the state from the wrong kinds of political pressures (hence the ambiguities around the 'participation' of 'civil society').

Once we see that a significant part of the contemporary development agenda is about expanding the reach of government, the links with global governance become clearer. If global governance is about anything it is about the attempts to impose a kind of governing order on those places and those issues that are seen in one way or another to pose a threat (understood very broadly) to the kind of order western states wish to see constructed. As James Wolfensohn put it, 'How do we better manage the big global issues – poverty, inequity, the environment, trade, illegal drugs, migration, diseases, and yes, terrorism?'<sup>xlvi</sup> To use the more 'neutral' language of academics, global governance is about 'efforts to bring more orderly and reliable responses to social and political issues'.<sup>1</sup>

Seen in this way, the pursuit of 'ownership' is part of the pursuit of a 'framework of governance linkages that cut across national borders'.<sup>li</sup> Or to use Mark Duffield's phrase, it emerges from the accelerating 'will to govern' of western states and the

agencies they control.<sup>lii</sup> This 'will to govern' is manifest most prosaically in the thousands upon thousands of meetings held every year in the foreign policy and development arms of western states, and in development agencies, where the agenda is something like: 'what should we do about the problem of such and such in such and such a country'. (One can fill in the blanks – small arms, smuggling, small enterprise, women's rights, judicial reform, micro-credit, etc, etc. etc.) It is manifest most ambitiously in 'humanitarian interventions', and the great schemes for social reconstruction that issue from western states and international organizations – human rights, human security.<sup>liii</sup> This 'will to govern' is almost boundless – as James Wolfensohn said, 'it seems the challenges and problems are never ending'.<sup>liv</sup>

The pursuit of ownership should be seen, then, as part of the attempt by western states and development agencies to configure and reconfigure administrative control and coordination over social, economic and political processes in development countries.<sup>lv</sup>

But there is more to the links between 'ownership' and global governance than even this. Beyond the question of what the pursuit of 'ownership' is trying to achieve is the issue of *how* the pursuit of 'ownership' works. There is no space to explore this fully, but the suggestion here is that we should see 'ownership' – along with 'partnership' and 'participation' – as a particular way of generating commitment to the development and global governance agendas established by western states and development agencies.<sup>lvi</sup>

The pursuit of 'ownership' is designed to work through enlisting governments, stakeholders and officials as agents in their own development. It emerges in part out of the recognition that 'imposing' reform strategies does not work – as evidenced by the experience of structural adjustment. Instead the pursuit of 'ownership' uses a variety of techniques designed to generate assent and commitment to particular development and governance objectives. The techniques include various forms of 'training', carefully managed processes of 'consultation' and the subtle and graduated use of various 'incentives'. In this way, at least in theory, committed political agents are created.<sup>lvii</sup>

This should be seen as increasingly typical of the ways in which the global governance is being pursued. Of course western states are not averse to using violence and imposition where it is deemed necessary. But even here it is notable that a great deal of energy is then expended on trying to configure political and administrative authority through these kinds of techniques. The experiences of Afghanistan and Bosnia are illuminating in this context. The fundamental point is that the ambitious agenda of global governance can only work through the creating of committed and responsible political agents. And this is exactly what 'ownership' is about.

Whether the pursuit of 'ownership' will work to produce effective administrative authority is another matter, of course.<sup>lviii</sup> The history of development is littered with initiatives, programmes and techniques, which failed to produce the kinds of outcomes expected of them. Until much more empirical research is conducted we should remain agnostic about the prospects for the 'ownership' agenda. There may, indeed, be reasons for thinking that some of the practical problems enumerated above will not be overcome by

'ownership'. In particular 'ownership' may just be another form of external accountability that does little to generate effective domestic accountability. Nonetheless, I would want to maintain that, for the time being at least, 'ownership' is here to stay because it fits so well with the emerging governance agenda.

## **Conclusion**

It should be clear that the pursuit of 'ownership' is not the same thing as the granting of 'sovereignty'. Very little value is placed on the ideas and practices of state sovereignty in the new global governance regime. To be sure a central aim of this regime is the creation and recreation of administrative authority over social, economic and political processes – in short effective governance. But this is to be achieved through mechanisms and techniques, such as 'ownership' that are developed and conditioned by the aims and objectives of western states and development agencies. I do not mean to imply that the 'ownership' agenda is somehow 'bogus'. I think donors are really serious about trying to make 'ownership' real in developing countries. They are doing this, however, not to generate sovereignty, but to generate effective governance.

What this leads to is a view of the state as heavily 'de-politicised'. The state becomes the administrative vehicle for development and, increasingly, global governance. It ceases to be about collective political freedom. This is of course the great liberal dream – states become simply vehicles for the implementation and administration of liberal projects. The danger here is that, as a matter of sociological fact, some kind of commitment to the idea of the state as a vehicle for collective *political* freedom is necessary to sustain the development and governance project. As noted earlier the sovereign state became the vehicle for the pursuit of a collective, *national*, project. The question, I suppose, is this: does sustained commitment to the development project require a certain degree of collective political freedom?

Finally, to return to the points made in the introduction, it is possible to see how an examination of the discourses and practices of 'ownership' reveals some of the norms and practices that underpin international society. The commitment to the value of the sovereign state as an expression of political freedom is fast eroding – certainly for many developing countries. In its place issues of administrative efficiency and effective governance have become more important. And this in turn is linked to the emerging global governance regime. Viewed in this light the pursuit of 'development' itself has become intimately linked to the global governance agenda; indeed one might go so far as to say that development has become about the construction of global governance.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> For example, Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, Cornell, 1987), or Stephen Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World Against Global Liberalism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>ii</sup> The literature here is voluminous. The flurry of books on 'state-building' is only the most recent example of an academic literature that exactly follows the particular policy concerns of western states. For an attempt to put the connections between the social science and policymaking in context see Peter Wagner, *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences* (London, Sage, 2001)

<sup>iii</sup> For an example see the essays in Margaret Karns and Karen Mingst (eds.), *The United States and Multilateral Institution: Patterns of Changing Instrumentality and Influence* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1990). There is, of course, an extensive literature on these agencies; it is just that most of it is not written from within the discipline of International Relations.

<sup>iv</sup> This seems to have been the view of Hedley Bull. See Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1984) and 'Justice in International Affairs', Kai Alderson and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Hedley Bull on International Society* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000). Working from within the same intellectual tradition as Bull, Robert Jackson has also pursued this thought; see Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge, CUP, 1990). See also David Lumsdaine, *The Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1993). In general though the discipline of International Relations has not been interested in what the fate of these states tells us about international politics.

<sup>v</sup> John Ruggie, 'Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis', Robert Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 145. For a very insightful account of the settlement of Westphalia see Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1994), ch. 2.

<sup>vi</sup> J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, 'The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations', *International Organization* 48 (1994) p. 108.

<sup>vii</sup> See for example, Charles Taylor, 'Invoking Civil Society', *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1995), Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Berger (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1989), and Anthony Volpa.

'Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe', *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (1992), pp. 79-116.

<sup>viii</sup> Rosalyn Higgins, *Problems and Processes: International Law and How we Use It* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), ch. 7.

<sup>ix</sup> Higgin, *Problems and Processes*, ch. 7.

<sup>x</sup> James Mayall, '1789 and the Liberal Theory of International Society', *Review of International Studies* 15 (1989), 297-307.

<sup>xi</sup> See Thomas Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge, CUP, 1991), and Nicholas Onuf, *A World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

<sup>xii</sup> Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Identity and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>xiii</sup> For a discussion see Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*.

<sup>xiv</sup> Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p. 31. See also here Georg Sorensen, *Changes in Statehood: The Transformation of International Relations* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>xv</sup> George Thomas and Pat Lauderdale, 'State Authority and National Welfare Programs in the World System Context', *Sociological Forum* 3 (1988), p. 388. More generally see John Boli and George Thomas (eds.), *Constructing World Culture* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>xvi</sup> John Ruggie, 'International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Post-War Economic Order', Stephen Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>xvii</sup> Nicholas Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge, CUP, 1998) pp. 156-158.

<sup>xviii</sup> See Jackson, *Quasi-States* for more on this.

<sup>xix</sup> At the most abstract level this 'sovereignty regime' can be thought of as a way of organising and managing inter-state relations. It is a bundle of norms and practices that has at its heart the idea of state sovereignty. To be sure as a practical matter the sovereignty of many developing countries was compromised during the period, but even



in its breach the principle of sovereignty was upheld. See Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford, OUP, 2000).

<sup>xx</sup> Lumsdaine, *The Moral Vision in International Politics*, ch. 2.

<sup>xxi</sup> Warren Baum, 'The Project Cycle', *Finance and Development* 7 (1970), pp. 2-13, Edward Mason and Robert Asher, *The World Bank Since Bretton Woods* (Washington, DC, Brookings Institute, 1972), p. 72.

<sup>xxii</sup> See David Williams, 'Aid and Sovereignty: Quasi-states and the International Financial Institutions', *Review of International Studies* 26(4) 2000, pp. 566-568.

<sup>xxiii</sup> See Anne Kreuger, 'Changing Perspectives on Development Economic and World Bank Research', *Development Policy Review* 4 (1986).

<sup>xxiv</sup> World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1989), and more recently, World Bank, *World Development Report 1999/2000* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2000), esp. p. 21.

<sup>xxv</sup> See James Wolfensohn, 'A Proposal for a Comprehensive Development Framework', internal World Bank paper, January 21, 1999.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Roger Tangri, *The Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization and Private Enterprise* (Oxford, James Currey, 1999).

<sup>xxvii</sup> Tangri, *The Politics of Patronage in Africa*, p. 61.

<sup>xxviii</sup> See David Williams, 'Managing Sovereignty: The World Bank and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Mondes en Development* 31 (3) 2003.

<sup>xxix</sup> For details see John Johnson and Suliman Wasty, *Borrower Ownership of Adjustment Programs and the Political Economy of Reform* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1993), and Paul Mosley, Jane Harrigan and John Toye, *Aid and Power: The World Bank and Policy-based Lending* (London, Routledge, 1991).

<sup>xxx</sup> Carol Lancaster, *Aid to Africa: So Much to Do, So Little Done* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 190.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Lancaster, *Aid to Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>xxxii</sup> James Morton, *The Poverty of Nations: The Aid Dilemma at the Heart of Africa* (London, I. B. Taurus, 1996), p. 86.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> See Ernest Aryeetey and Aidan Cox, 'Aid Effectiveness in Ghana', Jerket Carlsson, Gloria Somolekae and Nicholas van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa: Learning from Country Experiences* (Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1997), pp. 97-8.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Aryeetey and Cox, 'Aid Effectiveness in Ghana', p. 105.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Lancaster, *Aid to Africa*, p. 38.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> OECD, *Aid Coordination and Aid Effectiveness: A Review of Country and Regional Experiences* (Paris, OECD, 1988), Devendra Ray Panday and Maurice Williams, 'Aid Coordination and Effectiveness: Least Developed Countries 1981-1989', study prepared for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, March 1990.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Lancaster, *Aid to Africa*, p. 60. See also Glenn Brigaldine, 'Managing European Aid Resources in Mali', Carlsson, Somolekae and van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*, p. 138.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> For a case study see Aryeetey and Cox, 'Aid Effectiveness in Ghana'.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Stephen Lister and Mike Stevens, 'Aid Coordination and Management', internal World Bank paper, 22 April 1992, p. 8.

<sup>xl</sup> S. Knack, 'Aid Dependence and the Quality of Governance: A Cross-country Empirical Analysis', World Bank Research Paper, 2000.

<sup>xli</sup> Lancaster, *Aid to Africa*, p. 64.

<sup>xlii</sup> Botswana is sometimes cited as a case where effective administrative capacity has enabled the government to maintain more control over the development process than in other countries in the region. For a case study focusing on this see, Gervase Maipose, Gloria Somolekae and Timothy Johnston, 'Effective Aid Management: The Case of Botswana', Carlsson, Somolekae and van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*.

<sup>xliii</sup> Lancaster, *Aid to Africa*, p. 31.

<sup>xliv</sup> For a discussion of this see, Tim Kelsall, 'History, Identity and Collective Action', Ulf Engel and Gorm Rye Olsen (eds.), *The African Exception* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

<sup>xlvi</sup> There is obviously a much more complex story here to do with the different types of developing countries and the different kinds of ways they have responded to these changes.

<sup>xlvi</sup> A kind of semiotic analysis of the term ownership would be worthwhile here. These concepts emerge as descriptors because of the meanings they invoke. This in turn would

tell us something about the kinds of norms and rules prevalent in international society and, perhaps more subtly, something about the kinds of political strategies used to shape international outcomes.

<sup>xlvi</sup> This is taken from the Country Ownership section of the World Bank Website

<sup>xlvi</sup> For the idea of governmentality see Michel Foucault 'Governmentality', in *Michel Foucault, Power: Essential Works Vol. Three* (ed.) James Faubion (London, Penguin, 2000). See also Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London, Sage, 1999).

<sup>xlvi</sup> James Wolfensohn, Address to Board of Governors of the World Bank at the Joint IMF/World Bank meetings, October 3, 2004.

<sup>i</sup> This is from Leon Gordenker and Thomas Weiss, 'Pluralizing Global Governance: Analytical Approaches and Dimensions', Leon Gordenker and Thomas Weiss (eds.), *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance* (Boulder, CO, Lynn Reinner, 1996).

<sup>ii</sup> Daniel Kaufmann, 'Corruption, Governance, and Security', *Global Competitiveness Report 2004/5* (Geneva, World Economic Forum, 2004).

<sup>iii</sup> Mark Duffield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Radicalization of Development: Aid as a Relation of Global Liberal Governance', *Development and Change* 33(5) 2002.

<sup>iiii</sup> For two recent books that address this, albeit from different perspectives, see Nicholas Guilhot, *The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and the Politics of Global Order* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2005), and Ann Florini, *The Coming Democracy: New Rules for Running a New World* (Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

<sup>lv</sup> Address to Board of Governors of the World Bank at the Joint IMF/World Bank meetings, October 3, 2004

<sup>lv</sup> For a different perspective on this see Graham Harrison, *The World Bank and Africa: The Construction of Governance States* (London, Routledge, 2004).

<sup>lvi</sup> Here I follow Mark Duffield and Rita Abrahamsen. See Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London, Zed, 2001), Rita Abrahamsen, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa* (London, Zed, 2000), and Rita Abrahamsen, 'The Power of Partnerships in Global Governance', *Third World Quarterly* 25(8) 2004.

<sup>lvii</sup> See Abrahamsen, 'The Power of Partnerships in Global', and David Williams, 'Governance and the Discipline of Development', *European Journal of Development Research* 8(2) 1996.

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<sup>lviii</sup> For a very interesting sceptical argument see Lindsay Whitfield, 'Trustees of Development from Conditionality to Governance: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43(4) 2005.



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