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Global civil society agency within the New Aid Architecture a Neo-Gramscian approach

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Global Civil Society Agency within the New Aid Architecture: a Neo-Gramscian Approach

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Abstract

In the last decade, the development cooperation system entered into a transitional phase, moving from 'aid effectiveness' towards a 'development effectiveness' paradigm. This paradigm shift found expression in the launch of a new aid governance system in 2012, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). At the same time, a multitude of civil society organisations (CSOs) worldwide gathered together and founded the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) with the aim of effectively engaging with the GPEDC in its work.

This research explores the actions of the CPDE within the context of the GPEDC, seeking to understand how likely it is for the CPDE to successfully implement its vision of development in the given framework. In doing so, the research borrows the neo-Gramscian categories of hegemony and counter-hegemony from international relations and applies those within the field of development co-operation. Accordingly, the GPEDC can be envisaged as a direct emanation of a hegemonic neo-liberal order. In contrast, the CPDE has been critical of the hegemonic neo-liberal system and has been advocating for an alternative agenda for development, with social justice and a human rights-based approach at its core. By adopting a neo-Gramscian perspective, the research aims at understanding to what extent the CPDE is acting as a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic actor within the GPEDC. Here, the action of the CPDE within the GPEDC framework was investigated as a unique case study, for both the CPDE and the GPEDC are new entities marking a fracture with the previous modus operandi and have not yet been methodically researched.

The analysis of the CPDE action within the GPEDC found that counter-hegemonic features are more substantial and significant than the hegemonic features, and thus it is argued that the CPDE has the potential to act as a counter-hegemonic force. Indeed, the CPDE has been successful in building collective acts of resistance to counter the neoliberal drift within the GPEDC, carrying out a steady war of position right at the heart of the new governance system.

The increasingly complex development landscape has most recently brought the question of effectiveness back to public attention with the launch of the new Agenda 2030. Within this context, this study contributes to the understanding of emerging geometries of power on a mutating international stage. Furthermore, this study provides an occasion to discuss the crucial question of agency within a global neo-liberal order, with special focus on discerning potential counter-hegemonic forces and effective praxes to bring about alternative societal models.

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List of Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
AAAA	Addis Ababa Agenda for Action
AG	WP-EFF Advisory Group
AGM	Alter Globalisation Movement
Aid	Agency for International Development
BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BPd	Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
CC	CPDE Coordination Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPDE	CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EDC	Effective Development Cooperation
EEI	Enabling Environment Index
GC	CPDE Global Council
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GPIs	Global Partnership Initiatives
HLF	High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness
HLF-4	Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness
HLM	GPEDC High Level Meeting
HLM2	GPEDC Second High Level Meeting
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IAC	Independent Accountability Committee
ISG	CSO International Steering Group
MAG	Monitory Advisory Group
MICs	Middle Income Countries

NAM	Not Aligned Movement
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NoD	Nairobi Outcome Document
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OECD-DCD	OECD Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD)
PBIG	Post-Busan Interim Group
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
UEDC	Universalising Effective Development Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference for Trade and Developments
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Prologue

The "CSOs Partnership for Development Effectiveness" (CPDE) and the new aid governance system of the "Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation" (GPEDC) represent two new global entities that are the expression of changes that have recently shaken the development landscape, resulting in what has been described as a paradigmatic transition from "aid effectiveness" towards "development effectiveness".

Although there have been several academic studies on aid effectiveness, the most recent evolution of the debate and the process of reform inaugurated by the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011 has not received the same attention. Thus, the research represents an occasion to focus on the major innovations introduced in this domain since then. In particular, the CPDE and the GPEDC constitute two unique cases to research. In fact, the CPDE is the first ever global partnership of civil society organizations (CSOs) created into the aid governance system, while the GPEDC is the widest governance body in this field, based on the model of a multi-stakeholders partnership with mutual accountability and ensured by specific monitoring mechanisms.

CSOs participating in the process of reform of the aid system inaugurated in Busan have consistently showed a critical attitude towards the mainstream liberal conception of development, and have entered the system pushing for an alternative view, one with a human rights-based approach (HRBA) at its core. Therefore, this research has specifically focused on the actions of the CPDE within the GPEDC, to investigate the extent to which the CPDE is able to affirm its vision of development within a neoliberal governance system.

Considering the unfolding of the aid effectiveness paradigm, CSOs have moved over the years from being outsiders to being fully recognized development actors within the official aid system, a position that might put them at risk of co-option. Therefore, understanding the CPDE potential to affirm its vision within the GPEDC implies locating its action on a scale of positions ranging between two poles: internal resistance or co-option.

The tension between these two opposite positions has recalled a neo-Gramscian theoretical framework for civil society agency, which has informed the formulation of the

main research question: “to what extent is civil society acting as a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic actor within the GPEDC?”.

The first section presents the latest evolution of the aid effectiveness paradigm and its transition toward a new ‘development effectiveness’ paradigm. Within this transitional phase, special attention is given to the processes that led to the creation of the GPEDC and CPDE.

The second section outlines the main distinction existing in the wide body of literature on civil society as development actor, namely between the liberal democratic and the post-Marxist or Gramscian currents. The literature presented is used as background for the following discussion on the adoption of a neo-Gramscian perspective to look at the action of CPDE.

The third section discusses the contemporary relevance of the research. Having originated within the ongoing transitional phase towards the new “development effectiveness” paradigm, the CPDE and the GPEDC constitute two unique bodies in this domain. Furthermore, researching the CPDE and the GPEDC allows a discussion of current power dynamics occurring at the global level, as they embed and are the result of the changes that have recently shaken the international scene.

The fourth section presents the aim of the research and briefly discusses the main and the subsidiary research questions, which guided the development of the present study.

Finally, the last section offers an overview of the thesis structure, going through a brief presentation of the following chapters.

1.2 Reforming aid: “from aid effectiveness” towards “development effectiveness”

The dawn of the twenty-first century witnessed the rise of a new global agenda in the domain of development cooperation, known as the “aid effectiveness agenda” or “Paris Agenda”, concerned with the issue of the quality of aid. The efforts to boost aid effectiveness on the international scale were organized during four High Level Fora convoked by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011).

The Paris meeting in 2005 was a milestone in the aid effectiveness debate and resulted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which guided reform efforts from 2005 onwards, and has been the subject of considerable scholarly research. However, the most

relevant High Level Forum for this research project is the 4th High Level Forum on aid effectiveness (HLF-4), realized in Busan in 2011. The Busan HLF-4 was influenced by the global transformations, of both an endogenous and exogenous nature, which were shaking the development cooperation system. These included, for instance, the growing criticism around the failure of international donors in addressing the political nature of development, the proliferation of new development actors, the global financial crisis, and the change in global powers' equilibrium (Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014). In this evolving context, the Busan Forum was commonly felt to be a breakthrough moment by the international community, marking the transition from the "aid effectiveness" to the "development effectiveness" paradigm (Kim and Lee 2013, Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014, Kindornay 2011). The Busan HLF-4 offered a great opportunity to broaden the discussion about the "development effectiveness" concept, which permeated, whether explicitly or implicitly, the variety of debates that took place, without arriving to a clear and agreed definition. While the idea of development effectiveness went beyond the limited category of "aid" to embrace a more holistic and multidimensional vision of development, some old ideas regained some popularity. Economic growth was still considered as the main development driver, with poverty reduction moving down in terms of prioritization (Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014, CPDE 2012).

One distinctive feature of the Busan HLF-4 was the recognition of new development actors – emerging donors, CSOs and the private sector – which were elevated 'to full development partners with an equal say in how to foster sustainable growth, reduce poverty and share prosperity' (OECD-UNDP 2014: 58). The new global partnership launched in Busan resolved to reform the architecture of the development cooperation system. This led to the abolition of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), a technical subcommittee of the OECD-DAC. The WP-EFF was replaced by the new "Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation" (GPEDC), officially launched on 28th-29th June 2012 in New York. The GPEDC governance system was articulated on three levels: the Ministerial Meeting, the Steering Committee, which especially reflects a new style of global governance incorporating both state and non-state actors, and the Secretariat (Kim and Lee 2013).

Referring to civil society, the GPEDC formally recognized CSOs as development actors in their own right and included them in its governance system, thus operationalizing "inclusiveness", the principle lying at the core of the GPEDC. The inclusiveness concept directly refers to CSOs insofar as it aims at increasing the participation of non-state actors in national systems and gives value to their role as development drivers. Moreover, a specific indicator was elaborated within the GPEDC monitoring framework focusing on civil society, in order to foster the discussion about how an enabling environment for CSOs should look like and what can be done to realize it (OECD-UNDP 2014).

In parallel, as a result of the evolution of the aid architecture, CSOs that took part in the Busan HLF-4 decided, after its conclusion, to create a new partnership, in order to implement the commitments set out in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (BPd). To this end, the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness and BetterAid, which were the two channels through which CSOs worldwide coordinated their action to express a common position at Busan, joined together to form one single partnership, Thus, the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) was born (Bena 2012, CPDE 2012).

Thus, the CPDE represents a new platform that gathers CSOs around the theme of development effectiveness, having its own vision and mandate as expressed in the Nairobi Declaration. This document was the fruit of a process of global consultations, which finally converged into two days of discussion held in Nairobi in December 2012 amongst 50 civil society spokespersons, selected to assure the widest representation on the base of geographical and sectorial criteria (CPDE 2012).

With regards to the CPDE position in relation to the GPEDC, the Nairobi Declaration states that the CPDE's activity is mainly conceived in the context of the GPEDC and of the BPd. Furthermore, it is said that CSOs 'acknowledge the enhanced and formalized space that civil society secured at HLF-4 and in subsequent processes related to effective development co-operation', and they 'recognize that changes to the scope and membership of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) come with its opportunities' (CPDE 2012, paras 4–5).

In the light of the above, it may be observed that under the conditions supported by the new GPEDC, the CPDE may work as a platform for the inauguration of a new phase of civil society agency. In order to gain a full understanding of how the CPDE is articulating civil society action within the framework of the GPEDC, it is useful to contemplate the substantial body of literature produced on the different roles or functions of civil society. This is especially true within the field of development cooperation, presented in the next section.

1.3 Civil society and the new aid architecture: hegemonic or counter-hegemonic actor?

Amongst the vast literature produced on civil society as a development actor — discussed in detail in chapter One— two foremost positions can be identified: the liberal democratic and the post-Marxist or Gramscian currents.

The liberal democratic approach represents the mainstream, and has been adopted by major development institutions, such as the World Bank. The contours of this approach have been deeply shaped by the nineteenth-century North American conceptualization of democracy and development, finding its roots in Tocqueville's writings. According to this perspective, civil society is perceived as an autonomous arena of liberty permeated with organizational culture. It serves as the base for the construction of political and economic democracy, in which citizens and their organizations exercise their authority upon the state from the outside. The liberal democratic current is associated with a normative character, which endows civil society with an undisputed power of promoting the progress of democracy and development processes (Akman 2012, Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, Howell and Pearce 2001). This categorization tends to prescribe a model of relationship between the citizen and the state, suggesting it as a standard solution to be reproduced in different social, economic and political contexts (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015, Howell and Pearce 2001).

The liberal democratic conceptualization of civil society constituted the theoretical foundation for the introduction and success of the concept in the field of development cooperation. Back in the 1980s, the general impasse experienced by most of the Global South in terms of development outcomes was addressed through the adoption of a set of neoliberal policies, which further developed over time into two different generations. According to Harrison (2004), the first generation reforms correspond to a phase of economic liberalization, also known as "Washington Consensus". This promoted the state's withdrawal from economic life and favoured market liberalization, privatization, the cutting of taxes on imports and exports. In this context, the contribution of civil society organizations was conceived mainly as the provision of basic services in place of the state, due to the limitation of its welfare faculties following the implementation of the liberal reforms (Cornwall 2006).

The second-generation reforms realized by the end of the 1990s represented a revision of the previous dominant *modus operandi*. It has come to be known as the "Post-Washington Consensus". In this version, the centrality of the market was left untouched, the new feature coming from some resurgence of the state's role, which was assumed to be the fundamental institution able to lay a favourable ground for market operations. In turn, the role of civil society organizations underwent changes too: from service providers to watchdogs of the correct and effective implementation of development programmes. This change came along with a strong focus on the principle of "good governance", which, tailored to development cooperation, has taken the form of socio-political engineering. Here, the domain of civil society is perceived as responsible for fostering the citizens' engagement and shaping the democratic life of the state (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015, Doornbos 2001, Harrison 2004).

The alternative line of thought about civil society has originated from a vivid critique of capitalism. The intellectual foundations of this view can be found in the works of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci. In particular, the original intellectual contribution of Antonio Gramsci has been judged to have 'set the terms of a Great Divide in the contemporary literature on civil society' (Kumar 2007: 417).

As opposed to the dominant liberal theorization Gramsci built a model of the state as the *union* of two super-structural levels: civil society and political society. In this model, civil society is constituted by the group of private entities which exert hegemony over subaltern social classes, generating consensus amongst them (Schwarzmantel 2015). Gramsci's analysis acknowledges the political power that resides in civil society, and identifies it in the action of those institutions able to instil a way of thinking and acting consistent with the maintenance of a class-based system, — notably the educational system, the Church and the mass media. Yet, if civil society played a role in the maintenance of a hegemonic system through consent (rather than coercion), then it could also serve to challenge that hegemony. Gramsci therefore suggested that the most successful way to carry out a deep transformation in society was a progressive change in the social dimension of power. To him, changes in the state would follow the affirmation of a different order in civil society. It was thus necessary to establish a counter-hegemony in civil society, namely an alternative system and culture within the hegemonic framework (Cox 1983). Civil society, in Gramsci's analysis, can potentially perform two opposite functions: on the one hand, it can act in order to maintain and strengthen the established order while, on the other hand, it can represent an instrument to challenge the status quo (Schwarzmantel 2015).

Applying Gramsci's thought to the field of development cooperation, CSOs can work either as an instrument of the dominant neo-liberal approach to development or, alternatively, as a vector for social change, actively working for the affirmation of an alternative set of values and practices. Contextualizing Gramsci's thought within the case of the renewed aid architecture led to question the current CPDE attitude in relation to the GPEDC, to understand if the nature of its actions is predominantly hegemonic or counter-hegemonic. The analysis of the recent articulation of CPDE's discourse and strategies suggested that CPDE action may refer to the praxis of a counter-hegemonic force. For instance, the building of the CPDE seems to respond to the logic of a 'war of position', an expression used by Gramsci to indicate an intellectual and cultural struggle to challenge the hegemonic system. Indeed, CSOs are working to create 'alternative institutions and alternative intellectual resources' (Cox 1983: 53) within the framework of the GPEDC.

As mentioned above, CSOs participating in the CPDE proceeded with a laborious process of coordination at a global scale to define their own perspective, priorities, and

objectives, in opposition to the dominant (or hegemonic) paradigm. The CPDE's position is clearly expressed in the Nairobi Declaration, the core document containing the CPDE vision:

> civil society is also critical of several aspects of the BPd. We are concerned that the GPEDC envisages the private sector and growth as the driver of development. The BPd makes only token reference to human rights as the basis of development, and its treatment of women's rights, environmental sustainability and the decent work agenda is weak and instrumental (2012:6).

These lines show how the CPDE clearly distances itself from a neoliberal approach to development, advocating in turn for a distinctive view focused on the promotion of human rights (Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014, CPDE 2012).

Against this background, a neo-Gramscian approach offers a valid theoretical framework for the study of the CPDE's agency for three main reasons. First, a neo-Gramscian perspective allows us to overcome the theoretical assumption implicit in the neo-liberal conceptualization, which assumes the dichotomy of state and civil society. This characterization of civil society organizations is meaningful in relation to national boundaries. However, it comes to be 'both theoretically reductionistic and empirically inaccurate' (Akman 2012: 327) when extended to the analysis of global civil society, of which CPDE is an expression. In fact, CSOs' actions have recently transcended the national dimension to deal with global actors and arenas. Thus, that perspective does not capture the complexity of the actions through which civil society organizations exert their influence on the global governance system (McIlwaine 2007). A neo-Gramscian perspective can overcome such constraint as it includes the consideration of the influence exerted by the international dimension of politics on civil society's agency. It means that a full understanding of the effects of hegemony requires considering that it branches out into a broader international level, as stated by Gramsci's in his *Prison Notebooks*:

> Every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilizations (Gramsci 1971: 350, cit. in Schwarzmantel 2009: 8).

The Gramscian recognition of an international hegemonic system is thought to offer a valid basis for the study of politics in this present moment of expanding globalization. It opens to the discussion to a global hegemonic structure of power and, specifically, to an international counter-hegemonic agency. This consideration grounds the diffusion of neo-Gramscian approaches in the field of international relations and in the study of civil society,

whose agency has come to be analysed through a more complex spatial perspective (Schwarzmantel 2009a, McIlwaine 2007).

Second, a neo-Gramscian perspective is particularly pertinent for the examination of CSO action in the field of development cooperation. Indeed, it captures and stresses the potential polarity of civil society, as hegemonic or counter-hegemonic force. Indeed, the operation of CSOs in this domain, especially of development NGOs, has embodied this tension, having been considered both as promoter of a radical and transformative agenda and as an instrument for the dominant neo-liberal system (Cornwall 2006, Howell and Pearce 2001, Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015). In line with a neo-Gramscian perspective, the CPDE strategy within the GPEDC may develop along two opposite directions: a legitimizing or a critical attitude towards the new aid architecture.

A neo-Gramscian approach is also preferable because it allows to focus on the alternative narratives and praxes within the dominant neoliberal system. As a matter of fact, 'Gramsci's analysis was originally concerned not just with the analysis of a dominant set of ideas (hegemony) but with the forging of an alternative, a challenge to that hegemony' (Schwarzmantel 2009a: 9). Thus, a neo-Gramscian framework is appropriate to explore the critical potential of CPDE action. It allows the researcher to highlight the CPDE's efforts to approach development issues from a different set of values, by denouncing the iniquity of the underlying neoliberal institutions. According to a neo-Gramscian approach, neoliberal institutions and policies are envisaged as a structural problem to be addressed in order to prompt an effective and sustainable development process (Cox 1981, Howell and Pearce 2001).

1.4 Why researching the CPDE action within the GPEDC matters

From a global perspective, this research project contributes to the most recent evolution of the debate about development cooperation effectiveness, paying special attention to the role of CSOs in the new aid architecture.

This research is as a unique and valuable case study in this phase of paradigm shift within the field of development cooperation. The uniqueness of the research lies in the fact that both the CPDE and the GPEDC represent a new entity in the history of development cooperation and have not yet been methodically researched. With regards to the CPDE, it represents the first global partnership of CSOs in the field of development cooperation since the recognition of their new status as independent development actors. In addition, the CPDE constitutes the first collective body of CSOs to be fully integrated in the aid governance

system on an equal level. Similarly, the GPEDC constitutes the most inclusive multi-stakeholder global partnership based on the principle of mutual accountability, a peculiarity that clearly distinguishes the GPEDC from the architecture of the previous governance bodies of the aid system.

Moreover, the progressive transition towards the era of development effectiveness represents a specific characteristic of this moment, having marked a fracture with the scenario of the first decade of the twenty-first century and laying the foundation for a new phase. Given the ongoing shift from "aid effectiveness" towards the new "development effectiveness" paradigm, this research is timely and significant, reflecting the latter changes which occurred at the international level. Therefore, focusing on the latest evolution of the aid architecture allows us to investigate and understand the emerging geometries of power on a mutating international stage.

The GPEDC and the CPDE, as new partnerships stemming from the evolving context in the development cooperation system, constitute the two main units of analysis of the research. This project examines in particular the building of power relations among the actors in the GPEDC, with the aim of understanding the extent to which the participation of the CPDE may serve to legitimize the mainstream neo-liberal vision or to articulate alternative visions. Thus, this research attempted to analyse the complex interplay between the CPDE and the other GPEDC members, to comprehend how it gradually shapes the balance of power between civil society actors and the rest of the GPEDC members.

As a multi-stakeholder space, the GPEDC displays a dense network of relationships, where a wide plurality of development actors interacts and move amid a set of opportunities and constraints, which, in turn, are constantly reinforced or modified by the same actors' action. Looking at how the CPDE has developed strategies to promote its vision required the weighing of the CPDE's effective negotiating status within the GPEDC, beyond the rhetoric of official documentation.

The CPDE can be seen as the latest stage in the progressive affirmation of civil society actors within the field of development cooperation. Starting from an outsider position at the dawn of the aid effectiveness paradigm, it became an officially recognized actor in the transition towards the development effectiveness paradigm. In this sense, an in-depth comprehension of the CPDE is a fundamental step towards understanding the current position of civil society actors in this field more widely. Researching the CPDE allows to look at how the bargaining power of civil society actors is evolving within the recently developed institutional framework, and how their collective action is effective in shaping it and affirming an alternative vision of development. Also, the CPDE, as a collective entity of CSOs working in this field, has not yet been the focus of academic studies. This research therefore intends to

expand our knowledge about the CPDE and, in general, about CSOs action in the new development cooperation landscape.

In this regard, it has been observed that CSOs' initiatives have been suffering from lack of visibility. According to the Institute of Development Studies (IDS 2015), this lack is grounded in the fact that CSOs actions have not yet been the object of a consistent analysis, so that CSOs projects have not been regularly accompanied by a systematic documentation. Thus, the research project also contributes to the organization of the knowledge gained through CSOs' experiences and, consequentially, to direct a greater attention towards their role in this domain.

Similarly, the launch of the GPEDC has been under-investigated, in contrast with the former aid effectiveness system and governance, which catalysed the public and academic attention at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Indeed, while the Busan High Level Forum was inaugurated with a great fanfare, as the occasion to 'debate on the future of development cooperation' (Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014: 30), the following development of the GPEDC took place in an atmosphere of uncertainty and declined interest within the international community. Against this background, the research adds to the literature produced on the early life of the new aid system, drawing on both secondary and primary sources. Among primary sources, data collected at the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC, held in Nairobi in 2016, are deemed of particular interest as they contribute to the narration of a turning point in the growth of the GPEDC, defining a new mandate and affirming its role on a wider political scenario.

The GPEDC role in the international scenario was acknowledged since its formation, as showed by the UN Development Programme position statement released on the GPEDC First High Level Meeting (UNDP 2014). It is declared that 'the GPEDC plays an important role in assessing and catalysing the effectiveness of development cooperation' (UNDP 2014 § 3), and that 'a renewed, inclusive and more effective global partnership for development is needed to meet the challenges of a universal post-2015 development agenda' (UNDP 2014 § 4).

Since then, the GPEDC has worked to increase its influence in the field of international development cooperation. "Aligning with global priorities" (GPEDC 2016) was the Nairobi High Level Meeting's main objective. This meant that it would define the GPEDC's specific contribution and added value to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this sense, the GPEDC is widening its influence within the international arena, engaging in wider political forums and contemporary processes, such as the Agenda 2030. The progressive affirmation of the GPEDC at the international level is confirmed by the inclusion of the UNDP in the GPEDC Joint Support Team and by the recognition of the

specific role of the GPEDC Monitoring Framework at the UN High Level Political Forum. Regarding the Agenda 2030 process, the GPEDC 'informs UN-led follow-up and review of SDG targets related to multi-stakeholder partnerships, country ownership and gender equality', working as 'the vehicle to globally track and accelerate implementation of political commitments' (GPEDC 2018: 2).

In addition, the annual review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN High-Level Political Forum further stressed the crucial role of global partnerships to achieve the SDGs in an increasing complex development context. Dialogue amongst all partners, transparency and mutual accountability — the principles lying at the core of the GPEDC — were essential to promote development (GPEDC 2018: 2). Accordingly, the GPEDC stands as a model of inclusive global partnership for development effectiveness and, for this reason, has been designated to measure the progress made towards the achievement of goal 17. This goal is specifically about revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development (United Nations n.d.). A study of the action of the GPEDC is particularly relevant, as it constitutes a timely development in the course of ongoing global agendas, offering an internal perspective through which they can be explored.

As mentioned above, the attention gained by the aid effectiveness debate at the dawn of the twenty-first century seemed to have dwindled. While the phraseology about aid effectiveness became part of the routine language, the political momentum has faded since Busan (Glennie 2014, Simonds 2014). The shift from "aid effectiveness" towards "development effectiveness" has corresponded to a substantial enlargement of the development agenda, in which the focus on effectiveness has been ultimately diluted (Glennie 2014). However, the increasingly complex development landscape and the difficulties in tackling the emerging challenges have brought the question of effectiveness back to the centre of the discussion, within the context of the Agenda 2030. Then, building on the call for development cooperation to be smart at the last UN Financing for Development Forum in April 2018, the GPEDC has argued that 'the time is ripe for fresh thinking on how effectiveness relates to the dynamic challenges of an increasingly complex development landscape' (GPEDC 2018: 1).[1]

[1] The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation met for a workshop on 'Reinvigorating Effectiveness for the 2030 Agenda' on 11th and 12th September 2018. The first day was dedicated to the assessments of the progress made at the mid-point towards the 2018 Global Partnership monitoring round. The second day was dedicated to policy dialogue to discuss main issues emerged in relation to the 2017-2018 programme of work. The aim of the meeting was to

In this regard, the research aims at supporting the resuming of interest towards the issue of development effectiveness in the academic debate. Researching development effectiveness is considered opportune because the evolution of the great aid debate into the development effectiveness paradigm represents 'a key site of contestation about visions of global development' (Engel 2014: 1374).

In this sense, the CPDE has been advocating for an alternative development agenda, built upon social justice and a human rights-based approach. It is critical of the neo-liberal vision dominating within the GPEDC, which has the private sector and economic growth as the main development drivers (CPDE 2012). The CSOs that got involved in the High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness have been constantly working for the affirmation of a vision of development different from the neoliberal mainstream. As noted by Savage and Eyben (2013), in Busan conflicting views and interests found agreement between state actors in the endorsement of a neo-liberal approach to development effectiveness, and the only voice that fiercely opposed it was that of civil society actors, condemning the rhetorical employment of the concept of human rights and claiming the adoption of a vision rooted in social justice. That alternative vision of development 'created a fracture between civil society and almost everyone else' in Busan (Eyben and Savage 2013: 466), while the opposition between North and South dissolved when the time to endorse a neo-liberal approach came. Since then, civil society actors gained a growing influence within the development cooperation system and managed to push for a change in the conception and language of development, leaving behind the "aid effectiveness" discourse to embrace the wider and more elaborated idea of "development effectiveness".

Therefore, a meaningful discussion about the unfolding of alternatives to the official paradigm in this field shall recognize that civil society actors, and the CPDE within this context, play a key role as advocates of different visions of development. In line with a neo-Gramscian perspective, this research is an opportunity to look at emerging critical voices and alternative visions to the neoliberal mainstream in the field of development cooperation.

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track and accelerate the progress made towards the achievement of the SDGs, especially goal n.17 on effective global partnerships (GPEDC 2018).

1.5 Research questions and contribution

While civil society actors are experiencing a strong momentum in this field, (Kindornay and Morton 2009), their increased integration within the official development cooperation architecture might not be a sufficient condition for CPDE to fully express its potential as challenger of the status quo.

Looking at the CPDE agency in the GPEDC arena requires considering different tensions emerging from power distribution in the development cooperation system. Particularly relevant for the purpose of this research project is the opposition between traditional and new development actors.

The evolving power relations between traditional and new development actors is a central issue in this phase of transition, and this significantly impacts on the life of the GPEDC. Most relevant to this research is the tension between governmental and non-governmental actors. In fact, despite the formal status of development actors having been uniform, a distinct preference for government-to-government forms of cooperation continues, to the detriment of the role played by non-state actors. This imbalance, which applies both to North-South and South-South cooperation, has resulted in obfuscating CSOs' contribution in defining the development trajectory to be taken (IDS 2015).

Another important dimension of the relationship between traditional and new development actors refers to the critical relationship existing between states and CSOs. This phenomenon is particularly evident in those countries that have recently embarked on the development cooperation system, such as emerging donors (e.g. China, India and Brazil); regional powers (e.g. Saudi Arabia and South Africa); rapidly industrializing countries (e.g. Turkey and Thailand) and ex-socialist states (e.g. Russia and Poland) (Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014).

On this matter, the CPDE working group on CSO enabling environment acknowledges that CSOs action are recognized and protected by most of the existing national constitutions. However, this does not guarantee CSOs the possibility to freely perform their tasks, as they are hampered by further laws and regulations and by the same government activities and initiatives (CPDE 2013b). Furthermore, the last Enabling Environment Index (EEI) released by CIVICUS in the same year documented that in many countries the creation of an enabling environment for civil society organizations, highly supported by the GPEDC, is far from making progress (CIVICUS 2013). Ultimately, complaints about the persistence of adverse political and legal conditions in national scenes are advanced also by CSOs belonging to countries with a more consolidated civic organizational tradition.

In addition, when assessing the power balance between traditional actors and CSOs it is essential to remember that CSOs are likely to be in a disadvantaged position in the relationship with donors as well. In particular, the CPDE working group on CSO enabling environment reported that the collaboration between CSOs and donors has been generally subjected to the acceptance of programs and expected results that are mostly decided by donors, and this heavily limited CSOs operating space and opportunities (CPDE 2013b).

The previous observations may suggest that the enthusiasm that has accompanied CSOs' acquisition of the role of new independent and equal development actors in the official documentation has hardly been substantiated up to date. In other words, CPDE's potential agency collides with a development cooperation system that still seems to privilege traditional actors and instruments.

Consequently, it is legitimate to question if the construction of meaningful inclusive development partnerships is currently practiced in the given context. Thus, we need to bear in mind the latent structure of established power relations and the constraints that more or less implicitly influence the actors' possibilities for action, especially in a context where actors show uneven power statuses, as in the case of partnerships for development. Nowadays the partnership model still represents the official blueprint of relationships in this field, promoting a language that suggests the existence of common goals, cooperation, open democratic dialogue and equitable relationships amongst the actors included (Crawford 2003, Mercer 2003). However, the corresponding practice has shown several shortcomings, giving life to weak forms of partnership (Maxwell and Riddell 1998: 260; see Crawford 2003, Mercer 2003), generally limited to information sharing and, if at all, policy dialogue. The widespread adoption of partnerships seems not to have addressed the imbalance of power that exists amongst the different development actors, thus casting doubts on the genuine nature of development partnerships. Therefore, the implementation of the GPEDC may be interpreted as an attempt to adapt to a changing development landscape, to co-opt new actors in order to maintain the existing power hierarchy essentially untouched.

From a wider perspective, the underlying broader tension in play is that between the dominant neoliberal development paradigm and the forces that act to promote alternatives to it — as the CPDE may come to be. CSOs' continuous engagement with the neoliberal system exposes them to the risk of co-optation. in fact There is indeed 'a thin line between becoming critically engaged with a system to change it and ending up being co-opted by the system to stabilize it' (Melber 2014: 1088). Therefore, the CPDE position within the new GPEDC framework is continuously at stake due to the co-optative and depoliticizing forces of the traditional neoliberal system. CSOs have often acted as vigilante of the correct functioning of the established development cooperation system. The recent substantial increase of CSOs

participation has led to a greater access to services but, as pointed out by Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 'this has been through channels that are weakly connected to deeper process of political, economic, and structural change, in which marginalized or excluded groups search for alternative ways of organizing the economy, politics, and social relations' (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015: 708). Considering that, it may be hypothesized that the formal empowerment of civil society actors may constitute a cover to preserve the dominance of neoliberal forces, neutralizing potential initiatives of transformative justice (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015).

However, the position defended by CSOs values the great potential towards the change of living conditions through collective action, which has brought CSOs to collect significant achievements over time. Therefore, civil society activism may still represent a valid occasion for people to shape development road maps and priorities (McIlwaine 2007), wiggling out of the dominant neoliberal grip and taking advantage of all the possibilities and spaces for action achieved to address social issues in new alternative ways.

Moving from these considerations, the main purpose of the research is to assess to what extent CSOs are able to promote and bring about an alternative development agenda within the GPEDC framework. Applying a neo-Gramscian perspective, the main question that the research has aimed to answer is "to what extent is the CPDE acting as a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic actor within the GPEDC?".

As discussed above, assessing the CPDE potential to bring about an alternative development agenda required to consider the power dynamics in action within the GPEDC arena, with the aim of understanding how their contingent combination influences the agency of CSOs in an uneven power structure. Therefore, this research has examined the power relationships existing amongst the GPEDC stakeholders as a subsidiary research question.

Likewise, the power relationships existing within the same CPDE have also been examined, with the aim of understanding how they come to define a CSO's common perspective and shared strategies for action.

A corollary question has referred to the origin of both the CPDE and the GPEDC. Researching on the process that led to the creation of the two global partnerships has been essential to understand how the power relationships embedded in the two arenas have been progressively built and how they have changed over time.

Finally, in order to assess the CPDE potential to act either as a counter-hegemonic or a hegemonic actor implied answering to another subsidiary research question, that is identifying and weigh the main opportunities for action and constraints experienced by participating in the GPEDC arena.

Answering those questions has allowed me to contribute to the critical theories of the international relations discipline, especially within the paradigm of neo-Gramscian studies. Building upon a neo-Gramscian perspective, this research project addresses the question of agency, namely 'the analysis of those forces and "movements" which bring into being the alternative society sketched out by the theory in question' (Schwarzmantel 2009a: 79). Related to the idea of agency are two important questions: on the one hand, the identification of the social forces that are in the best position to lay the foundations of and realise an alternative world order and, on the other, the definition of pragmatic ways to bring about alternative societies. This research borrows the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony and counter-hegemony from the field of International and applies it to a different field, namely the studies of international development cooperation. The research project assumes the existence of a neoliberal hegemonic project acting on a global scale. This hegemonic project is deeply rooted in the narrower field of development cooperation, which reflects and constantly reproduces the established global order.

Identifying spaces for alternative social forces to operate is a crucial issue in critical IR and has been addressed within the present research by choosing the GPEDC as a case study, as a recently created arena for potential counterhegemonic forces to act. In line with the resurgence of interest in civil society and social movements as counter-hegemonic actors, the present research focused on the transformative potential advocated by civil society actors within the field of development cooperation.

Analysing the actions of the newest civil society actors at the highest level of global decision making about development cooperation allowed to identify an effective force of resistance within the neoliberal mainstream in this field. In particular, the CPDE, in concertation with other development actors, is successfully building several collective moments of resistance right at the heart of the renewed governance system; progressively creating the conditions for more substantial achievements towards the realization of an alternative, anti-neoliberal, agenda for development.

1.6 Chapters Overview

This research is articulated in seven chapters.

The first chapter discusses the relevant literature, with the aim of presenting the theorization of the concept of "civil society" and its later adoption within the field of development cooperation. The first part explores the early conceptualization of "civil society", from its appearance at the time of the Greek civilization until the Scottish Enlightenment, especially through the philosophical contributions of philosophers Hume, Ferguson and Smith (Cohen and Arato 1997). Subsequently, the chapter focuses on the

conceptualization of civil society elaborated by Hegel, whose contribution constituted a watershed in this field and brought the concept into modernity. Indeed, from the work of Hegel originated the two main modern approaches to civil society: the liberal and the Marxist (Van Rooy 1998). The liberal current has been presented through the works of Tocqueville, Putnam and Parsons, while the Marxist through the works of Marx and especially Gramsci.

The second part analyses the adoption and operationalization of the concept of civil society within the field of international development cooperation, maintaining the division between the Marxist critical vision and the orthodox liberal vision. The latter is discussed — especially through the interrelated concepts of civil society, democracy and good governance — to assess the influence that this has been exerting in the definition of development agendas worldwide (Hearn 1999, Harrison 2005).

Bringing the idea of civil society into present days, this chapter analyses the recently forged category of global civil society, which is discussed in comparison to the traditional concept of civil society. Finally, the term civil society is considered within the context of the research, explaining the reason that led to the adoption of a neo-Gramscian perspective to investigate the role of the CPDE within the GPEDC.

The second chapter explores the methodological foundations of this research. The choices made at this regard have been informed by a continuous dialogue between the theoretical framework and the theory of research in social sciences, leading to the adoption of a qualitative inductive approach.

The research followed the model of the unique case study, while the methods employed for data collection are: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. The interviews are aimed at investigating the interplay between the CPDE and the GPEDC, as well as the power relations existing within the same GPEDC. The interviews have been directed to the members of the CPDE Coordination Committee, for being the body where the political action of the CPDE is discussed and defined by the plurality of voices that make up the CPDE. Non-participant observation was realized on three different occasions: two Coordination Committee meetings —the first held in Brussels between 20th-21st of March 2016, the second in The Hague between the 20th-22nd of June 2016 — and the GPEDC Second High Level Forum, held in Nairobi between 28th November-1st December 2016. In addition, non-participant observation was also employed during the realization of a fieldwork period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Quezon City, Manila. This part of the fieldwork was realized between May and June 2016, and was dedicated to the participant observation, interviews and the collection of relevant documents. The documents gathered during the period spent at the Global Secretariat are heterogeneous in nature, including those

made available to the public and those destined for the platform internal use, in printed form or online.

Then, the chapter moves to the discussion of the analytical framework, to explain how data collected were analysed and interpreted. The GPEDC and the CPDE have been initially considered as autonomous units, and have been after analysed together, with the aim of investigating the power relationships generated through their interaction. This is an essential operation to evaluate the transformative potential of the CPDE and, finally, to locate CPDE in the theoretical scale from hegemonic to counter-hegemonic action. Towards this aim, the action of the CPDE was assessed against the features identified in chapter one as distinguishing those forces. In particular, the CPDE potential to act in a hegemonic way was assessed against the presence of three features: (i) apolitical activities, (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors, and (iii) the degree of internal professionalisation. Similarly, the CPDE potential to act as a counter-hegemonic force was assessed against four essential features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung*, (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices, (iii) the ability to intertwine local, national and global levels of action, and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure.

The final two sections offer some reflections on positionality issues and the project's potential limitations. Positionality has been discussed in relation to the evolution of the researcher position from 'outsider' towards 'insider' during the realisation of the research project. Bearing in mind the bias that could derive from that, the research has been conducted so that the outcome would reflect the voices of the CPDE members as far as possible. Regarding limitations, these mainly resulted from time constraints and difficulties experienced in accessing civil society actors.

The third chapter discusses the background against which the research project originated. A proper comprehension of the CPDE and the GPEDC implies the study of the context in which they originated. Therefore, the unfolding of the aid effectiveness paradigm and its recent transition towards development effectiveness have been assumed as the focus of this chapter. The aid effectiveness paradigm evolution has been presented through an analysis of the four High Level Fora that took place between 2003 and 2011, paying particular attention to the 2011 Busan High Level Forum, for being the occasion when the process of reform of the aid system was decided and launched.

In addition, the chapter presents a discussion on the meaning of the recently adopted expression "development effectiveness" based on a study realized by the North-South Institute in a study published in 2009.

The fourth chapter especially focuses on the GPEDC. The chapter recalls and moves from the previous discussion on the aid effectiveness paradigm and its latest evolution, this time aiming at highlighting the features that are most relevant to the creation of the GPEDC. In this sense, particular attention is paid to the work of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), for being the predecessor of the GPEDC. A full section is dedicated to the Busan High Level Forum, which was presented in chapter four. In this chapter the analysis of the Busan Forum has especially focused on those dynamics that led to the abolition of the WP-EFF and to start a reform process culminating with the launch of the GPEDC.

The chapter continues with a description of the GPEDC structure, mandate, vision and orienting principles. Particular attention is paid to the monitoring framework, for being a unique tool in this field to implement the accountability principle and instil it amongst the stakeholders.

Then, the chapter describes the first and second High Level Meetings of the GPEDC, the first held in Mexico City in 2014 and the second in Nairobi in 2016. The Second High Level Meeting is thoroughly discussed as representing a crucial point in the evolution of the GPEDC; in fact, on that occasion the GPEDC adopted a new mandate and discussed its position in relation to the Agenda 2030. Finally the chapter offers some reflections on the comparative advantages of the GPEDC governance body, its inclusiveness and mutual accountability.

The fifth chapter further narrows the focus to the CPDE, the main unit of analysis of the research. The first part of the chapter describes the CSOs' path of increasing influence within the aid effectiveness paradigm and onwards, in order to understand the conditions in which the CPDE originated. Again, a full section is dedicated to the Busan Forum, to narrate how the project of a single CSOs global platform developed along with the building of the GPEDC, resulting in the launch of the CPDE in December 2012. Successively, the governance structure, vision and mandate of the CPDE are briefly outlined. The last section of this chapter briefly describes the CPDE ongoing programmes and activities.

The core of the chapter is constituted by an analysis of the internal functioning of the CPDE, mainly based on data collected through the interviews to the CPDE Coordination Committee members. The analysis of the CPDE internal functioning has been organized through two main categories: strengths and challenges. The CPDE strengths have been further divided into the following categories: unity, a learning platform, expertise and literature production and, last, self-reflection and growth. With regards to the challenges that the platform is experiencing, they have been categorized into four main groups: internal management, power, representativeness and accountability. The second section illustrates the challenges that the platform is experiencing, which have further been categorized into four

main groups: internal management, power, representativeness and accountability. In conclusion, the chapter considers how the features discussed in the previous sections influence, positively or negatively, the likelihood of the CPDE being successful in fulfilling its vision and goals.

Chapter six assesses the CPDE potential to bring about its transformative agenda within the framework of the GPEDC. The first section analyses the GPEDC and the CPDE as spaces for participation, putting them in relation to one another. To this aim, looking at the context of their foundation has been deemed essential to understand how they have been shaped by specific circumstances and by power relationships amongst different development actors. In the second section, the GPEDC is assessed applying the taxonomy of spaces for participation elaborated by Gaventa (2006). Further considerations are made about the nature of social and political spaces, to help understanding the complexities of such realities and their dialectical nature. The third section focuses on the CPDE and analyses its position within and in relation to the GPEDC. The CPDE is introduced as the GPEDC natural counterpart, and this argument is further supported by a brief discussion of the CPDE political position in relation to the official position advocated by the GPEDC. Finally, the conclusions bring together the analysis of the CPDE in relation with the GPEDC framework to assess the potential of the CPDE to successfully push forward its development agenda.

The seventh and last chapter assesses the CPDE's potential to act as either a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic force against the main features identified in the relevant literature as distinguishing those forces. The analysis made of the CPDE predisposition to act in a hegemonic way was discussed in relation to three features: (i) apolitical character of its action; (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors; and (iii) a high degree of internal professionalisation. Following this, the potential of the CPDE potential to act as a counter-hegemonic force was assessed against four essential; features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschaung*; (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices; (iii) to intertwine local, national and global levels of action; and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure. The following discussion have weighed the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic potential of the CPDE, which has brought to an overall assessment of the CPDE action as predominantly counter-hegemonic.

While the first two sections directly respond to the main research questions, identifying the CPDE as an actual counter-hegemonic actor in the field of development cooperation, the third section discusses potential scenarios for the future evolution of the CPDE action within a globally hegemonic neoliberal order.

Finally, the last section locates the research presented within the academic debate and introduces the related potentials, shortfalls and suggestions for further investigation.

In order to assess the CPDE potential as a counter-hegemonic actor, it is important to understand the role that civil society actors play within the development cooperation system, and how this has evolved over time. To this end, the next chapter will describe the emergence of the concept of civil society, from its early theorisation onwards, paying specific attention to how this conceptual category has been adopted and operationalised by the development cooperation system.

Chapter 2
The civil society fever: unravelling the success of a concept within international development cooperation

Introduction

Exploring the relevant literature, this chapter offers an overview of the theorization of the notion of civil society and of its related operationalization within the field of development cooperation.

The first section traces the early process of theorization of this concept, following the distinction into two main phases suggested by Van Rooy (1998). The first phase started at the time of the Greek civilization and lasted until the Scottish Enlightenment, which marked the entrance into the second phase that has been running until the present day. The first phase's distinctive character is the opposition between civil society and the state of nature and it is discussed through the brief analysis of the contribution of philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes and Locke. The entrance in the second phase is explained through the illustration of some of the most prominent work of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers—especially Hume, Ferguson and Smith.

The second section describes how the concept of civil society was pushed into modernity thanks to the contribution of Hegel. Hegel's work is regarded as a milestone in the process of theorization of the concept, and two different traditions originated from his contribution: the Marxist and the liberal. Marx and Gramsci are discussed as main representatives of the first current, while the second is presented through the works of Tocqueville, Putnam and Parsons.

After this, the chronological narration of civil society theorization is interrupted, to focus on the reception and operationalization of civil society itself within the specific domain of development cooperation. This *excursus* covers the third and the fourth sections and provides the theoretical background necessary to the comprehension of the research project design. This field of studies mirrors the division of civil society thinkers into two traditions: the dominant liberal current and the unorthodox. Because of their relevance in shaping the political agendas of developing countries worldwide, special attention is given to the discussion of the inextricable relations existing between the ideas of civil society, democracy and good-governance in the dominant neoliberal view.

The fifth section briefly illustrates the recent transnationalisation of civil society and the subsequent elaboration of another broad-ranging expression: global civil society. Its main features are discussed in comparison to the category of civil society.

Finally, the term civil society is contextualized within the framework of the research project. Following on from the objectives and the nature of the research, the final section justifies the choice of a neo-Gramscian theoretical perspective to the study of the CPDE action within the GPEDC.

2.1 The emergence and affirmation of civil society in political philosophy

The concept of civil society has experienced incredible success in the last two decades. Its ubiquity in agendas and academic discourse worldwide made it gain the status of a buzzword, ultimately resulting in a perception of uncertainty about its actual meaning (Howell and Pearce 2001). In this regard, Werker and Ahmed vehemently noted that *'*taken literally, "non-governmental organisation" could describe just about anything from social groups like Mensa to educational institutions like Harvard University to for-profit firms like Walmart*'* (Werker and Ahmed 2008: 2–3).

The enthusiasm with which it has been greeted within an extremely diversified institutional and political compass favoured the flourishing of a rich literature on this subject. Nevertheless, the definition of civil society is still controversial, and no agreement has been reached up until now (Akman 2012, Van Rooy 1998). Trying to define this concept, Akman stresses its 'slippery character which seems to defy all attempts to pin it down firmly', and continues observing that:

> almost every academic article that touches upon the concept feels obliged to begin with an attempt to define what civil society means in its first or second paragraph. Despite all these efforts, however, it is evident that a consensus on what civil society 'really is' seems farther from our grasp than ever (2012: 321).

The protracted evolution of this concept throughout history — which started at the time of the Greek *polis* and continued until the present day — contributed to increase its degree of complexity and, as a consequence, the uncertainty surrounding it (Cohen and Arato 1997, Hall and Trentmann 2005, Hearn 2001, Van Rooy 1998). As expressed by Pelczynski, *'*few social and political concepts have travelled so far in their life and changed their meaning so much' (1988). Nowadays the concept of civil society represents a tangle of models and meanings which varies according to geographical criteria, theoretical backgrounds and

political projects, so an overview of how it has been theorized has been deemed as beneficial for the understanding of its potential developments.

A useful starting point to systematize the body of knowledge produced about civil society is Van Rooy's (1998: 7–11) distinction of two phases in the process of theorization of civil society: the first running from the Romans to the eighteenth Century, when the development of the Scottish Enlightenment marked the entrance into the second phase, lasting until the present day. The first phase's distinctive character is the opposition between civil society and the state of nature. The fact that men organized themselves to take on social and political responsibilities for the achievement of the common good was regarded as a high moral action. At this time, civil society equated to political society. The passage to the second phase was realized between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, in correspondence with the maturing of the Scottish Enlightenment, and was fostered by the contribution of authors such as Ferguson, Hegel and Tocqueville. Beyond the peculiarities of their perspectives, the authors of this phase share a common feature: the need to stand up to the authority of the state, which was often felt to be invasive and a threat for the society subjected to its rule. Thus, in this phase the perceived opposition was between those governing and those governed, or, in other words, between state and civil society. The last is the vision that lies at the core of the following theorizations about civil society up to the current day.

According to Van Rooy (1998), the first phase of the theorization of civil society started at the time of the Romans in concomitance with Cicero's coining of the expression *civilis societas.* However, earlier conceptualizations of civil society might be tracked in the life of the social communities in the Greek City-State (*polis*). Civil society appeared in embryo in the thought of Socrates and his disciple Plato. Socrates was concerned about bringing civility in the life of the citizens, which was understood as depending on the realization of a dialectic dialogue between two parts: one representing the need of the individual and the other the need of the community, with the aim of finding a balance between them. Later, Plato further developed the discourse about the ideal just state, which he thought to be realized when people were free to exert a set of civic virtues (as wisdom, justice and moderation amongst others) to pursue the common good.

The expression 'civil society' was first employed by Aristotle, who referred to it as *politike koinonia*, meaning political community, and later translated by Romans to Latin as *societas civilis.* The term *koinonia* could refer to associations of any nature, while the term *politike* derived from *polis*. Thus, the expression *politike koinonia* defined a partnership of free citizens ruled by a system of laws finalized to the achievement of common goals inspired by a shared *ethos*. The *politike koinonia* distinguished itself among other forms of social

associations for being the one with the highest aim — that is, performing virtues to improve community life — and encompassing the whole social system, leaving only natural relations outside (Schmidt 1986). This initial Aristotelian formulation of what would become known as civil society implied the conception of human beings as political animals, who could be educated in justice through their participation in community life. As a consequence, building a just life for the community was assumed as the ultimate objective of human being. Aristotle's theorization of civil society deeply influenced later political philosophy, identifying the conflict between the rational social organization of human beings and the natural state of animals, while affirming the equation of political and civic society, that is, between the organization of citizens and the political and legal system (Cohen and Arato 1997, DeWiel 1997).

The Aristotelian model of civil society started to be questioned in the seventeenth century mainly by the contribution of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. As explained by Parekh, these philosophers sustained the idea that:

> civil society referred to a group of individuals held together, and forming a single society, by virtue of subscribing to a consensually based public authority and sharing in common the practice of civility. Civil society was a human artefact, created, sustained and capable of being changed by human beings. It was not an organic expression of human sociability as Cicero and Aquinas argued, nor a teleological requirement of human nature as Aristotle maintained. It was a rational and artificial institution […] (Parekh 2004: 16).

In the famous work *Leviathan*, Hobbes described the life of human beings in the state of nature as a continuous war, in which people fight each other to affirm their reason. This constant state of fear and uncertainty prevented people from improving their life conditions and, for this reason, they eventually agreed on the creation of a common system of power based on the rules of reason. According to Hobbes' perspective, human beings did not naturally organize into political communities, but they did so as a result of fear and the need to protect themselves. Building a shared power structure in the form of a state would permit going beyond the state of nature and assuring the conditions for the creation of civil society.

With regards to Locke, he is generally deemed a founder of liberal constitutional government and, differently from Hobbes, he clearly opposed monarchy and rejected it as model of civil government (Hall and Trentmann 2005). Locke defended the need to separate the legislative and executive power to protect people from the state. In fact, he sustained that the state, when not respecting the citizens' rights, must be overthrown and, in this respect, he identified two different categories of law: natural law and positive law. The natural law to recognize man's universal rights that are discernible by the exercise of reason. The positive law, by contrast, was emanated by the established government. Thus, if the action of the state went against the law of nature, the removal of the government in power was required. In this

context, civil society represented a specific configuration of political society, realized exclusively when the action of the state was controlled and limited.

Locke's thought stretches at the same time in two different directions. It is strongly connected to classical Aristotelian thought while also looking forward to the forthcoming modernization of the concept. On one hand, Locke shared Aristotle's belief in the sociability of human beings and their capacity of virtuously shaping their life according to a natural universal law, and defended the need of government and civil society to act as a single entity. On the other hand, he considered the opposition between state power and civil society, rather than relating the latter to the state of nature as previous philosophers did. Moreover, his discourse about power legitimacy and the universalism of natural law would make him a reference point in the development of the Enlightenment thinking (DeWiel 1997).

At the end of the eighteenth century, the entrance into the Enlightenment era marked the beginning of the second phase in the long history of civil society theorization. This transition was championed by the work of Scottish Enlightenment philosophers — especially David Hume, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith — who clearly conceived of civil society as a sphere of human relationships independent from the state (Van Rooy 1998). Central in Hume's thought was the idea that people would shape their objectives on the base of moral requirements, but achieving those objectives required the use of reason. When the realization of personal objectives was conducted by enlightened reason, it would spontaneously result in the overall improvement of the whole society.

For his part, Ferguson offered a characterization of the category of civil society in opposition to rude societies. In his perspective, a civil society would protect personal liberties from the interference of the state, and a satisfactory degree of social, political and economic progress would be achieved. The gap existing between civilized and uncivilized societies in terms of development was to be filled through the implementation of *ad hoc* policies by the state (Hill 2018, Cohen and Arato 1997).

Adam Smith's analysis of liberal commercial society led him to interpret civil society as an economic realm autonomous from the state, whose action within it was organized through the intermediate system of private property, free exchanges of labour and contracts. In his perspective the development of a liberal commercial society at the same time required and encouraged the diffusion of civic virtues (Cohen and Arato 1997).

From a global perspective, the work of these authors paved the way towards the definitive separation of the spheres of civil society, family and the state, taking an important step toward the definition of a modern concept of civil society.

2.2 The shaping of modern civil society

A fundamental contribution to lead the concept of civil society towards modernity was given by Hegel. Differently from the previous philosophers, he considered civil society as imbued with instability and tensions, a condition that could not been autonomously altered due to the lack of collective self-consciousness and self-reflection, as well as the absence of capacity to build and follow a moral path. Moving from these premises, Hegel affirmed the necessity of a state, in order to foster civil society development by instilling in it a sense of community, and regulating it to realize a higher form of social life. As a consequence, in Hegel's thought civil society and the state could never be considered as a unity — the state transcended civil society and the latter only represented a moment within it. Moreover, in Hegel's system, civil society represented the space of differentiation where individuals seek their own interests in observance of the law, this space being situated between the sphere of the state and the sphere of family (Parekh 2004). In conclusion, Hegel marked a turning point with the past tradition because of two main reasons: first, he theorized the antinomy of civil and political society and, second, he went beyond the previous dyadic conceptions by designing a triadic model, in which civil society represented the ethic moment existing between the macro dimension of the state and the micro dimension of family.

Hegel's thought greatly influenced contemporary and future contributions to the understanding of civil society. On the base of their political beliefs, his followers divided into two currents: left and right. On the right side, the most relevant voice was that of Alexis de Tocqueville, on whose thought the current dominant liberal vision of civil society is modelled on. De Tocqueville embraced in his analysis two aspects of civil society discussed by Hegel, that is: the pluralism of associational life and its close relationship with the state (DeWiel 1997). The author studied the functioning of American democracy and discussed the centrality attributed within it to equality, a condition which caused at the same time the promotion of social virtues and the isolation of the individuals. De Tocqueville argued that the development of democratic regimes is associated with a greater isolation of its citizens, in fact the abolition of hierarchy and class distinctions would bring to the formation of 'an undiscriminating mass', upon which the democratic state exerts its sovereignty. While acting in the name of the people, the mass is however left without means to effectively control the authority of the state, creating the conditions for the realization of a sort of democratic despotism (Clinton 1993). Tocqueville warned against the tendency of democratic governments to acquire despotic features and celebrated the creation of social boundaries in the form of civic associations. With the aim of achieving common interests, civic associations worked to limit the expansion of the state over social functions and, once converted into political groups, their collective action would influence political decision-making (Howell and Pearce 2001, McIlwaine 2007,

Parekh 2004). In the late twentieth century, the Tocquevillian theorization experienced a great revival and was given a new impetus by the work of different authors, amongst which Robert Putnam's is worthy of note for the great success gained by its concept of social capital (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994). Putnam's analysis went beyond the consideration of formal institutions and their ability to encourage the building of democratic life, focusing on the role of the informal institutions regulating social groups' life (e.g. patterns of trust and code of behaviour) (Howell and Pearce 2001). Putnam's and Tocqueville's views were combined by Walzer during the 1990s. Walzer recognized the nature of civil society as the space of human association free from coercion as well as a network of human relations. According to this view, civil society brings together a differentiated group of associations including churches, trade unions, university and the press (amongst others), leaving political parties outside for being associated to the acquisition of state power and resources (Parekh 2004).

On the left, Marx used Hegel's idea of civil society as a starting point for further development. While Hegel recognized the different social institutions of civil society as independent but also related to the state, Marx rejected the hypothesis of their presumed legitimacy and autonomy. Marx assumed civil society to be the space where the bourgeoisie realized its domination over the labouring class. The economic relations mirrored the underlying relationships of power, and the rest was to be considered a superstructural expression of the given order (DeWiel 1997). According to Marx, modernity was characterized by social tensions, and this was the condition for the progression of capitalism. Within it, civil society was conceived as the dimension in which the real relationships of history (a history different from the narrative of the deeds of great princes) take place. Marx's interpretation, which equates civil society to a mere reproduction of the structure of economic power, led to the conclusion that civil society was only an expression of the capitalist power in force. As a result of the capitalist manipulation of organizational life, civil society was to Marx deprived of any political potential (Schwarzmantel 2015). Thus, civil society for Marx was 'the locus of degradation, not liberation' (DeWiel 1997: 30).

Looking at both the right and the left tradition, Cohen and Arato (1997) proposed the unusual combination of two authors — Gramsci and Parsons — to illustrate the advanced development of Hegel's contribution in the twentieth century. From two opposite perspectives, both authors discussed the distinction of civil society from the state and the economy. Parsons and Gramsci also shared the perspective of seeing civil society as the sphere of social integration of the whole social system, so that they respectively overcame the liberal and the Marxian reductionism, as discussed below.

With regards to Parsons, his work is thought to represent the synthesis of the liberal conception of civil society. In his work Parsons preferred the use of the expression *societal community* as a realm that is separated from the economy, the polity and the culture and is also different from the state. He opposed the individualism of the market and the impersonality of bureaucracies in favour of the principles of solidarity and social integration underpinning the societal community (Howell and Pearce 2001). Parsons understood a modern society as composed of frameworks of legality and frameworks of plurality — that is, associations — and he attributed to the latter the function of creating integration amongst the various components of the social system. The societal community he described and to which he attached a strong normative value was the one he observed in contemporary U.S. reality. Thus, the model that Parsons suggested as desirable and fully realizing the project of modern society is identified with the functioning of the Western liberal societies, in particular of the American model (Cohen and Arato 1997, Howell and Pearce 2001).

Gramsci's thought has been judged as ‘set[ting] the terms of a Great Divide in the contemporary literature on civil society’ (Kumar 2007: 417). Embracing Marxian thought as a starting point, Antonio Gramsci reformulated the concept of civil society and made it a central component in the elaboration of a socialist strategy, opening up new possibilities of action for the leftist activists (Wood 1990, Schwarzmantel 2015). First of all, it must be noted that the conceptualization of civil society in Gramscian thought is characterized by some degree of elasticity, assuming slightly different connotations as his *Prison Notebooks* evolved. In general, Gramsci's theorization of civil society differs from the mainstream for his considering the autonomy of civil society from state and economy to be a useful methodological simplification for the study of the concept, but one that fails to meet reality. In fact, he described an expanded version of the state, which civil society integrates (Schwarzmantel 2015). For Gramsci, civil society represents that component of the state responsible for creating consent amongst subordinated classes, with the aim of maintaining the established order. In his perspective, civil society constitutes the sphere of hegemony, meaning the dimension of the state domination exerted by a set of associations and institutions−such as the Church, the educational system, the press and so forth−through the diffusion of a way of thinking that conforms to the established social and political order. State domination was jointly exerted by civil society and political society, the latter referring to the state's juridical apparatus and its repressive means, through which the state exerted a direct and coercive control. Thus, the state, in this integral version, was understood as the sum of civil society and political society, representing the double face of its total control over citizens: direct and indirect, coercive and cultural (Schwarzmantel 2009b, 2015).

Gramsci's thoughts about civil society were initially concerned with understanding to what extent the established order was rooted, with the aim of conceiving successful strategies

to challenge it. In his perspective, the sphere of civil society came to be intended as a social arena for the potential realization of two opposite projects: preserving and reinforcing the *status quo* or organizing to affirm a social and political alternative to it. In other words, civil society was to be understood as both a hegemonic and a counter-hegemonic force and space for action. Therefore,

> Civil Society is not just an assemblage of actors, i.e. autonomous social groups. It is also the realm of contesting ideas in which the intersubjective meanings upon which people's sense of 'reality' are based can become transformed and new concepts of the natural order of society can emerge (Cox 1999: 10).

Gramsci's conceptualization of civil society highlighted its transformative potential and was favourably received by activists worldwide for opening a new channel for political action, as explained by Wood:

> Gramsci thus appropriated the concept of civil society to mark out the terrain of a new kind of struggle which would take the battle against capitalism not only to its economic foundations but to its cultural and ideological roots in everyday life (1990: 62–63).

Before proceeding with the most recent evolution of this theoretical category, this will be now discussed in relation to the domain of development studies.

2.3 Development doctrines and civil society

By the late 1970s and the early 1980s developed countries were affected by a harsh recession which stoked disaffection with the role of the state, paving the way to the rise of neoliberalism. Concurrently, developing countries were suffering too from the effect of the recession and from a severe debt crisis, which even gave ground to fear of the collapse of the international financial system. Developing countries were so badly hit by the debt crisis that the 1980s were labelled as the ‘lost development decade’, marking a decisive break from the previous theories about development (Thorbecke 2007). The development thinking elaborated from the 1950s to the late 1970s had attributed to the state the role of dominant actor in aid recipient countries. Thus, the state was thought to be responsible for prompting modernization into newly independent countries, through its intervention in different sectors such as agriculture, industry, infrastructure, education and health. During the 1980s, the logic underlying the firm trust in the state's capacity to drive modernization was completely reversed. From that moment on, poverty alleviation and economic stabilization would have depended on the advancement of open economies and a free market, a belief that fostered the diffusion of an anti-state rhetoric. The state in developing countries came to be criticized for

its lack of accountability and representativeness, its corruption, its distortion of market forces, its protection of national industries (among other reasons). Therefore, its position in developing countries rapidly slid from the protagonist of modernization to the main obstacle to social and economic progress (Howell and Pearce 2001, Harrison 2004).

The declining role of the state and the open criticism against it created a favourable environment for the rise of civil society agency in the Global South. Differently from Eastern Europe, where achieving economic and political freedom constituted one of the main objectives of civil society, action in developing countries was primarily focused on the reduction of social and economic inequalities (Howell and Pearce 2001). Equally, the agency of civil society worldwide highlighted a common fundamental trait: the increasing consciousness of the rights attached to the status of citizen. The commitment showed by civil society in claiming the respect of citizens' rights can be read as a request to ratify the cardinal principles of democratic systems. Seligman (1992) further suggested that the civil society category was intentionally employed to refer to democracy, as a way to overcome the fact the term "democracy" had already entered in the phraseology of communist propaganda. Other authors supported Seligman's observation by stating that not only was the association of civil society and democracy strategic, but also postulated the existence of a cause and effect law between the two intellectual categories (Van Rooy 1998).

In the domain of development studies, the conditions were ripe for greeting civil society, a situation that permitted movement beyond the impasse felt by development theory during the 1980s (Schurmann 1996). As discussed, the concept of civil society gave prominence to the political sphere, especially focusing on the process of democratization, indicating a new possible path towards the achievement of a sustained development process. An evident expression of this change was the inversion of the terms of the equation formulated in the 1950s, according to which democracy would eventually result from the establishment of a development process. In fact, in the wake of the new contributions flourishing in this field during the 1980s, democracy came to be understood as a necessary condition for the achievement of development, no longer as a consequence of it (Howell and Pearce 2001). The logic connecting civil society agency and progress in development was not so strong, lacking a sound rationale to support it. However, this shortcoming did not prevent civil society from achieving a considerable success in this field, as vehemently noticed by Comaroff and Comaroff:

> civil society has served as a remarkably fertile call-to-arms across the world. […] But even in the academy, even with all the criticism it has attracted, the idea – the fetish? – of civil society has worked some magic. For in the process of arguing about it, many scholars – like politicians and poets and ordinary people – have rediscovered a language in which to talk about the utopian ideals of democracy and moral community. Amid fin de siècle

> cynicism and retrospection, in a universe beset by the collapse of grand systems and old certainties, advocates of civil society look bravely toward a new world (1999: viii).

Within this context, civil society entered the stage of international development cooperation playing the 'force par excellence symbolizing freedom, antistatism and the defense of democracy', as well as 'the natural counterpart of privatized markets and liberal democracies', reflecting the belief that 'modernization, development, and good governance required vibrant civil society' (Howell and Pearce 2001: 4). Thus, by the end of the twentieth century civil society was attributed both a political and an economic function. Civil society's role in political life consisted in influencing the political decision-making processes through the conduction of a free debate within the framework of democratic associations. With regards to the economic dimension, civil society acted as a mediator between citizens and market, even if in advanced capitalist systems the possibilities of civil society organizations affecting the economic life would be limited when compared to political life (Cohen and Arato 1997).

As a result of the debt crisis and the international recession, the development cooperation system moved towards a new paradigm in the 1980s, which brought economic growth back at the core of development policies, to the detriment of objectives of social nature. This approach to development was supported by the belief that implementing reforms designed to prompt economic growth would be conducive to improvements in the poorest life conditions (Emmerij 2010). This perspective was realized by the adoption of neo-liberal policies, prescribing a reduction of the state interference in economic life, market liberalization, the adoption of measures of privatization, the cutting of taxes on imports and exports amongst others. The dismantling of the state created an urgent need for public services to be delivered and, in this context, the contribution of civil-society organizations mainly consisted in the provision of basic services in place of the state (Doornbos 2001, Harrison 2004, Van Rooy and Robinson 1998, Hearn 1999). It is no coincidence that the 1980s witnessed an intense increase of small-case organizations, the so-called "associational revolution". Those organizations — NGOs especially— were commonly portrayed in the official development discourse as less bureaucratic, more flexible and more cost-effective; a set of features that made them deemed as valuable and effective tools for the implementation of neo-liberal prescriptions and strategies (Cornwall 2006). Another central argument for the promotion of civil society action was the so-called "grassroots advantage", according to which civil society organizations experience a greater closeness to the most marginalized groups when compared to the state apparatus, so they were judged to be most successful in understanding and satisfying the needs of the poorest. Furthermore, their action was considered to be extremely valuable from a political point of view, since it showed a more

participatory approach and thus created a channel for the expression of people's voices (Howell and Pearce 2001, Kamat 2004, Cornwall 2006, Banks and Hulme 2012).

2.4 The rise of the "good governance" agenda: a neo-liberal project

The position of civil society in the development cooperation system experienced further ascent by the early 1990s, when it was eventually put at the core of the aid policy agenda (Hearn 1999). The enhancement of civil society's condition was facilitated by the end of the Cold War, which permitted a shift away from the preoccupations that had marked that period. The concept of "good governance" appeared in parallel with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and rapidly spread in the development discourse, gaining success amongst donors, recipient countries and international financial institutions. Amongst the latter, the World Bank stood out for their commitment to the theorization of "good governance" and its following operationalization.

The concept of good governance was initially conceived as a neutral set of technical reforms of the public sector which were reckoned to be conducive to economic growth (Harrison 2005). As a far-reaching conceptualization, the expression "good governance" easily became a buzzword, for possibly referring to a plurality of topics within the field of public policy-making. The expression "good governance" was engineered by donors and development agencies, where the choice of the adjective "good" implies a value judgement of the decision-making process put in place by different political entities (Doornbos 2001). Thus, good governance soon after came to identify a defined set of policy reforms to implement, deemed as necessary in order to achieve satisfactory progress in terms of economic growth and, more generally, of development. Assuming the articulation of the good-governance agenda made by the World Bank over the 1990s as a base, Mercer proposed a list of the fundamental factors to promote good governance, with a further characterization of the role that civil society plays in advancing it:

> multi-party elections; a free and independent civil society, media and judiciary; the provision of an 'enabling environment' for the free market; respect for the rule of the law; and the decentralization of government. Within this framework civil society is held to be an inherently democratic and democratising sphere wherein private actors and institutions can flourish (2003: 747).

The description of good governance proposed by donors showed a normative character. It outlined a particular configuration of the relationship between the state and

market economies, aimed at assuring favourable conditions for the implementation of the desired policies (Kamat 2004). In developing countries, and in Africa most evidently, the project of good governance clearly took the form of a socio-political engineering project, where the role that social actors are expected to play is described as a function of the underlying dominant political-economic logic (Harrison 2004).

Civil society's contribution within the good-governance project has changed according to the evolution of mainstream thinking in political economy. In particular, two phases can be discerned: the first running over the 1980s and the 1990s, and the second emerging in the late 1990s (Doornbos 2001, Harrison 2004, 2005). According to Harrison's systematization (2004: 18), the first-generation reform referred to the period of promotion of economic liberalization. As previously discussed, under those circumstances the action of civil-society organizations consisted mainly in the provision of basic services in place of the state, which had been in turn limited in its welfare faculties following the implementation of the liberal reforms. The second-generation reforms were realized by the end of the 1990s and brought about the revision of the previous dominant modus operandi, so that it has come to be known as "Post-Washington Consensus". The failure of structural adjustment programmes and neo-liberal policies was attributed to political rather than economic considerations. As a consequence, the centrality of the market was not questioned, and the key change consisted in the resurgence of the state. Within the Post-Washington Consensus the state was deemed as a necessary institution, for it had the means to lay a favourable ground for market operations. The state therefore became the guarantor of a strong market. The role of civil-society organizations was also subjected to changes, shifting from main service providers to watchdogs of the correct and effective implementation of the new development programmes. In the renewed context, civil society actors were intended to be both implementers and accountability guardians, thus performing a function of legitimatization of the dominant paradigm (Harrison 2004, 2005).

In light of this, the good-governance project seemed to have definitely distanced itself from the neutral profile it originally claimed, moving towards the gravitational centre of economic liberalism. Under the conditions presented, 'the effort to strengthen civil society concentrates primarily on nurturing the bourgeoisie and creating an enabling environment for business' (Abrahamsen 2000: 61). It is reasonable to assume that civil society actors were employed to provide a democratic façade to the pursuit of neo-liberal interests. The renewed confidence in the State as development actor was accompanied by the emphasis on the themes of democracy, human rights and civil society as a key actor for the promotion of citizens' participation, but the programs that should realize such discourse showed in practice a different attitude. In fact, despite the fact of CSOs activities having helped towards a more capillary distribution of services, especially amongst most marginalized groups, this was done

‘through channels that are weakly connected to deeper processes of political, economic, and structural changes in which marginalized or excluded groups search for alternative ways of organizing the economy, politics, and social relations’ (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015: 708).

The conceptualization and operationalization of civil society within the framework of development cooperation embodies a specific theorization of civil society, that is, the neo-liberal current. The theoretical distinction between the right and the left traditions previously presented is clearly reproduced within the development cooperation system through the opposition of the liberal democratic mainstream and the alternative current, each of which will be briefly illustrated.

The mainstream version dominates donors and development agencies’ perspectives and is based on the nineteenth-century North American conceptualization of development and democracy, which closely refers to the contribution of Alexis de Tocqueville. The wide group of neo-Tocquevillian studies all share the firm belief that the existence of a strong civil society is inextricably linked to a strong democracy (Howell and Pearce 2001, McIlwaine 2007, Van Rooy 1998). The amplification of the American discourse about civil society has been supported by a variety of think-tanks, amongst which the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies is one of the most prominent. Its work provides empirical evidence of the fact that the action of civil society through norms of reciprocity and trust can effectively influence the political and economic dimension, both in developed and developing countries (Howell and Pearce 2001). The vision of civil society modelled by the American mainstream discourse is one of an autonomous arena of liberty permeated with organizational culture, functioning as the base for the construction of political and economic democracy, in which citizens and their organizations exert their authority upon the state from the outside. The liberal democratic current is associated with a strong normative character, deducible from the unquestioned civil society contribution to the progress of democracy and development (Akman 2012, Comaroff and Comaroff 1999, Howell and Pearce 2001).

This vision provided the theoretical basis for supporting an anti-state rhetoric, which despite having been mitigated, is still present in the dominant neo-liberal agenda for development. In fact, the original liberal formulation postulates an antagonist relationship between state and civil society, in which democracy is assessed according to a zero-sum game criteria along a vertical axis which opposes state and civil society (Akman 2012: 325). Moreover, it is important to remember some of the implications related to the normative character associated with civil society within the mainstream liberal democratic current. First, the undisputed civil society positive contribution to the progress of democracy and development may prevent from considering the orientation of the great variety of groups being

part of civil society, which may be labelled as uncivil. In fact, many groups have shown a hateful and intolerant discourse along with violent actions, realizing what seems to be the antithesis of civil society (Akman 2012). Still, civil society has been portrayed and commonly perceived as animated by people with good intentions acting for noble causes, leaving in the dusk those associations of people forged to pursue wicked objectives (Carothers and Barndt 1999). As a result, the mainstream liberal perspective on civil society is likely to have engendered *'a theological notion, not a political or sociological one'* (Rieff 1999).

Second, as mentioned above, the normative conceptualization of civil society tends to describe a particular modality of relationship between citizens and state — the American model — and suggests it as a standard and neutral blueprint that can be unconditionally applied to a great variety of different contexts, without questioning whether or not it would fit the peculiarities of the considered social context (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015, Carothers and Barndt 1999).

2.5 The transnationalisation of civil society

The discussion about civil society has been extended in more recent times to include the discourse about "global civil society". The fundamental characterizations attributed to the concept of civil society have been transferred and adapted to the broader category of civil society, which, as said, escapes a univocal definition and could be better represented as an umbrella term unifying a wide group of different actors: from social movements to interest groups to international NGOs, among the many.

By extension, global civil society has been described as a third autonomous realm distinct from the state-centric system and from the global market. The essence of global civil society is constituted by the transnational character of its action, which goes beyond the authority and boundaries of the state and directly engages with supranational actors (McIlwaine 2007). On the nature of global civil society, Chandoke eloquently stated:

> If the distinguishing feature of these organizations is that they defy national boundaries, the cornerstone of global civil society is constituted by the self-conscious construction of networks of knowledge and action, [and] by decentred local actors, that cross the reified boundaries of space as though they were not there (2002: 36).

In his characterization of global civil society, Chandoke highlighted that while the overrunning of the boundaries of states may be the superficial visible feature of global civil society, its essence is rooted in the development of a new kind of feeling, a sense of responsibility coming from being citizens of the same world.

Thus, thinking in terms of global civil society cannot be reduced to the extensive use of a stretched concept of civil society, but requires considering the unfolding of a new dimension in the feeling of citizenship, shaped by the intent to influence global policies. From this perspective, the state-centric vision has been dismissed in favour of the choice of civil actors to participate through their own networks in the shaping of global power hierarchies, rather than to intervene on specific national contexts (Chandoke 2002, Kumar 2007, Falk 2005).

The theoretical schematization of the existing literature on civil society in two currents — the neo-liberal and the alternative — applies also to the study of global civil society. The neo-liberal mainstream seems to orient the definition of global civil society, which is described as a precondition for the peaceful coexistence of different identities and values worldwide. As observed by Colas:

> The liberal notions of plurality, difference, freedom and individual rights thus constantly resurface in connection with global civil society, and so on this rendition the concept carries with it — however reluctantly — the burden of a liberal project to be realised (2005: 19).

Focusing on development cooperation, the neo-liberal version has been promoted worldwide by donors' institutions and international financial institutions (IFIs) — especially by the World Bank — and civil society has become an essential ingredient of the development agenda, for the implementation of reforms in favour of free market and parliamentary democracy (Kaldor 2005). In this context, NGOs have been tamed and their agency tailored to a neo-liberal development agenda, in which they play the role of vigilante ensuring the correct implementation of development projects and guarantors of the respect of accountability mechanisms. Thus, NGOs' original critical approach has been replaced by a much smoother one, in which these organizations play a legitimating role. The close collaboration of NGOs, governments and donors within the framework of development partnerships has brought about NGOs' entrance into the system from which they previously claimed their independence and difference (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015, Howell and Pearce 2001, Kaldor 2005, Hearn 2007). The result was the assimilation of NGOs into the official development cooperation system alongside donors, IFIs and governments, resulting in the normalization of their criticisms, which was finally appropriated by the discourses of the main development institutions. In this regard, James Heartfield noted that 'curiously, the more forthright the denunciations of the World Bank, IMF and the rest of the Washington consensus, the more solicitous these institutions are towards their critics' (2005: 96). As an example, the author referred to the 2000 World Banks' Development Report, which pledges

to consult civil society organizations on a regular basis, especially caring about those representing the most disadvantaged sections of the population of developing countries.

The increasing space acquired by civil society organizations — especially NGOs — within the development cooperation system occurred as a corollary of the affirmation of a neo-liberal agenda. Acting within a neo-liberal agenda for development has highly exposed NGOs to the risk of co-option. In fact, the intensification of their action has mainly targeted the flourishing of a free market, without working to create, expand and strengthen potential spaces for local civil society to act as a political agent. Notwithstanding the fact that a global civil society has stemmed from a new feeling of citizenship and developed around the desire to shape global policies and take responsibility for the achievement of global justice goals, these aims have often been assimilated into the dominant apparatus and modus operandi. By receiving and legitimating the criticisms levelled against the status quo in this field, dominant institutions have worked to integrate critical voices within the mainstream narrative, creating new tools that formally reflect those criticisms, while smoothing their inherent political dimension. In this sense, a strong support from global civil society has emerged to campaigns targeting poverty reduction which reproduce and strengthen the neoliberal dominant paradigm. In such campaigns, poverty is presented as a phenomenon originating from market failures, conveying a commodification of the notion of development, which then comes to be equated with the possession of goods and of services to be sold and bought within the free market (Richey and Ponte 2011). In this process of fabrication of a neoliberal agenda, civil society — NGOs especially — participates at two levels. First, civil society organizations perform as watchdogs of the right implementation of privatization and liberalization reforms and as services providers themselves (Cornwall 2006); second, they support poverty reduction campaigns that oversimplify the nature of development, reducing it to a consequence of market failures. In doing so, the crucial issues of power relationships and political voices of the poor are overlooked, so that the potential of social change inherent in the growth of a local civil society is significantly limited (Banks and Hulme 2014, Richey and Ponte 2011). Within the context of a consumerist approach to development, the activism of global civil society further obscures national and local civil society, so that the imaginary of development that dominates Western campaigns tends to picture Western actors as responsible for putting an end to poverty and inequality. In advocating for Western responsibility for advancing development in the global South, local civil society is presented as a passive and powerless actor, whose space for action is engulfed by the passionate ego of Western actors (Richey and Ponte 2011).

Assuming poverty as a consequence of market failure prevents us from considering its intrinsic political nature, paving the way for the affirmation of a ‘technocratic development via trade policy, economic openness, voucher systems and micro-lending. These solutions

subscribe to the tenets of free markets with little consideration of the political economy involved in their operation' (Gulrajani 2011: 8). As discussed, the set of reforms promoted under the New Washington Consensus was presented as a neutral set of measures, inferring their validity from a presumed rationality of administrative principles regarding governance and, therefore, indiscriminately applicable to any socio-political context. In parallel with the proliferation of market-oriented policies, the management of foreign aid systems was pervaded by corporate principles. As noted by Georgeou and Engel:

> […] 'new managerialism', [it] describes the set of knowledges and practices that inform neoliberal operations and organisational governance. These are publicly aimed at increasing government efficiency but – in line with the neoliberal agenda of small government, privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation – serve to limit the size of the state sector and create a range of quasi-markets. Further, new managerialism promotes the view that social and political issues are technical and procedural matters to be managed by experts (2011: 299).

Efficiency came to be the supreme orienting principle in aid management. While efficiency as the pursuit of the best allocation of resources with the aim of meeting a greater portion of needs within a target population is desirable, it is misleading when applied within a context of public service. For the quest for ideal efficiency in terms of costs, resources and results replicate a business model that does not prioritise social objectives and citizens' needs (Gulrajani 2011, Georgeou and Engel 2011). A pivot point of the new managerial approach to development is the idea of performance measurement, from which stems the need for a 'results-based management' of the aid system. A results-based management requires relevant concepts — e.g. poverty —, to be quantitatively analysed and understood, in order to be translated into targets and indicators against which potential outcomes have to be measured. The complex nature of development processes can hardly be caught and measured in terms of inputs and outputs, and has most of the time been reduced to its economic dimension; as long term processes and concepts – e.g. citizens empowerment – are quite hard to detect and assess. Nevertheless, results-based management has become the blueprint for the international community, as clearly reflected in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (both discussed in Chapter 3) (Engel 2014, Georgeou and Engel 2011, Gulrajani 2011).

The managerial revolution had a clear impact on CSOs and NGOs actions and organisation. Those organisations have increasingly interpreted and tackled poverty and inequality as technical issues, 'providing social and economic inputs based on a technical assessment of capacities and needs of the community' (Kamat 2004: 168); moving away from a critical action based on the critique of power asymmetries and a commitment to social justice. This essential change in their action has been mirrored by a progressive

professionalization of their staff, while before, especially looking at community-based NGOs, a de-professionalization of CSOs leadership was deemed recommendable to ensure a greater closeness and influence of grass roots (Banks and Hulme 2012, Kamat 2004). Building on the existing literature on CSOs, Kamat (2004) conveys that, despite the uniqueness of each case study, a common trend towards 'professionalization and depoliticization' is observable in community-based NGOs. By way of example of this trend, Brass (2011) pointed out that ninety per cent of NGOs registered in Kenya are mainly involved in service delivery (cf. Banks and Hulme 2012, Kamat 2004).

The 1995 World Bank's 'Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration between the World Bank and Non-Governmental Organizations' is a document drafted with the intention of identifying the challenges and advantages of working with NGOs. NGO's politicization is stated to be a weakness and an actual limit to the possibility of partnering NGOs, leading to the recommendation to select apolitical NGOs when assessing potential collaborations (Malena 1995: 77). Referring to the criteria for selection of partners, the same document points out that NGOs' organizational capacity should be assessed on the basis of proven track records, not stated goals (Malena 1995: 7). The relevance attributed to organisational assistance for the choice of partners and, therefore, the allocation of funding, implies a pressure for NGOs to effectively adapt to managerialism's requirements. That also means that, in order to create a desirable profile in the eyes of financial institutions, donors and governments, NGOs might opt for projects that are more likely to be successful in terms of outputs delivery. This implies selecting outputs with an easily quantifiable and assessable nature, for example a certain number of services delivered or goods provided, along with the number of beneficiaries reached. The focus on performance and the rule of results-based management also works to channel NGOs efforts into a specific model of projects and programmes, at the detriment of other activities that might target essential long-term development outcomes, aiming at prompting deeper process of social change. Again, the existing neoliberal system constrains the action of civil society actors, pushing them to follow a particular course of action that smooths or even neutralises their political character, and that is functional to the neoliberal system's action and reproduction.

In fact, the action of CSOs and NGOs within the dominant managerial neoliberal framework has supported an entrepreneurial notion of empowerment, according to which the poor are responsible themselves to find a solution for the satisfaction of their needs by becoming active agents on the market, this notion being far from the idea of empowerment built on social justice. If the quality of the poor's livelihood is understood as depending on the single capacity to gain his/her own space on the market, then the idea of public welfare dissolves. The idea of a public good that rises above single interests comes to be neutralized and replaced by the idea of a common space where individual needs interact and compete. In

this sense, Kamat (2004: 169–170) theorises NGOs as active promoters of the privatisation of public welfare. The author further articulates her concept, by postulating a symmetrical evolution for the public sphere at a global level, within the global policy arena. The global governance dimension seems to be pervaded as well by a neoliberal spirit and understanding of democracy, grounded on the principle of pluralism. Accordingly, the global policy arena has been forged on the model of multi-stakeholder partnerships, in which the maximum degree of inclusivity has to be guaranteed, for all the different voices to be heard and taken to heart. In this regard, it is useful to elucidate the pluralist perspective advocated by the World Bank:

> [O]ur partnerships must be inclusive – involving bilaterals and multilaterals, the United Nations, the European Union, regional organizations, the World Trade Organization, labor organizations, NGOs, foundations and the private sector. With each of us playing to our respective strengths, we can leverage up the entire development effort (Speech by Wolfensohn, 1997: 5, cf. Kamat 2004: 166).

The pluralist approach to global governance epitomizes the liberal perspective of democratic spaces, where all the stakeholders are ensured a place and the possibility to act on an equal step, as in the case of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Where equality is guaranteed to the stakeholders, the questions of power relationships and legitimacy remain unproblematized though. So, for example, the voices of people's representatives and those of profit-seeking corporations are equalized, from the point of view of legitimacy and, formally, of political weight (for a broader discussion of multi-stakeholders partnerships see chapter 4). Building on these observations, Kamat sees a deep assimilation of NGOs, and CSOs by extension, within the dominant neoliberal paradigm, both at the national and global level:

> In reclaiming the public space as a negotiation between different private interests, the concept of the public good is impossible to identify, let alone defend. Thus, rather than deepening the gains made on the basis of popular democratic struggles, NGOs are being re-inscribed in the current policy discourse in ways that strengthen liberalism and undermine democracy. Given this trend, it is unlikely that NGOs can be the honest brokers of people's interests (Kamat 2004: 171).

Since CSOs 'became the new sweethearts of the development sector' (Banks and Hulme 2012: 5), substantial funding has been channelled through them, often more than those allocated to governments (Banks and Hulme 2012). This closeness is likely to have made NGOs more inclined to comply with mainstream institutions and actors in this field, causing a downplaying of their political views and, eventually, a legitimisation of the hegemonic system (Cox 1999). Drawing from the previous discussion, CSOs that tend to act as counter-hegemonic actors share several characteristics, i.e. apolitical character of their actions, the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors and the high degree of internal

professionalization. From a global perspective, CSOs seem to have been significantly co-opted and subsumed within the hegemonic neo-liberal system, to the point that they have become active promoters of the given order. However, many CSOs remain aware of co-option mechanisms and have not given up their projects of social justice and alternative social models; those CSOs represent the antithesis of a hegemonic civil society.

Moving from opposite theoretical premises, the alternative current of global civil society found its roots in the Neo-Gramscian school (discussed below). This current includes a multiplicity of voices, from grass-roots organizations to international social movements, all sharing a vivid critique of capitalism. Despite the fact that the unorthodox current has not yet organized into a clear and strongly articulated alternative to the mainstream, it distinguishes itself in the role played by mutuality and solidarity, while the mainstream approach originally celebrated the individual emancipation from kinship bonds in favour of the affirmation of the individual right to self-determination (Howell and Pearce 2001). Thus, the alternative current recovers and values the bonds of kinship and community as being an important source of solidarity and, thus, as an effective means to oppose capitalistic individualism (Howell and Pearce 2001). The alternative current of global civil society comprehends a great heterogeneity of actors; social movements, socialist think-tanks, ecological groups, peace groups and, regarding the field of development cooperation, even some NGOs (Schwarzmantel 2009a). This great variety of social actors are generally described as movements from below and gathered under the category of Alternative Globalization Movement (AGM). They are united by the common project of creating an opposition to the worldwide affirmation of neo-liberalism, reputed to be responsible for the diffusion of social and economic inequalities around the world, for the neo-imperialist exploitation of developing countries and for severely damaging the Earth's ecosystem (Mark McNally 2009).

2.6 A Neo-Gramscian perspective on the CSO Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

The research project follows the evolution of the aid-effectiveness agenda and its late transition to "development effectiveness", with a closer look at the role played by civil-society actors within this process. The analysis of the concept of civil society and its connection with the field of international development cooperation allows us to trace the contours of the dominant neo-liberal conceptualization of civil society, and to understand how it serves the unfolding and reproduction of the given order. As previously discussed, the concept of civil

society has been moulded to fit the perimeter of a neoliberal world order, so its potential to prompt social change has been toned down and has been celebrated only to the extent that it facilitates a smooth running of the system, while denying any effective space for manoeuvre for civil society actors to challenge it. NGOs in particular have experienced a process of co-option within the system of official development cooperation, and their criticism against specific aspects of the aid delivery system was appropriated by the same institutions responsible for the questioned practices. As a result, expressions such as 'participation', 'bottom-up' or 'partnership' were subsumed within the official narrative on development cooperation, eluding the possibility of substantial challenges to the status quo. Despite a massive growth of NGOs activities during the twentieth century and, especially, after the wave between the late 1970s to 1980s that Hulme and Banks defined as 'the NGO decade' (Banks and Hulme 2012: 6), their power to effectively orient the definition of development policies did not experience the same intensification. This seems to be a signal of their more or less conscious adjustment to the dominant system.

Neo-Gramscian studies have represented a salient reference point for the development of the research project. The intellectual work of Antonio Gramsci greatly influenced the field of International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE), giving rise to what Gill referred as the 'Italian School' in IR (Gill 1993: 21). Pioneering was the contribution of Robert W. Cox, who, in 1983, presented to scholars a new reading of Gramscian thought, from which would stem a fresh understanding of the evolution of the international order and of its hegemonic character (Cox 1983). Cox's contribution was followed by different publications within the next decade, all employing a Gramscian lens to analyse the changes happening in the world order (Germain and Kenny 1998).

A major reason for the success of the Neo-Gramscian School was its capacity to critically engage within the field of international studies. Specifically, the Neo-Gramscian theoretical project was successful in bringing a strong critical alternative on the table of International Relations, a traditionally conservative field. Those contributions flourished during a historical moment characterized by the 'triumph of the West', sealed by 'an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism' (Fukuyama 1989: 1). It was in this context that Neo-Gramscian theories broke in and offered a new way to look at the established order and suggested a space to challenge it. In this sense, the concern of this research project with the realization of alternative views of development within the mainstream development cooperation system finds itself aligned with the critical view promoted by the Neo-Gramscian current.

Gramsci's original work calls attention to the transformative potential of human beings and advocates a 'creative view of human agency' (Schwarzmantel 2009a: 3), which

allows his analysis to go beyond deterministic and ahistorical structuralist approaches to IR (Germain and Kenny 1998: 5). In this context, the Gramscian dialectical conception of history led to an understanding of reality as a specific articulation of social forces and its inherent contradictions, amongst which the potential for social change lies. The dialectical exercise permits us to question the social reality that appears to be objective and reified, and to understand the functioning of the underlying institutions and practices that inform it. On this point, Rupert clearly states that thinking critically opens the way to a radicalization of ontology: 'no longer viewed as a priori, i.e., as prior to and constitutive of the reality which we can know, it becomes instead an ongoing social product, historically concrete and contestable' (Rupert 1995: 67). Therefore, neo-Gramscian theorists reject the problem-solving attitude peculiar to the mainstream in IR and IPE and the related aim of ensuring a smooth running of the established order, in favour of understanding the specific combination of social forces that regulate it (Ayers 2008, Cox 1983, Gill 1993).

Another element of success of the neo-Gramscian approach is a result of its conceptualization of historical materialism, from which derives a more ductile interpretation of hegemony, historical block and, finally, civil society. neo-Gramscian scholars have employed the category of hegemony, originating from the analysis of the Italian situation between the 1920-1930s, to make sense of the present world order. Differently from the use of hegemony made within neo-realist theoretical frameworks, the neo-Gramscian approach emphasizes its nature of contestable social product and, therefore, denies its reduction to a matter of mere material conditions. Understanding hegemony and historical block in a Neo-Gramscian way requires looking beyond the state as a unit of analysis, to consider the larger socio-economic context in which states operate. McNally (2009) argued that the international dimension of politics is well reflected in Gramsci's thought, and, moreover, this must be fully considered to gain a full understanding of the concept of hegemony. Indeed, Gramsci was aware of the role of international politics and considered it a fundamental moment in the construction of hegemony. In the *Prison Notebooks* he stated:

> Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but the international and world-wide field, between complexes of national and continental civilizations (Gramsci 1971: 350; cfr. Schwarzmantel 2009b: 8).

Gramsci's political activism was indeed animated by a strong international character, reflecting the belief that *'*capitalism is a world phenomenon*'* (Gramsci 1971: 69) and that revolution started within national boundaries would never be successful if not directly linked to an international struggle. McNally (2009) opposed criticism that linked the application of Gramsci's concepts to a global scale built upon the centrality in his thought of the national-

popular element. Replying to those criticisms by affirming that the introduction of the national-popular served to enrich Gramsci's internationalism, McNally further argued that Gramsci's early internationalism evolved to escape the tendency to acquire an intellectualistic feature, and this aim was achieved by anchoring it to people's feelings, traditions and specific national experiences. From this point of view, international strategies met the national dimension of life and were re-interpreted to be meaningful within the perspective of the state (Mark McNally 2009).

The previous considerations paved the way for the understanding of a fundamental innovation introduced by the neo-Gramscian school, i.e., the extension of civil society on a global scale. In Gramsci's thought civil society is intended as 'the political space and collective institutions in which and through which individuals form political identities […]. It is the realm of voluntary associations, of the norms and practices which make them possible, and of the collective identities they form' (Murphy 1994: 31). Global civil society has come to be the outcome of the process of transnationalisation of social forces, unfolded by the system of practices and meanings promoted by both public and private transnational institutions (Germain and Kenny 1998: 7). Global civil society directly emanates from the continuously evolving hegemonic global system, which in this work is intended as reflecting a neo-liberalist model, affirmed and reproduced through the work of regulatory institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank (Schwarzmantel 2009b). In line with Gramscian thought, civil society is at the same time the place where the neoliberal project is collectively processed and validated, as well as the space where the dominant common sense may be challenged.

It was previously presented how the spread of neoliberalism on a global scale inspired the creation of an alternative vast mass of civil society actors, proposing an antagonistic model of globalization based on the achievement of global justice through transnational networks of solidarity. Here lies another fundamental value of the Neo-Gramscian perspective, which is the attention paid to the crucial question of political agency intended as 'those forces and movements which bring into being the alternative society sketched out by the theory in question' (Schwarzmantel 2009a: 79). Gramsci's original contribution within the context of the Marxist orthodoxy is the inclusion of culture as a fundamental component of political action. As a result, any revolutionary process would need to start from a new *Weltanschauung* (Schwarzmantel 2015). The responsibility of creating and spreading an alternative culture was attributed in the *Prison Notebooks* to the figure of the Modern Prince, which he identified with the political party. The communist party was expected to perform this task by widening the understanding of subordinated classes of their own condition and, thus, creating a new consciousness in civil society. Gramsci borrowed the figure of the Prince from Machiavelli,

but adapted it to his time to express the need of the revolutionary process to be an expression of a collective body and a multitude of minds (Schwarzmantel 2009a).

Different Neo-Gramscian theorists have identified new social movements and, especially, the Alter Globalization Movement (AGM) as the most effective contemporary revolutionary agents. In particular, Gill stood out for proposing the idea of a Postmodern Prince, which he identifies with those forces that resist the globalization process led by capital. Gill observes that 'these movements are beginning to form what Gramsci called "an organism, a complex element of society" that is beginning to point towards the realization of a "collective will"' (Gill 2000: 138).

In fact, modern social movements and, especially, the Alter Globalization Movement share different qualities that Gramsci described as necessary for the Party to fulfil its counterhegemonic mission. First of all, movements recognise and value civil society as a sphere for political struggle. Moreover, social movements assume the creation of a common vision of the world based on solidarity as a primary condition for the creation of a collective project aimed subverting the status quo (Della Porta et al. 2006). The creation of this common consciousness on a new intellectual and moral basis to challenge the hegemonic system well reflects the strategy designed by Gramsci to bring about social transformation. Again, in line with a neo-Gramscian strategical thought, social movements have shown their commitment to building alliances amongst those forces willing to contribute to the definition of a counterhegemonic vision. Modern movements have also forged strategic links with traditional forces, such as trade unions and political parties —a fact that, again shows closeness to the Gramscian project of gaining power through fighting both at the level of civil society and at the level of state institutions. In this regard, McNally noted how modern social movements and the AGM cannot be captured by the analysis proposed by the theorists of early social movements, which described the latter as anti-institutional formations, lacking a strong internal structure and built on the base of informal social relations and episodic interaction (Alberoni 1984, Diani 1992). Therefore, modern social movements have been evolving in a sense that meets Gramsci's project of building a counter-hegemonic force, confirming the value and the effectiveness of Gramscian categories for the analysis of the present world order.

In summary, the action of social forces belonging to the alternative current of global civil society share several features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung;* (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices; (iii) to intertwine local, national and global levels of action· and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure.

In light of the previous discussion, a neo-Gramscian perspective is in line with the aims of the present research. First, the field of international development cooperation is thought to be dominated by a mainstream neoliberal project, which is considered to be at the same time a product and active component of a wider global hegemonic project. Similarly to the alternative stream of global civil society, the CPDE has worked since 2012 to create its own vision of development and development cooperation, putting the rejection of neoliberal basic assumptions at its core. Despite the CPDE's genuine willingness to bring about an alternative development agenda, its action may be mitigated, being co-opted within the GPEDC's mainstream position. In fact, the GPEDC was created ex novo by development actors to constitute a multi-stakeholder platform for those actors to participate on an equal step. The GPEDC's institutional design formally ensures an equal status to all the stakeholders but follows a relational conception of space that may obscure the invisible structures that permeate it (Bourdieu 1989). Space, as LeFebvre famously argued, is not a given that is simply there but a 'social product' whose main characteristic is its being a 'dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence of domination'; that is, space is ran across by power (Lefebvre 1991: 24). This is the conceptual ground upon which Gaventa can offer a fresh development, arguing that the reverse is also true: power relationships are manifested in spatial terms. Power can (indeed, must) be understood 'in relation to how spaces of engagements are created, and the levels of power (from local to global)' in order to appreciate and, finally, to evaluate 'the possibilities of transformative action in various political spaces' (Gaventa 2006: 25). At stake, as Andrea Cornwall perceptively notes, is the very possibility of participation—what could be now phrased as access within a power-infused controlled space. In practice, societal spaces might be declared as open, free and equal, and even projected to be so by the designs of the institutions that seek the use of 'participatory approaches'. Yet, in this apparent level field power is still at work. Indeed,

> issues of power and difference may not only undermine the very possibility of equitable, consensual decision-making, they may also restrict the possibility of 'thinking outside the box', reinforcing hegemonic perspectives and status-quo reinforcing solutions (Cornwall 2002: 5).

Understanding the GPEDC in terms that conjugate space and power allows for an understanding of the dynamics of participation and its possible asymmetries. Accordingly, despite the formal characterization of the GPEDC as an arena built to respect equality, the differences existing in power status amongst the stakeholders continue and are likely to recreate the asymmetries that are in and out of it. In this sense it is important to consider the GPEDC as a dynamic arena, a space that, far from being neutral, is the result of a dialectical negotiation of meanings and practices amongst different actors and that, therefore, reflects the contingent relations of social forces (Lefebvre 1991).

The CPDE seems to share the features that characterise the action of the alternative current of global civil society. The CPDE is moving between the more or less visible power relationships that permeate the GPEDC and its capacity of fulfilling its project will depend on its ability to think and act strategically, in order to take advantage of new channels for action and progressively increase its voice to effectively face actors that have been traditionally given a major political weight.

The evolution of civil society actors' action and the process that led to the launch of the GPEDC are discussed in the chapter 3, which aims at presenting the reforms realized within the aid system under the "aid effectiveness" paradigm and later on, during the transition towards a new modus operandi.

Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the methodological dimension of the research project, which is divided into six subsections: research strategy, design, methods, analytical framework, positionality and iterative data collection, and limitations. As previously introduced, the research topic originated from the study of the innovations promoted in the field of development cooperation since the realisation of the Busan High Level Forum for Development Effectiveness. The research especially focuses on two global partnerships, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) and the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). The CPDE's critical attitude towards the GPEDC's position on main development issues led to reflection on the future evolution of the CPDE action within the GPEDC. In this respect, two scenarios were identified: the CPDE continuing to perform as an internal opposition or, alternatively, aligning with the GPEDC mainstream view. The tension between these two opposite possibilities oriented the researcher to look at the action of the CPDE in a neo-Gramscian way: as a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic force within the context of the GPEDC. Reflecting on this tension, the research methodology discussed in this section has been elaborated with the aim of satisfactorily addressing the following research question: 'To what extent and in what ways does the CPDE perform a counter-hegemonic or hegemonic role within the GPEDC?'

The first section presents the research strategy, which discusses the epistemological and ontological nature of the research project. Elements of the theoretical framework are recalled for examining the pertinence of the strategies selected to orient the research. The continuous dialogue between the theoretical framework and the theory of research in social sciences will serve as a basis to motivate the choice of an inductive qualitative approach.

The second section is dedicated to the research design. The aim of this subsection is to illustrate the methodological properties that led to a case study approach over other research designs. The case study has been applied in the form of a specific category, that is, the unique case study.

The third section examines the methods employed for data collection — semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis — giving details on their application in the specific context of the CPDE action within the GPEDC.

The fourth section presents the analytical framework and aims to provide a general explanation of how the data collected were interpreted. The analysis was done in two phases. First, the GPEDC and the CPDE were considered independently, paying attention to their specific history and organisational features. Second, the GPEDC and the CPDE were considered together to understand the emerging patterns in their interaction. This operation enabled a deeper understanding of CPDE action within the GPEDC and, therefore, to localise the CPDE within the scale of possible positions between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic agency. To this aim, the action of the CPDE was assessed against the features identified in chapter one as distinguishing those forces. In particular, the CPDE potential to act in a hegemonic way was assessed against the presence of three features: (i) apolitical activities, (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors, and (iii) the degree of internal professionalisation. Similarly, the CPDE potential to act as a counter-hegemonic force was assessed against four essential features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung*, (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices, (iii) the ability to intertwine local, national and global levels of action, and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure.

The fifth section discusses issues related to the researcher's positionality. The researcher's position in relation to the CPDE and its members gradually evolved during the realisation of the research project, from 'outsider' towards 'insider'. The closeness gained to the CPDE members has produced a constant awareness of the potential bias in the interpretation of the data collected. With this in mind, the research was conducted so that the outcome would reflect the voices of the CPDE members as far as possible.

Finally, the sixth section exposes the limitations that the research project had dealt with, especially regarding research strategy and data collection. The limitations mainly resulted from time constraints and difficulties experienced in accessing civil society actors.

3.1 Research Strategy

The elaboration of a research strategy must simultaneously keep into consideration three elements: ontology, epistemology, and the relationship between theory and research. The discussion of these three dimensions was not approached as a prerequisite for the development of an appropriate methodology to investigate the subject in question. This is not attributable to a methodological deficiency, but rather to a choice made in terms of methodological awareness. The research project presented was not informed by a principled methodological awareness, meaning that the research praxis was not derived as a function of an ontological and epistemological position, nor as a function of a specific relationship

between theory and research. The methodological awareness characterising this project is better defined as pragmatic, as ‘it offers the researcher the prospect of choosing the research strategy and research design which offer the most promising outcomes given the nature of the research question and the audience for the research’ (Kelly 2016: 33).

Therefore, the choice of the research strategy and research design in this project was formulated bearing in mind the subject of the study, and following the scrutiny of different methodological instruments in order to find those with a higher potential for satisfactorily answering the research questions.

However, the research project is not devoid of theoretical foundations. In fact, as argued by Bryman, **‘**the literature acts as a proxy for theory’ (2012: 22). In this, case the research questions stemmed from the analysis of the literature produced on the topic of interest, which assumes the role of background theory. Even when replaced by literature, theory is not absent from the project for it is implied in the literature and, more or less directly deducible from it. If we conceive theory as ‘grand-theory’, the research project refers to critical theory.

The research project values the search for alternative models and practices of development from the dominant neoliberal order, examining in particular the case of the CPDE as a potentially transformative actor within the development cooperation system. The research declines a problem-solving attitude in studying the effectiveness of the development cooperation system, and rather, calls into question the functioning of its current governance system. It examines the action of those actors, as the CPDE, who advocate for the need to change the existing order through the affirmation of different shared values, narratives and praxis (Cox 1981). Moving in this direction, the research echoes the critical theory denunciation —especially as articulated by the Frankfurt School theorists — of the positivist attitude in treating social phenomena as social facts. This is in accordance with a Durkheimian vision of social reality (Durkheim 1982: 31–166). In critical theory, this attitude is critiqued for taking reality for granted, excluding a critical discussion of the nature of social phenomena and, therefore, producing a form of knowledge that corroborates and preserves the status quo.

In continuity with this criticism, the research project proposes an open discussion of the given order and engages with a ‘dialectical imagination’ exercise (Jay 1973: 41–85). The CPDE’s capacity for pursuing the transformative potential implied in the present order is assessed, embedded, in this case, in the GPEDC. According to Agger (1991), positioning the research within a critical theoretical perspective realises the dissolution of the distinction made between epistemological and social theory concerns, implying specific consequences in terms of methodology. As Agger stated: ‘In this sense, they help deconstruct methodology, showing that method, like the philosophy of science, is not simply a technical apparatus but

a rhetorical means for concealing metaphysically and politically freighted arguments in the densely technical discourse/practice of quantitative analysis and figural gesture' (1991: 119).

The previous affirmation suggests a resistance to practices of quantification of social phenomena, which are deemed to hide the political meanings of social matters by reifying them through the pure rationality of mathematics (Agger 1991). At first instance, this would orient the researcher towards the choice of qualitative strategies in the study of the topic of interest. However, this would not constitute a sufficient motivation, as qualitative strategies may also be employed in an acritical way. The choice of a qualitative research strategy in this case was determined, as mentioned before, on the basis of more pragmatic considerations. This was motivated by the need to find adequate answers to the questions of the research project. In particular, the main research question intends to investigate the transformative potential of the CPDE. As previously discussed, the CPDE has declared a critical position towards the GPEDC and declared itself in opposition to the dominant neo-liberal paradigm.

This consideration led to question if, and to what extent, the CPDE is able to perform as a counter-hegemonic force within the renewed governance system of development cooperation. This way of addressing the research problem through a neo-Gramscian perspective seems to privilege a qualitative approach. In fact, according to Gramsci:

> The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned […] that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in the particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated — i.e. knowledge' (Gramsci 1971: 418, cit. in Jubas 2010: 226).

Jubas (2010) affirmed that Gramsci's epistemological stand requires the use of a qualitative research strategy as it permits the disclosure of people's feelings and experiences and advocates the need for interpreting a specific issue within the social context in which it develops. In fact, qualitative research strategies are qualified as 'meaning-centred and informed by the interpretivist tradition in social theory'(Kelly 2016: 19), a characteristic that makes them suitable for 'explain[ing] social action in terms of the subjective meanings of the actor and the constructions placed upon their actions by themselves and other actors' (Kelly 2016: 19–20). Thus, turning to the present research project, a qualitative approach is preferable as it aligns with the purpose of inquiring how the formal recognition of the new civil society organisation's status is understood and operationalised.

A qualitative approach is thought to be desirable to gain a comprehension of the subject in question from the perspective of actors who themselves are concerned with it. The choice of a qualitative approach in this research was mainly intended to reveal the CPDE's actors' opinions on their course of actions, their understandings of the ongoing evolution of

the development cooperation system, and how they perceive their position in it. Also, it was considered that a qualitative approach would best fit the research project as it draws attention to processes, allowing the dynamics of change over time in a given frame of reference to unfold (Bryman 2012). This characteristic of qualitative approaches was judged to be of service to the research project as it aimed to study the evolution of civil society agents in this moment of change and transition towards a new paradigm for the development cooperation system.

Another advantage associated with qualitative approaches is the flexibility of the research design, a feature which responds to the purpose of the qualitative approach to see a social phenomenon through the eyes of the individuals studied. Qualitative approaches reject the strict methods of data collection and analysis inherent in quantitative approaches, as a previous theoretical framework imposed by the research could affect the emergence of individuals points of view. This could preclude a genuine comprehension of the social context and of the reasons that move social actors.

For these reasons, the research design has not been highly structured. This is reflected, for example, in the choice of employing semi-structured interviews (Bryman 2012, Kelly 2016). According to this stance, research questions, theoretical concepts, and data collection methods are to be seen as a working framework which is liable to be modified throughout the research project life cycle (Kelly 2016). Taking the previous discussion about the research strategy into consideration, an inductive approach was adopted. This means that in terms of the connection between theory and social research, theory emerges as an outcome of the research process. In the development of the project, research questions were answered following the process of data collection and data analysis, which has resulted in the elaboration of an adequate theory.

It worthy of note that despite deductive and inductive strategies having generally been presented as opposite paths in the process of knowledge building, they are not mutually exclusive, and it is possible to detect inductive moments using a deductive approach and vice versa (Bryman 2012). Therefore, the choice of an inductive approach always implies, to a certain degree, the employment of a deductive kind of thinking. For example, researchers need to make decisions about how to conduct research at a stage that precedes data collection by defining the perimeter of the social objects to consider, and how to address it, etc. Moreover, the definition of a topic to be investigated is always influenced by the researcher's previous theoretical perspective, which earlier data and literature were consulted, or concern with a specific thematic, all of which act in concert to direct the attention towards specific key issues to investigate (Kelly 2016).

On this point, Silverman (2005) advocated the need for establishing a research problem and a method to analyse it as steps to be necessarily taken before starting data collection, in order to make the latter meaningful. Similarly, the research project in question, which is mainly inductive in nature, progressed with the delimitation of a specific topic of interest within the pertinent literature, followed by the formulation of research questions. These actions were conceived as preliminary requirements to be fulfilled in order to bring about an effective data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research design

The research design delimits the framework for the realisation of data collection and the following analysis. Since the project is concerned with the articulation of CPDE action within the context of the new aid governance system, the CPDE was holistically recognised as the unit of analysis. The research process follows a case study approach for several reasons. First, it is consistent with the neo-Gramscian perspective adopted for valuing the study of the given phenomena in mutual interdependence with the social and political context in which it originates (Jubas 2010). In particular, a case study proves to represent the best design option when the subject studied — in this case, the CPDE's potential to act in a counter-hegemonic way — is influenced by the surrounding ongoing process (Stake 1995, De Vaus 2001, Bryman 2012). In fact, an exhaustive consideration of CPDE agency must put it into a continuous dialogue with the ongoing transition towards the development effectiveness paradigm, with the evolving structure and mandate of the recently constituted GPEDC, as well as with the macro dynamics shaping global economic and political assets. It is thought that the attention paid to social context enables the researcher to better deal with the complexity of the relationships taking place in a rich social network such as the CPDE, and, widening the focus, within the even larger framework of GPEDC (Yin 2003).

The research project is characterised by a high degree of complexity when analysed in terms of social relations. In fact, the CPDE is composed of a great variety of voices and interests of civil society representatives coming from different sectors and geographical regions from all over the world, whose plurality the research aimed to capture. Similarly, the GPEDC is a wide global multi-stakeholder platform which brings in a myriad of actors — governments, multi-lateral and bilateral development agencies, the private sector, etc. Looking at the case study from the point of view of social relations, the choice of a qualitative case study is amply justified, given that the social complexity in question could not be entirely captured by statistical exercises (Yin 2003). Finally, Tellis (1997) pointed out a property of the case study design which represents a salient point for the present project. He argued that

case studies are often employed as a means to give voice to the powerless, rejecting the narration from the point of view of the "elite".

The relevance attributed to questions of power is central within a case study informed by critical theory, which questions the given social order to explore alternative systems. As previously mentioned, a great variety of different identities, projects, and interests come to interact closely within the framework of the present research project. Thus, studying the continuous shaping of power balance by the actors involved in the case study constitutes the *leitmotif* of the investigation. Special attention is paid to the strategies put into practice by the CPDE to negotiate its power status and gain ground amongst the pre-eminent actors in the GPEDC. Therefore, in accordance with Tellis' observation, this research project assumes the point of view of less powerful actors — in this case, the CPDE. In fact, it is important to bear in mind that despite the official recognition of civil society agents as development actors in their own right, they have not yet gained the same political weight as other actors such as governments and the private sector .

With reference to Bryman's (2012) taxonomy of the types of case study, the case of CPDE action within the GPEDC was approached as a unique case study. As discussed in the introduction, the unique features of the case stem from the fact that the CPDE represents the first global partnership of civil society organisations in the field of development cooperation since recognition of their new status as independent development actors. Similarly, the GPEDC represents the first example of a multi-stakeholder global partnership based on the principle of accountability, distinguishing it from the architecture of previous governance bodies. Moreover, the progressive transition towards the era of development effectiveness represents a peculiar characteristic of this moment which has already marked a fracture with the scenario of the first decade of the twenty-first century, and which is laying the foundation for a new stage.

3.3 Research methods and data collection

The data collection made use of three methods: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. These are discussed below in turn.

First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed, with a structure 'organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees'(DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). Interviews were structured in order to comprehend the definition of the power relationships between the CPDE and the GPEDC, and amongst CPDE members. Also, interviews aimed to

give a picture of the major developments that accompanied the transition towards the development effectiveness paradigm, built through the experiences and feelings of civil society actors[2].

The research project realised a purposive sampling, and thus, the choice of potential interviewees was based on the characteristic of the individuals and how these could fit the research project aim. It was initially decided to interview the CPDE members who are part of its Global Council. The initial selection of the Global Council members was made due to the fact that it 'represents the ultimate decision-making body of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, providing political leadership and strategic direction' (CPDE n.d.*a*). Thus, its members would likely be able to offer interesting political insights upon which to build and answer research questions. The Global Council constitutes 46 organisations selected in order to maintain a balance between sectoral and geographical representation and meet at least once a year to address key issues.

However, the target of the interviewees was changed at a later point, following discussions with Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga, a CPDE co-founder, and also previous co-chair responsible for the platform's political leadership in its major engagements, especially within the GPEDC (CPDE 2012). The discussion of the research project with Mr. Ssewakiryanga highlighted that interviewing the CPDE Coordination Committee members, rather than the Global Council members, would have a greater potential for gathering useful information. In fact, despite the Global Council being responsible for the last level of decision-making, the core of the political debate and the design of the strategic plan takes place in the Coordination Committee, moving later to the Global Council for approval. Thus, considering that the project intends to understand the CPDE action and the strategies put into practice to affirm its vision, the Coordination Committee is deemed as the body that can offer the most relevant insights. In particular, the Coordination Committee[3] is the body that:

> oversees the day-to-day work of the CSO Partnership. It is responsible for following up on the decisions of the Global Council in between Global Council meetings; representing the CSO Partnership; facilitating policy development; preparing the draft agenda and

[2] See Appendix I

[3] The CSOs making up the CPDE are organised according to geographical and sectoral criteria, in order to assure the widest possible degree of inclusion and representativeness. In terms of geographical representativeness, the CPDE has identified 7 main regions: Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and the Pacific. In terms of sectoral representativeness, 7 sectors have been identified: Faith-Based Organisations, Youth, Women and Feminists, Agriculture and Rural Development, Labour, Indigenous People, International CSO and Ex officio/fiscal sponsor.

> reports for the annual GC meeting; facilitating the setting up, coordination and coherence of the working groups; overseeing the work of the secretariat; approving the draft annual budget; and forming a Finance Committee (CPDE n.d.*a*).

Therefore, interviewing the representatives of the Coordination Committee was essential for understanding the plurality of voices that constitute the CPDE, as well as for following the complex debate underpinning the creation of the CPDE's political agenda and vision. The Coordination Committee is currently composed of 21 members: 17 of the members represent different constituencies of the CPDE, selected on the basis of geographical and sectoral criteria (the same applied to the Global Council), plus four co-chairs. It convenes at the minimum twice a year (CPDE n.d.*a*). Therefore, the research project intended to realise as many interviews as possible with these committee members, face-to-face or via skype. Of the 21 members, 12 interviews were carried out, overcoming significant time constraints and substantial difficulties in getting in contact with the Coordination Committee members[4]. In addition, the Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee and the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator were also interviewed. These two CPDE representatives are not part of the Coordination Committee body but participate in its meetings and play an important role in CPDE life. Interviewing the Policy and Advocacy Coordinator was deemed as relevant to gain an insightful comprehension of the CPDE overall action and strategy to bring about its development agenda. Interviewing the Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee was deemed as appropriate to better understand the internal functioning of the partnership, especially how and to what degree the principle of accountability has been implemented within the CPDE, and how it influences its work.

In-depth interviews were chosen as the research method due to their inherent potential to 'co-create meaning with interviewees by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006: 316), an operation that requires building mutual trust and a friendly environment. Initially, feelings of suspicion manifested towards the interviewer, which potentially jeopardised the collection of relevant information. These were due to concerns about an external agent accessing and disclosing information about the partnership's life and its members' personal opinions. To overcome this prospect, the collection of data through interviews was proceeded by an official presentation of the research project made by the Global Secretariat Coordinator through an e-mail sent to all the

[4] See Appendix II

Coordination Committee members, supported by a further mediation of the Secretariat Coordinator when requested.

Interview questions were designed to gather information about the opinions of CSO representatives on the CPDE's actions and internal functioning. The research project therefore ensured the interviewees' right to confidentiality. In this regard, the participant information sheet provided to the interviewees specifies that information collected during interviews could be quoted or indirectly referred to throughout the thesis. Interviewees were given the opportunity to choose between two options when filling in the consent form: identification or anonymity. The identification option implies that the interviewee's name and surname, as well as the name of the CSO represented, can be made known in the thesis. The anonymity option implies that the interviewee's identity and that of the CSO represented are protected. In this case, the interviewee's name is replaced by a pseudonym. In addition, whether choosing the identification or the anonymity option, interviewees were given the possibility of explicitly indicating particular information that they would like to keep anonymous by virtue of its sensitive nature. In these cases, the name of the interviewee was replaced with a pseudonym. Also, when the information provided could possibly lead to the identification of the interviewee, the information was disguised and re-formulated as a general statement (e.g. 'Tom is 29 years old' would be rephrased to the following: 'The representative belongs to the 20-30 year-old age category'). Nevertheless, the participant information sheet warned that there might still exist a chance of the interviewees being recognised due to the possible familiarity of their opinions or experiences to other members of the CPDE. Finally, data confidentiality is protected by the research project. The consent form, along with the participant information sheet, states that interviews are recorded, encrypted and safely stored in the researcher's personal cloud storage. Also, as specified in the consent form, the data collected were accessed exclusively by the researcher.

A second method of data collection comprised non-participant observation, according to which 'the researcher watches the subjects of his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny' (Scott and Marshall 2009: 516). Non-participant observation was used on several occasions: when attending Coordination Committee meetings, when staying at the CPDE Global Secretariat; and when attending the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC. Non-participant observation was employed to meet several aims: to collect data, to gain knowledge of different voices and perspectives within the CPDE, and to directly observe the CPDE in action within the GPEDC. Thus the specific focus of what was being observed through non-participant observation shifted depending on the different occasions in which it was employed. While attending the Coordination Committee meetings, the focus of non-participant observation was observing the CPDE's internal political debate. The aims here were to identify the main

positions expressed by the representatives of different CSOs on development issues, and to discern the existence of power relationships amongst CPDE members. In contrast, during non-participant observation at the Global Secretariat, the focus was mainly on collecting documentation on the CPDE and analysing its activities. Finally, attendance at the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC allowed direct observation of the action of the CPDE within the GPEDC. On that occasion, non-participant observation provided a unique opportunity to look closely at how the CPDE members interact with the other GPEDC members, and how the CPDE strategically organises its action in order to push its vision forward.

In terms of the specific criteria by which to assess the interaction at these relatively high-level meetings of both the CPDE and the GPEDC, information was gathered on, for instance, the relative equality of opportunity to speak, who was most represented, opportunities for building informal coalitions amongst players, the confidence of the different organisations' representatives, the trust between organisations, the desire and willingness to challenge perceived injustices, and the capacity to do so. This was recorded by methods such as noting the number of times a person took the microphone, observing informal coalition building during coffee breaks and group work sessions, watching social interactions between representatives, checking publicly stated claims regarding injustices, and so forth.

With regards to the Coordination Committee meetings attended, information was gathered in the form of notes on how the discussion developed. The first meeting took place in Brussels between 20th-21st March 2016, the second in The Hague between the 20th-22nd June of the same year. Being present at the meetings as an observer allowed notes to be taken about the political discussion, which mainly focused on the definition of the advocacy agenda and the strategic plan for the next period (2017-2020). The June meeting, despite further extending the previous debate on the future CPDE political agenda, introduced some preliminary proposals to organise the partnership participation in the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC, held in Nairobi between 28th November-1st December. A crucial topic in the preparatory discussion for the Nairobi Meeting was the revision of the GPEDC mandate, which would imply turning it into a knowledge hub, a substantial modification that would make it loose its core function — accountability. This change in the GPEDC mission would substantially diminish the political power of civil society, and would cause the CPDE to leave the GPEDC.

Therefore, attending the Nairobi meeting represented a fundamental element for the development of the investigation, and a significant step in the definition of the relationship between the CPDE and the GPEDC. The participation in the Second High Level Meeting was possible thanks to the mediation of the CPDE, which allowed me the status of civil society

representative. Thus, participating at the High Level Meeting made it possible to take part in various events making up the agenda, paying special attention to those of particular interest to civil society; namely the plenaries on the GPEDC second monitoring round and on 'leaving no one behind'. Also, it was possible to attend the civil society global forum, a side event organised by the CPDE with the aim of defining a common position for CSO actors to stand by during the High Level Meeting. During the Nairobi meeting, detailed field notes were taken.

In addition to attending the Coordination Committee meetings, non-participant observation was also employed during the realisation of a fieldwork period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Quezon City, Manila, which is discussed below. The documents gathered during the period spent at the Global Secretariat are heterogeneous in nature and include both those made available to the public, and those destined for internal use within the platform, in printed form or online. The first documents to be consulted were collected from the CPDE online archives. These documents helped to gain an overview of the CPDE — its structure, vision, and mission, and the path that led to its founding. Establishing a connection with organisations so geographically dispersed was a challenge that required several months to overcome. This was tackled by the organisation of a non-participant observation period at the Global Secretariat headquarters, between 11th May 2016 and 6th June 2016, with a duration of 27 days.

The Global Secretariat is hosted by IBON International Foundation, located in Quezon City, in Metro Manila region, in the Philippines. IBON International is a service institution which advocates social justice and social transformations and works with CSOs and social movements from all over the world, especially from the Global South. IBON performs an activity of support to various CSOs and social actors with the aim of building a common position on development issues and engaging in global process and arenas (IBON n.d.). In fact, establishing personal contacts with the staff constituted a necessary action, given the difficulties encountered when trying to communicate from distance via e-mail or skype with the aim of soliciting documents.

Thus, the third research method entailed document analysis. Amongst the documents of major interest for the research project, the following were especially significant: the Nairobi Declaration, statements relating to the CPDE position on the GPEDC Steering Committee meetings realised hitherto, a compendium of the CPDE basic documents, the CSOs key ask, a public report on the state of the platform, a report of the progress recorded since Busan, one publication about the CSOs' work from the Third Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2008) to the Fourth Busan High Level Forum (2011), and a further publication describing the theoretical shift from 'aid effectiveness' towards 'development

effectiveness'. Also important was a description of the two main programs that the CPDE intended to implement in over the three years (2016-2018): 'Enhancing Civil Society Role in Development Partnerships', an action to be realised in collaboration with the European Commission to increase CSOs' influence on policy outcomes and to stress CSOs' Development Effectiveness; and 'Continuing Campaign for Effective Development', which focused on outreach, capacity development and delivering impacts at the country level. Moreover, IBON staff made available several materials presenting the activity of the foundation. Being physically present at the Global Secretariat made it possible to access CPDE documents, an operation that was less successful in the previous phase when communicating at a distance.

Another valuable contribution from the fieldwork was the possibility of having a personal interaction with the CPDE staff. This considerably sped up the process of making some important arrangements for the development of the research, namely participation in the Coordination Committee Meeting held in June 2016, and in the Second Level Meeting of the GPEDC in Nairobi. As noted above, the CPDE members were initially wary of the research project. Non-participant observation therefore effectively served the general purpose of building trust between the researcher and the CPDE members, which led to wider access to information (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe 2010). In fact, the physical presence of the researcher, spending time together, and sharing experiences with the CPDE members was crucial to the process. This enabled deeper insights into CPDE functioning, and access to the GPEDC High Level Meeting, which would have not been possible otherwise.

To understand CPDE agency within the GPEDC framework, I also collected documents released online by the GPEDC. Two types of documents were judged to be of major interest: the outcome documents of the GPEDC Steering Committee meetings, and two outcome documents of GPEDC High Level Meetings. The relates to the First High Level Meeting held in Mexico City in April 2014, and the other to the Second High Level Meeting realised in Nairobi between 28th November – 1st December 2016.

3.4 Analytical framework

The research project's main objective was to examine the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic role played by the CPDE within the GPEDC. The polarity proposed between counter-hegemonic and hegemonic action was employed as a theoretical model that comprises a large range of intermediate possible positions, each combining features of both conservative and transformative action to different degrees.

The assessment of the CPDE action within the GPEDC resulted from balancing different attitudes that the CPDE showed on different occasions, depending on the discussion at stake. The observation of the interaction of the CPDE and the GPEDC was finalised to gain a full comprehension of how power relationships between these actors have been progressively built and shaped. This is an essential operation to evaluate the transformative potential of the CPDE, and ultimately, to locate CPDE in the theoretical scale from hegemonic to counter-hegemonic action. Towards this aim, the action of the CPDE was assessed against the features identified in chapter one as distinguishing those forces. In particular, the CPDE potential to act in a hegemonic way was assessed against the presence of three features: (i) apolitical activities, (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors, and (iii) the degree of internal professionalisation. Similarly, the CPDE potential to act as a counter-hegemonic force was assessed against four essential features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung*, (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices, (iii) the ability to intertwine local, national and global levels of action, and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure.

In order to answer the research question, the analysis was conducted in two steps. First, the CPDE and the GPEDC were studied individually, considering each in itself. This step takes into account their organisational characteristics while overlooking their relationships with other spaces and actors. Second, the CPDE and the GPEDC were assessed together, with the focus of the analysis on their interaction.

First, major relevance was attributed to the analysis of the CPDE, for being the core subject of the research project. Information on its internal functioning and history was gathered through interviews, documents released by the partnership, and notes taken during two CPDE Coordination Committee meetings. The analysis of these data led to meaningful insights into the functioning of the CPDE, and highlighted some fundamental organisational features which were relevant to the previously mentioned characteristics for the identification of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces, which are discussed later. The CPDE has simultaneously shown to have characteristics belonging to both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic actors. A careful assessment of its action was therefore required to understand how these elements combine to define the prevailing nature of its actions.

The GPEDC was also scrutinised for representing the institutional context within which the CPDE articulates its action and tries to impose its alternative view on development issues. The GPEDC analysis made use of documents available on its website. This examination was particularly targeted at understanding the transformative potential of the GPEDC as a new model of governance in the field of international development cooperation.

In fact, the GPEDC represents the first example of a multi-stakeholder partnership for development at the international level in this field, with the highest ever degree of inclusivity. An analysis of the new spaces for participation made available to its members was carried out. This particularly focussed on comparing it with the previous governance body that the GPEDC replaced in 2012 — the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

In the second step, the GPEDC and CPDE were analysed together, with the aim of investigating the power relationships generated through their interaction. Data analysed in this phase came from the outcome documents of the GPEDC High Level Meetings and the GPEDC Steering Committee meetings realised up to now, interviews with the selected CPDE members, and lastly, notes taken during the GPEDC 2nd High Level Meeting. The analysis of these data allowed the identification of the topics that have led to most disagreement between the CPDE and the GPEDC. These were first and foremost the revision of the GPEDC mandate, then the role of the business sector. The debate and the process of decision-making arising around these controversial topics permitted tracing of the progressive creation of power relationships that connect and bind the CPDE and the other actors of the GPEDC. A comprehension of the power relationships makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of how the CPDE articulates its action, and to assess to what extent it succeeds in advocating for its own vision of development.

Finally, positioning the CPDE in a theoretical scale ranging from a counter-hegemonic to a hegemonic role was achieved by pondering and combining observations about the CPDE and GPEDC as autonomous units, and about their interaction. First, concerning the CPDE, the analysis focused on understanding if the partnership has the necessary capacities to bring about a counter-hegemonic project, and whether or not it is fully expressing its transformative potential. Second, the analysis of the GPEDC was important to detect new spaces of action made available to development actors, and to understand the extent to which those actors are given power enough to challenge the mainstream. Finally, the analysis of the interaction between the CPDE and the GPEDC showed that the counter-hegemonic posture of the CPDE can be tempered. Examination of the action of the CPDE within the context of the GPEDC has in fact highlighted limits to the realisation of its vision, so that the CPDE might occasionally act as a hegemonic actor.

The process of data analysis was structured around coding, which was organised into two main phases. The first phase consisted of an initial open coding of the data collected (Bryman 2012, Bazeley 2013). Transcriptions of interviews and notes taken during the Coordination Committee meetings were repeatedly read and examined. The in-depth reading served the purpose of identifying relevant themes which were distinguished throughout the text, working with a pen and paper. At this stage, there were two criteria employed for

defining concepts of potential interest: repetition and pertinence. The first criterion, repetition, was based on the assumption that the themes that appear at different times in the materials considered may be of interest for the research project. However, mere repetition does not constitute, *per se*, a sufficient condition to qualify a concept as relevant to the research project. In order to successfully identify relevant themes, it must be used in connection to the second criteria, i.e. pertinence. The latter refers to the capacity of a selected theme to give information that can be useful to achieve the objective of the research project, in particular, to answer the research questions. This initial coding exercise resulted in listing a number of themes which were labelled and considered as preliminary codes. Thus, the resulting codes mainly shown an analytical character, having been elaborated as 'categorising topics or issues, through to naming more interpretive or analytical concepts' (Bazeley 2013: 126).

The search for themes recalls thematic analysis as an approach to qualitative data analysis. The concept of "theme" has been employed in different ways by social researchers, ranging from equating it to a code, to understanding it as a synthesis category of groups of codes (Bryman 2012). In the present data analysis process, the expression "theme" was understood as a code, which can be further structured into sub-themes.

The second stage of the data analysis can be defined as focused coding (Bryman 2012, Bazeley 2013, Charmaz 2006), implying a further in-depth analysis of the codes initially identified. Similarities and differences amongst the initial codes were detected in order to reorganise them and give them a clearer and more rigorous structure. This phase was characterised by a reduction in the original numbers of codes, which were often combined to create new ones, and by the mapping of the codes generated. In particular, links between codes were detected, which mainly resulted in a hierarchical organisation into themes and sub-themes. For example, the initial codes "resources", "managing success", and "representativeness" were combined to form the new code "internal management", which was then articulated into sub-themes. This operation of mapping contributed gaining a higher understanding of the interdependence of the various themes, which were later interpreted within the context of the research questions. The coding led to the identification of different themes, which are thought to be relevant to getting a fuller understanding of the internal functioning of the CPDE and of the relationships that unite its different constituencies. The identified codes were organised into two categories — challenges and potentials — each composed of several themes and, possibly, sub-themes, as illustrated below:

Challenges:

1. Internal management: agenda, bureaucracy, resources, communication
2. Power: North-South relationship, donor-CPDE relationships, IBON-CPDE relationship

3. Representativeness

Strengths:

1. Unity
2. Learning platform
3. Expertise and literature production

3.5 Positionality and iterative data collection

It is important to remember that a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis is fluid in nature, and that the thematic mapping is deemed to be a working framework. In fact, data analysis was approached as an iterative process, implying a 'repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data' (Bryman 2012: 564). Thus, the outcomes of data analysis are not definitive but rather undergo a process of constant shaping which is influenced by the evolution of data collection. The same applies to data collection, which changes in relation to the themes emerging from the data analysis. On this point, the focus on CPDE in terms of data analysis has highlighted the need to collect more information about power relationships, which, as discussed in the project research strategy, constitutes a central analytical category for developing a meaningful and exhaustive comprehension of the CPDE.

The research design and the subsequent data collection exposed some issues related to the researcher's positionality, which could influence the research with regard to its reliability and ethical dimension. Positionality issues are inherent in the nature of the project, for it is assumed to be a process shaped by the interplay of participants and the researcher (England 1994, Bourke 2014).

Borrowing from action research, positionality in this project was mainly experienced through considering the status of the researcher in terms of being an insider or outsider in relation to the research setting. According to the methods employed for data collection — i.e., semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis — the position of the researcher should be mainly conceived as outsider, given that the researcher is not taking an active part in the situations examined, nor is a member of the group analysed, in this case the CPDE. The status of outsider attributed to the researcher within the methodological framework of this project was confirmed at an early stage of data collection.

As researcher, I noted that my way of engaging with CPDE members, especially the interviewees, reflected the will to stress the existence of common aims between my research

and the CPDE; specifically, by mentioning the potential positive effects of bringing the CPDE's action under the focus of the academic community.

This attitude was a clear response to how I felt to be perceived by CPDE members, that is, an external agent coming from a distinct world — academia — to investigate the action of the CPDE — a community of practitioners and activists. A feeling of distance and, in a few cases, wariness, was perceived to be the CPDE's members' attitude towards me, the researcher, confirming my status of outsider. Therefore, my approach to the CPDE members was built around the need to stress common interests with the aim of smoothing the perception of the researcher as an outsider, a fact that would potentially inhibit CPDE members from disclosing information and their opinions about the CPDE's action.

As mentioned above, the research project is to be understood as a process which undergoes a continuous evolution led by the interaction between the researcher and the participants (England 1994). By way of example, the initial interview with the CPDE ex-co-chair, Mr. Richard Ssewarikyanga, led to the decision to interview the members of the CPDE Coordination Committee instead of the Global Council. This shows how interactions with participants influence the design of data collection. Similarly, the positionality of the researcher is not fixed, but evolves throughout the development of the project. Therefore, the insider-outsider analytical couple should not be thought of as a binary opposition, but rather as a more fluid concept, in which the status of the researcher may vary along the research path, relocating along the continuum between the positions of insider and outsider (Thomson and Gunter 2011, Herr and Anderson 2005).

As non-participant observer, I attended two CPDE Coordination Committee meetings, and I spent a month at the CPDE Global Secretariat, all this between March and June 2016. During this period, my position in relation to the CPDE members certainly evolved, changing in the direction of a greater involvement in CPDE activities and, subsequently, the perception of me an outsider changed too. In particular, the time spent at the Global Secretariat helped the creation of bonds with the CPDE and IBON staff, so that my position in relation to the research group and setting changed as well, moving from 'outsider studying insiders' to 'outsider in collaboration with insiders' (Herr and Anderson 2005: 40–41). The change in my researcher status was epitomised by my participation at the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC (HLM2), held in Nairobi in 2016. Attending the HLM2 was a fundamental moment for data collection, and it was possible thanks to the mediation of the CPDE. The CPDE helped me with accessing it by recognising me the status of civil society delegate and registering me into the event. Also, I relied on the CPDE's logistics for transport and accommodation in Nairobi, as the members of the CPDE did. This symbolically put me within the CPDE community, thus shifting my position away from a

mere "outsider" position. Following the CPDE's activities from up close and sharing the same spaces and experiences at the HLM2 led to a different perception of myself, as researcher, from the point of view of the CPDE members, but also influenced the way I conceive my own position with respect to the CPDE group.

The interaction with CPDE members led to discussion about the reasons for choosing the action of the CPDE as the object of my research, which, in turn favoured further considerations on my identity. A sense of duality developed throughout the data collection process from perceiving my position as both insider and outsider. On the one hand, I have felt to be an outsider as I belong to the academic world, which is detached from the plurality of realities experienced by the different civil society representatives worldwide, especially in the Global South. In addition to the contraposition between the academic world and that of practitioners, I understood my position to be that of outsider also for not being a member of the CPDE, and thus, for being external to the organisation. On the other hand, I felt to be close to an insider position when contemplating the existence of shared political backgrounds and interests. In particular, I would consider myself close to an insider position when reflecting on the fact that I am a civil society actor, and that I share with CPDE members interest for the arena of development cooperation, and the role that civil society has been playing within it. We also share support of a view of development that rejects the centrality of economic growth and claims the role of human rights as fundamental drivers for development. In this broad sense, I feel to have a shared background with the CPDE which relates to the dimension of political beliefs, and which also makes up the researcher's identity. The common field represented by interests and political identity has come to be a point of contact between two separated entities. This point of contact provided the occasion for different identities to meet, interact, and work towards a greater involvement of the researcher in the life of the CPDE, sealed by the participation in the HLM2 as a civil society delegate.

The closeness attained and the common interests may cause bias in the interpretation of the data collected, and therefore the researcher has worked to acknowledge and question the part played by personal interests and beliefs in shaping the research. As stated by Herr and Anderson when referring to political or ideological beliefs and cultural assumptions:

Each of these dimensions enters into the construction of the reality we capture in our research. […] Our sense is that, in making explicit the tensions we experience as researchers in our varying roles and statuses, we have the possibility of crafting uniquely complex understandings of the research question. In addition, we hope to avoid the blind spots that come with unexamined beliefs (Herr and Anderson 2005: 55).

Therefore, the subjectivity of the researcher has not been neutralised but rather employed and scrutinised, for it enables the researcher to build a unique contribution.

The existence of common interests and beliefs may induce the research to speak for the participants. This can occur when the participants' experiences are viewed through analytical tools that belong to the researcher, who may feel it appropriate to stretch those tools so that they apply to the participants' experiences. The research project approached the interpretation of data as a dialectical synthesis of two moments: the participants making sense of their experiences, and the researcher accounting for those experiences and his/her own experiences (Bourke 2014). In a research context in which the researcher may sympathise with the participants' causes, it is more likely that, with the aim of supporting the participants' struggles, the researcher may tend to speak for them, acting in an oppressing way (Freire 2000). During the process of the research, these possible distortions were always kept in mind, and I worked towards the outcome that the research findings reflect the voices of the participants as far as possible (Bourke 2014).

3.6 Limitations

The development of the research strategy and data collection had to manage some limitations. The limitations experienced were mainly determined by time constraints and the difficulties experienced in accessing civil society actors.

The consideration of time boundaries influenced the research design process and played an important role in drawing the perimeter of the area for data collection. As stated, the aim of the research was to understand the extent to which the CPDE is acting in a hegemonic or counter-hegemonic way within the new aid effectiveness architecture. The overall assessment of CPDE action was built on the analysis of the documentation produced by the CPDE, and on its members' voices, as expressed through interviews and the occasions during which non-participant observation was realised. In the early stages of the research design process, the project was intended to encompass voices coming from civil society actors who act in the field of development cooperation effectiveness but outside of the CPDE. Targeting external civil society actors was intended to identify those voices that could potentially be critical of the CPDE and its creation, with the aim of weighing up the assessment of CPDE action within the GPEDC. A deficiency of alternative civil society voices, of outsiders, could be more likely to induce a perspective that is inclined to commend the CPDE action within the GPEDC, with data coming from its members.

Despite the existing awareness about the importance of considering external civil society actors' voices, the research project had to exclude them from data collection due to the difficulties in identifying such voices. In this regard, identifying voices that could potentially be critical of the CPDE proved to be particularly challenging. The CPDE

constitutes a recently-born partnership of CSOs and has not yet received exposure within the media and the academic world. Thus, the research project had to deal with the problems experienced in finding any documentation referring to the CPDE and its action other than those released by the same CPDE members. As a consequence, identifying potential critical outsiders' voices did not lead to concrete results. Extending the analysis to external civil society actors is understood as a shortfall to address with future research; doing it will require further time out of the PhD programme time constraints to identify and successfully reach relevant civil society actors worldwide.

In fact, establishing a contact with the CPDE and reaching its members represented a key challenge in itself. First, getting a response was only achieved after repeated attempts over a period of time. The first attempt to contact the CPDE Global Secretariat was through the CPDE website, by sending a message through the 'Contact Us' section. The first message did not receive any reply, and was followed by further attempts, which were equally ineffective. The following discussion held with the supervisory team about finding an alternative strategy to build a connection with the CPDE Global Secretariat resulted in contacting Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga — a CPDE co-founder and previous co-chair for the CPDE political leadership — via his personal e-mail. Contacting Mr. Ssewakiryanga via e-mail was possible thanks to the mediation of Dr Jorg Wiegratz, who was initially part of the research supervisory team. Dr Wiegratz's professional relationship with Mr. Ssewakiryanga provided a potential entry point to the CPDE members. Nevertheless, several attempts were made before receiving a reply from Mr. Ssewakiryanga, which finally allowed a first contact through Skype on January 2016. The discussion held on Skype with Mr. Ssewakiryanga made it possible to finally reach the Global Secretariat to organise the non-participant observation period, through having put me in touch with Mrs. Dulay, the CPDE Network Manager.

Getting in touch with Mrs. Dulay was an essential step that made organising and realising data collection viable. The difficulties of getting in touch with the CPDE members was then addressed through the mediation of Mrs. Dulay. She introduced the research project to the members via e-mail, inviting them to collaborate by making themselves available for an interview. Within this context, Mrs. Dulay acted as a gatekeeper, and the introduction she made of the research project to the Coordination Committee members was essential to get access to their contacts and to predisposed them to be interviewed. Nevertheless, as stated before, only 12 out of 21 interviews were carried out. Despite Mrs. Dulay mediation, several members were not responsive. Those members either did not been respond to the e-mails inviting them for an interview, failed to respect the arrangements made for realising the interviews by not picking up skype calls at the date and time agreed (on occasion, repeatedly), or by not presenting themselves after having agreed to meet in person according to their availability. With the aim of interviewing as many Coordination Committee members as

possible, the deadline for completing data collection was postponed several times. The need to complete the research project within the time boundaries set for a PhD research project led to the decision to definitively close data collection by the start of the fourth year in order to have sufficient time to satisfactorily finalise data analysis and complete the PhD thesis.

Chapter 4
From Aid Effectiveness to Development Effectiveness: overturning the paradigm in four High Level Fora

Introduction

Understanding the action of the CSOs Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) within and in relation to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) requires looking at the unfolding of the aid effectiveness paradigm, especially at its late shift towards a new paradigm named 'development effectiveness'. In fact, both the CPDE and the GPEDC originated within this transitional phase, and both are major products of the reform path taken within the system of development cooperation. Thus, the aid effectiveness paradigm, from its appearance in the early twenty-first century until the shift towards a new paradigm, is presented in this chapter with the aim of understanding the background against which the call for reforming the aid system emerged.

Assuming as a starting point the dissatisfaction with the dominant *modus operandi* in the field of development cooperation, the first section briefly discusses the conditions that led the international community to adopt a new perspective focused on the quality of aid. It introduces the international events and actions that paved the way for the launch of the aid effectiveness paradigm, along with the main axes around which it was developed, namely: an increasing focus on poverty reduction, the re-articulation of the relationship between donors and recipient countries and, finally, an approach based on time-bounded targets.

The second section proposes an analysis of three High Level meeting Fora through which the aid effectiveness paradigm was progressively built: the first held in Rome in 2002, the second held in Paris in 2005 and the third held in Accra in 2008. Each of these Fora marked a step forward in the advancement of the Aid Effectiveness agenda but particular attention will be drawn to the Paris High Level Forum, which constitutes a milestone for the aid effectiveness paradigm.

The third section aims at presenting the international scenario at the eve of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan in 2011, which had to deal with a rapidly evolving development context. The main dynamics of change will be presented, with special attention given to the growing influence of South-South Cooperation and emerging donors, out of the traditional group of OECD donors. The distinguishing character of their

action is discussed in relation to the traditional aid modalities, so as to highlight the main differences and understand the implicit potential for change.

The fourth section addresses the changes in the conceptualization of aid effectiveness, a category that came to be inadequate to describe the evolving landscape. Using aid effectiveness as a background, the new category of 'development effectiveness' is explored in light of the four interpretations elaborated by the North-South Institute in a study published in 2009.

The fifth section focuses on the Fourth Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and on its achievements. The Busan Forum was commonly perceived as the beginning of a new era in the field of development cooperation, marking the transition from aid effectiveness towards the new development effectiveness paradigm. Primarily, the section analyses the formation of a new global partnership and the resulting reform of the aid governance system, which resulted in the launch of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in July 2012.

Finally, the last section considers the consequences of the process of fragmentation of the Western supremacy in development cooperation. Taking Busan as the culmination of this process, hypotheses about future scenarios and balances of power are shortly outlined.

4.1 In search of solutions

The lack of evidence about the impact of aid led to a diffused sense of scepticism within the international community in the late 1990s, and the perception that aid had failed in the fight against poverty entered the public domain (White 2001). The concern about the capacity of aid to tackle poverty raised great attention worldwide and brought to an outburst of publications, giving rise to the Great Foreign Aid Debate (Engel 2014). The result, as described by the New York Times, was 'a ferocious intellectual debate about how best to help poor people around the world' (Kristof 2009).

The Great Foreign Aid Debate prompted the emergence of a new agenda at the dawn of the twenty-first century – i.e. the 'aid effectiveness' agenda. This new global agenda revolved around the quality of aid, moving the focus away from the volume of aid, which had previously been central to the development agenda. The importance on increasing the volume of aid as a prerequisite to overcome poverty was not dismissed but was progressively accompanied by a new focus on how to improve the quality of aid.

The emphasis on quality that drove the aid effectiveness agenda was strongly supported by a number of actors, among which reformers, political leaders aiming at

promoting themselves as pioneers of a new era of development cooperation, activists and various organizations and celebrities (Mawdsley et al. 2014). The new paradigm was developed along three main axes. Firstly, an increasing focus on poverty reduction, which represented a step away from the logic of structural adjustments that dominated the discussion during the 1980s and the 1990s under the Washington Consensus. The importance gained by the idea of poverty reduction reflects the evolution of the theory underpinning development cooperation practices, in particular the awareness that economic growth alone would not benefit the development process. During the 1960s and the 1970s, economic growth was harmonized with a concern for poverty reduction, with attention especially paid to meeting the basic needs of the poorest people (Emmerij 2010, Quibria 2014). The implementation of the Washington Consensus subordinated poverty reduction to aggregate economic growth but, by the end of the 1990s, the noticeable lack of positive development outcomes associated to such policies brought poverty reduction back to the heart of development agendas. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the idea of poverty reduction had been further developed and was given a more complex multi-dimensional profile (Alkire and Foster 2011, Mawdsley, Savage, and Kim 2014, Sen 1999, Quibria 2014). Health, living standards, education and capability deprivation, meant as the freedom to achieve the kind of life that different people value, were all concepts included in the discussion (Sen 1999).

Secondly, the relationship between donors and recipient countries entered a process of re-articulation driven by the appropriation of recipient countries of their own development policies. Indeed, previous development programs had been strongly criticized for weakening the capacity of recipient countries as well as their control over national development programs. In response to this criticisms IFIs launched in 1999 the adoption of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The PRSPs consisted of documents that detailed the actions of national governments, and involved national stakeholders, along with external development partners, with the aim of analysing the roots of poverty and elaborating specific strategies to tackle it. This approach was instrumental in seeing the relationship between donors and recipient countries as moving towards the model of partnership. As a result, the end of the 1990s would be later understood as marking the beginning of the partnerships era. The adoption of the language of partnership was a reaction to the crisis of legitimation that the development cooperation system had been suffering, as a result of the high social costs caused in many countries by the implementation of the structural adjustment packages in the 1980s and 1990s. The promotion of development partnerships was meant to reconstruct the aid system from a new moral base, restoring trust in its ability to bring about progress (Sjostedt 2013).

Thirdly, the new aid effectiveness agenda was structured around the establishment of international commitments expressed through specific time-bounded targets (Mawdsley 2014

et al.). A first expression of the willingness to create a global partnership to improve the quality of development cooperation can be found in the OECD document 'Shaping the 21st Century' (OECD 1996), which, in its spelling out development goals to be achieved by 2015, can be considered as the predecessor of the Millennium Development Goals (Kindornay 2011). The Millennium Development Summit was held in September 2000 at the United Nations Headquarters and gathered 149 Heads of State and Government and high-ranking officials from over 40 other countries. On that occasion, the participants created a large new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 and committed to achieve eight development goals. The Millennium Development Goals reflected the understanding of poverty's multifaceted nature, addressing at the same time the different factors deemed responsible for it: gender inequality; low rate of primary education; HIV/AIDS and other diseases; high child mortality and poor maternal health; endangering practices for the environment (United Nations n.d.*a*).

4.2 Building up the aid effectiveness agenda

In the early 2000s, the lack of evidence about the effectiveness of aid put development agencies under pressure, while electors and their representatives expressed their discontent with supporting official development assistance (ODA). Recipient countries also expressed their scepticism, pointing out that aid often seemed to be motivated by the interests of donors rather than by a concern for bringing about the expected results. At the same time, international assistance had to tackle an increasing number of humanitarian emergencies – such as assistance to refugees and interventions in post-conflict situations – which affected the effectiveness of those projects that were strictly aiming at producing development outcomes (UNDP 2001).

The aid effectiveness agenda gained political momentum in 2002 in occasion of the Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico (Keijzer and Hanus 2016). Heads of governments and representatives of multilateral agencies met to address the challenges experienced in financing for development in an era of sustained globalization. The outcome document, known as the Monterrey Consensus, set to address the shortfalls in resources that would have been necessary to achieve the development goals internationally agreed upon. This, the document argued, could be achieved by increasing the financial resources available and by promoting their more effective use (United Nations 2003: §§ 1-4). In Monterrey, the traditional concern with quantity was complemented by a strong emphasis on the quality of aid delivery, affirming aid effectiveness as a central issue in the agenda of any following international meetings.

After the Monterrey Conference, further evidence continued to appear which refuted the supposed link between increasing the amount of foreign aid, reducing poverty and enhancing economic growth. Improving aid effectiveness was perceived as a top priority, one which donor and recipient countries decided to deal with by organizing several discussions. Those discussions constituted a continuation of the work of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Task Force on Donor Practices, which was created in 2000 to further refine and realize the principles established as the foundation of a global partnership, as presented in the OECD document 'Shaping the 21st Century' (Kim and Lee 2013, Kindornay and Samy 2012).

The first step taken in this direction was setting up an event in Rome in February 2003 that built on preparatory discussions previously held in Jamaica, Vietnam and Ethiopia (Kim and Lee 2013). This event was meant as the first international occasion to identify a set of principles for improving aid effectiveness, and the outcome declaration was signed by heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, representatives of the IMF, other multilateral financial institutions, and partner countries. The final declaration, known as Rome Declaration on Harmonization, stated:

> Our deliberations are an important international effort to harmonise the operational policies, procedures, and practices of our institutions with those of partner country systems to improve the effectiveness of development assistance, and thereby contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (OECD 2003: 10)

The main commitments made at the Rome Forum regarded donors, who pledged to align their actions to the priorities of partner countries, as well as make efforts to delegate cooperation at country-level by making their country-based staff more flexible in order to better handle country programs. Finally, donors were asked to monitor, analyse and spread good practices so that they could be used by partner countries to strengthen their leadership on development programs and outcomes (OECD 2003). The Rome Forum was the first event in which donors and partner countries specifically met to discuss the issue of aid quality, and where donors sought to harmonize their practices (Kim and Lee 2013). Still, there was no lack of criticism against the first international declaration on aid effectiveness. It was mainly observed that the outcome declaration largely focused on donors praxis, leaving the essential contribution of partner countries in the background, and that harmonization on its own would not guarantee ownership of development plans by recipient countries (Bena 2012).

The 2003 Rome event would be later assumed as the First High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, paving the way to the following High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness, respectively held in Paris in 2005, in Accra in 2008 and, most recently, in Busan in 2011. Each of these Fora recorded some progress for increasing development cooperation strategies.

The one that was hailed as a milestone of the aid effectiveness paradigm, however, was the 2005 Paris Forum with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as its seminal outcome document.

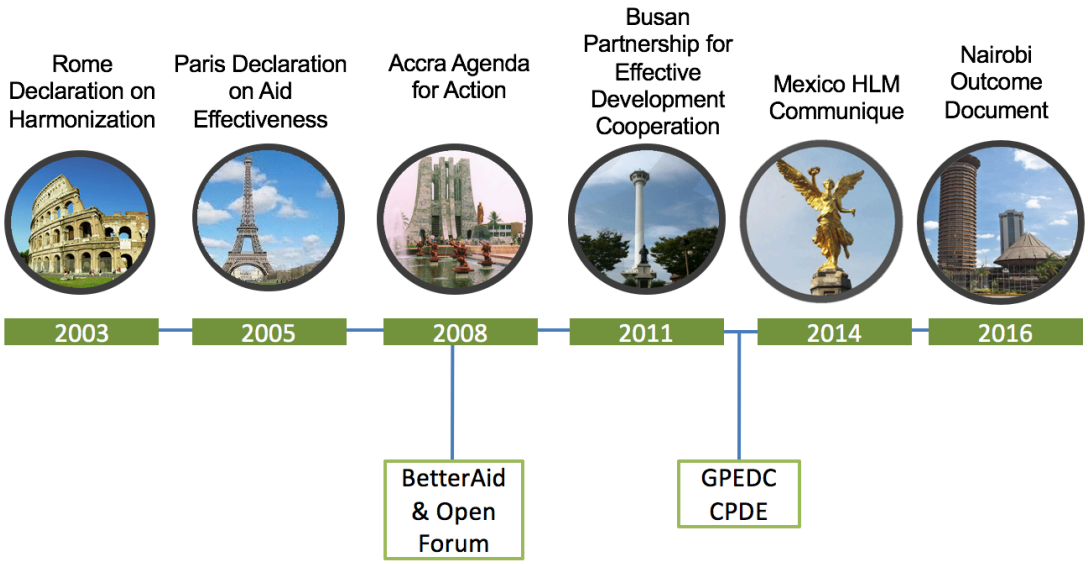

Figure 4.1 The Aid Effectiveness and Development Effectiveness Timeline

Source: CPDE PowerPoint Presentation

The Paris declaration was signed by 61 bilateral and multilateral donors, 56 aid-recipient countries and 14 civil society organizations, who participated as observers (Menocal 2011). It constituted a milestone in the history of development cooperation, becoming the landmark of the aid effectiveness paradigm. Differently from the previous Rome Forum, the Paris Forum emphasised the voices of partner countries, inviting them to sit at the negotiation table with equal status (Bena 2012). Another significant step forward was that donors and partner countries agreed on holding each other accountable for the achievement of specific goals. In light of the improved position gained by recipient countries and of the mutual commitment undertaken by both donors and recipient countries, the Paris Declaration was acclaimed as the first partnership that achieved actual results in terms of aid effectiveness. Furthermore, the Paris Declaration distinguished itself as a roadmap for donors and partner countries, going a step further than the Rome declaration, which still had the character of a general statement of intents. In this regard, the Paris declaration states that 'We […] resolve to take far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways we deliver and manage aid' (OECD 2008: 1). The Paris Agenda was enriched by five commitments and a set of 12 goals

against which progress had to be measured. James Wolfensohn, then-President of the World Bank, enthusiastically commented that:

> Progress has been made. But we have to move faster. We don't need more analysis. We know what needs to be done. With the Paris Declaration, we have the blueprint to do it. (OECD 2008: 2)

In particular, five commitments to guide the action in this field were established within the framework of the Paris Declaration. These were ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results and mutual accountability. As mentioned, the formulation of these commitments was accompanied by the creation of 12 indicators to track the progress in different areas, and each indicator was further structured into targets and given a deadline for its achievement (OECD 2008).

Concerning the ownership commitment, it was defined as 'Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions' (OECD 2008: 3). Partner countries — no longer recipient countries, as participating in partnership models requires — were expected to design their own national development strategies through a process of broad consultation and, then, to derive from those strategies results-oriented programmes. From a global perspective, partner countries had to direct and coordinate aid at all levels, while donors supported partner countries in strengthening their capacities, in compliance with their priorities.

The second commitment was alignment and it was further refined in Paris as follows: 'donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures' (OECD 2008: 3). This meant that donors, despite their different requirements for funding, committed themselves to conditions and indicators in compliance with the national development strategy. Donors were asked to make use of countries system and procedures and, when not possible, to adopt measures able to reinforce the latter. In line with this aim, donors and partner countries should work together to create a mutually agreed framework to assess results, accountability and transparency of country systems. Partner countries were then asked to review the work of their national procedures and institutions and undertake the reforms needed to address possible problems with their effectiveness, transparency and accountability. However, in order for the alignment principle to be meaningful for the improvement of aid effectiveness, partner countries had to build solid structures for designing, implementing and reviewing procedures and national plans. On this point, the declaration stated that:

> The capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives – from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not

> only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources. (OECD 2008: 4, **§** 22)

In particular, the declaration called for an improvement in the capacity of partner countries in terms of public financial management and national procurement systems. Finally, as part of the alignment commitment, donors were invited to continue to untie aid (OECD 2008: 3-5).

The third commitment made was on harmonization, as it appears from the declaration. 'Donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective' (OECD 2008: 6). Indeed, the commitments made in Rome by donors and partner countries were reaffirmed and strengthened in Paris. The importance of complementarity was recalled in the declaration, meant as the effective division of labour between donors and partner countries. Partner countries were supposed to spell out pragmatic indications for donors to achieve complementarity at country and sectoral level while, for their part, donors had to collaborate to harmonise separate procedures.

Managing for results, the fourth commitment, was defined as 'Managing resources and improving decision-making for results*'* (OECD 2008: 7). Partner countries had the responsibility to connect national development strategies to annual and multi-annual budget processes. Also, they were required to conduct assessments and reports that were results-oriented, seeking to track progresses in relation to the main purposes of the national strategies. Donors would allocate resources on the basis of the performance of partner countries and avoid imposing the use of indicators that were not in line with national development strategies. Donors were also asked to harmonise their reporting and assessing frameworks, and to rely on partner countries systems as much as possible. At the same time, donors and partner countries had to collaborate to create joint formats for periodic reporting and for reinforcing the capacity for results-based management (OECD 2008: 7-8).

The last commitment was mutual accountability: 'Donors and partners are accountable for development results' (OECD 2008: 8). The enhancement of mutual accountability was a fundamental factor for the improvement of aid effectiveness, along with the promotion of transparency in the use of development resources. In this respect, partner countries committed to increasing the role of parliaments in national development strategies and budgets, and also promoted the employment of participatory approaches aiming at involving different development partners in the assessment of the progress made within the framework of national development strategies.

These commitments represented the guiding principles for the improvement of aid effectiveness, and became the cornerstones of the aid effectiveness paradigm. The Paris Agenda constituted a response to the criticism against the function of development cooperation which had emerged starting from the end of the twentieth century. In this sense, the Paris Agenda may be understood as an attempt to reverse negative trends through the elaboration of reforms that rejected previously accepted assumptions in the field (Keijzer and Hanus 2016). In particular, the ownership principle stood out as a reaction to the imposition by donors of policy conditions in return to aid, a practice which characterized the previous Washington Consensus. Then, the Paris Declaration affirmed the necessity for partner countries to set their own development priorities and strategies. The extreme fragmentation of donors' initiatives resulted in the existence of a myriad uncoordinated programs, causing increasing transitional costs for development parties. To face this problem the Paris Agenda advocated coordination amongst donors and the consistency of their actions with the partner countries plan, as specified in both the harmonization and alignment principles. The co-existence of a great multiplicity of donor-driven plans and actions also undermined the capacity of partner countries for planning and budgeting. In response to this, the Paris Agenda called for the use of country systems to channel resources, and for the realization of development plans from design to assessment. The lack of satisfactory result, in terms of development promotion and poverty reduction, raised the need for shifting the attention from processes to results, which was reflected in the adoption of the managing for results principle. In addition, donors had not been responsible for the lack of success of the policies and plans implemented in partner countries so far, and partner countries were only asked to be accountable for their actions. Again, the Paris Declaration addressed this point by finally affirming that accountability in a partnership was a two-way concept, in which both donors and recipients were responsible for their actions (Stern et al. 2008).

The Paris Declaration was widely acclaimed and presented to the international community as a new consensus and created a big political momentum (Sjostedt 2013, Stern et al. 2008). If on the one hand the Paris Agenda embodied an increasingly common agreement on some problematic aspects of development cooperation and the modification required to overcome them, on the other hand this shared perspective did not gain the status of a true international consensus.

In fact, the shared agenda built up in Paris was the result of a negotiation realized between partner countries, the main multilateral aid and development agencies – World Bank and IMF – and donors. As noted in Stern et al. (2008), in spite of the OECD-DAC requiring consensus, there may have been a different degree of keenness amongst its members on supporting the agenda. Furthermore, civil society organizations had claimed that this supposed consensus had been built exclusively among governments. Leaving civil society

actors outside further corroded the Paris Agenda's legitimacy as a consensus (Kindornay 2011).

Another problematic aspect stemmed from the fact that different actors might have had a different understanding of the Paris Agenda. On this point, the Paris Declaration suggested a set of operational processes and, despite referring to good policies, it did not specify which policies were the most successful for the achievement of the given goals. This implies that the declaration is open to interpretation and that 'the explanatory power of the model in mainstream scientific terms is not strong' (Stern et al. 2008: viii).

As stated, the Paris Agenda was described as a partnership, and the commitments discussed are referred to as partnership commitments. The choice of the partnership model was deemed as 'an attempt to morally rehabilitate the aid industry (Sjostedt 2013: 145), and a way to recognize and address the power asymmetries between donors and partner countries (Stern et al. 2008). Bearing this aim in mind, the Paris partnership was anchored to the principle of mutual accountability, which conveyed the idea that donors and partner countries were bound by mutual responsibilities. However, the definition of 'partnership' attached to the Paris Agenda proved to be loose. The terms of the partnership were not explicitly spelled out and no binding commitment was made, then the words 'commitments' and 'accountable' would rather appear as mere terms employed to push donors to comply with those commitments (Kindornay 2011). For example, in this respect, Stern et al. (2008) highlighted two divergent metaphors used by the press when referring to the Paris partnership, that is: 'non-negotiable decrees' and 'statement of intent'. The two metaphors respectively trace two contrasting perspectives on the partnership. On the one hand, it was presented a partnership that resembled a contractual model, in which partners are legally bound by mutual responsibilities, while on the other hand it was assumed a blander view of partnership, simply intended as shared agreement on actions to be taken in a certain domain. A further different and more radical interpretation was sustained by the Working Group on the Right to Development of the UN Human Rights Council, which in a consultant report critically affirmed that the PD does not constitute in itself a partnership,

> as it brings together national and International actors in the aid cycle with extremely asymmetrical conditions and does not spell out corresponding rights and obligations. As a framework for bilateral partnerships between donors and creditors on the one hand and individual aid recipient countries on the other, the PD fails to provide institutional mechanisms to address the asymmetries in power. Institutional ownership of the PD process rests with the OECD DAC and the World Bank, where donors and creditors have exclusive or majority control, with little or no developing country voice or vote (Bissio 2008: 2).

Amongst the different criticisms advanced by experts and practitioners on the Paris Declaration, the realization of the ownership principle proved to be particularly critical. In fact, it was argued that ownership could only exist in rhetoric within the context of power balance between donors and recipient countries. Also, it was stressed that decentralizing aid administration and promoting budget support would not necessarily increase ownership and a reduction of transaction costs (Menocal 2011).

Another highly questioned principle was that of managing for results. The strict focus on results was seen to cause resources to be channelled in programs with a higher probability of being successful and whose results could be easily measured, at the expense of more complex and often more relevant long-term projects, focusing on development outcomes rather than results. Another contested adverse effect of managing for results was that partner countries experiencing the most severe socio-political and economic conditions were at risk of being left aside, for their poor performances. Thus managing for results was 'perceived as encouraging a focus on "doing things right" rather than "doing the right things" and also a temptation to engage in actions that can be easily quantified' (Sjostedt 2013: 153). A further aspect that came under criticism was that promoting partner countries' ownership and donors' alignment with partner priorities was often in blatant contrast with the donors' establishment of firm priorities and the continuous request to measure and report results in accordance with blueprints of managing for result (Sjostedt 2013).

Finally, a major concern was that the Paris Declaration addressed aid effectiveness as a matter of techno-administrative implementation; in fact, it looked more as a technical agreement, rather than a political agenda for action. This embodied a widespread attitude in the development cooperation community, exalting technicality and managerial approaches to development, which entailed silencing its political dimension as a side effect (Bena 2012; Gulrajani 2011; Mawdsley et al. 2014).

From a global perspective, the implementation and operationalization of the Paris Declaration revealed the tensions inherent in such agenda but, despite the bottlenecks and criticisms pointed out, the reforms introduced were largely welcomed and embraced by many within the international community, and aid effectiveness eventually gained political momentum. From then, the expression 'Paris Agenda' would be employed to refer to the entire aid effectiveness paradigm and process (Mawdsley et al. 2014, Bena 2012).

After Paris, the next High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was planned to take place in Accra in 2008. The Accra Forum aimed at realizing a further analysis of the problems affecting aid effectiveness, in order to set out reforms and accelerate the achievement of the targets established by 2010. Accra doubled the number of attendants at the event in comparison to the previous Paris Forum, welcoming 1000 delegates from all over the world.

In particular, the representation of Middle Income Countries (MIC) and civil society was clearly larger in comparison with the previous Fora. Civil society, which was not considered at the Paris Forum, was in this occasion invited to organize a parallel event (Eyben and Savage 2013). The Accra Forum distinguished itself for having brought in other development actors, namely the private sector and civil society. For the first time, civil society organizations were recognized as development actors in their own right, even if they were left outside of the negotiation phase. The outcome document — the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) — recognized the role played by civil society in fostering development and committed to bring about an enabling environment for CSOs to operate and maximise their contribution. In turn, civil society was asked to reflect on the implementation of the Paris principles from a specific civil society perspective (OECD 2008). The Accra Agenda for Action reaffirmed the commitments made in Paris and moved forwards by making some progress in some fundamental areas like medium-term predictability of aid, the use of country systems, transparency, conditionality, gender equality and human rights (Bena 2012, Eyben and Savage 2013). These achievements were welcomed by those development actors who embraced a concept of development that went beyond economic growth, as will be later discussed (Eyben and Savage 2013).

4.3 A landscape in transformation

The fourth High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness was planned to take place in Busan in 2011 to track the progress of the implementation of the Paris and Accra Agenda for Aid Effectiveness. By this time, the international scenario was turbulent and had assumed different features from the one that witnessed the launch of the MDGs and the rise of the aid effectiveness paradigm at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Development cooperation was sharply affected by different global challenges, namely the proliferation of new conflicts, the international financial crisis, climate change and natural disasters (UNDP 2001). Moreover, the development cooperation arena had become more complex due to an extraordinary growth and diversification of development actors, concerning both state and non-state actors (Mawdsley 2012; Mawdsley et al. 2014). Private foundations, CSOs and the private sector distinguished themselves among non-state actors for playing an increasingly relevant role, while the state actors team was enlarged through the rise of new donors. In addition, the development cooperation system was also experiencing a proliferation of new modalities of conceptualizing and delivering assistance to partner countries (Janus et al. 2015, Kim and Lee 2013; Mawdsley 2012; Mawdsley et al. 2014).

Within this context, the most influential dynamics for the future of development cooperation was felt to be the rise in number and influence of new donors, which gradually altered the existing geopolitics of aid. Rising donors differ from one another, encompassing:

> growing global giants like China, India and Brazil; regional powers like South Africa and Saudi Arabia; rapidly industrializing countries like Thailand and Turkey; and former socialist states, such as Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic. (Madwsley et al. 2014: 29)

This large group is characterized by a high internal degree of heterogeneity in terms of priorities, modalities of assistance and experience in the field. Based on the premise that what rising donors have in common is the fact that their assistance activities cannot be subsumed within the traditional definition of aid as defined by the OECD-DAC, Kim and Lightfoot proposed an organization of the group into four categories (2011: 713), that is:

a) OECD countries that are not members of DAC (e.g. Mexico and Turkey)
b) Countries that have recently joined the European Union but are not members of the OECD
c) Middle East and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia)
d) Non-OECD donors that do not belong to any of the previous groups (e.g. Brazil, Russia, India and China).

The last category of rising donors – especially Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICs) – is the one that mostly drew the attention of the international community, mainly because of the substantial, and increasing, flows of financial support given to their partners in the last decade, but also because this represented a potential challenge to the traditional praxis of development cooperation (Gray and Gills 2016, Kim and Lightfoot 2011, Quadir 2013, Woods 2008). Many of those donors gained a more prominent position in the last decade by supporting development activities in the Global South, eventually spearheading the flourishing of South-South Cooperation (SSC).

The political roots of SSC are to be found in the Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung in 1955 and in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In Bandung, 29 newly independent countries from Africa and Asia affirmed their 'desire for economic co-operation [...] on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty' (Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe 1995 § A) and the need to achieve global peace and promote human rights. The Bandung Conference along with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), constituted the political base of the emerging SSC, while the economic base was

found in the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The NIEO was demanded by those countries that participated in the launch of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Developments (UNCTAD), with the aim of replacing the Bretton Woods Institutions and addressing the structural inequalities rooted in the international trade system, by promoting an open dialogue between the global North and South. Therefore, the UNCTAD played in its early life a role of opposition to the established system of the Bretton Woods Institutions, but its antagonistic role was progressively reduced during its process of reform (Gray and Gills 2016). Against this background, SSC emerged as an expression of solidarity amongst Southern countries and as a vehicle for change in international relations, explicitly addressing the established hierarchical relationship between North and South. SSC explicitly took a step away from the conditionality attached to traditional aid assistance and fostered a model of horizontal cooperation, embracing the principles of equality, partnership and non-interference (Quadir 2013).

The SSC model recently gained increased visibility and space for several reasons. First, the rising Southern donors that fostered the SSC succeeded in proposing an alternative narrative of development cooperation that challenges the primacy of the DAC. In fact, by focusing on horizontal cooperation and untied aid, Southern partner countries are given a higher degree of centrality in defining their own path to development. However, the emphasis on equality, partnership and untied aid had often proven to be merely rhetorical (Quadir 2013). The actions of southern donors have been shown to be led by economic as well as political interests. For example, the resurgence of China's interest in Africa resulted:

> from its twin objectives of building its image as a major political force in the 21st century and its growing need for raw material [and] Brazil's development programmes are guided by its foreign policy objectives, which aim to consolidate its international image as a Southern nation willing to play a greater role in global, peace, security and justice (Quadir 2013: 333).

Another factor of success of SSC providers is the mounting disillusion with the promises made by traditional donors. Despite the pledges made by traditional donors about increasing aid, that promise was not fulfilled by the great majority of this group, as a combined result of the harsh financial crisis and of the change in development priorities. Until the collapse of the Lehman brothers, when the international financial crisis exploded, there had been some positive achievements in terms of supporting the Paris and Accra Agenda for Action but afterwards the political momentum started to wane and the aid flows generally began to show decreasing trends. This decline in interest in the Paris agenda was attributed to the governments' concern with restoring their own budget deficits, which resulted in cuts in public spending and, in turn, in a weaker propensity to allocate resources for aid (Tomlison 2008). In some countries, the simultaneous occurrence of the crisis and changes in political

leadership resulted in the growth and consolidation of discourses on national interests and 'value for money' in relation to foreign aid (Mawdsley et al. 2104). In addition to the detrimental effects of the financial crisis on aid disbursement, aid flows further shrank as an effect of the introduction of the security imperatives in the aid agenda. This was especially visible in the case of the US, the world largest aid provider, whose contribution in the years 2004–2005 approximately provided a quarter of the total aid. Woods (2008: 1213) noted that in the same period Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Jordan and Colombia became the main recipients of US aid. Also, apart from allocating by 2005 10 million dollars of ODA to the Near East area, an amount 600 times larger was spent by the US on other forms of aid that did not qualify as ODA, such as economic support and foreign military spending. In that moment of aid fatigue for the traditional donors, Southern providers increased or maintained their assistance to Southern partner countries. Recipient partners' dissatisfaction with donor actions and plans was further fuelled by their inability to bring about the reforms commonly agreed upon. The principles of ownership and harmonization were far from being realized. On the contrary, the actual state of affairs showed how donors 'sustain and expand their own separate aid agencies and processes, creating a cacophony of donors making different demands on over-stretched aid-needy governments' (Woods 2008: 1219).

Conversely, many analysts from the North condemned the 'sinister agenda' of emerging donors (Madwsley 2012). First, in line with their principle of non-interference, the new donors are accused of supporting rogue states, putting at risk regional and global security (Mawdsley 2012; Mawdsley et al. 2014; Woods 2008). Another major criticism addressed against new emerging donors is the fact that they do not require country partners to respect international standards referring to human rights and environment protection amongst other. In addition, they are thought to be responsible for generating an unfair context for company competition and for riding on debt relief (Kim and Lightfoot 2011, Woods 2008). In conclusion, emerging donors started what Woods defined as 'a silent revolution', in which they were:

> not overtly attempting to overturn rules or replace them. Rather, by quietly offering alternatives to aid-receiving countries, they [were] introducing competitive pressures into the existing system. (Woods 2008: 1221)

The indisputable political and economic weight gained in the development cooperation system by emerging donors made them central actors in the forthcoming Busan Forum, with participants wondering whether they would actively engage in the proceedings or remain external to the whole process.

4.4 Forging new perspectives: from aid effectiveness towards development effectiveness

In those time of changes the concept of 'aid' came under criticism, which was mainly levelled by emerging donors on the count that it could not capture the complexity of the evolving context. In this sense, new theoretical categories were to be elaborated, allowing an approach to the international landscape through different perspectives and intellectual tools. In this regard, the academic debate introduced new expressions, such as 'post-aid world' (Madwsley et al. 2014), 'beyond aid' (Janus et al. 2015) and 'the end of ODA' (Severino and Ray 2009), amongst others.

In the years preceding the fourth High Level forum on Aid Effectiveness, the expression 'development effectiveness' gained in popularity. Generally employed to refer to the new set of development actors and modalities to be included in a new development agenda (Grimm and Hackenesch 2011), 'development effectiveness' emerged from a critique of the expression aid effectiveness, and was the starting point for the creation of a more comprehensive concept that could better fit the features of a new development cooperation system. Differently from 'aid effectiveness', which was consistently interpreted as the aid sector's ability to achieve the stated objectives and outcomes, with a distinct stress on technical issues of aid delivery, 'development effectiveness' lacks a univocal conceptualization, (Kindornay 2011). Thus, the latter expression is meant as an umbrella term including several characterizations of the concept. While 'development effectiveness' and 'aid effectiveness' were often used in an interchangeable way (Quibria 2014), the large majority of development actors operate a distinction when referring to the two concepts.

To explore this aspect, the Ottawa-based North-South Institute conducted a study in 2009 that aimed at creating a literature review of the meanings attached to the expression 'development effectiveness' by different development actors. According to this comprehensive study, which will be briefly presented, four starting points for understanding the expression were identified. The different understandings discussed below are not mutually exclusive and, therefore, there may possibly be some overlapping in their use by development actors (Kindornay 2011).

The first category presents development effectiveness as 'organizational effectiveness' and it is the one that most resembles aid effectiveness. This category was elaborated mainly within aid agencies and gives voice to the supply side, explaining the term as the effectiveness of their own policies and of their ways to achieve fixed organizational objectives. This approach was criticized as it did not realize any advancement in relation to the existing practices, even though organizational effectiveness is still deemed crucial to

orient an effective design and implementation of development policies and plans (Kindornay 2011: 11-12).

The second category sees ‘development effectiveness as coherence’ as relating to the consistency of policies connected to development. It advocates that aid is not the only tool able to influence development and, therefore, it is necessary to enhance coherence between policies adopted in different areas, paying special attention to those which are most likely to affect development, such as trade, investment, security and immigration. With the aim of reforming the international aid architecture, this view promotes ‘whole-government’ approaches for donor countries and the improvement of coherence across partner countries' policies. Even without explicitly referring to the terminology of development effectiveness, non-DAC donors seemed to support the simultaneous use of a plurality of tools, aid and non-aid. For instance, in 2000 leaders of China and Africa decided to carry on a mutual-benefit program of South-South Cooperation which included initiatives on trade, investment, debt relief, tourism, migration, education among others areas. This approach to development effectiveness evinces an idea of regulation different from the one dominating the aid effectiveness paradigm (Kindornay 2011: 13-17). In fact, while the principles of the Paris agenda represented a system of soft rules for delivering and implementing aid, this understanding of development effectiveness relies on international regimes and, above all, national political systems as frameworks for the realization of development actions (Janus et al. 2015).

Third, the conceptualization of development effectiveness as ‘development outcomes from aid’ takes into consideration outcomes expected to be achieved, rather than the interaction of policy areas or the efficiency of each program. Thus, outcomes are considered to be the yardstick for the performance of the programs. This conceptualization was adopted by prominent international organizations, for instance the OECD-DAC and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Kindornay 2011: 18-19).

Finally, the last category identified by the North-South Institute study is development effectiveness as ‘overall development outcomes’, which is presented as the most comprehensive approach. It is to be intended as a measure of the overall development process and outcomes; it includes aid and non-aid tools and implies the adoption of a holistic view, in which the contribution of single actors or tools cannot be isolated from the rest. As a consequence, aid does not occupy a central position, and it is appreciated on the basis of its function of catalyst of alternative resources for development. This category corresponds to the shared perspective of development effectiveness presented by CSOs at the Busan HLF-4 under the coordination of the platform BetterAid, stressing the connection between aid, finance and trade agendas. In this vision, development is especially qualified by the degree of

achievement of human rights, decent work, gender equality, environmental sustainability and democratic power sharing (Kindornay 2011: 20-24).

It is important to follow the future evolutions of the debate on the conceptualization of development effectiveness as it represents a way to comprehend and address the evolving practices in development cooperation, and thus to use the debate as an arena to promote the transformation of the system (Janus et al. 2015).

4.5 The Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness: a turning point

The perception of entering a new era for development cooperation seemed to bring the participants in Busan HLF-4 to share an overwhelming enthusiasm. The Busan High Level Forum was commonly understood as marking a turning point in the history of development cooperation in terms of foreign aid governance and conceptualization.

About 3000 delegates gathered in Busan for the High Level Forum, the participation recorded was far wider than the previous Fora, as was the diversification of its attendance. This was a clear manifestation of the recent evolution of the development landscape that in 2011 appeared much different from 2003, when recipient countries were considered for the first time as equal partners by the OECD and multilateral organizations during the first Forum for Aid Effectiveness (Eyben and Savage 2013). The choice of Korea to host the HLF-4 was also indicative of change. This may be interpreted as a growing interest from traditional donors in forging partnerships with the emerging donors, rather than in supporting the aid effectiveness agenda and, at the same time, as an attempt to relocate themselves in the renewed context by collaborating with the emerging providers (Mawdsley et al. 2014).

A crucial task of the Busan High Level Forum was the assessment of the progress made in relation to the Paris agenda. The results evidenced were clearly unsatisfactory considering that only one out of thirteen targets, the coordination of donors' activities, had been achieved, (Kindornay 2011). Moreover, the superiority of partner countries performance in comparison with donors was definitely confirmed. The lack of satisfactory progress was clearly acknowledged in the Busan outcome document:

> Our dialogue in Busan builds on the foundations laid by previous High Level Fora, which have been proven to remain relevant, and which have helped to improve the quality of development co-operation. Yet we recognise that progress has been uneven and neither fast nor far-reaching enough. (OECD 2011:§ 6)

Surprisingly, the magnitude of the failure did not inspire a critical discussion to identify the factors that undermined improvements, nor were suggestions to move forward in the achievement of the targets advanced. The examination of the targets established by the Paris Agenda was avoided and replaced by an open critique denouncing the agenda's unrealistic and over-ambitious character. As a result, the Paris targets were re-qualified as 'ideals-. In this regard, a very different attitude was shown by developing countries and civil society, which were the only actors who struggled to keep donors accountable to the Paris agenda and maintain the focus on the structures and processes to deliver aid – that is, to keep the Paris agenda on the table (Bena 2012; Ssewakiryanga 2011). In response to this perceivable lack of interest in the so-called 'unfinished business agenda', the Forum organization worked to give it a high political profile, turning down the technical approach that characterized the previous Fora by engaging political representatives of high level, such as, amongst others, the US Secretary of State, the UN Secretary General, the President of the Republic of Korea and the heads of multi-lateral organizations (Kim and Lee 2013).

Eyben and Savage (2013) reported that Korea, which joined the DAC in 2010, was shocked by finding out that elder members tried to dismiss the commitments made in Paris and renewed in Accra. Thus, Korea advocated the need to stress diversity amongst the different actors instead of a possible unity of aims, as sponsored so far by the Paris Agenda. The idea advanced by Korea had important repercussions on the following development of the Forum and gained a large consensus. If the Busan Forum included tracking the advancement of the Paris Agenda as its main objective, it would fail in including the new emerging powers, especially the BRICs. Engaging Southern providers was felt as an essential requirement given the relevance acquired by this group of actors in the last decade, so that an international debate without a proper representation of their voice would have not been meaningful (Mawdsley et al. 2014; OECD 2011). So, during the Busan preparatory process it clearly emerged that the main objective of Busan was to create a new global partnership (Eyben and Savage 2013). The shift towards the creation of a new partnership proved to be extremely successful since it raised enthusiasm and interest in the international community, as expressed by Eyben and Savage:

> The Aid blogosphere exploded with commentaries; positions statements were produced by practically every organization even remotely involved in aid expenditure. Political momentum gained. Everyone needed an opinion. Everyone wanted to go to Busan. (2013: 460)

The issue of how to involve the emerging powers, especially the BRICs, became the underlying *leit motiv* of both the preparatory meetings and the High Level Forum sessions. However, those actors showed low engagement. Brazil, for example, was only present at the

thematic session on South-South Cooperation organized by Colombia. The negotiation of the outcome document proved to be particularly exhausting due to the difficulty of making China and India sign the document. The concern with whether China would sign the document was perceived by the entire community as an essential condition for the project of a future global partnership. Without China, it was believed, the partnership would have sunk. China, who had refused to sign any drafts of the outcome document, eventually agreed to sign late in the night of the third day. The sought-after signature by China turned the HLF-4 into a success, and the formation of the Busan Partnership was internationally intended as a watershed moment in the history of development cooperation (Eyben and Savage 2013, Mawdsley et al. 2014). The success of the Busan Outcome Declaration came at a cost. In order to bring China and India in the partnership, the outcome document was weakened by the insertion, at the very last minute, of the paragraph n.2, which stated:

> The nature, modalities and responsibilities that apply to South-South co-operation differ from those that apply to North-South co-operation […] The principles, commitments and actions agreed in the outcome document in Busan shall be the reference for South-South partners on a voluntary basis (OECD 2011).

That meant that the commitments made in Busan were not binding for Southern Donors, who could choose whether to respect each of the commitments. This caused the disappointment of many participants, who thought that the insertion of the paragraph undermined the very essence of the partnership, reducing it to a worthless agreement. Other actors – such as Mexico – stressed that paragraph number two uprooted the binary division between North-South and replaced it with a new geography, where two emerging Souths were united by development effectiveness (Eyben and Savage, 2013).

Another major achievement of the Busan Forum was the official transition from ‘aid effectiveness’ to a new paradigm named ‘development effectiveness’. The HLF-4 offered a great opportunity to broaden the discussion about the characterization of this concept. Indeed, development effectiveness permeated, either explicitly or implicitly, the variety of debates that accompanied its rise. In this regard, a strong concern arose about the financial dimension of the new development effectiveness model, as it was asserted that the Official Development Assistance (ODA) would no longer represent the primary source of revenue. New channels had to be contemplated for financing development, as instance export credits and other forms of state-sponsored financial instruments. A wide support was garnered also around the need for this new model to incentivize the coordination and coherence of different policy areas, in line with the conceptualization identified by the North-South Institute by the second category. In addition, development effectiveness was interpreted in Busan as the recognition and

inclusion of a vast range of new development actors, as South-South providers, CSOs and the private sector.

The discussion about the new paradigm outlined a trend reversal, in relation to the development focus and purpose prevailing up to that moment. The approach promoted within the aid effectiveness paradigm, aimed at alleviating poverty through the promotion of social wellbeing and sound institutions, was strongly questioned and the new paradigm marked the reaffirmation of economic growth as the main driver of development. This change of direction was accompanied by a return of interest in economic modernization theories, according to which poverty reduction would be achieved as a direct consequence of economic growth. Consequently, wealth creation and the increase of industrial productivity came to be reconsidered as the successful path to development. The progressive definition of the new paradigm reflected the neo-liberal mainstream of the Busan Forum, although many voices expressed different concerns and positions. This was the case of CSOs, which stood against the centrality of economic growth and vigorously advocated the importance of adopting an approach focused on the promotion of human rights (Mawdsley et al. 2014; Reality of Aid 2010). On this point, Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga, prominent activist of African civil society and Executive Director of the Uganda National NGO platform, declared that:

> As we leave Busan, civil society remains concerned about the lukewarm reference to rights-based approaches to development; […] the neoliberal market-driven agenda still reigns supreme with private sector mentioned more times than any other actor. (Ssewakiryanga 2011)

As anticipated above, the new actors celebrated in Busan were emerging donors – especially Brazil, China and India – civil society and the private sector. Civil society was invited for the first time at the negotiation table. CSOs from all around the world participated in Busan, especially those organized by BetterAid with the aim of maximizing the space of CSOs as representatives of the poorest people. CSOs fulfilled the commitments undertaken in Accra, arriving in Busan with an agreed set of principles and an International Framework for CSOs development effectiveness yielded from an intense process of national and regional consultations (Bena 2012; Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011). With regards to the private sector, its contribution was received in Busan with a great fanfare. The enthusiasm for the official intervention of the private sector was linked to the hope that it would propose alternative effective solutions, succeeding where traditional actors had repeatedly failed. Despite this fanfare, the discussion on the potential contribution of the private sector was mainly limited to the topic of public-private partnerships, with little exploration of alternative ways to propel development. In this regard, Busan failed to create a framework for effective and responsible private finance, so it is not yet clear what the

outcomes of the Busan Statement on enhancing public and private cooperation for growth were (Mawdsley et al. 2014; CPDE 2012 a).

The new global partnership launched in Busan set to reform the development cooperation system. To this end four principles were established as guidelines for building up effective development (OECD 2011: 3):

a) Ownership of development priorities by developing countries
b) Focus on results
c) Inclusive development partnerships
d) Transparency and accountability to each other.

It may be seen that the principles referring to ownership, accountability and results were borrowed from the Paris agenda, while the focus on inclusiveness and transparency was a novelty of the new global partnership. With respect to transparency, the Busan Partnership succeeded in establishing specific commitments, among which the creation of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), a common and open framework for the publication of data, was largely applauded (OECD 2011).

The establishment of a global partnership required the reform of the global aid governance, and this was a matter of the utmost importance at Busan. The new Busan Partnership planned to abolish the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), a technical subcommittee of the OECD DAC that organized the Fora on Aid Effectiveness, in order to replace it with the new 'Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation'. The final declaration of Busan also defined the new global approach to development cooperation as 'global-light, country focused' (OECD 2011) in order to affirm the primacy of the priorities of the development countries, the use of their administrative apparatus as default system to deliver aid and the creation of a lean global structure.

This change contributed to reshape the role of the DAC and its relative weight in a more complex landscape of development actors. Moreover, in Busan the requirement of unanimity, which was the mode through which decisions in the field of aid had been taken for over fifty years, was abandoned in favour of 'building blocks'. These were a set of discretionary initiatives for the implementation of the GPEDC principles to which development actors could freely subscribe, offering an occasion to work without the constraint of dealing with the veto of other partners. Owen Barder, Senior Fellow & Director for Europe at the Center for Global Development, pointed out that 'Busan marks a shift in the global governance of development cooperation from consensus in the DAC to the "variable geometry" of building blocks' (Barder 2011). The governance structure of the new Global

Partnership and the elaboration of a specific framework to monitor the commitments made were not defined in Busan. To this end, the Post-Busan Interim Group (PBIG) was constituted, with June 2012 set as the deadline to bring the work to a conclusion.

4.6 A snapshot of the Post-Busan order

The international context within which the aid effectiveness paradigm matured in the late 1990s dramatically changed in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. At the heart of the change was the emergence of new powers, thus causing the fragmentation of the previously Western-dominated international order (Eyben and Savage 2013, Mawdsley et al. 2014, Woods 2008, Quadir 2013, Gray and Gills 2016). The substantial proliferation of new development actors – such as civil society organizations and the private sector – also contributed to make the development cooperation framework more complex than it was at the beginning of the century. The evolution of the aid effectiveness system was given its direction by the High Level Fora, which clearly reflected the ongoing changes in the international context. The HLF-4 held in Busan in 2011 represented the culmination of this path of change, which resulted into the official recognition of the beginning of a new era in the field of development cooperation, which was given the name of 'development effectiveness' (Mawdsley et al. 2014).

The beginning of the new paradigm required a reform of the aid governance system, which resulted in the launch of the GPEDC in July 2012. The GPEDC adopted a new architecture for aid governance that was shaped around the model of partnership. This model, as discussed in the next chapter, affirmed itself as the largest and most inclusive global partnership ever created in this field.

Busan offered the opportunity to observe the interaction of the various actors involved in the process and, therefore, advance hypotheses about the future evolution of their relationships and the resulting power balance. The main tension in terms of power in Busan was that between emerging Southern providers and traditional donors. The former were successful in promoting a new narrative of development cooperation based on the refusal of top-down approaches and the conditionality that characterized the traditional OECD model of development co-operation. Yet, emerging donors have not yet realized nor conceived an alternative set of institutions to co-ordinate their action under a common framework. As such, they have not yet succeeded in constituting a new compact system out of the OECD area of influence that is able to contrast the Bretton Woods Institutions (Quadir 2013, Kim and Lightfoot 2011).

It is also essential to bear in mind that, beyond the rhetoric of horizontal co-operation, the aid provided by emerging powers was not qualitatively different from those given by traditional donors, as both were equally driven by national interests, be they trade, commercial, investments or political. Also, the new powers highly benefited from globalization and from the application of the market-driven liberalism at a global scale, thanks to which they could increase their influence in the international order. Thus, there might be a community of interests between the elites of traditional and emerging powers, with both aiming at supporting the dominant neo-liberal framework (Cammack 2011, Quadir 2013, Eyben and Savage 2013). This hypothesis seems to be reinforced once we consider what happened in Busan. The shift towards development effectiveness was accompanied by a great emphasis given to the role of economic growth as the main driver for development and a celebration of the role of private sector. This conceptualization was endorsed by the majority of the actors involved in Busan, including emerging powers that in theory would have opposed the dominant Western approach to development. In this context of common interests, the efforts undertaken by traditional donors to bring new powers within the novel global partnership may be intended as an attempt to absorb potential opposition by including them in a shared political arena that operates under the common framework of global capitalism (Eyben and Savage 2013).

Therefore, the frictions amongst the various participants in Busan disappeared to reinforce the neo-liberal global paradigm. The only voice that stood against the endorsed vision of development effectiveness was that of civil society, which contested the centrality of growth and argued that development must bring about social justice and be rooted in the respect of human rights – in effect advocating a vision of human rights that went beyond the liberal rhetoric embedded in Clinton's words. The idea that development must build on social justice openly conflicted with the neo-liberalist vision and, as Eyben and Savage put it:

> [it] did not reflect a North-South divide but rather created a fracture between civil society and almost everyone else: fractured cultural and historical geographies were eclipsed by a goal to which all countries should aspire. (2013: 466)

A potential threat to the established order may come from civil society, insofar as it formulates a coherent, systemic critique of global neo-liberalism. Indeed, the position of civil society was in contrast with that of the majority of donors – be them traditional and emerging, Northern and Southern – as well as with those recipient countries who were reluctant to commit to the respect of human rights. The new development effectiveness governance system is a partnership, but despite the official equal status granted to all its members, the reality of facts is different. Thus, notwithstanding its firm opposition to the concept of development effectiveness as proposed by the GPEDC, civil society did not worry traditional

donors as much as the emerging donors did. However, CSOs are working to carry on their battles. Their success might well depend on their future ability to form ad-hoc alliances with more powerful actors.

From a global perspective, the GPEDC is still a new global arena and understanding the formation of power relationships within the great variety of actors involved is a complex task. In order to gain a meaningful understanding of the GPEDC functioning and its internal equilibrium of forces as defined by the constant interaction of its stakeholders, the next chapter examines the formation of the global partnership, its structure and action, as well as its location within the wider international context of development assistance.

Chapter 5
The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: origins, features and future prospects

Introduction

Moving from the evolutionary path of the development cooperation system[5] described in the previous chapter, the focus will now be narrowed to especially look at the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), with the aim of understanding how the GPEDC originates from that social, political and economic background. The main dynamics of change that have shaken the development cooperation system during the last two decades are here discussed to gain a fuller comprehension of the circumstances that shaped the GPEDC profile.

The first section briefly returns to the aid effectiveness debate, which is approached by looking at the series of High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness realized up to 2008. In this chapter, the overview of those Fora especially focuses on the process of formation of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF), for representing the ancestor of the GPEDC. The role played by the Working Party in the organization of the Fora and, thus, in defining the ongoing debate about the aid effectiveness agenda, is at the core of this section.

The second section discusses the 4th High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan in 2011, which constituted a watershed moment in that it marked a transition from 'aid effectiveness' to 'development effectiveness'. Differently from the general presentation given in the previous chapter, the Busan Forum will be here analysed in order to understand the dynamics in act that brought the present actors to agree on the need to design a new governance system — that is the future GPEDC — and bring the Working Party to an end.

The third section presents a portrait of the GPEDC. It introduces its mandate, its vision and the four core principles that orient its action. Special attention is paid to the GPEDC monitoring framework, which was elaborated to track progress in implementing commitments made in Busan, and the mutual accountability function that it supports.

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[5] See Appendix II

The fourth and the fifth sections respectively discuss the first and the second High Level Meetings of the GPEDC, held in Mexico City in 2014 and in Nairobi in 2016. The discussion of the first GPEDC High Level Meeting is based on the documentation released on the event, while the discussion of the second High Level Meeting benefits from the data collected as non-participant observer. Despite efforts to make the development agenda appealing to the emerging powers, there was strikingly low involvement. The Nairobi meeting was nevertheless a turning point for the GPEDC. This took place at a particular juncture for the international community, a year after the launch of the new 2030 Agenda and of the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. The Nairobi meeting established a new mandate for the GPEDC and affirmed the need to review its monitoring framework, to connect to the wider UN-led process of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, the conclusions analyse the comparative advantages of the GPEDC governance body, its inclusiveness and mutual accountability.

5.1 The seed of the GPEDC: The High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness and the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

The launch of GPEDC in July 2012 represented the evolution of the development-effectiveness debate during the last two decades. The concern with the quality of aid found expression in the 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration, which was committed 'to making the right to development a reality for everyone' (United Nations General Assembly 2000 § 12) and called for the creation of 'an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty' (United Nations General Assembly 2000 § 12). Based on such resolution, the Millennium campaign succeeded in gathering together governments and other development actors from all around the world to achieve by 2015 a set of targets designed to satisfy the needs of the most indigent people in the world – i.e. the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations 2015a). The eighth goal, 'Develop a Global Partnership for Development' (United Nations, n.d.*b*), is of special interest to this work, as it stemmed from the awareness, raised by the variety of development actors, of the need to work together to achieve significant results in the fight against global poverty. In this sense, the eighth goal constituted the basic premise for the realization of the other development goals. The origin of the path that led to the creation of the GPEDC is to be found in the international community's commitment to cooperate in successfully promoting development. It is against this background that the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, the predecessor of the GPEDC, was established in 2003.

As discussed in chapter III, the international community efforts to cooperate in order to improve the quality of aid materialized in the organization of the Rome High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness in 2003, which constituted the first step taken to define and officially recognize aid-effectiveness principles. The progress made in terms of harmonization would then be monitored and discussed in the following High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness, which was held in Paris in 2005. The need to monitor the implementation of the Rome Declaration was the basis for the creation of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF). The Working Party started its work in the same year as a group composed exclusively by donors from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), and was hosted by the OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) (Atwood 2011). The Working Party task team translated the concept of harmonization and alignment into operational guidelines. In particular, it identified the key-actors responsible for harmonization within countries and amongst different sectors and then proceeded with the creation of an on-line information platform to share experiences.

The Second High Level Meeting on Joint Progress toward Enhanced Aid Effectiveness was held in Paris in 2005, and became a milestone in the recent evolution of development cooperation. As seen before, the outcome document 'The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness' (also known as Paris Agenda) shaped a new kind of relationship between donor and partner countries as a genuine partnership between actors who, for the first time, agreed to held each other accountable for the results achieved. The momentum for reforms and changes also involved the Working Party. On that occasion, what was created as an OECD-DAC members' group evolved into a larger joint partnership of donors and developing countries, with partner countries and multilateral institutions deliberately choosing to join so as to contribute to the remodelling of the aid system (OECD 2010; OECD 2008). Moreover, the Working Party played a key role in the organization of the Forum and in the production of the outcome document. The Working Party met twice in 2005 to formulate and review the targets related to the Indicators of Progress launched by the Paris Declaration. The same document attributed a special function to the Working Party, which was 'asked to provide specific guidance on definitions, scope of application, criteria and methodologies to assure that results can be aggregated across countries and across time' (OECD 2008: footnote to § 9). In the evolving debate on aid effectiveness, the Working Party came to be identified as the body responsible for the organization of the High Level Fora series, thus guiding and coordinating the efforts made to change the way development cooperation was working.

The Working Party aspired to be an informal and independent platform for dialogue on aid effectiveness based on the principles of inclusiveness and transparency. It succeeded in broadening its constituency by including developing countries and different development actors, which were probably attracted by some features that distinguished it from other

international institutional spaces, especially its relative informality and its assumed objectivity (Atwood 2012; OECD 2010). In fact, the Working Party adopted a soft-law approach to its work, aimed to create an informal setting where different development actors could participate in evidence-based discussion. However, the Working Party's self-proclaimed status of objectivity, guaranteed by the employment of transparency mechanisms in its work, was questioned by some governments (e.g. Brazil) which believed that its subordination to the DAC could undermine its neutrality (Atwood 2012).

The organization of the 2008 Third High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness (3HLM) was fully taken over by the Working Party. It worked on different drafts of the outcome document, each of which was posted on the 3HLM website to ensure transparency and collect proposals for modification. Thus, the 3HLM declaration — the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) — was pre-negotiated, with only few topics left open for the final discussion preceding the official adoption (Abdel-Malek 2015). During the time required to the organization of the 3HLM, the Working Party further increased its constituency, bringing in other development countries, the UN, the World Bank, regional banks and organizations, such as the African Union. In particular, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) made an important contribution to the work of the Working Party, by facilitating the participation of developing countries and giving a larger global dimension to the survey to be realized about the implementation of the agreed commitments (Atwood 2012; Abdel-Malek 2015).

As the AAA raised the bar in terms of improving aid effectiveness, the members of the Working Party questioned its adequacy and efficacy to deal with the challenges posed by the new agenda. The changing development landscape marked by new international commitments, the proliferation of new development actors and a harsh financial crisis, triggered the Working Party members' need to review its functioning. After the 3HLM, the Working Party held a meeting on November 2008 to review its mandate and its structure, in order to effectively respond to the AAA call for strengthening partnerships for effective aid based on more genuine and trustworthy relationships between the actors involved (OECD 2010*;* Abdel-Malek 2015). This review seemed to be even more necessary in preparation to the following High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness, which was decided to take place in 2011.

The Working Party Joint Ventures and Task Teams[6] elaborated proposals in their respective domain, while the Secretariat presented proposals regarding the mandate, the work plan, the membership and the structure. The Working Party embraced the increment experienced in its membership in the name of the inclusiveness principle. The plenary session included 80 members organized into five categories: countries receiving ODA; countries both receiving and providing assistance; countries reporting ODA to DAC, multilateral organizations, CSOs, foundations, local governments and parliaments. The Steering or Executive Committee would lead and coordinate the Working Party. This body, with a constituency of 20 members, was designed to have a restricted membership with the aim of assuring a leaner organization of the work. The executive committee membership reflected an even distribution in terms of geographical and technical representativeness of the various constituencies (OECD-DAC 2008). Finally, the clusters were defined as limited groups with fixed number of task teams, working within time bounds and oriented to the delivery of concrete outputs. Clusters of work had a strong focus on country level implementation and their objective was to spread good practices and tools and coordinate the communication among the country, regional and international level. Clusters, as well as the task teams, would be jointly guided by a donor/partner co-leadership. The four clusters working for the implementation of the AAA were: ownership, country systems, transparent and responsible aid, and assessing progress (OECD-DAC 2008).

Participants in the Accra Forum had already decided that the next forum would have been held in Busan in November 2011. The time frame between April 2009 and November 2011 recorded an extraordinary intensification of initiatives to advance the implementation of the AAA promoted by a great variety of development actors and stakeholders. The effect of the myriad of contributions was an enrichment of the debate on aid effectiveness, whose boundaries were extended to include other topics and issues related with the broader theme of development effectiveness. In this fervid moment, the Working Party's action was organized into four distinct areas. The first area was working with the clusters and work streams to identify both positive and negative practices and, in case, finding solutions and elaborate tool-kits to solve any problems experienced. This area of work concentrated the majority of the Working Party's efforts. The second area was checking and supporting the stakeholders' commitment to implement the agreed agenda, and this was done through letters from the chair and meetings at international and regional level. The last two areas of action

[6] The WP-EFF Joint Ventures and Task Team are the following: civil society and aid effectiveness; division of labour, capacity development alliance, health as a tracer sector; public Financial Management; procurement; managing for development results, fragile states.

were engaging in regional and ad-hoc meetings. While regional meetings were organized to discuss specific regional concerns, ad hoc meetings were arranged to increase the engagement of policy makers in the development agenda, a fundamental condition especially in view of the next High Level Meeting (Abdel-Malek 2015).

5.2 The Busan High Level Forum and the launch of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

The Working Party, and its Executive Committee in particular, was responsible for the organization of the 2011 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (4HLM). The Busan Forum marked a turning point in the history of development cooperation, certifying a paradigm shift from 'aid effectiveness' to 'development effectiveness'.

As discussed in chapter III, the 4HLM was driven by the need to adapt the development cooperation system to the changing international landscape, in particular to the diffusion of new cooperation modalities and the growing influence of South-South Cooperation, led by successful Southern countries such as China, India and Brazil. The concept of aid effectiveness was felt to be inadequate to capture the ongoing transformations and was replaced with a broader narrative called 'development effectiveness'. This change allowed taking stock of the large set of factors – including foreign direct investment, trade regulations, labour laws, amongst others – which, considered in their entirety, influence the result achieved by a country in terms of development. Thus, development effectiveness was judged to better fit the idea of policy coherence, a point that had been on the table of donors and partner countries for discussion for a long time since the Paris Forum (Bena 2012).

The disappointment with the lack of substantial progress worked as an incentive for the actors involved to further push the efforts already undertaken. In particular, the new approach to development partnerships needed to be differently articulated in order to maximise impact. The partnership of the actors in Busan was made more effective through the inclusion, for the first time, of a new set of actors at the negotiating table, namely parliamentarians, private sector, civil society and emerging donors. This more inclusive coalition aspired to reforming the development cooperation on the basis of the four orienting principles mentioned in chapter III *(*ownership of development priorities, focus on result, transparency and accountability and inclusive partnerships) which will be discussed later. With the aim of implementing and following up the new commitments, the Busan Forum officialised the creation of the new Global Partnership for Effective Development

Cooperation (GPEDC). The outcome document specified that a new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation would be established:

> to support and ensure accountability for the implementation of commitments at the political level. This Partnership will offer an open platform that embraces diversity, providing a forum for the exchange of knowledge and the regular review of progress. (OECD 2011: § 36, ¶ a).

This is to be considered the main outcome of the Busan Forum, giving development cooperation a new architecture, one which distinguished itself for being the most inclusive partnership for development ever realized in terms of variety of stakeholders involved and comprehensiveness of the agenda. The GPEDC would replace the Working Party, the latter having been responsible for organizing the GPEDC working arrangements and proposing monitoring mechanisms. The Working Party formed a limited group to work on these tasks, named the Post Busan Interim Group (PBIG). In particular the group was expected to define the GPEDC mandate, its internal organization and how progress towards meeting the agreed commitments would be measured by June 2012 (Abdel-Malek 2015).

The PBIG was formed by 25 members representing different development stakeholders, one chair – Mr. Abdel-Malek, at that time also chair of the Working Party – and two vice-chairs – *Korea and the World Bank*. In addition, the chair of the DAC and a UNDP delegate showed their support to the creation of the GPEDC by joining the Working Party Bureau, while India, China and Brazil participated as observers (Abdel-Malek 2015). In the report made by the Working Party and PBIG chair Mr. Abdel-Malek, three meetings of the PBIG were scheduled before the last plenary session of the Working Party, when the arrangements made would be presented for approval.

With regards to the GPEDC working structure, it would be composed of a steering committee, ministerial meeting and a UNDP-OECD Joint Support Team, while the membership would be open to all the stakeholders who endorsed the Busan outcome document. Within this structure, the key role was played by the ministerial meetings, which would be the decision-making core entity, while the Steering Committee had the responsibility for elaborating the agenda and following up the ministerial directives. The UNDP-OECD Joint Support Team would provide the GPEDC with a secretariat. External support to the work of the GPEDC was given by regional organizations, in light of their comparative competences and specific contributions.

Concerning the monitoring framework, different proposals were taken into consideration. This analysis led to the identification of a set of elements to orient the design of the framework, that is: emphasis on country-level monitoring, a degree of flexibility in applying the framework to different contexts, the need to develop both quantitative and

qualitative methods of monitoring and, finally, the need to detect both outcomes and behavioural changes (Abdel-Malek 2015). The framework was finally spelled out in the last PBIG meeting, held in May 2012 where an agreement was reached on 10 indicators[7] and related targets.

Other challenging issues were solved during this last meeting, in particular the question of the composition of the Steering Committee. In the initial proposal, the Steering Committee was supposed to be made of 12–14 members, but different members – both recipients and providers – asked to extend the membership so as to ensure an equal and balanced representativeness for all members. Finally, the members agreed on a Steering Committee of 18 members, comprising three co-chairs and 15 members classified in the following way: recipients, providers, recipient-providers and, lastly, non-executive stakeholders (which included all other types of development actors). The last PBIG meeting managed to build consensus among the constituencies about the future GPEDC mandate, structure and monitoring framework, and was ready to present its work during what would be the last plenary session of the Working Party, before its dissolution (Abdel-Malek 2015).

The final meeting of the Working Party was held on 28th -29th June 2012 in New York and the proposal elaborated by the PBIG was opened to discussion. The approval of the GPEDC mandate and functions ran smoothly, but concerns were raised again about the Steering Committee membership and the definition of the global indicators. The critiques advanced were the same faced during the PBIG previous meetings, so that it was deemed preferable not to open further negotiations. As for the global indicators, it was recognized that, while more technical work was needed, the working framework proposed was adequate to produce a review. It was stated that UNDP-OECD Joint Support Team would work to improve the definition of the indicators and the criteria to measure them. This process of revision had to be transparent and make use of the expertise of the GPEDC constituencies. The modified framework would be submitted by the end of the year to the Steering Committee

[7] The agreed global indicators are the following: 1) Development cooperation is focused on results that meet developing countries' priorities 2) Civil society operates within an environment that maximises its engagement in and contribution to development 3) Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development 4)Transparency: information on development cooperation is publicly available 5) Development cooperation is more predictable 6) Aid is on budgets, which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny 7) Mutual accountability among development cooperation actors is strengthened through inclusive reviews 8) Gender equality and women's empowerment inclusive reviews 9) Effective institutions: developing countries' systems are strengthened and used 10) Aid is untied.

for approval (Abdel-Malek 2015). The GPEDC was officially inaugurated in July 2012 (Abdel-Malek 2015).

The next section presents an overview of the GPEDC vision, mandate and monitoring. This is necessary to gain a general understanding of the GPEDC action before proceeding to a comprehensive analysis of the GPEDC work in the two High Level Meetings realized in 2014 and 2016.

5.3 A compendium of the GPEDC vision, mandate and monitoring activity

The GPEDC took over the mission of the Working Party in 2012, and since then it has been advocating for the improvement of all forms of development cooperation, with the ambition to represent a 'new global business model' aimed at eradicating poverty (GPEDC 2013: §6).

In pursuing its mission, the GPEDC has been oriented and led by the implementation of four core principles, developed from the shared principles identified by the Busan Partnership (OECD 2012), i.e. ownership of development priorities by developing countries; focus on results; inclusive partnerships; and transparency and mutual accountability. The GPEDC website, which has devoted a section to its core principles[8], characterizes them as follows (GPEDC n.d.*a*).

[8] See Appendix III

Figure 5.1 Figure The GPEDC Principles

Source: GPEDC Principles. [online] Available from: http://effectivecooperation.org/about/principles/

The first principle is country ownership and has been considered as the mainstay of any action undertaken to improve development effectiveness. It stresses the importance for partner countries to determine their priorities, needs and projects, so that the latter are especially designed to fit specific local contexts.

The second principle, known as ‘focus on results’, reflects the need to increase the degree of success of development actions, given the poor experiences shown by the

monitoring process promoted through the different High Level Fora. It states that development programmes must be designed to achieve long-term impacts in terms of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality and, to do so, they must stimulate the development capacity of partner countries and be linked up with their policies and priorities.

The third principle, known as 'inclusive partnerships', affirms that the creation of a partnerships relies on the inclusion of different actors with their distinct perspectives and roles, as well as in the capacity of building trust and respect amongst them.

The last principle, 'transparency and accountability', highlights the necessity of building accountability at various levels: towards those who benefit from the projects, towards constituencies and other stakeholders, and towards citizens. It also stands to remind that employing transparent practices is a necessary condition to ensure accountability (GPEDC n.d.*a*).

2015 was a fundamental year for the international community, as it marked the deadline to achieve the MDGs. After 2015, a stage of discussion about the next evolution of the Millennium Campaign was inaugurated at an international level. This process ended up with the launch of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which built on the previous campaign and goals but further expanded it, defining a more comprehensive definition of poverty and inequality. The new 2030 Agenda established a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be met by 2030, to which 169 targets were associated to (United Nations n.d.*c*).

The discussion about the 2030 Agenda ran through the GPEDC too, with the aim of positioning the GPEDC work within the new development agenda. The potential contribution of the GPEDC for the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was discussed and officially acknowledged in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action (AAAA), the outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development realized in Ethiopia in July 2015. The AAAA affirmed the complementarity of the GPEDC work, which stands out amongst others development fora, to that of the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (United Nations 2015b). The potential connected to the employment of the GPDEC monitoring framework was also recognized – by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and the identification of successful tools, the framework may speed up the fulfilment of the SDGs (GPEDC n.d.*b*).

Within the new international agenda, the GPEDC mandate was updated to actively sustain the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the promotion of effective development practices, playing an instrumental role in the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the GPEDC aims at 'ending all forms of

poverty and inequality, advancing sustainable development and ensuring that no-one is left behind' (GPEDC n.d.*d*: § 2). Accountability remains the cardinal principle at the heart of the GPEDC action, and it is operationalized, firstly, through the production and diffusion of data that evidences progress in improving development effectiveness; secondly, through the adoption of a country-focused approach, which allows partner countries to maximize the benefits resulting from development cooperation (GPEDC, n.d.*b*:§ 2). Also, five core functions were identified: supporting effectiveness at country level; generating evidence for accountability and SDG follow-up; sharing knowledge and lessons to drive innovation; facilitating specialized dialogue on key issues for SDGs achievement; building political momentum for effective development co-operation (GPEDC 2017*a*: 5).

With regards to the GPEDC monitoring framework, it was created to take stock of the progress made towards the realization of the four principles that orient the GPEDC action in development cooperation. The GPEDC framework was defined the 'jewel in the crown' (Bhattacharya, 2017: 2), for it 'is currently the only global mechanism that seeks to instil mutual accountability in development cooperation in general and aid relationship in particular' (Bhattacharaya 2017: 2).

A preliminary version of the GPEDC monitoring guide was launched in 2013, offering an overview of the indicators and targets to be met and suggestions for data collection. The framework is composed of ten indicators, some of which are derived from the 2005 Paris Agenda, while others were introduced after the realization of the 4HLM to reflect the more comprehensive vision about development effectiveness gained in Busan. The monitoring framework is currently being reviewed in order to adapt it to the implementation of the 2030 agenda and to the monitoring of the SDGs, in particular of goals 5 and 17 — respectively, 'gender equality' and 'partnerships for the goals' — (GPEDC n.d.*d*). As mentioned above, the GPEDC may play an instrumental role in supporting the realization of the 2030 Agenda. It is in this sense that:

> [the monitoring exercise] seeks to capture behaviour change: it focuses on 'how' stakeholders engage in development co-operation. It complements other international accountability frameworks which monitor 'what' results and outcomes stem from development co-operation (e.g. the monitoring of progress with the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals) (GPEDC 2015: §1).

The monitoring process has its roots at country level. Data collection is led and conducted by partner countries that later share those data with development co-operation providers, representatives of civil society, the private sector and parliaments, to collectively validate them. After that, validated data are shared with UNDP-OECD Joint Support Team (JST) to be aggregated and incorporated into global synthesis report (GPEDC 2015).

The first preliminary version of the GPEDC monitoring guide was launched in 2013, following Busan (Abdel-Malek 2015). The first monitoring round was closed in 2014 and development effectiveness was discussed during the First High Level Meeting of the GPEDC that took place in Mexico in April 2014. 46 developing countries and 70 providers of development cooperation contributed to the realization of the first monitoring round (Bhattacharya 2017). The results were synthetized by the OECD-UNDP JST in the report 'Making Development Co-operation More Effective: 2014 Progress Report' (OECD/UNDP 2014), which pictured progress as a half-full glass. It stated that:

> The results are globally mixed. Longstanding efforts to change the way development co-operation is delivered are paying off, but much more needs to be done to transform co-operation practices and ensure country ownership of all development efforts, as well as transparency and accountability among development partners (OECD/UNDP 2014: 16).

The changes made confirmed that reforms require time and that any improvement had not to be taken for granted, especially in a context of international financial crisis. The main issues discussed regarded the need to ensure that development was indeed built in an inclusive way, comprising all stakeholders, with particular attention to civil society and parliaments. Moreover, the importance of increasing action at country level was stressed (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores / Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo 2014). From a methodological point of view, this first exercise of monitoring helped detect difficulties in measuring the indicators. The main difficulties concerned the complexity of measuring indicators built upon composite variables, rather than single ones, and to the challenge posed by the need to measure qualitative issues, especially those concerning the change in the behaviour of the actors. From a global perspective, what emerged in this first round was a confident attitude towards the possibility of building effective mechanisms to ensure global accountability that would be managed and implemented at the national level (Bhattacharya 2017). Also, it clearly resulted that the monitoring framework needed to be further refined and updated in view of the forthcoming second round, as well as of the new 2030 Agenda (Abdel-Malek 2015; Bhattacharya 2017).

The monitoring framework was subject to a process of review and restructuring in 2015-2016. This process aimed to adapt it to the 2030 agenda and the new Sustainable Development Goals (GPEDC 2017*b*). In particular, the 7th GPEDC Steering Committee meeting, held in January 2015, stated the need to improve the indicators framework as well as the process to monitor development cooperation activities and, in order to do so, a Monitory Advisory Group (MAG) was created. The MAG is made up of 12 members and reunited for the first time in May 2015 in New York (Bhattacharya 2017). The preparatory work of the MAG and the consultations realized in 2015 and 2016 led to the identification of a series of

parameters elaborated to extend the monitoring framework for it to be able to address the issues related to the 2030 Agenda, namely:

a) Principles of effective development co-operation remain relevant.
b) Global Partnership's holistic approach with an inter-related set of indicators to monitoring effective development co-operation adds value to efforts to strengthen the means of implementation and complements SDGs review process at country level.
c) The unique value of the Global Partnership monitoring is its country-driven, inclusive, multi-stakeholder process.
d) The purpose of monitoring remains that of incentivising and guiding changes in practice and behaviour in development co-operation and partnerships.

The current set of indicators remains relevant to the behaviour and institutional changes required to implement the principles for effective cooperation and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, the scope of monitoring and the indicators will need to be adjusted to be relevant to today's development cooperation challenges, and meet expectations in assessing effectiveness (GPEDC 2017:3)

The second monitoring round of the GPEDC was launched between September and October 2015, the related report was made available in September 2016 for circulation amongst the GPEDC members and development stakeholders, so that it could be discussed in view of the GPEDC 2nd High Level Meeting, which was held in Nairobi in December 2016 (GPEDC n.d.*d*). The number of participants in this monitoring round notably increased, having involved 81 low and middle-income countries; 125 development partners; 74 development organizations; and hundreds of civil society organizations, private sector representatives, trade unions, foundations, parliamentarians and local governments (OECD/UNDP 2016).

Similarly to the previous report, the 2016 monitoring report also sketched a positive overview of the progress made since Busan in relation to the four principles orienting the GPEDC action. However, inclusiveness had proven to be scarce in relation to the involvement of civil society in meaningful political dialogue with country institutions and in relation to the realization of public-private dialogue, the latter being affected by a lack of instruments and resources to translate public-private dialogue into concrete actions. Transparency also proved to require improvement, especially in terms of the realization of country-level mutual review, given that in more than half of the countries considered local governments and non-governmental stakeholders were not consulted. Finally, the results on strengthening countries

systems were mixed, with only 50% of development co-operation finance being conveyed through the public financial management of the countries (OECD/UNDP 2016).

The results of the second monitoring round were circulated amongst the participants of the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting, held in Nairobi in 2016. In Nairobi the GPEDC went through a watershed moment in its life, which resulted in the renewal of its mandate and a further evolution of its monitoring framework. In fact, despite being a recently-born global partnership, the GPEDC has gone through a continuous path of change, which can be appreciated through two milestones, the first and the second High Level Meetings, which are given a thorough presentation in the following two sections.

5.4 The First High Level Meeting of the GPEDC, Mexico City 2014.

The first High Level Meeting of the GPEDC was held in Mexico City on 15–16 April 2014. It recorded a wide participation with more than 1500 delegates, among which there were heads of governments, of multilateral, regional and bilateral agencies (including the UN and the OECD Secretary-General), senior-level officials, parliamentarians, practitioners and academics. This level of participation to the very first High Level Meeting of the new Global Partnership was eventually understood as a good sign, rewarding the effort made to maintain the political momentum generated during the Busan HLM in 2011 (Abdel-Malek 2015).

The Communiqué released at the end of the two days of meetings opened with a concerned commentary on the international socio-political landscape and how it affected the development cooperation system:

> Global development is at a critical juncture. Despite progress on the MDGs, poverty and inequality, in their multiple dimensions and across all regions, remain the central challenges. Slow and uneven global economic growth, insecurity in supplies of food, water and energy, lack of quality education and decent work for all, and instances of conflict, fragility and vulnerability to economic shocks, natural disasters, and health pandemics are also pressing concerns in many areas of the world. Managing climate change and the global commons add further complexity to our global agenda (GPEDC 2014*a*: §2).

These initial observations, heavy with adverse premises, had been counterweighed in the same section by a paragraph imbued with fervour and enthusiasm. This constitutes an example of the aspirational language that is typical of this kind of documents, and which reaches its highest expression when applied to great universal quests, such as ending poverty and inequality. ‘At the same time, the possibilities for human development are immense and we have at our disposal the means to end poverty at global scale in the course of one generation’ (GPEDC 2014*a*: §2).

The Mexico Communiqué underscored the GPEDC pledge to realize a paradigm shift from aid effectiveness towards effective development cooperation, and resumed the commitments made in Busan. The unfinished business was still qualified as a 'critical concern', requiring a renewed political will and further urgent measures to address the bottlenecks hindering the effectiveness of development highlighted in the first monitoring round. Also, it intended to reinvigorate the commitments made with regards to financing for inclusive and sustainable development (GPEDC 2014*a*: §5-7). Other relevant issues that were identified as in need of being addressed in order to produce the new agenda for effective development cooperation were the mobilization of domestic resources, the role and contribution of Middle Income Countries (MICs), of South-South Cooperation (SSC), of triangular cooperation and knowledge-sharing and, finally, the need for a greater involvement of the private sector as a development partner (Abdel-Malek 2015).

The first GPEDC High Level Forum should build on the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and the Mexico Communiqué essentially reaffirmed what already asserted in Busan. The Communiqué resembled a declaration of general intents, rather than a concrete roadmap for advancing the development effectiveness agenda.

Indeed, the Busan Forum strongly focused on the elaboration of principles against which development cooperation plans and initiatives would be assessed for their capacity of promoting sustainable development process. In Busan the promotion of a wider discussion about development effectiveness had 'the beginning of a wishy-washy language' (Glennie 2014: 2) as a repercussion, but the intent of monitoring the development cooperation system outcomes was still the fulcrum of the reform process started. Differently, the space dedicated to the monitoring mechanisms in the first GPEDC High Level Meeting was limited.

While in Mexico the discussion to develop the monitoring framework was given a minor role, the debate was organized around five thematic areas: progress since Busan and inclusive development; domestic resource mobilization; south-south cooperation, middle-income countries; working with the private sector (Glennie 2014: 2).

Eventually, 38 voluntary initiatives to increase development effectiveness were presented in an annex of the Communiqué, which was intended to be a 'living document', in the sense that it was conceived to be expanded and enriched in time by the addition of different experiences. Some examples of the initiatives listed in the annex are the Africa action plan, the EU joint programming to manage diversity, CSO enabling environment framework and country dialogues for strengthening local systems, amongst others (Abdel-Malek 2015: 296-297). Such initiatives were positive in that they constituted the result of joint consultations realized by development stakeholders. On the other hand, their being on a voluntary basis was

a negative aspect, as they could be interrupted or shut down at any point, without the need to be accountable to the development community. On this point, Abdel-Malek commented that:

> In short, […] sustainability rests on the continued commitment of its sponsors. The voluntary initiatives annex is a far cry from the firm commitments made in Busan and previous High Level Forums, notwithstanding that many such commitments have yet to be honoured, but they nevertheless showed a willingness 'to commit', not merely to volunteer. (2015: 297)

The outcome document prompted a range of different reactions from the participants. Then-chair of the OECD/DAC Erik Solheim highlighted as a major positive result that GPEDC had grown into the main forum to discuss policies and experiences to end poverty. Other voices were less enthusiastic, complaining about the decision of China and India not to attend the meeting, along with the mistrust towards the GPEDC shown by Brazil. On the lack of those actors, the Chair of the China International Development Research Network vehemently argued that:

> The decline in the participation of China and India, as well as apparent disagreement from Brazil, despite its attendance, raised questions over how this new partnership can be further developed [...] The West has been using a similar approach through its controlled institutional structure and well-elaborated framework to secure the 'buy-in' of others in order to sustain its basic agenda. China and, I believe, others have been very cautious not to be 'bought in' (Li 2014 cit. in Abdel-Malek 2015: 299).

Other actors also expressed disappointment, for example CPDE protested against the lack of concrete commitments to achieve the MDGs and to build an enabling environment for CSOs to operate. They also criticized the great emphasis given to the promotion of the private sector and the lack of mechanisms to make it accountable towards people and transparent about its work. Other participants, as Anders B. Johnsson from Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), pointed out the discontinuity between declaration of principles and action, warning that only a part of the commitments made in Busan were being systematically checked. Yet, these mixed opinions and feelings were to be expected when considering the extreme variety of actors and interests involved, as well as the vastness of the agenda discussed in a two days span only.

In conclusion, the concern about the potential low political profile of the first GPEDC High Level Meeting was drawn away by the participation of almost all countries – with the controversial exception of India and China – which allowed the development of a substantial discussion, although the political profile was not on a par with that of recorded in Busan (Glennie 2014).

5.5 The GPEDC Second High Level Meeting, Nairobi 2016

Two years after the Mexico Meeting, the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC (HLM2) was hosted by the government of Kenya, taking place in Nairobi on 28th November-1st December 2016.

On days 28th and 29th November stakeholders had the chance to meet to discuss relevant issues before the start of the High-Level Ministerial Segment, namely: youth and women forum were held on 28th November, and civil society, parliamentarians, foundations and private sector fora on 29th November. On 29th November a workshop for the discussion of the findings emerging from the Second Monitoring round was also held, providing useful data to inform the debates in the following days. With regards to the High-Level Ministerial Segment, it was constituted by seven plenary sessions, along with parallel debates on development bottlenecks, side events and a marketplace designed to share knowledge and successful and innovating initiatives (GPEDC 2016*b*).

The event occurred in an important moment for the international community, one year after the launch of the new 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development, and straight after the release of the second GPEDC monitoring round. Against this background, the Second High Level Meeting was deemed as an important moment to foster the effective development cooperation agenda and shaping the future action of the GPEDC. The GPEDC, in preparation for the HLM2, published on its website a document entitled 'The Second High Level Meeting: 12 reasons why it matters' (GPEDC 2016*a*) to underscore the significance of that event and, therefore, ensure a wide participation from development actors and stakeholders worldwide.

Amongst the twelve reasons illustrated, the most relevant is 'aligning with the global priorities', which was intended as the primary objective of the Nairobi meeting. The debate in Nairobi was mainly structured around the need to work for the achievement of the SDGs and, then, to support and link up with the 2030 Agenda (Davis 2016). The GPEDC sees itself as a pivotal component of the new development cooperation architecture articulated around the 2030 Agenda, within which it affirms its expertise in enhancing the effectiveness of development cooperation, at global and local level. (GPEDC 2017*b*). With a view to adapt and effectively respond to the new global agenda, the GPEDC engaged in a process of review of its mandate, which was finally discussed and approved during the HLM2 in Nairobi.

The elaboration of the new mandate was informed by the formulation of a Theory of Change (ToC) for the GPEDC, brought to light by a specific Monitoring Advisory Group upon request of the Steering Committee and the co-chairs. Tracing a Theory of Change for the GPEDC was deemed necessary 'in order to highlight some important directions,

challenges and ingredients that seem to be important factors in furthering the Partnership's contribution to change in effective development cooperation' (Davis 2015: 1). The released Theory of Change (ToC) situated the GPEDC within the new development governance and specified its term of engagement in relation to it. In this specific context, the GPEDC action was intended as developed along two dimensions: process and engagement (Davis 2016).

The dimension of process refers to monitoring and evaluation, which are deemed as essential tools to realise the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Those activities aim at creating shared knowledge about which development practices work and which not, with the goal of employing the evidence collected to influence the design of future development projects. This leads back to another reason why HLM2 matters, which is monitoring. As seen above, monitoring is a core activity for the GPEDC, as it sets in motion virtuous circles of mutual learning and accountability building. Within the context of the 2030 Agenda, the monitoring conducted by countries, and the related reports, are presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum and contribute to assessing the progress made in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals numbers 17 and 5 (namely 5c, 17.15 and 17.16)[9] (GPEDC 2017b). The contribution of the GPEDC towards the achievement of the SDGs is particularly relevant in relation to goal 17. More specifically, GPEDC acts within the framework of the target on multi-stakeholders partnerships, that is:

> Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries (UNDP n.d.: para. 13).

The other basic function identified by the theory of change as qualifying the GPEDC action within the new global agenda is that of engagement. As stated before, the inclusive nature of the GPEDC constitutes its distinguishing mark and value, GPEDC having the task of promoting the engagement of all its members (Glennie 2014). It is important for the GPEDC to understand the different reasons that underpin the engagement of each actors, as well as generate data that show each of them the importance of their specific role for a successful functioning of the partnership (Davis 2016). As a unique example of multi-stakeholders partnership for development, championing inclusiveness and equality of its

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[9] In particular, Goal 17 is to 'strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development' (United Nations 2016 *a*), while goal 5 is to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (United Nations 2016 *b*).

members, the GPEDC is in a position to make an original contribution to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

In fact, as mentioned above, the creation and strengthening of global partnerships is valued by the 2030 Agenda as a fundamental precondition for the achievement of the SDGs, as spelled out in goal 17. This goal stems from the change in the international community's approach to development, shifting away from the past conception of a dual relationship between a donor and a recipient, or a benefactor and a beneficiary. A new approach can only 'be found through principled and practical partnerships between equals' (GPEDC 2016*a*: §2). In this context, the GPEDC embodied the idea of inclusive partnership for development and the HLM2 represented for the various constituencies the possibility to gather together, discuss and elaborate practical ways to bring about the sought-after behavioural change.

In this sense the HLM2 is to be considered a success, since different voices and perspectives expressed themselves and were able to shape the negotiation of the outcome document. On this point, Klingebiel and Li (2016a § 2) further stressed the openness of the debate during the HLM2, claiming that 'for sure, the GPEDC does not follow the overly balanced, diplomatic approaches adopted by a number of UN platforms. In other words, at least the non-plenary session and side-events provided scope for creative and controversial – and often constructive – debate'.

However, the proclaimed inclusiveness of the GPEDC appears less stable when considering that rising powers as Brazil, China, India and South Africa had decided not to attend the HLM2, as had already been the case with the Mexico First High Level Forum in 2014. This happened despite the willingness shown by the GPEDC to bring in the contribution of the South-South cooperation providers, which, more or less explicitly, pervaded the documentation produced about the HLM2. This is especially true for the documentation released during the preparatory path, expressing the effort of GPEDC members to make the HLM2 appealing from the point of view of emerging powers. For example, the document explaining why HLM2 matters, mentions that 'we will learn and adapt' as one of the fundamental drivers (GPEDC 2016 b). This clearly stands to emphasise the value of the perspective brought in by different actors, together with their own way of doing development cooperation, with an emphasis on business and Southern partners, amongst others. With respect to the latter, the document even invoked a milestone event for South-South Cooperation – the 40th anniversary of the monitoring for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries by the UN General Assembly in 1978 (United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, n.d.) – evidently to express the wish to share experiences with Southern partners. The call for engagement of Southern partners was

maintained and renewed throughout the Nairobi outcome document too. For instance, the section dedicated to 'the way forward' states (GPEDC n.d.*e*: 29, §12):

> The renewed mandate of the Global Partnership is an opportunity to unblock bottlenecks on existing effectiveness commitments while also embracing the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda […]. To this end, the Global Partnership shall continue to promote behaviour change […] and adapt its framework to ensure that it is relevant for dual countries and southern partners.

And:

> The Global Partnership needs to build mutual learning from innovative approaches and solutions tried and tested by different stakeholders into its way of working. The Global Partnership shall review its modus operandi to develop a mutual learning loop from country-level evidence, areas of progress, learning from different modalities of development co-operation with specific attention to southern partners […] (30 §16).

However, the main shortfall of the HLM2 was the waning of political interest, as proven by the reduction of the funding for HLM2 when compared to Mexico and Busan (Tomlinson 2016). Emerging powers were not the only actors showing a weak interest in the event, the attendance was lower than it was in Busan and Mexico and, when attending, many governments decided not to send representatives with a high political profile[10]. According to Bena and Tomlinson, '[o]nly three Ministers came from Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden. Other donor delegations were led by lower-ranking officials. Unlike in Busan in 2011 and Mexico City in 2014, the UN Secretary-General did not participate' (2017: 4).

The HLM2 did not bring about major achievements, but it still made some steps forward. First, the renewal of the GPEDC mandate was perceived as a positive outcome as it helped to better shape its profile and the working programme, clearly positioning it within the global 2030 Agenda. Another positive achievement, related to the definition of the new mandate, was the central role recognized to the GPEDC monitoring framework.

The monitoring framework received a wide support during the meeting, and this was strongly reflected in the Nairobi outcome document that celebrated its unique role, adding that this would be further refined to better fit the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the outcome document highlighted the fact that the monitoring framework 'helps to build mutual accountability, mutual benefit and mutual learning' (GPEDC 2016*b*: §31). In particular, building mutual accountability has been seen as a core function of the GPEDC. Reaffirming the centrality of the monitoring framework was also seen as successful, especially for those actors – mainly civil society and partner countries – who were contrary to a change in the mandate of the GPEDC that would downplay its accountability function. Indeed, the dialogue

[10] Notes on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on 28th November 2016 and 1st December 2016.

built on the way to the HLM2 assisted to the promotion by different actors of a conception of the GPEDC as a learning hub, having knowledge sharing at the heart of the platform. Such proposal, which would implicitly dismiss the GPEDC capacity for building mutual accountability and its political relevance transforming the GPEDC into one of the many knowledge hubs[11], was firmly rejected during the HLM2 (Bena and Tomlinson 2017).

Eventually, the HLM2 too re-committed to the so-called 'unfinished business' – that is, the commitments made in the previous High Level Fora from Paris to Busan. On 29th November, a workshop was held to focus on the findings emerging from the GPEDC Second Monitoring round. Once again, the progress recorded was minimal and some traditional donors showed themselves inclined to put this agenda aside. Yet, its centrality was successfully advocated by many actors, mainly partner countries and civil society (Bena and Tomlinson 2017, Tomlinson 2016)[12]. The struggle to keep the centrality of unfinished business in the development agenda eventually led to the introduction in the outcome document of a pledge to 'develop time-bound action plans in relation to these commitments' (GPEDC 2016: §36), a positive move forward with respect to the previous events (Bena and Tomlinson 2017).

It is to be acknowledged that the discussion about the unfinished business did not receive great attention as some other topics did – such as the contribution of the private sector, which stood out from the rest. Private sector, and its potential contributions, literally disseminated to almost every workshop and session, eventually finding its way into the outcome document. The language of the private sector, or business, came to be particularly strong, in clear continuity with a trend that had characterized the previous international events on development effectiveness (Simonds 2014)[13].

What the specific contribution of the business sector were supposed to be was not clearly spelled out, and this fact was especially criticized by civil society actors. These actors stressed that a great part of the documented previous experiences showed how seeking profit by the private sector had not led to positive results in terms of 'leaving no-one behind'. The need for making the business sector accountable for its action was also noted by civil-society actors. This criticism was partly acknowledged in the final version of the Nairobi outcome

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[11] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on 20th -21st March 2016, and in The Hague on 20th -22nd June 2016

[12] Notes on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on 28th November 2016 and 1st December 2016.

[13] Notes on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on 28th November 2016 and 1st December 2016.

document, which required the private sector to 'set up reporting and accountability systems on the environmental, economic and social impacts of their efforts, in particular on the generation of full and productive employment and decent work for all' (GPEDC 2016*b*: § 57, b) and make its operations transparent. However, as stated by Bena and Tomlinson, signs of 'uncritical praise' of the business sector are apparent in the final version of the document, in which no specification is found on how the private sector is to be held accountable (2017: 3).

Finally, at the HLM2 the new co-chairs of the GPEDC for the next two years were appointed, respectively the ministers of Bangladesh, Germany and Uganda. In addition, one potential modification of this segment of governance was finally accepted for discussion in Nairobi. Non-executive members of the Steering Committee asked for the addition of a fourth non-executive co-chair, which could result in the following potential advantages:

> (i) making the leadership more inclusive and multi-stakeholder; (ii) fostering mutual accountability at the highest decision-making levels; (iii) bringing in additional expertise on improving engagement with non-state development actors; (iv) promoting democratic ownership by example; and (v) allowing inputs from non-executive stakeholders to shape the agenda of Steering Committee, High-Level and other Meetings of the Global Partnership from a very early stage (GPEDC 2016*b*, Annex I: §22).

Despite the openness showed, this proposal had to be further considered at the following meeting of the Steering Committee, where non-executive members would be asked to present their suggestions about the function of this seat. According to consultation among non-executive members of the Steering Committee, the fourth co-chair would represent the following categories: civil society organizations, trade unions, local governments, parliaments, philanthropy and the business sector.

This proposal had already been rejected by the Steering Committee in the past and there had not been any significant signals of a potential change of position by the majority of the GPEDC Steering Committee on this count, so that the possibilities of a further rejection remains considerable. Another challenge might be represented by the difficulty in defining a common position synthetizing the variety of identities within this group (Bena and Tomlinson 2017). The discussion of the challenges inherent in the GPEDC HLM2 will be further discussed in chapter six, in relation with the CSOs Partnership for Development Effectiveness' (CPDE) strategic action during that Meeting. An exhaustive discussion of the CPDE – its formation, internal functioning, assessment of its action in terms of potentials and constraints – constitutes the object of the following chapter.

5.6 The GPEDC: a genuine development partnership?

Far from being rare, partnerships for development have become the dominant model for regulating the relationships amongst actors in international development cooperation (Crawford 2003). Global development partnerships replicate the same controversial issues affecting the functioning of partnerships at smaller scales. Among these issues, those related to accountability and participation are of particular importance, as these two are essential elements for authentic partnerships (Bäckstrand 2006, Gaventa 2002).

Concerning the dimension of participation, it must be observed that the GPEDC substantially enlarged its membership compared to its predecessor, the Working Party for Aid Effectiveness (WP EFF). As discussed above, the principle of inclusiveness, borrowed from the Busan Partnership, is a pillar of the GPEDC and determines its course of action. The launch of the GPEDC in July 2012 was positively received from international media, receiving special praise for its ability to bring together a variety of development actors and put them on the same level. In this sense, the launch of a new inclusive global development partnership marked the success of the post-Busan process, overcoming the scepticism of those who thought that the process would not produce any changes in the standard approach to development cooperation effectiveness (Abdel-Malek 2015). The satisfaction with the inclusiveness of the nascent GPEDC was stressed, amongst others, by Oxfam International: 'by reaching out to a diverse range of development stakeholders […] Busan has provided a more realistic framework to improve the way cooperation is implemented on the ground and how it works with other development drivers' (Bena 2012: 10).

Bringing together a large set of development stakeholders and granting them an equal status works towards the increase of the system inclusiveness, but it is not in itself a sufficient condition to ensure that members can effectively influence the management and the mechanics of the system they work in. On this count, Fowler (2000a; 2000b) argued that the participation of different actors in an organization should be assessed according to two dimensions: breadth and depth.

Breadth refers to the range of organizational functions and actions that each member can engage with, varying from single projects to the full range of actions required for the organization to fulfil its mandate (Fowler 2000a; Fowler 2000b). In the case of the GPEDC, every stakeholder has the right to participate in all the activities and events that make the partnership agenda. On the other hand, depth of participation defines the level of members engagement in different activities. On this matter, Fowler (2000a; 2000b) distinguishes four levels of engagement: information exchange, consultation, shared influence, and joint control. Information exchange constitutes the lowest level of member involvement, while joint control, which sits at the other end of the scale, represents the highest level of engagement,

and requires that mutual responsibilities and formal obligations be taken. Joint control is exemplified by the case of members taking part in a steering or a management committee with other actors, a condition that applies to the governance model of the GPEDC. In fact, the GPEDC Steering Committee is composed by the co-chairs and other members appointed by their constituencies, representing the following four categories of development stakeholders: recipients of development cooperation; providers of development cooperation; recipient-providers of development cooperation; and non-executive stakeholders. The Steering Committee is the main decision-making body and is responsible for the partnership strategic leadership (GPEDC 2016). That all development stakeholders take part in it *pari passu* through their representatives outlines a system in which the participation of the stakeholders aims at being not only formal but substantial, and where all the stakeholders are formally granted the same power status. Against this background, the stakeholders seem to be able to effectively participate and contribute to the GPEDC work.

The design process of the GPEDC led by the Post Busan Interim Group (PBIG), which started in late 2011 and ended in July 2012. This process was run through by internal tensions amongst the stakeholders especially with regards to organizational issues, and this sparked a reflection on the nature and authenticity of the GPEDC. Talaat Abdel Malek, then-chair of the Working Party, affirmed that '[t]he Steering Committee size and composition turned out to be problematic' (Abdel-Malek 2015: 210). The initial proposal was to have a Steering Committee composed by 12 to 14 members, to ensure an efficient governance body, but this was not positively received by a number of members, such as Africa Union, BetterAid, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee of the OECD, Pacific Islands, and United Cities and Local Governments. Those actors were calling for additional seats to the Steering Committee, in order to maintain a balanced representativeness of all the stakeholders. This criticism resulted in the approval of a larger Steering Committee of 18 representatives that included 3 co-chairs. Despite the proposal having been supported by the majority of the PBIG, those advocating for additional seats continued to ask for it until the very last meeting of the PBIG. Even if the very Abdel-Malek (2015) recognized that such a request was reasonable, the efficiency and manageability of the steering committee remained imperative and was supported by the majority of PBIG members. The Steering Committee has grown in size since its launch in 2012, so that the matrix designed to improve the representativeness of the partnership relating to years 2017/2018 comprises 26 members, of which four are co-chairs (GPEDC 2016b). The progressive enlargement of the steering committee certainly constitutes a positive signal of growth of the partnership, which gained more legitimacy from it. While the steering committee has shown some flexibility and responsiveness with the inclusion of representatives from new constituencies, the call for an additional co-chair was firmly rejected for almost five years. The insistence for an additional non-executive co-chair,

advanced well before the HLM2, had been supported since the design phase by BetterAid, and the request was carried on by the CPDE later on. As a result, all non-executive stakeholders have so far been left without representation at the highest level of political action in the GPEDC. This was felt as a betrayal to the principle of inclusiveness, one that was deemed to seriously affect the legitimacy of the GPEDC. This has been clearly pointed out by a representative of the CPDE:

> We've been pushing to try to have a co-chair seat as well, and I think we probably believe that, because we're not there, so it is not a truly a multi-stakeholder process. It may look like one, because we have a fairly representative structure […] but all of the, or, a lot of the decision making […] is still inflected by the co-chairs and so […]sometimes we are shut out […] decisions remain behind closed doors that we are not permitted, so it still makes it difficult. I think […] the co-chairs still play the heavy hitters. (Owen Interview)[14].

Thus, despite an overall satisfactory structure in terms of representativeness, the lack of a co-chair coming from the side of non-executive stakeholders raises questions about the actual degree of inclusiveness of GPEDC as a development partnership. Moreover, it is to be noted that those stakeholders excluded from the co-chair position are the non-executive representatives – that is, those actors who were not part of the traditional development cooperation system to begin with, and who have gained more visibility and influence only recently. Therefore, the declared intention to change the approach to development cooperation seems not to be rooted on solid bases, given that, once again, the most powerful positions for the GPEDC governance were held by traditional governmental actors.

By contrast, emerging donors – another category of new development actors that entered the GPEDC governance system in the post- Busan process – were given a seat as co-chair. This should be no surprise, as the Busan High Level Forum and the two High Level meetings of the GPEDC were marked by the efforts of involving with the rising powers, since their active engagement was needed to legitimize the new global partnership. This move may suggest that the creation of the GPEDC was an act of strategical manoeuvring to co-opt those powers that threatened the Western domination (Eyben and Savage 2013, Madwsley 2014, Quadir 2013, Woods 2008).

Emerging donors have been suspicious about joining the GPEDC, which they often conceive of as 'the strategic way to buy-in the emerging powers' (Li 2017:7) and, thus, as another way for Western powers to continue to nurture their vested interests. The concern of the emerging powers is understandable and might be justified, as suggested, for instance, by

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[14] Thomas Owen, Interview held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th-21st March 2016.

the fact that the GPEDC Secretariat is symbolically hosted by the UNDP and the OECD-DAC in Paris. This is seen as reinforcing the OECD-DAC influence over the GPEDC process and reports (Glennie 2014), even from a geographical point of view, given that the GPEDC Secretariat is located in Paris, at the heart of the OECD-DAC headquarters (Sinclair 2012).

Constantine (2015: 1–2) point out that, notwithstanding the effort made to meet their needs, the GPEDC has not yet clearly addressed three issues: political legitimacy, attribution of responsibilities and agenda definition. On political legitimacy, the rising powers generally share the idea that the GPEDC is not an appropriate space to discuss and sign binding agreements, being this the competence of the United Nations. As for the attribution of responsibilities, rising powers are not willing to have pressure piled on them to help Western countries relieve the burden that they have historically accumulated (Constantine 2015, Li 2017). As for the issue of agenda definition, finally, emerging powers argue that the passage from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness has not been completely realized, with the previous praxis of aid, dominated by financial flows, being still dominant. Moreover, the relationship between traditional and emerging donors is pervaded by a lack of trust. As Constantine put it:

> Rising powers […] fear that the established powers of the North and West are determined to thwart their rise. They are increasingly likely to resent attempts to influence their domestic development debates groups who are critical of government […] as an assault on their sovereignty. They are also very conscious of their growing power in the world, and increasingly ready to take offence when they perceive that they have been treated with insufficient respect (2015: 2).

The GPEDC recognized a co-chair seat to rising powers but, in contradiction with its driving principles, rejected the request for a non-executive co-chair. The call for a non-executive co-chair, vigorously pushed forward by the CPDE, and even before by BetterAid, was left unheard for a very long time, eventually being heeded in the GPEDC second High Level Meeting in December 2016. The absence of a non-executive representative at the GPEDC's highest level of decision making recalls the same shape of power relationships observed at the Busan High Level Forum by Eyben and Savage (2013: 466). In this perspective, which was discussed in chapter III, the distinct fracture was not between the global North and the global South anymore, but rather between civil society and, essentially, the rest of development actors. This observation can be further extended to fit the distinction, identifiable within the GPDEC itself, between civil society and the rest of the actors, and, more in general, between non-governmental actors and governmental actors.

Despite the institutionalization of a new governance architecture shaped on the model of a multi-stakeholder partnership, status asymmetries between the most powerful actors and the rest of development actors seem to have survived. Thus, while an equal status and in-

depth participation within the GPEDC is officially granted to every stakeholder, a differentiation in status, although latent, is still noticeable. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the GPEDC was successful in creating a unique space which is distinguished from other international fora for the range of actors involved and for the quality of their engagement (Simonds 2014).

The other fundamental factor for the success of development partnerships is accountability, as this represents a mechanism to address, and balance, power relationships. The concept of accountability directly relates to the responsibility of each stakeholder to carry out its own task and to give an account of it to the other partners. More than a simple act of reporting, accountability implies being held accountable for what was accomplished by the other stakeholders (Cornwall et al. 2000, Blagescu and Young 2005). In this sense, accountability ideally connects the actors through a network of connections based on mutual responsibility, placing them on the same level regardless of their power status. Accountability works beyond the partnership as well, particularly for the benefit of those users who are the target of the partnership mission. Accountability is also crucial to the life of a partnership because it requires a common process to set up the stakeholders' specific responsibilities and the partnership mandate and goals, which have to be regularly assessed. The two-fold practice of monitoring and assessing allows partnerships to learn important lessons from what was done and, consequently, improve its action and effectiveness (Blagescu and Young 2005).

Originating from the international community effort to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation after years of disappointing results in this field, the GPEDC was built around the principle of accountability, which was intended as the core function of the partnership. As discussed above, the GPEDC's instrument to ensure accountability is its monitoring framework.

Although the GPEDC monitoring framework is the core of the partnership and its uniqueness have been acknowledged even within the UN High Level Political Forum, it still ran the risk of being watered down and turned into a knowledge hub. This change would deeply affect the nature of the partnership, reducing the relationships among stakeholders to mere knowledge exchange, a far less onerous function that would not require stakeholders to be accountable for their actions. At the HLM2, the monitoring framework was the object of a full one-day workshop, during which the distinctiveness of its action was once again recognized, receiving extensive support from the constituencies which rejected all calls to reduce its role. Having reaffirmed the relevance of the Monitoring Framework, the workshop focused on spelling out what its specific contribution to 2030 Agenda would be and made the arrangements to further refine its proposal with a view to fit the 2030 Agenda and the new emerging modalities of delivering development cooperation (Bena and Tomlinson 2017).

Thus, concerning the dimension of accountability the GPEDC has built a strong mechanism to implement this principle, which has resisted to the proposal for its minimization. This, in turn, revealed once again the reluctance of some actors, especially donors, to fully commit to the sharing of responsibilities. Yet, from a more global perspective, the GPEDC has shown its commitment to bring about its original mandate, rejecting those initiatives that would undermine its mission and its core identity.

5.7 Conclusion

The GPEDC represents the most recent step in the evolution of the development cooperation system. The new governance model of inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnership reflects the changed landscape of development cooperation, one that has been characterized by the proliferation of new development actors and new modalities of carrying out development cooperation. In a move away from the previous development era, which was concerned with aid effectiveness and dominated by OECD-DAC directives, GPEDC has led the transition 'towards a more horizontal, rather than hierarchical, relationship between development actors, expressed in a relationship and language based on partnership rather than donor and recipient' (Schaaf 2015: 69) with development effectiveness at its core.

When compared to the development partnerships realized so far in the field of development cooperation, the GPEDC distinguishes itself for its inclusiveness and accountability. With regards to inclusiveness, the GPEDC eventually gathered together a wide variety of development stakeholders – including emerging donors, civil society, private sector, foundations and local authorities – that are not traditional actors. The Busan attempt to find a compromise between a plurality of voices might have caused a dilution of commitments and language compared with the past Fora outcome documents (Bena Interview[15], Besharati 2013), but it was indeed successful in promoting original debates. This was possible through the promotion of tight relationships between different development actors within the GPEDC framework, most notably between civil society and the private sector (Glennie 2014).

[15] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th-21st March 2016.

However Southern donors have been reluctant to engage with the GPEDC so far, it being considered as a political space dominated by Western interests. This poses a serious threat to the legitimacy of the GPEDC (Eyben and Savage 2012, Simonds 2014). Indeed, the GPEDC matured and was shaped within the context of the High Level Fora directed by the OECD-DAC, and from Busan onwards traditional donors have kept on trying to involve emerging powers, making efforts to make the development effectiveness agenda more appealing to them. Beyond the speculation about the nature of the GPEDC as a development partnership, the complexity of the development cooperation landscape makes it recommendable to have a reference platform that covers the totality of issues related to development cooperation effectiveness, including South-South Cooperation (Klingebiel and Li 2016b).

The GPEDC is in the right position to respond to the pressing need for coordination resulting from such a complex landscape. However, for it to be successful the GPEDC will have to deal with the question of legitimacy. It will need to address the thorny issue of power imbalance amongst its constituencies (and primarily between governments and non-state actors) and promote innovative mechanisms to ensure a truly democratic dialogue amongst such constituencies. At the same time, in order to defend its purpose of universality, the GPEDC will need to find new channels to communicate with the rising voices of emerging powers, which still operate at the periphery of the partnership.

On this count, the strategic affiliation of the GPEDC to the 2030 Agenda favours the GPEDC participation in other United Nations Fora. The inclusion of the UNDP in the GPEDC Joint Support Team helps to link the GPEDC to the UN processes as well. In effect, the United Nations are often perceived as the supreme body that is able to gather all global stakeholders, so the GPEDC's closeness to the UN Fora and UN Departments might contribute positively to overcoming the misgivings of emerging powers, encouraging a greater degree of interaction with the GPEDC in the process. With regards to UN Fora, civil-society actors stressed that the UN inclusiveness does not equate in their case to meaningful participation (Glennie 2014). Again, the multi-stakeholder nature and the participation of its members on an equal footing is what makes the GPEDC clearly stand out amongst other similar platforms.

The other distinguishing feature of the GPEDC is its accountability, which is the principle lying at the very core of its functioning. The Monitoring framework is a unique tool in development cooperation and is acquiring increasing visibility in connection with the new 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Building mutual accountability, although a source of pride, proves also a problematic process. While stakeholders who supported both the Mexico and the Nairobi Outcome Documents are responsible for delivering the agreed agenda, there are no binding mechanisms with respect to those commitments. The Mexico and Nairobi

Meetings marked a step forward from Busan, having transformed voluntary acts into commitments. But, at the same time, stakeholders are not legally bound, and the achievement of specific goals still depends on their perceived pressure to act. The lack of stronger incentives to realize the agreed objectives might cast doubts about the real implementation mutual accountability beyond mere discursive artifice. This is especially true when considering the low interest shown by some actors in respecting agreed commitments, as it has been the case with traditional donors with regards to the unfinished business on the Nairobi Agenda, or with the reservation of some emerging donors towards initiatives promoting transparency in development cooperation practices. Given these premises, it is legitimate to question to what extent the GPEDC accountability mechanisms are able to foster an essential behavioural change within the development cooperation system.

From a global perspective there is no doubt that the improvements recorded by the GPEDC in terms of accountability and inclusiveness constitute a comparative advantage for the delivery of the Nairobi Agenda, as well as for the achievement of the SDGs. And yet, the real difference in bringing such transformative agendas to fruition will be made by the political will of development stakeholders. As noted, the development effectiveness agenda has been suffering from a decline in political interest (ODI 2016; Glennie 2014) and will need to maintain momentum if it wants to hold visibility and affirm its relevance. At the same time, the exposure of the United Nations 2030 Agenda in the international community is continuously increasing. Therefore, the GPEDC strategic action within the 2030 Agenda process might lead to a significant gain in terms of relevance and momentum for the GPEDC too, whose action might benefit from the exposure to a wider public of potential supporters. Therefore, the connection between the UN 2030 Agenda and the GPEDC development effectiveness agenda could generate a virtuous circle, which both the governance bodies would benefit from, one in which the synergies created are likely to make a positive contribution to the achievement of the common development goals of ending poverty and inequality.

Chapter 6
The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness from Within

Introduction

After having closely analysed and discussed the creation and activity of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), I furthermore focus on the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). This chapter aims at gaining an understanding of the CPDE main organizational features and its internal functioning, as well as addresses the subsidiary research question related to the identification of power relations amongst the CPDE members.

The presented work makes use of data collected through two different methods. The first concerns interviews[16] addressed to the members of the CPDE Coordination meeting. The interviews were conducted in person during the attended Coordination Committee meetings and during the participant observation period at the CPDE secretariat, and additionally, some interviews were carried out via Skype. Secondly, participant observations were carried out at (i) the CPDE Global Secretariat in Quezon City, in the Philippines, between the 9th of May and 7th of June 2016, (ii) in two CPDE Coordination Committee meetings, held in Brussels in March 2016 and The Hague in June 2016, respectively, and (iii) during the GPEDC Second High level Meeting on the 29th of November to 1st of December 2016 in Nairobi.

In this chapter, the CPDE is considered as a unit of its own, in order to clarify its functioning, its organizational features and the internal power relationships. The first part of this chapter (5.1) offers an overview of the process that has led CSOs working in the field of development cooperation to fund the CPDE, and it provides information about the progressive growth of CSOs as development actors through the aid effectiveness paradigm and beyond. I note, that the evolution of the aid effectiveness paradigm has been analysed in Chapter 3 and further discussed with a specific focus on the consecutive creation of the GPEDC in Chapter

[16] The interviews have been employed in the text in compliance with the interviewers' choice in terms of privacy protection. In particular, free choice was given between making personal information public or remaining anonymous, as referred to in the ethics form.

4. Here, the path from aid effectiveness towards development effectiveness is discussed through the specific perspective and contribution of civil society actors.

The section 5.1 is organized into four sub-sections. Section 5.1.1 describes how CSOs got involved in the aid effectiveness paradigm, looking at their contribution to the High Level Fora, from 2005 to 2008. Particular attention is paid to the 2008 Accra High Level Forum, since it was on that occasion that CSOs were acknowledged as independent development actors, and it was then, that they officially started to contribute to the activities organized by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness. Finally, the section follows up the work of CSOs organized through the platforms 'BetterAid' and 'Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness' in the lead up to Busan. Section 5.1.2 focuses on the watershed moment represented by the Busan High Level Forum from the point of view of civil society. It briefly describes how the project of a single CSOs global platform bringing together BetterAid and the Open Forum, developed in parallel with the building of the GPEDC, ending up in the launch of the CPDE in December 2012. Finally, it describes the governance and management structure of the CPDE. Section 5.1.3 section offers an introductory, panoramic view of the CPDE, especially with reference to its key document, the Nairobi Declaration. It describes and analyses its governance structure in its composition in three different bodies: the Global Council, the Coordination Committee and the Co-Chairs including the Global Secretariat. Section 5.1.4 constitutes an overview of the current CPDE activities. In particular, this section presents the CPDE's strategic agenda as defined in 2016, which has been condensed in the formula 'Universalising Effective Development Cooperation'. Further, the two ongoing programmes of the CPDE are described, namely the 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Effectiveness' and the 'Enhancing Civil Society's Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015'.

The second part of this chapter (5.2) focuses on the internal functioning of the CPDE. The insights gained on CPDE internal working have been analysed in two main categories. Section 5.2.1 discusses the platform's strengths under the aspect of (i) its unity, (ii) serving as a learning platform, (iii) generating expertise and new literature and under the aspect of (iv) self-reflection and growth. Section 5.2.2 illustrates the challenges that the platform is experiencing with reference to (i) internal management, (ii) power, (iii) representativeness and (iv) accountability.

In summary, the discussion is about the CPDE as a development actor which has progressively gained a strong voice in the international context, and its position to fight for the implementation of its vision of development cooperation within the GPEDC and other political arenas.

6.1 The Making Up of the CPDE

6.1.1 CSOs and the Aid Effectiveness Paradigm

The creation of the CPDE must be understood as a moment in the evolution of CSOs' action in the field of development cooperation, especially within the framework of the aid effectiveness paradigm and the recent transition toward 'development effectiveness'. In this context, CSOs' participation and impact experienced a progressive rise, moving from the sidelines towards the core of the aid effectiveness governance institutions.

It was discussed in Chapter 3 that only few CSOs took part in the Paris High Level Forum in 2005 (between 25 and 30 CSOs; Tomlinson 2011), while the attendance and involvement of CSOs in the following 2008 Accra High Level Forum increased intensively, actually leading to the statement that 'the engagement of CSOs in preparations and during the HLF was the hallmark of this High Level Forum' (Tomlinson 2012: 7, §17). CSOs were on different occasions encouraged to sign the Paris Declaration, but after the realization of regional and global consultations, they firmly refused to do so. This choice was due to two main reasons. Firstly, the Paris Agenda lacked a participatory approach in its definition, with the voices of development actors other than donors and governments being excluded. Secondly, the Paris Declaration represented a list of technical prescriptions mainly addressing the issue of aid delivery, which were thought to be ineffective at tackling inequalities and producing sustainable outcomes (Svoboda n.d.: 1). In fact, while welcoming the reforms promoted by the Paris Agenda, CSOs raised awareness that bettering aid was not enough, given that even when fully implemented such reforms would fail to address the complexity and multidimensionality of the broader issue of development effectiveness, whose adoption was advocated by CSOs. These were the motivations at the base of CSOs' refusal to sign the Paris Declaration and of their choice to elaborate instead their own commitment to aid effectiveness (Tomlinson 2011; Svoboda n.d.).

The Accra Forum and its preparation showed to be inspired by a different multi-stakeholders approach in defining its agenda. As mentioned above, CSOs were extremely active, since January 2007, when the Working Party for Aid Effectiveness created the Advisory Group (AG) on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. This group coordinated a multi-stakeholder dialogue amongst donors, governments and civil society organizations, and aimed at informing the Working Party on the position assumed by civil society in relation to the Paris Agenda. The AG supported civil society's contribution to the elaboration and broadening of the existing international aid effectiveness agenda, and finally, outlined the specific principles and guidelines positioning civil society work as a development actor. The AG was constituted of twelve members organized into four stakeholder groups, i.e. Southern

CSOs, Northern CSOs, donors and developing country governments, and was presided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)[17] (Tomlinson 2011*;* Svoboda n.d.).

Concurrently, CSOs willing to take part in the process of preparation and engagement with the Accra Forum independently organized through the CSO International Steering Group (ISG), launched in 2007 by the BetterAid (Tomlinson 2011). This group was described as 'a diverse global platform that brings together hundreds of civil society organizations (CSOs) that engage in development cooperation' (BetterAid 2011: 8). The ISG worked as the main CSO interlocutor with the Working Party and supported the organization of the CSO Parallel Forum in Accra (Tomlinson 2011).

In September 2008, an impressive number of CSOs (about 700) arrived in Accra to attend the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, after more than a year of preparation for the event. Such a massive presence of CSOs had no precedent in previous similar meetings (Tomlinson 2011). In his report, Brian Tomlinson, the North America regional representative in the CPDE Global Council, Executive Director of AidWatch Canada and chair of the GPEDC Monitoring Advisory Group, described the inflows of civil society actors in Accra as follows:

> The HLF was immediately preceded by an Accra CSO Parallel Forum, overwhelmed by an unexpected turnout of more than 700 participants from 80 countries (plans were made for 400). […] From among these CSOs, 80 were official delegates with full rights to participate and intervene in the official HLF (Tomlinson 2011: 2).

The contribution of civil society, especially through the Advisory Group and the International Steering Group, enriched the debate about aid effectiveness, which was clearly reflected in the outcome document, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) (Svoboda n.d.). As outlined also in previous chapters, CSOs reached in Accra a major achievement. In fact, the AAA for the first time officially recognized civil societies as independent development actors and acknowledged other actors' commitment, especially governments, to promote an enabling environment for CSOs, assisting them to fully express their potential (OECD 2008: §20).

Another positive result for civil society was the introduction of the "development effectiveness" language, a broader conceptualization advocated by civil society. As discussed

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[17] More precisely, the Advisory Group was constituted by three CSOs from the North (CCIC, ActionAid International, and CARE International), three CSOs from the South (IBON Foundation / Reality of Aid Network, AFRODAD and Third World Network Africa), three partner governments (Rwanda, Nicaragua and Zambia), and three donors (Canada, Norway and France) (Canadian Council for International Cooperation 2008: 2).

in Chapter 3, development effectiveness seeks the realization of human rights, gender equality, the achievement of decent work and sustainable development, which are considered to be at the roots of poverty and inequality (BetterAid 2009; Kindornay 2011). In this regard, the dialogue between civil society and the Working Party in the path towards Accra was certainly fruitful, as it led the donors to recognize the complementarity of aid effectiveness and development effectiveness, despite eventually asserting that the scope of their activity was limited to aid effectiveness only (Tomlinson 2011). Thus, the language of development effectiveness penetrated the AAA, explicitly mentioning the vital role of gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability for the achievement of effective development impacts. However, the AAA did not go far beyond affirming their relevance and adopted no concrete measure or incentive to sustain their effective realization (BetterAid 2009).

In Accra, CSO delegates presented a proposal to engage with governments and donors through a multi-stakeholder process to discuss and develop CSOs' specific vision on development effectiveness (OECD 2008: §20), which was endorsed and recognized in the AAA. This initiative was known as the Open Forum for CSOs Development Effectiveness and was conceived in response to the challenge posed by governments and donors to CSOs to define their own understanding of development effectiveness and present their guidelines for their action and accountability (Tomlinson 2011). The launch of the CSO Open Forum at the Accra Forum was preceded by a preparatory meeting held in Paris in June 2008, which was attended by more than 70 civil society leaders representing different constituencies. These included developed and developing countries, grassroots and international CSOs, national and regional platforms and thematic networks. It was established on that occasion that CSOs would embark on a complex two years process of consultations (from January 2009 to December 2011), which would embrace a great variety of CSOs worldwide, from grassroots to international level, encompassing different sectors and activities (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011). The underpinning of the whole process was the belief that CSO effectiveness should go beyond considering the donor-recipient relationship. That is, CSOs wanted to stress the uniqueness of their perspectives, for being 'the first and foremost highly diverse expressions of social solidarity for the active engagement of people in their own development efforts', so that 'their development and advocacy work comes out from the grass roots experience, analysis and open dialogue in community-based processes' (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011: 1).

After Accra, CSOs engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogues. In particular, through the CSO International Steering Group, which was re-organized as the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG) and enjoyed full membership in the Working Party, and through the Open Forum, engaging with the Working Party on its own right or through the BACG (BetterAid 2011, Svoboda n.d.).

The long process of consultation led by the Open Forum resulted in its first Global Assembly, held in Istanbul in September 2010, during which the Istanbul Principles[18] were officially adopted. The latter are 'statements of values and qualities that should inform CSO socio-economic, political, and organizational relationships' (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011: 7), formulated as follows:

1) Respect and promote human rights and social justice.
2) Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls rights.
3) Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation; promote environmental sustainability.
4) Practice transparency and accountability; pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity.
5) Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning.
6) Commit to realizing positive sustainable change (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011: 26-27).

The work of the Open Forum continued after the formulation of the Istanbul Principles for another year, and its mandate lasted until the following High Level Forum, taking place in Busan in 2011. In Busan, CSOs would present the outcomes of the Open Forum process to participants, which was then employed as a long-term template for CSOs to improve their work and development effectiveness.

In preparation for the 2011 Busan Conference, the Open Forum organized its final assembly, realized in Siem Reap in June 2011. Over 200 CSOs representatives approved the 'Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness', a milestone document for civil society. It marks the achievement of the ambitious goal for designing a global shared vision on development effectiveness. The core of the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness encompasses three sections, namely the Istanbul Principles, the mechanisms for CSO accountability and the conditions for enabling CSOs' development effectiveness. Two independent documents, an Implementation and an Advocacy Toolkit, contain information about how to put into practice different principles, so that they are responsive to the specific needs of the considered context (Implementation Toolkit), and provide CSOs with indications about how to use the messages presented in the

[18] See Appendix IV

Framework to promote an enabling environment in particular regional and national context (Advocacy Toolkit) (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011: 26-27).

6.1.2 Veni, Vidi, Vici: Civil Society at the Busan HLF and Beyond

The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, as previously discussed in Chapter 3 and 4, became a milestone in the history of development cooperation, marking the shift towards the development effectiveness paradigm.

Civil society organizations arrived in Busan coordinated by the BetterAid network, having had elaborated civil society's own vision of development effectiveness. The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness and the Istanbul Principles were presented at the Busan Forum and gained international support and being officially recognized in the Busan Outcome Document (OECD 2011: § 22). As seen before, Busan gave negotiating status to new development actors, amongst which was the civil society (Bena 2012). For the first time, the civil society entered the negotiation process and directly shaped the outcome document. One positive achievement for civil society at Busan was the recognition of fundamental development drivers as human rights, democratic ownership, gender equality, and effective institutions, although this was limited to a lukewarm reference in the outcome document (Bena 2012; Ssewakiryanga 2011). Another major achievement for civil society was participating in the constitution process of the Working Party successor, a new space for the discussion on aid and development effectiveness, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (OECD 2011). As outlined previously, the GPEDC governance architecture was thoroughly discussed by the Post Busan Interim Group, and the GPEDC was officially launched in July 2012. The final discussion to define the governance architecture of the GPEDC aroused the criticism of civil-society actors and no common agreement could be achieved, so that the BetterAid representatives left the event in protest. In particular, the civil society disappointment concerned the lack of an adequate representation of civil society, especially in the Steering Committee, and the rejection of the proposal for a non-state co-chair. The latter was felt to be a betrayal of the inclusiveness principle, which the GPEDC actually had signed up to (Abelenda 2012). Meanwhile, BetterAid and the Open Forum had started a process of broad consultation to further shape a shared vision of CSOs development effectiveness, building on the creation of the Busan Partnership. BetterAid and the Open Forum first gathered together in December 2011, exploring the possibility of merging into one platform. Their aim was to engage with the new development agenda. That meeting was followed by a wide process of consultation amongst civil society constituencies worldwide, which culminated in the Nairobi meeting on 8th-9th December 2012. It was on that occasion that BetterAid and the OpenForum officially joined

to launch the new CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE 2012, CPDE n.d.*b*).

6.1.3 CPDE at a Glance

In Nairobi, one year after Busan, fifty civil society leaders came together. Their representatives coming from different regions of the world, including Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, the Middle East and North Africa, and embracing faith-based, feminist, labour, rural sector and international civil society organizations gave birth to the Nairobi Declaration. The Nairobi Declaration is the reference document for CPDE, containing CSOs vision, their mission and their political statement. The Nairobi Declaration acknowledges that:

> The enhanced and formalized space that civil society secured at HLF-4 and in subsequent processes related to effective development co-operation. We recognize that changes to the scope and membership of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) come with its opportunities (CPDE 2012: §5).

The Nairobi Declaration opens with a section stressing the need to embrace a new approach to development, contrasting the failure of the previous paradigm, now addressing poverty and the consequential exacerbation of inequalities worldwide. In response to this situation, CSOs affirmed in the declaration their intention to realize the vision of development effectiveness brought to Busan, which had a human rights-based approach at its core (CPDE n.d.*b*). Specifically, the CPDE's vision states: '[we] envisage a world where respect for human rights, participatory democracy, social and environmental justice and sustainability, gender equality and equity, and decent work and sustainable change are achieved' (CPDE 2012: §8).

The governance structure was finalized after the Nairobi meeting and it is currently composed by the following bodies: the Global Council, the Coordination Committee, the Co-Chairs and the Global Secretariat (CPDE n.d.*a*).

Figure 6.1 Organigram of the CPDE

Source: CPDE Structure and Governance. Available from: http://www.csopartnership.org/structureandgovernance. [Accessed 14/03/2020]

The Global Council (GC) is the ultimate decision-making body of the CPDE, with the function of providing political leadership and strategic direction to the partnership. It is composed by sixty-five organizations. The criteria followed to structure the Global Council was to reach the widest representation, both in sectoral and geographical terms, assuring at the same time a balance between sectoral groups and geographic representation. The Global Council meets at least once a year to address key issues.

The Coordination Committee collaborates with the GC to supervise the daily work of the CPDE. In particular, its functions are: following up on the decisions of the Global Council; representing the CSO Partnership; facilitating policy development; preparing the draft agenda and reports for the annual GC meeting; facilitating the setting up, coordination, and coherence of the working groups; overseeing the work of the secretariat; approving the draft annual budget; and forming a Programme and Finance Committee within the CC. The Coordination Committee meets twice a year minimum and is constituted of at least one representative from

each constituency, plus the Co-Chairs of the CSO Partnership. Co-chairs assume the leadership of the CPDE. There are presently four co-chairs in charge of managing the platform's policy, finance, communications and outreach concerns[19] (CPDE n.d.*b*). The Global Secretariat is engaged with the daily management, coordination of activities and finances of the CSO Partnership, and is hosted by the service organization IBON International (CPDE n.d.*a*).

The governance bodies are supported by the Independent Accountability Committee (IAC), which is concerned with checking their accountability and transparency and meets once a year. Its work includes examining functioning evaluation and audit mechanisms and other horizontal and vertical accountability measures set at all levels of action (CPDE n.d. *c*). During its meetings the Independent Accountability Committee produce an assessment which helps the CPDE to identify and face potential challenges and to reflect on its structure, mandate and strategy. The members of the Accountability Committee are elected from outside the Global Council (CPDE n.d.*c*).

Finally, the management structure includes regional and sectoral coordinating units. In particular, regional coordinating units convene existing sub-regional platforms, development CSOs and sectoral networks/groups within the region to develop and implement a collective advocacy, outreach and work plan. Sectoral coordinating units are facilitated by a global representative and regional representatives. The global representative sits at the Coordination Committee, while global and regional representatives sit at the Global Council. Regional sectoral representatives are also part of regional coordinating units to ensure synergy in their work with their respective region/sub-region.

6.1.4 The CPDE Agenda

The CPDE strategic agenda was sealed in 2016. The planning process was propelled by the intent to effectively engage in the ongoing debate on development, within an evolving international landscape. Eventually, the CPDE members presented an overarching advocacy banner, the 'Universalising Effective Development Cooperation' (uEDC). In their words:

> 'Universalising EDC [Effective Development Cooperation] is primarily designed to address development partnerships and is an agenda predicated on DE [development

[19] The present co-chairs were elected in December 2016, during the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting held in Nairobi, and are: Vitalice Meja (policy an advocacy Co-chair); Beverly Longid (membership and outreach co-chair); Monica Novillo (communications co-chair); Julia Sanchez (finance co-chair).

> effectiveness] principles that are founded on the highest levels of transparency and accountability, inclusive development, democratic country ownership, and human rights-based approach. It calls for universal adherence to the commitments made and principles agreed upon primarily by setting up accountability mechanisms to fulfil promises since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.' (CPDE 2016*b*: 7).

The advocacy for uEDC has been grounded in a further renewal of the commitment towards the unfinished business. This is supported by development effectiveness principles which directs its work inwards and outwards. The CPDE inwards-actions refer to the partnership continuous work to reflect upon and improve CSOs own effectiveness, through an ongoing process of sharing of lessons learnt, effective practices and toolkits for the implementation of the Istanbul Principles (CPDE n.d.*e*; CPDE 2016*b*). In parallel, the work of the CPDE outward directed aims to advocate the implementation of development principled within major global arenas, e.g. the GPEDC and the UN High Level Political Forum, by promoting policy recommendations based on evidence-based researches and country-level information (CPDE 2016*b*: 6).

In advocating for uEDC, CPDE 'builds on the synergies between the global and local levels to address symptoms and structural causes of poverty, inequality, and social marginalisation and make development issues more grounded and meaningful for people.' (CPDE 2016*b*: 7). The intent to make development issues and policies relevant to people implies that regulatory frameworks and policies on national level will most directly effect on people's daily life. That is, on the national level multi-stakeholders' dialogues and policy making processes must be accessible[20].

Currently, the CPDE has five working groups concerning: CSOs Development Effectiveness, CSOs Enabling Environment, South-South Cooperation, Private Sector and Diaspora and Migration. It further embraced two programmes, namely the 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Effectiveness' and the 'Enhancing Civil Society's Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015'.

The 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Effectiveness' was a three-year programme implemented between November 2013 and December 2016, and was financed by five donors, i.e. the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

[20] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, and in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016, and on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and the 1st of December 2016.

(SIDA), the IrishAid, Austrian Development Agency, the Finland's Foreign Ministry and the Global Action Canada. The programme coordinated national-regional-global and sectoral campaigns, with initiatives focused on (i) continuous monitoring and advocacy on the Global Aid and Development Effectiveness Agenda, ensuring the alignment with the Human Rights-Based approach, CSO Key Asks and Busan agreements, on (ii) promoting an Enabling Environment for CSOs and on (iii) building CSO Development Effectiveness (DE) through the implementation of the Istanbul Principles (CPDE n.d.*g*: 5). Advocacy, policy engagement and outreach activities were selected each year by the Global Council, based on their consistency with the programme objectives and their potential to push forward the CPDE vision. The programme provided a Performance Management Framework to guide the implementation and the monitoring of the activities, while information about outputs, results and challenges in delivering such activities were presented in annual reports (CPDE n.d.*g*: 5).

The programme 'Enhancing Civil Society's Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015' had a duration of two years (January 2016 until December 2018), and was supported by the European Commission and co-financed by SIDA (20%). This programme acted at the global level and was conceived within the Post-2015 process that led to the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GPEDC actively engaged with the design process of a Post-2015 Agenda and responded by expanding its mandate, as fully discussed in the previous chapter. Likewise, the CPDE increased its efforts to deliver SDGs, through the GPEDC and other relevant regional and global policy arenas (CPDE n.d.*f*:2). The programme spelled out two immediate objectives to support the achievements of SDGs. That are, to (i) influence favourable policy outcomes in Development Partnerships at the global and regional levels through institutionalising CSO participation, to (ii) advocate enabling environment for CSOs, to (iii) align development frameworks to human rights based approaches, to (iv) increase the CSO's capacity to contribute and monitor partnerships developments, and to (v) to implement the Istanbul Principles. Similarly, the activities promoted within this programme were organized around two poles: (1) the Policy Engagement and Advocacy based on strategy meetings, evidence-based researches and global and regional workshops on thematic issues and (2) the Capacity Development of CSOs addressing capacity needs assessment/researches, regional and global workshops on CSO Development effectiveness and skills training on different monitoring mechanisms (CPDE n.d.*f*:2). The activities realized under this programme worked towards strengthening CPDE voices within major arenas between 2016 and 2018, e.g., the 2015 UN Summit and the GPEDC 2nd High Level Meeting. In particular, those activities were entrusted to the communications officer and the communications committee. In fact, increased CSOs' capacities and a greater availability of resources were expected to facilitate the achievement

of communication objectives, and therefore, contribute to mainstreaming CSO positions in relevant global arenas (CPDE n.d.*f*:17).

6.2 Living the CPDE

The organizational life of the CPDE relies on the data collected through a period of non-participant observation realized at the Global Secretariat, the attendance of two Coordination Committee meetings between March and June 2016 and the attendance of the Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC, held in December 2016. Data were also collected through the interviews addressed to 15 members of the Coordination Committee.

6.2.1 Strengths

The main CPDE potentials identified by its members are (i) its unity, (ii) being a learning platform, (iii) accumulating expertise and publishing literature and (iv) gaining from reflection and growth.

Unity

First, most of the members interviewed perceive the platform unity as a potential *per se*. CPDE comprises thousands of different constituencies, with different sectoral and geographical backgrounds, unifying all these identities represents for CPDE members a demanding target. Thus, succeeding in integrating such plurality of perspectives within a shared space and making all the actors collaborate to create a common strategy for action is seen a specific strength of the platform. With regard to the wideness of the CPDE agenda, it was stated before that this is a consequence of its capacity for being so inclusive, proving the CPDE's potential to cope with a high heterogeneity of positions and to turn it into a cohesive whole.

However, Mr. Antonio Tujan, a global leader of civil society activism in this field, founder and first co-chair of the CPDE[21], warns that its wideness may undermine the internal

[21] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

stability and lead the platform to implosion (Tujan Interview[22]). Looking back at CPDE activity from its foundation in 2012 up to now, it seems that CPDE has successfully evolved towards an increasing degree of cohesion, while signs of collapse have not yet emerged. This progressive consolidation is reflected in the words of the ex CPDE co-chair for policy:

> We are also quite happy because […] this is a big platform, very diverse, we're able to consolidate and unite this big platform. Of course there a lot of tensions, a lot of challenges but I think CPDE is maturing as a platform. You should have seen us when we were starting in […] Nairobi, when we founded the CPDE, there was really a lot of mistrust. (Lauron Interview[23]).

CPDE unity has been built over time, designing a strategy for action and a view on development effectiveness capable of bringing together all the members in the achievement of a continuous and articulate debate. It is through dialogue that members of social networks establish social ties, e.g., through channels for the circulation of information and mutual support, and that's how collective meanings are negotiated (Mische 2003). Thus, dialogue is at the core of CPDE's activities, and the dialogue within the platform is described as a conversation *inter pares*, basing on equality and inclusivity. In other words, this is reflecting an organizational model in which power is equally diffused amongst its members (Andela Interview[24]; Tamata Interview[25]). Dialogue is the means through which unity is built and through which plurality is mediated to elaborate a shared view:

> This is actually a platform [that constitutes] the good figure of what can be the world when you accept that you are different, that there are different interests, but that we can live in

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[22] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[23] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[24] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interviewee held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[25] Laitia Tamata, Technical Advisor at the 'Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organisations' (PIANGO).Interviewee held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

> peace if we try to take in to account the different interests and to discuss without […] trying to impose your own idea on the others. So […] dialogue for me, which is the focal mechanisms within CPDE and its work as CPDE, and also within the GPEDC, is for me actually the main thing we have in our hands. (Andela Interview[26]).

Moreover, the fact of various civil actors being gathered in CPDE helps generating new ties within the platform members, contributing to increase its degree of internal connectedness. Participation in CPDE actually provides its members the opportunity to come into contact with other populations that otherwise would have not met (Guzman Interview[27]). This means that the variety of the platform favours the creation of new channels of communication among its members, giving CPDE a complex political profile (Diani 2003*b;* Katz 2006).

A Learning Platform

Another CPDE quality identified by its members is its potential of being a learning platform. Knowledge within CPDE is not assumed as a given and static resource, but rather considered as dynamic. On this point Mr. Tamata, regional representative of the Asia and Pacific Region at the Coordination Committee, described the experience within the CPDE as an ongoing learning process involving CSOs worldwide (Tamata Interview[28]). Five years passed since the realization of the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the adoption of the Istanbul Principles[29] in 2011, and over this period CSOs worldwide have worked to improve their own effectiveness, sharing experiences and lessons learnt (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011). The recognition of civil society as an independent development actor further encouraged the development of CSOs skills related to development effectiveness. In this sense CPDE has been strongly concerned with actions of

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[26] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interviewee held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[27] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in The Hague from 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[28] Laitia Tamata, Technical Advisor at the 'Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organisations' (PIANGO). Interviewee held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

capacity building to permit CSOs to effectively engage in political process and arenas at all levels, locally and globally. Capacity development has been a core component of CPDE programmes and involved building research capacities through skills trainings, integrating systematically CSOs development effectiveness principles into CSOs organizational praxis and realizing workshops on specific issues (CPDE n.d.*a*; CPDE n.d.*b*). In order for the capacity-building activities to be successful, they have been organized and tailored to the political context specific to each area of action. These initiatives have provided CPDE members and ordinary people with the know-how that is necessary to take part in technical debates about public policy at all levels, helping them to acquire the 'weapons of the powerful' (Cornwall 2004: 85).

Beyond contributing to the construction of technical skills, capacity-building activities have helped people to deepen their understanding of the role of civil society as a development actor. On this point, Mrs. Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development, stated:

> I am working at ground level in my country so […] what I can say is that CPDE has helped a lot to build capacity in different countries […] we operated on civil society to be able to understand better their own role. Because, you know, in this […] story of cooperation for development, from the beginning the civil society organizations have been utilized by the governments and by the partners only to implement their projects, so it was only about service delivery. But now, there is a political role of civil society coming up, and I think that CPDE has helped a lot […] to build this capacity, to strengthen civil society throughout, but especially in Southern countries, because […] the work of CPDE in Southern countries, […] it's very important, and building this capacity to understand better the role of civil society as an actor by himself, and with […] right of initiative, has been a […] turning point in the […] way civil society sees his own role in specific countries. (Andela Interview[30]).

CSOs are usually looked upon as watchdogs, for monitoring and evaluating the development of projects or working as service providers for agencies or other NGOs. However, the activities developed by CPDE go far beyond this vision, for instance encompassing the policy research (Lauron Interview[31]). Therefore, what the CPDE is actually

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[30] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interview held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[31] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant

doing is helping people to fully understand their potential as political individuals and agents for transformation, showing them new ways and channels to speak out their views and equipping them with the knowledge and skills required to be effective.

Expertise and Literature Production

A great comparative advantage results from CPDE richness in terms of constituency variety, as clearly stated by Mr. De Fraia, representative of ActionAid International:

> We are a highly organised constituency with a very broad outreach and this is something that we can choose to our own benefit when it comes to supporting positions, pushing for positions. We are able to claim that we are consulting, we are in touch with national, international, local organizations, so that's one of the […] major opportunities […], our capacity to tap on a wealth of expertise, a wealth of knowledge coming from different parts of the world that not so many others constituencies can do. (De Fraia Interview[32]).

In line with the idea of a learning platform, expertise is shared amongst CPDE members to help those actors, who have not yet developed strong capacities. This knowledge sharing is particularly evident with regards to policy works. Noteworthy, this field is mainly covered by Northern organizations, while a big part of Southern organizations is engaged in process of capacity-building through the activities organized by the same platform.

The process of knowledge sharing is sustained through the continuous production of literature resources by its members, which are circulated by the platform (Owen Interview[33]; Guzman Interview[34]). Bulletins, research papers and reports are released with the aim of keeping the constituencies informed about the ongoing activities and to share the experience of members and research data. This growing literature body constitutes a solid base for the improvement of CPDE action, by (i) supplying its members with valuable information, (ii)

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observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[32] Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General at ActionAid Italy. Interview held via Skype on the 22nd April of 2016.

[33] Thomas Owen, Interview held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[34] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

favouring a self-assessment of their own activities and (iii) helping those to manage common problems at a larger scale of CPDE action.

Reflection and Growth

A factor that is thought to be important for the future evolution of CPDE action is its capacity to engage in reflection and self-assessment of its activity. As stated by the CPDE policy chair:

> We are learning platforms […]. So, I think that the fact that the CPDE from time to time calls upon itself to reflect internally, how do we make ourselves, you know, more systematic more effective, I think it's a good sign. (Lauron Interview[35]).

CPDE encourages discussion on its work and on the structure of its governance bodies, welcoming inputs from all its constituencies. This inclination to change clearly emerged during the March and June Coordination Committees, when the members revised the strategy plan for the next three years. In particular, they debated about the abolition or modification of reference and working groups, the mandate of the Global Council and its relationship with the Coordination Committee[36]. A fundamental moment for reflection was provided by the anniversary of the launch of the Istanbul Principles. Seven years later, CPDE convened on the 30th and 31st of March 2017 in Bangkok the event: 'Breaking Ground, Taking Roots: Istanbul Principles@7'. This was the occasion for CSOs to reflect on the improvements made or the shortcomings emerged since 2010 in terms of enhancing CSOs' own accountability and transparency (CPDE n.d.*e*). This action of self-reflection and propensity to flexibility allowed the platform to evolve over time in relation to the ever changing environment. Thus, the platform structure does not constitute a fixed boundary to the members' agency, as it is moulded by the ongoing interactions amongst the constituencies. The platform's self-reflection and flexibility can be considered a genuine strategy preparing the members not only to take part in decisional process, but also empower them to be able to change the structure in which they act (Cornwall 2004; Cox 1983; Katz and Anheier 2003).

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[35] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[36] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, and in Den Haag from 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

This cycle of self-reflection and change is a potential of paramount importance for the platform's success as a counter-hegemonic force. It makes the platform more responsive to the challenges posed by the external political environment or resulting from its internal evolution, moving towards a constant improvement of its action.

6.2.2 Challenges

The challenges that the platform faces, especially in terms of internal management, are directly connected to the richness of the platform's constituencies and to the political and organizational complexity. The challenges are classified into three main categories, i.e., (i) internal management, (ii) representativeness and (iii) power. These categories are interconnected and matters of global and local connectedness is introduced in this system as a transversal issue, which constantly permeates the work of the CPDE.

Internal Management

Internal management is the category which refers the elements of the CPDE's internal organization. They have been identified from the interviewees as critical for the improvement of CPDE action and are worth being reviewed in more detail. The main discontents identified are ascribable to four focal points: the agenda, bureaucracy, resources and communication.

The risk related to pursuing a too broad CPDE agenda has been constantly addressed in both, the interviewees' perspectives and the debates developed during the last CPDE Coordination Committee meetings, held in March and June 2016. CPDE is a very large platform, bringing together different sectors and constituencies from all over the world, including approximately 4000 CSOs (Bena Interview[37]). Each one is carrying its own background and particular agenda. Therefore, a great plurality of perspectives and interests contribute to shape the CPDE action, resulting in an extremely rich agenda. Each constituency pushes for the inclusion of the themes it advocates for, and this has inevitably increased the degree of complexity of the political agenda. In addition to the plurality of the constituencies' voices, another factor which is intrinsically connected to the richness of the agenda, is the CPDE's focus on development effectiveness. This expression, as previously discussed, was

[37] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

coined to go beyond the concept of aid effectiveness, and thus constituting a far-reaching domain *per se* (Tujan Interview[38]). A clear picture of the complexity of the CPDE agenda is given by Farida Bena, director of humanitarian policy and advocacy at the International Rescue Committee and CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator:

> Each group, each constituency wants to defend and promote its own cause and often it all ends up with a kind of minestrone, which has everything in it but, then, the minestrone is not always good. The risk is that by giving priority to everything, you actually give priority to nothing. So this is for me the main challenge for CPDE […] all the organizations, they are trying to cover everything they can because everything is connected, we all agree upon this point. But, at some point, you have to be able to choose, and choosing means giving up something else. So in the case of CPDE that, let's say, works on an agenda as rich as the one of the Global Partnership, this is a squared problem, or even cubed! (Bena Interview[39]).

The fact of working on a wide agenda, as the development effectiveness demands, involving a myriad of civil actors' voices is not questioned by CPDE actors. On the contrary it is accredited as an indispensable condition. What is really at stake, is the CPDE's ability to define a strategic focus. 'This is […] the area in which we need to improve a lot' (Bena Interview[40]). Focusing on a limited range of topics to be addressed, is clearly a common need felt by CPDE constituencies, as proved by the efforts and the time devoted to sharpening the CPDE strategic plan, which aimed at identifying the key areas of interest for the next three years (2017-2020), a process that lasted almost a year.

Processes of internal consultation in CPDE require a lot of time and may seem cumbersome. This problematic aspect emerged few times during the debates[41] held in the Coordination Committee meetings observed. Criticisms on the weight of the bureaucratic process are unsurprising, given the large base of constituencies involved in the CPDE that

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[38] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on 28th May 2016, during the realization of a non –participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[39] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[40] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[41] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, and in Den Haag on the 20th to 22ndof June 2016.

have to be regularly consulted. The different geographical levels (from local to global) and the various bodies through which information is circulating and consensus is built, further complicates the bureaucratic processes. In particular, bureaucratic processes are criticized for taking time out of the debate on political strategy, and hence, diminishing in part the CPDE's potential for impact (Tujan Interview[42]; Owen Interview[43]; Guzman Interview[44]). Tujan argued that the tension felt between the need to push forward political advocacy and the need to fulfil bureaucratic procedures is intrinsic to the CPDE nature, as it reflects the duality of the two merged platforms, BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. In fact, BetterAid was an advocacy platform working on aid effectiveness, mainly to ensure donors and governments accountability, whereas the Open Forum was focused on the effectiveness of CSOs as development actors and, thus, was more centred on processes of self-organization (Tujan Interview[45]). Therefore, the CPDE synthetizes and expresses two diverse attitudes, one is expressing the need to affirm itself as a strong political speaker, whose effectiveness requires a light underpinning structure, while the other puts emphasis on the internal procedures that allow it to be a fully accountable development actor, from the local to global level. So, despite the ongoing reforms of the CPDE structure, its members are still caught between the necessity of complying with the rules that assure a satisfactory degree of representativeness and accountability to their constituencies, and the necessity of developing a more incisive political action.

Bureaucracy is thought to absorb resources, both in terms of financial resources and of the members' zeal. In particular, an interviewee, talking about the early formation of CPDE, stressed how the operation of designing and building up its bureaucratic apparatus made the participants' political enthusiasm dim and dwindle:

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[42] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non –participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th May and 6th of June 2016.

[43] Thomas Owen, Interview held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[44] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[45] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

> In the lead up to Busan there was so much energy at the national level […] All the Open Forum was amazing for mobilizing groups nationally, you know? […] I think it took so long to establish the CPDE and so much bureaucracy was generated […] that I feel like a lot of that national energy just dissipated. And rather than maintaining the momentum that was generated in the build up to Busan, I think that it just completely dissipated. (Owen Interview[46]).

The same interviewee continues observing that beyond reducing the space available for political debate and diverting energies from it, bureaucracy also concentrates the majority of financial resources available:

> We have become this huge structure […] I think we are representative, but we have like a coordination committee, we have a global council, we have probably five or six working groups, we have an independent accountability committee, we have like all of these committees and they are just sucking on all the resources, so that would be my biggest criticism.' (Owen Interview).

Resources constitute another matter of concern for members and are seen as a critical factor for creating a political continuum between local and global level. The theme of how to translate global principles and campaigns into national initiatives was a focal point in the discussions developed during the Coordination Committee meetings attended[47] and embraced different nuances. For instance, arguing about the extent to which a multi-sectoral platform is possible to deliver at country level, about how to coordinate the plurality of national agendas within the intermediate regional level and about the urgency of building national accountability charts[48], amongst others. The recurring element in all those discussions was the difficulty in finding and mobilizing substantial resources, in order to articulate global plans at country level. Members of Coordination Committee are aware about the limitations that may result in terms of action from the lack of adequate resources. Mr. Tujan further emphasized this problem, adding that the continuous fight for resources is influencing the shaping of the platform activities. In the founder's view, the search for funds is the force that

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[46] Thomas Owen, Interview held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[47] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on 20th -21st March 2016, and in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[48] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on 20th -21st March 2016, and in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

actually moulds the CPDE equilibrium between the programmatic and the political dimension, identifying here another tension issue in the platform (Tujan Interview[49]).

The programmatic dimension requests being susceptible to funds of donors and to external support in general, while the political dimension refers to the organizations of internal strategies and the capacity of engaging in political arenas at different levels. Mr. Tujan stated that the programmatic dimension is prevailing on the political dimension, due to the awareness amongst the members about the necessity of complying with donors' movements, but at the same time, seeking not to leave the action in the hand of donors. On the one hand, steps are taken to be effective from a programmatic point of view, while on the other hand, being politically effective, signifies engaging in different sectors and at different levels at the same time. The political dimension is far more complex and entails the employment of more intense efforts and greater resources. At the same time, Mr. Tujan highlighted the improvement documented with regards to CPDE financial sustainability. Looking back at the process that led up to the formation of CPDE, he noted that before the Accra Third High Level Forum CSOs' resources were scarce, but after that, funds came along with the recognition of civil society as a development actor on its own, allowing the foundation of BetterAid and the Open Forum. With regards to the creation of the CPDE, it was financed by an innovative pool funding mechanisms supported by several donor governments, but the support received dropped in the span of few years. This change was due to political shifts taking place in some governments after political elections (Bharier Interview[50]). This reflect in the volatility of political and financial support that CSOs may experience.

The last focal point within the internal management group relates to communication. Discussion on communication revealed again the difficulty met in building a continuity between global, regional, national and local levels. Information only hardly passes along the imaginary 'top to bottom' axis, i.e., from global institutions and bodies towards the grassroots level and *vice versa*. Language has been perceived within CPDE as a factor of potential

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[49] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[50] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

exclusion[51] for its technicality, and for the related problem of translation to the different languages spoken by the CPDE constituencies.

The technical language of CPDE is thought to fail to speak to CSOs' bases, who are not familiar with this phraseology, qualified by a member during the Brussels Coordination Committee meeting as 'civil society language'[52], suggesting its distance from local people's day-to-day life. This situation poses the question of finding a language able to speak to grassroots audiences, for them to understand the relevance of the development effectiveness agenda for the improvement of their daily life (Guzman Interview[53]). Indeed, it is fundamental that civil society bases feel the development effectiveness agenda as meaningful to their lives and interests. Ideally, they would take a hold of it, using it as a weapon for their social and political struggles. If CPDE worked without making the platform within the reach of local people, CPDE plans to translate global principles into national and local strategies would only be yet another attempt of imposing a centralized initiative in accordance with a top-down logic[54]. That is to say that the barriers posed by technical language are to be broken down to ensure the highest degree of inclusiveness, of democratic participation and ownership of CPDE by people on the ground. Christine Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development addressed the discussion about the persistence of technical language and highlighted its negative impact on the achievement of potential development outcomes:

> Sometimes we are in very technical descriptions at these global things […] and so it's very difficult for a platform like ours to make sure that everybody is participating. We are in a global strategy and we want everybody to be part of the strategy, so it's very difficult. You have seen for example that there is a trend […] for the confiscation of the space by experts. But if we allow the confiscation of the space by experts […] then we are no longer CPDE. So, […] it's not actually a contradiction but it's something which makes us sometimes not as effective as we would like to be. (Andela Interview[55]).

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[51] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, and in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[52] Idem.

[53] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in the Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[54] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, and in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

[55] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interviewee held on the 20th of March 2016,

The concern with technical language is also pointed out in the documentation released by CPDE, where it is confronted as a constraint to members' full participation in different arenas:

> Sustaining the interest of members in terms of participation in important platform discussions remains to be a challenge. However, it has recognized the highly technical nature of the discourse around development cooperation – i.e., posing challenges in ascertaining the linkage to the social realities of these issues on the ground. In an attempt to address this challenge, CPDE has thought about universalizing the discussion on effective development cooperation to surface the linkage of the issues on the ground – i.e., discussions that resonate with the daily lives of the people who are most vulnerable to the actions concerning development. (CPDE 2016*a*).

Language is also thought to be problematic due to the extensive use of English. Meetings and debates are held in English, which is not the first language for many of the members and that is not spoken by many local actors. This fact constitutes a clear obstacle to the transmission of information towards the bases. In fact, CSOs representatives need to report CPDE messages or discussions to their respective base, but this is not an immediate operation. First, many words, especially those with a technical connotation (e.g. 'accountability'), do not have a corresponding term in a different language and this affects the clarity of the message. Therefore, the chance of people showing interest for the issues presented diminishes. Moreover, documents released in English need time to be translated by civil actors to another language, this preventing communication from being prompt and effective. This challenge emerges clear and strong in the words of Pedro Guzman, representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty:

> […] it is not only about the technical language as I mentioned, but also about the fact that big part of the debate is held in English, and I speak Spanish. There are some colleagues who understand and can speak a bit English, but the majority of indigenous community, of rural community and fishers community do not speak English. Therefore, it is difficult for us to bring them important messages by time and in a language that they can understand, because messages are first released in English and it takes a while to be able to [access those in another language]. […] for civil society, translating fifteen-twenty pages to Spanish or French is not easy, bearing in mind that there are many words that are not easy to translate from one language to another. (Guzman Interview[56]).

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during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[56] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21th June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

Finally, few interviewees felt the language employed by CPDE as being "aspirational", i.e., sounding bold and suggesting great expectations. This makes it difficult to translate it into more concrete ideas or indications. A question addressed to members during the interview consisted by asking them to explain what the affirmation 'CPDE wants to challenge the action of other development actors' (CPDE n.d.*e*) means, specifying what are the concrete steps to be taken in this direction. A member replied that:

> This language […] in English it would be called aspirational, ambitious, far-reaching. And then, at the end, what does it really mean? That is, how do you concentrate your challenging action? […] expectations are created at the level of CPDE base and those are not realistic, so in this sense I would say let's come back to the work we have to do, challenging is fine but let's agree upon on what, upon how.' (Bena Interview[57]).

Representativeness

The category of representativeness as a challenge for CPDE is inherently interdependent upon that of internal management and represents a central issue within any large global platform as CPDE. CPDE represents a wide range of voices of civil society actors, which in turn are interested in development effectiveness, encompassing the equally comprehensive field of effective cooperation management (Bena Interview[58]). It is clear that representativeness implies a great onus, as bespoken by Luca De Fraia, representative of ActionAid International within the CPDE Coordination Committee:

> 'I think that there is a huge responsibility resting with the GPEDC because we are the CSOs delegates of the GPEDC Steering Committee so I think that we need to feel, and we actually feel that responsibility for creating and shaping our own views on the basis of a very broad system of consultation and this is a big challenge. I would like to stress this element on others because I think that we must be serious in that regard, we are claiming that we are the CSOs voice […] and this is a serious job to be done.' (De Fraia Interview[59]).

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[57] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[58] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[59] Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General at ActionAid Italy. Interview held via Skype on the 22nd of April 2016.

The same sense of responsibility is shared by Tetet Nera Lauron, the CPDE ex-co-chair for policy, Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. On this point, she affirmed:

> Whatever intervention I make it's not on my behalf but on behalf of the whole platform […] we are the biggest constituency in the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership […] governments only represent themselves, governments...but for us, it's the whole of civil society that you're speaking for. (Lauron Interview[60]).

Despite some difficulties related to internal communication, CPDE members seem to be satisfied with the platform capacity of being representative, by virtue of its wide-ranging and accurate process of consultation of the base. However, CPDE members are aware that an adequate degree of representativeness alone does not assure the legitimacy of CPDE. Legitimacy of NGOs and, by extension of CSOs, refers to the question of 'moral justifications for political and social action', and can be interpreted as the combined result of two dimensions: a formal-procedural and a substantive purposive (Atack 1999: 855). The concern with representativeness belongs to the formal-procedural sphere of legitimacy, and depends, amongst other variables, on members' participation, to which interviewees expressed concern about. The CPDE represents about 4000 CSOs worldwide, but the degree of representativeness shall vary according to different contexts, leading to the question, on how effective the CPDE's actions are in each case (Bena Interview[61]). In fact, there may be a discrepancy between formal and effective participation, an important consideration for the assessment of CPDE's legitimacy in claiming to represent the whole of civil society, towards its constituencies, the GPEDC stakeholders and other development actors and institutions. The CPDE's structure was designed to assure the largest degree of inclusivity, taking into account both geographical and sectoral representativeness, but the members' participation has shown to be uneven amongst the various realities that make up the CPDE. The main factor responsible for different levels of engagement can be understood in the countries' political context. A basic divide is given between Northern and Southern countries. Generally

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[60] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[61] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

speaking, Northern CSOs can take advantage of a more stable political environment with institutionalized channels for civil society participation, while the global South experiences in many cases more adverse political conditions, often characterized by shrinking capacities for civil society action. Moreover, the global South does not represent a homogenous group, and their civil society capacity is often too week to steer significantly political decision-making changes. This is further influenced from country to country by a plurality of factors, such as the degree of political stability or instability, militarization, governments' paternalism, the presence of conflicts, etc. (Tujan Interview[62]). In addition, the extent to which a political environment can be defined as enabling for CSOs action usually influences the level of resources available to CSOs, a factor that concurs to determine the degree of presence of CPDE at regional, national and local level.

CPDE's success in terms of representativeness is also relying upon its capacity to maintain the constituencies' commitment constant through time. A common disappointment has arisen about the lack of full and regular participation of different CPDE members. The oscillation in members' level of engagement into CPDE action is reflected in the often unfair distribution of the workload amongst the members, as visible in the extreme example of a working group actually composed by one active member only, and in the absence of feedback during consultations. CPDE has tackled this problem by starting a review of its working bodies and procedures, however those measures have not produced yet a substantial change in its members' attitude, as stated in the CPDE report on the implementation of the programme 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Effective Development':

> Despite formulating protocols in ways of working, reorganizing the structure and membership of working and reference groups, and installing a Membership Engagement Officer, sustaining the interest of members in terms of participation in important platform discussions remains to be a challenge (CPDE 2016*a*).

Finally, it was argued that not only the level of members' commitment is to be dealt with, but also the way it is put into practice. In particular, the CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator pointed out two tendencies that, according to her experience, are common to many networks and need to be addressed, namely the enthusiasm shown by some members in standing as representatives of certain groups which, however, is not followed by a rigorous participation in the work of groups, and the persistency of some representatives in putting

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[62] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st March 2016, and in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

their organizations' specific interests first, not contributing to the formulation of common strategies (Bena Interview[63]).

Power

The thorny question of power relationships within CPDE emerged seldom during the Coordination Committee meetings and the interviews held. It must be remarked though that no directly power-related questions were prepared. Thus, the observations made on this point are partial and refer in this section to three main relations observed between IBON and CPDE, Northern and Southern CSOs and Donors and CPDE, respectively.

From a global perspective, the CPDE shows a pluralist approach to power, theorized by Lukes (1974) and Gaventa (2006) as a form of power distribution in organizations 'in which contests over interests are assumed to be visible in public spaces, which in turn are presumed to be relatively open' (Gaventa 2006: 14). As already discussed, CPDE features a high degree of inclusiveness and participation at different levels, and political decision-making is subject to public open debate. CPDE action is managed collectively by members, with all the bureaucratic challenges that this entails, and power is supposed to be diffused amongst the plurality of actors and the different levels of action. Therefore, the CPDE governance structure essentially excludes the possibility of an authoritative and centralized leadership. In this sense, CSOs involved in BetterAid and the Open Forum pushed for establishing a mechanism to supervise the work of the governance bodies (Bharier Interview[64]). This role was given to the Independent Accountability Committee (IAC), whose function is providing 'help and assistance to the governance structures and to the global secretariat to ensure that CPDE meets and maintains high standards of transparency, accountability and integrity, in line with the Istanbul principles' (CPDE 2016*a*).

However, leadership is not always institutionalized and manifest, but can also be latent, exerted through dynamics that do not involve direct control of members and resources. On leadership roles, Diani stated that 'they may also, far less obtrusively, result from 'certain actors' location at the centre of exchanges of practical and symbolic resources among

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[63] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[64] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

movement organizations. This will not generate domination […] but rather varying degrees of influence' (Diani 2003*a*: 27). The definition suggested might apply to IBON international. In fact, as previously mentioned, CPDE is hosted by IBON International, with the CPDE Global Secretariat being located at the IBON headquarters offices in Quezon City, in the Philippines' capital metro region. The CPDE website relates that 'IBON International handles the core Global Secretariat functions of project and finance management, platform coordination and outreach, as well as communication work*'* (CPDE n.d.*g*). The logistic and administrative operations are daily managed within IBON offices, and from here the flow of information reaches successively constituencies worldwide. Thus, IBON comes to be an important node in terms of potential influence and power, being at the very root of the CPDE functioning. In the light of the above, it is reasonable to speculate, whether potential influence of IBON over CPDE is executed more or less intentional. This concern seems to find confirmation in the observations formulated by the same IAC in its last report, dating back to December 2016. In this document it is pointed out that 'a gulf [is perceived] between the wide understanding that the global secretariat has of activities and the level of information of CPDE actors at regional and local level' (CPDE 2016*a*: 4). This statement addresses the existence of information asymmetries between the Global Secretariat - and by the extension IBON - and other CPDE actors. This condition potentially facilitates the exertion of forms of control and influence over those who have access to limited information. The same report offers an example of interference by the Global Secretariat with the selection and recruitment of experts to employ in regions, sub-regions or countries, without consulting representatives from the regional level or country focal point (CPDE 2016*a*). This interference by the Global Secretariat, alias IBON, means bypassing the subsidiarity principle, a fact that indicates a certain ability to exert influence over other subjects of the CPDE.

The weight of IBON over the CPDE can be better understood, when considering that IBON is the forerunner of the process that resulted in the creation of CPDE (it is not a coincidence that BetterAid is also hosted by IBON headquarters). In this respect, the IBON director Mr. Tujan vehemently spoke out:

> It's a strength for CPDE that it is hosted by IBON, because IBON was also the progenitor of the whole process. […] and that's why I talk about the CPDE as IBON, it's the same thing, if you will, I look at it as the same. (Tujan Interview[65]).

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[65] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

Another influence that IBON plays over CPDE lies in its capacity to act as a broker, 'an actor connecting other actors' (Diani 2003*a*: 5). In fact, IBON can look back onto a long and rich experience in working with CSOs networks and social movements worldwide in the field of development. This wide pool of connections was definitely helpful for the constitution of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness, and later for the CPDE. Given IBON's contribution to the CPDE work, a certain degree of political influence may also be exerted. This influence was certainly felt by CPDE members (Bharier Interview[66]), as recognized by Mr. Tujan. In fact, in the same interview, Mr. Tujan affirmed that the fact of CPDE being hosted by IBON is a strength for the partnership, but can also be problematic, as some members complained about the concentration of power in IBON's hand. So, this criticism was followed by an effort to reduce IBON's influence in favour of a more diffused form of power, highlighting the CPDE search for balance between the need to spread power amongst its members and find new ways for them to express their view on the one hand, and on the other, the need to maintain the structures effective and manageable, limiting unwieldy tendencies (Tujan Interview[67]). Mr. Tujan, who is also IBON director, further specified that he was the first and longest CPDE co-chair, holding the position from 2012 to 2014, and that he felt the necessity to step back in response to the objection about the existence of a conflict of interests, assuming that this would influence the way people conceive CPDE.

Mr. Tujan represents an outstanding figure that must be taken into consideration when analysing power relationships within CPDE. It is necessary to bear in mind that Mr. Tujan represented civil society in the Accra High Level Forum, he was CSOs' Sherpa in the Busan High Level Forum negotiations, he was the founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum, and later, of the CPDE itself, of which he was also the first co-chair. All of this together with being the director of IBON. In his own words: 'I am Mr. Effectiveness!' (Tujan Interview[68]). During the interviews, Mr. Tujan explained the centrality of his position in the full process from Accra to the formation of CPDE, and in the creation of each organization mentioned -

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[66] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

[67] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

[68] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

BetterAid, Open Forum, IBON and CPDE. The statements made, beyond the occasional veil of hilarity, seem to claim a special status within CPDE. For example, 'CPDE is IBON' and 'IBON is me' are two affirmations made by Mr. Tujan during the interview realized for the research (Tujan Interview[69]). If the logic underpinning transitive relations is applied to the statements, the statement would translate into 'CPDE is me'. The latter affirmation was never formulated by Mr. Tujan but seems to logically proceed from the previous affirmations. The importance of Mr. Tujan contribution to the formation of the CPDE, and in general, to the advancement of civil society's fight in this field, is such that the authority implied in his words and his recognized experience give him a greater degree of political influence within CPDE, when compared to other members, despite the formal equal status of CPDE members. Mr. Tujan is certainly a charismatic informal leader, and his presence and action does not go unnoticed amongst the other members, who might happen to feel uneasy about it. As expressed by an interviewee (Waterman Interview): 'I think Tony Tujan is a […] pretty forthright person, and he has a particular style. I would describe it as quite a bully style'. The interviewee went on relating this to an example, describing Mr. Tujan's heavy influence on the North-South discussion, often blaming Northern NGOs for their imperialist history and, thus, conceiving of their voices as expendable. This attitude has from time to time upset some Northern actors. In this regard, the same interviewee pointed out that, beyond Mr. Tujan's criticism about Northern imperialism, the same IBON seems to have reproduced an imperialist structure. In fact, he noted that not only the CPDE Global Secretariat, but also other CPDE members, for instance representatives from the Youth, the Rural or the Migrant Sector are curiously from the Philippines where IBON and the CPDE is headquartered. This last observation highlighted another potential role of Mr. Tujan within the CPDE, which further supports the idea of his exercising an implicit influence within the CPDE: that of the gatekeeper regulating who is allowed within and who stays outside.

On relations between North and South, the fact of the CPDE Secretariat being situated in Manila may be indicative of Southern CSOs primacy over Northern CSOs, in which the choice of locating the administrative services in the Philippines, that is in a country of the global South, may be indicative of a shift of power from North to South (Mawdsley 2012). In his pioneering empirical study to test at a global level two different models of civil society, termed hegemonic and counter-hegemonic. Katz (2006: 340) argued that 'the global civil

[69] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

society network is characterized by a dominance of high-income economies. The distribution of the organization and links in the global network of INGOs is skewed towards the rich, developed nations'. In the case of CPDE, this tendency is overturned, for being a global CSOs network with a prevalence of Southern constituencies. This prevalence might have been partly determined by the fact that IBON, the predecessor of CPDE and its potential social broker, is focusing its work more on Southern CSOs and movements. The perception of a dominant presence of the Global South in CPDE was acknowledged by the CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Ms Bena, who affirmed: 'I would say that in comparison with other platforms, the CPDE is a platform driven by the South, by Southern CSOs, so there's not a domination by Northern civil society, as it often happens in other global platforms' (Bena Interview[70]).

The last point to be discussed about power is the relationship between donors and CPDE. The possibility of CPDE being subject to the plans of donors plans depends on what was previously discussed as the complex balance between being programmatic and being political. The need for external funds pushes CPDE to prefer more programmatic plans, at the expenses of its effectiveness as a policy-advocacy platform. This fact has exposed CPDE to the criticism of its action as one that is shaped in function of funding. This, as a result, caused a decline of its political potential when dealing with donors. Because of this, CPDE has been blamed for running behind money (Tujan Interview[71]). Members are aware that an increase in programmatic activities is reflected in a narrowing space for political action, but at the same time it is also clear that in order to remain active and effective, it is important to fulfil the requirements set by donors to some extent, since otherwise fighting for civil society rights would come to a standstill.

Accountability

In the past years, CSOs have constantly been working to affirm the concept of accountability as a fundamental requirement for the achievement of development effectiveness outcomes. Since the lead-up to Accra, CSOs have never stopped deepening their

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[70] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[71] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

understanding of accountability and kept improving the mechanisms that control their own accountability. However, CPDE have been experiencing some difficulties in this respect, which are clearly outlined in the Independent Accountability Committee (IAC) report to the CPDE General Council released in November 2016 (CPDE 2016*a*).

According to the IAC report, both upward accountability and transparency towards donors are satisfactory, while outward accountability in the direction of CPDE members, civil society actors and general public is not strong enough. On this point, the IAC pointed out that the website, conceived as the main channel to get to know the CPDE activity, does not provide the necessary information or those are not easily accessible from the website. This is particularly true for the information concerning the CPDE structures and their composition, the creation of the CPDE, as well as the procedures, methodologies and reports amongst other. The report especially spotted the lack of clarity, when it comes to spell out the way in which the principles of development effectiveness apply to the CPDE's own work. Moreover, the IAC highlighted the absence of formal explicit agreements about procedures, criteria and specific roles to clearly orient decision-making, reporting and accountability. The language problem resurfaces in connection with the CPDE website issues. As stated before, the employment of technical language in the documentation shared online makes it difficult for a non-expert audience to fully comprehend the information provided. Also, the website uses English only, despite the fact of documents shared being available also in Spanish and French (CPDE 2016*a*).

Another fundamental issue to address relates to CPDE governance, mainly caused by CPDE limited strategic governance experience and its complex nature (Bharier 2016). Moreover, the report found that 'significant problems may be addressed informally, rather than through the governance structures' (CPDE 2016*a*: § IV). Despite recognizing that this modality of informal resolution may be justified at the light of pragmatic reasons, it still stands as relevant to query again the accountability mechanisms in act amongst the Global Secretariat, the Regions, the Coordination Committee and the co-chairs (CPDE 2016*a*). Thus, the IAC urged the Coordination Committee Meeting and the Co-Chairs to elaborate a Transparency and Accountability Policy in accordance with the guidelines contained in the toolkit contained in the International Framework (CPDE 2016*a*). However, beyond the observations made, the report did acknowledge the ongoing work of the CPDE to improve the degree of accountability and transparency of its activities.

6.3 Conclusions

The experience of CPDE undoubtedly represents a history of success, which reflects the progressive empowerment of civil society as a development actor during the last two decades. Civil society was able to positively engage in the turbulent development landscape of the early twenty-first century and to take advantage of the political opportunities emerged in a context characterized by the international community commitment to reform the aid delivery system. Civil society actors have shown a proactive attitude, which not only has led them to make good use of the political opportunities, but even pushed them to create as well as shape new opportunities and spaces for action. In fact, CSOs initially entered the aid system reform as outsider players, then gradually involved themselves in the ongoing process, until becoming one of the most active promoters of the new global governance structure of development cooperation, the GPEDC. The action of CSOs made a qualitative leap in Busan, when CSOs moved from shouting from outside the meeting venue to influence people inside the room, enforcing a seat at the table. The new position of CSOs as insiders implied a substantial change in their political relevance, as their inclusion meant the acquisition of a collective responsibility for the decisions taken inside the room, differently from before, when they would not be considered responsible for what was decided within the negotiation room's walls (Bharier Interview[72]). Since CSOs came together in 2012 to give birth to the CPDE, the CSO platform has matured over time, refining and sharpening its capacity to work in multi-stakeholders political arenas. New contexts required the CPDE to develop new advocacy strategies, given that CSOs took on the responsibility for finding 'common ground positions with other stakeholders, where the goal is to raise the policy bar for all stakeholders' (Tomlinson 2011: 3).

A key factor for the CSOs achievements has been the capacity to examine their own work and collectively reflect on it, in the light of development effectiveness principles, which had been autonomously defined. As noted by Meja, executive director of reality of Aid Africa and new CPDE policy co-chair from December 2016, the CPDE 'is continuously re-adjusting over time' (Meja Interview[73]). This action of self-reflection has been fundamental for the platform to progress towards the achievement of its goals.

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[72] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

[73] Vitalice Meja, CPDE policy chair and Executive Director of Reality of Aid Africa, interview realized on Skype on the 4th of March 2017.

Also, what stood out in the majority of the interviews, is the capacity of CSOs to speak with a single voice through the CPDE. This was felt as a major achievement and a great strength to advance their vision within the GPEDC and other political arenas. Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and current CPDE finance co-chair, affirmed that the fact of the CSOs being on the same page and in the same team clearly constitutes a reason for success, in a context where governments and donors are fragmented and have different views (Sanchez Interview[74]).

Finally, looking forward, Mr. Tujan, director of IBON, raised an interesting question about the possible evolution of the CPDE in the next future. In his opinion, the success of CPDE provides a reason to reflect upon the platform's future. He interpreted the current expansion of the CPDE action as a consequence of its success, of its capacity to be inclusive, but at the same time he is concerned about the possibility of the situation becoming ungovernable. He foreshadowed two possible scenarios: either CPDE becoming a super-federation of CSOs or its implosion. In his view, the outcome depends on the partnership capacity to deal with success. Therefore, the evolution of the platform will depend on how its governance system will manage the platform's success. In turn, the success of the CPDE will be contingent on its capacity of being selective with the issues to take up, in order to prevent an excessive agenda that could not be run successfully on every front.

In conclusion, the picture emerging from the collected data is that the CPDE is a robust development actor, which - despite some structural challenges - has a reasonable potential to successfully deliver its vision on development within the GPEDC. The articulation of the CPDE strategic action within the GPEDC is discussed in the next chapter, using the HLM2 as a case study to reflect upon the factors that may influence, either positively or negatively, the CPDE's actions and its possibilities to affirm its own vision of development effectiveness.

[74] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized on Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

Chapter 7
The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness on Stage

Introduction

This chapter assesses the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) potential to into practice its transformative agenda within the framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). In particular, two research questions are addressed, that is: "What are the main opportunities and constraints originating from CPDE participation within the GPEDC?" and "what are the power dynamics amongst the GPEDC stakeholders?"

Data discussed in this chapter were collected through personal notes, interviews and non-participant observation. Personal notes were taken during the participation at two CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016 and in The Hague from the 20th to 22nd of June 2016, respectively, as well as at the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting held in Nairobi from the 28th of November 2016 to 1st of December 2016. Interviews were addressed to the Coordination Committee members, realized via Skype or personally during the mentioned Coordination Committee Meetings. Non-participant observation was carried out at the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting held in Nairobi between from the 28th of November to 1st of December 2016 and during the period spent at the CPDE Secretariat in Quezon City, Manila between the 9th of May and 6th of June 2016. Further data come from the documents released by the same CPDE about its activities, provided by the Global Secretariat during the realization of the non-participant observation period in Quezon City, Manila. The data collected are discussed in relation to the specific research questions mentioned above, with the aim of answering those questions building on the CPDE positions and its Coordination Committee members' experiences and perspectives.

The first section (6.1) analyses the GPEDC and the CPDE as spaces for participation, and especially focuses on the power dynamics existing amongst the different development stakeholders. The GPEDC and the CPDE are put into perspective, reviewing the context in which they have been created, to further understand, how they have been shaped by specific circumstances and power relationships amongst different development actors. The GPEDC is compared with its predecessor, the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, to better comprehend what new channels for action have emerged or have been dismissed in terms of civil society participation within the aid governance framework. This comparison also allows to grasp the evolution of power dynamics within the development cooperation system and how those

influenced the action of CSOs. Finally, referring back to the literature discussed in Chapter 1 with respect to the Gaventa (2006; 2007) Foucault (1991) and Bourdieu (1977;1989) notions of space, the relationship between the CPDE and the GPEDC has been looked at with the aim of going beyond the visible forms of power embodied in their interaction and contest over interests. Subject of analysis is the existence of hidden forms of power, reproducing the established status quo in this domain. The section continues the discussion of the GPEDC's, and thereby of the CPDE's organizational features, this time through a spatial lens. The GPEDC is assessed as a political space for participation, applying the taxonomy of spaces for participation elaborated by Gaventa (2006). Further considerations are made about the nature of social and political spaces, to help understanding the complexities of such realities and their dialectical nature.

Section 6.2 focuses on the CPDE and analyses its position within and in relation to the GPEDC, especially through a thematic lens. The CPDE is introduced as the GPEDC natural counterpart, which is supported by a brief discussion of the CPDE political position in relation to the official position advocated by the GPEDC. Next, the articulation of the CPDE action within the framework of the GPEDC is presented, highlighting the strategies employed by the CPDE to gain more influence. Last, the GPEDC's experienced constraints are presented, which are mainly resulting from the different stakeholders' status in terms of power.

Section 6.3 considers the Second GPEDC High Level Meeting, held in Nairobi between the 28th of November and 1st of December 2016, as an analytical case study to observe the CPDE in action within the GPEDC. The negotiation process of the outcome document and the CPDE position within it is briefly discussed. The outcome of the Nairobi High Level Meeting is also presented, along with the factors that played a crucial role in determining a positive conclusion for civil society.

Finally, the conclusions unite the analysis of the CPDE in relation with the GPEDC framework, with the aim of answering the research questions posed and, from a global perspective, assessing the potential of the CPDE of successfully pushing forward its development agenda. The focus of the analysis has been widened to put both the CPDE and the GPEDC in relation with the surrounding geo-political context, in order to understand how it may influence the CPDE political project. An obstacle to the realization of the CSO political project may result from the union of powerful actors under the banner of global capitalism, under which political and ideological differences fade away. Thus, in order to bring about a transformative development agenda, the CPDE will need to act strategically, namely by building alliances within and outside the GPEDC arena and by gradually advancing its view through well-measured steps.

7.1 The GPEDC and the CPDE as Spaces for Participation

In order to understand the potentials of GPEDC as a political arena for new development actors and the action of the CPDE within it, it is useful to look at the CPDE and the GPEDC as spaces for participation. Participation can be considered as a "spatial practice", since the creation of a space for participation not only involves the stakeholders' space for manoeuvring, but also highlights the power relationships amongst development actors, contributing to shape new spaces for action (Cornwall 2002). Thus, this perspective allows to address specific research questions regarding the opportunities and constraints made available by CSOs participation in the GPEDC, the attitude of the CPDE towards the GPEDC and the dynamics of power established amongst the GPEDC actors.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the GPEDC originated from the process of evolution of the Working Party for Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF). The WP-EFF was created in 2003 in order to operationalize the principles adopted during the first High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness held in Rome in the same year. This group was exclusively composed by donors from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC 2010) and was hosted by the OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) (Atwood 2012). Referring to the taxonomy of spaces elaborated by Gaventa (2006), the WP-EFF was at that time a closed space, where the process of decision making was realized behind closed doors, without consulting any other actor. The second High Level Forum for Aid Effectiveness held in Paris in 2005 brought for the first time developing countries at the negotiating table, shaping the relationship between donors and recipients into a partnership. The WP-EFF followed this evolution and turned into a larger joint partnership of donors and developing countries, including also multilateral institutions (OECD 2010; OECD 2008).

From that moment on, the WP-EFF continued to expand its membership, including civil society, parliamentarians and providers of the South-South cooperation. Between 2003 and 2011, when arrangements for the creation of the forthcoming GPEDC were made, the WP-EFF moved from being a closed space towards being an invited space. The latter is identified by Gaventa (2006) as a space that has been opened up, in which users, beneficiaries or citizens are invited to participate by authorities. So the WP-EFF progressively moved from being a closed space dominated by the OECD-DAC towards being a more open space, in which other actors were asked to come to express their expertise and distinct view, with the aim of advancing the aid effectiveness agenda.

A further change in the direction of reaching a higher degree of openness was made with the collective decision of launching a new governance body for the aid system: the

GPEDC. The launch of the GPEDC represented a substantial step forwards in terms of stakeholders' participation and capacity to influence the decision making process. From an invited space, still led by the OECD-DAC, towards a partnership composed and designed by equal members. This change responded to need for adaptation of the development cooperation system to the changing international landscape, characterized by the spread of the financial crisis and the proliferation of new development actors. Especially emerging donors' growing influence was shaking the Western supremacy (Eyben and Savage 2013; Mawdsley 2012; Mawdsley et al. 2014). Talking about the evolution of the aid effectiveness agenda in the post-Busan scenario, the CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator stated:

> Globally, this is an evolving agenda which is adapting to times, because the aid effectiveness agenda was an agenda dictated by donors, […] more radical, more vertical, based on alliances, on univocal, vertical power relationships. We are now instead in a […] multipolar [panorama], the power is shared and the relation is no longer as linear and, in a sense, it's about time! Thus Busan, the post-Busan, better reflects the reality we live in, in which we are acting and making aid work. (Bena interview[75]).

In this context, the launch of the GPEDC is understood as an attempt to give legitimacy to the established aid governance system, by bringing in all the actors showing a critical attitude towards traditional donors and the North-South Cooperation, whose influence could not be ignored any more. Then, the idea of a global development partnership could be seen as a valid option, because it expresses the traditional donors' willing to fairly share the control over the aid system along with new actors in order to adapt to the new multipolar landscape. While responding to the call for greater transparency, accountability and participation from different development actors, e.g. civil society, the partnership could also work towards an ulterior motive. In fact, it could permit granting a portion of power to critical actors with the aim to slowly assimilate them into the mainstream, and then tame their dissent without risking a protracted confrontation.

Concerning emerging powers, despite the frequent employment of an anti-Western rhetoric, they have also demonstrated being moved by national strategic interests. These are for instance, commercial benefits or geopolitical reasons, as intervention in politically unstable areas affect their interests and encourage the creation of alliances (Mawdsley 2012). In addition, emerging donors have largely benefited from globalization, so that a collusion of interests with the traditional powers are also a likely future scenario. So far, effectively

[75] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

engaging the rising powers in the new effective development cooperation system has proven to be a hard task, despite all the efforts taken to this end since Busan. However, economic interests could ultimately push the rising powers to share the GPEDC arena under the common banner of global capitalism (Eyben and Savage 2013, Mawdsley et al. 2014). In fact, in Busan the fragmentation of the actors' positions was overcome in the moment the neoliberal agenda for development had been supported. Holding all other factors equal, it is likely that the majority of development actors, including the rising powers, will continue to support more or less openly a neoliberal agenda.

The same pertains to the inclusion of civil society, which has usually been one of the strongest voices of opposition to the traditional approach of development cooperation, actively advocating for an alternative vision of development and development cooperation. Including CSOs, now the CPDE, within the new global governance can be thought of a way to sedate their activism and quieten their concerns. However, the CPDE attitude within and towards the GPEDC, which will be reviewed in the following sections, has shown to be substantially critical, which makes the scenario of a potential CSOs co-option within a neoliberal agenda is less likely to occur.

The GPEDC itself may be interpreted as the result of a process of institutionalization of a former invited space, the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, in which the cooperation started among different development stakeholders, culminating with the creation of a new political arena. This new space, that is the GPEDC, differs in nature from its predecessor as it was collectively established and designed by all the stakeholders, marking a clear improvement in terms of accountability and participation, when compared to its predecessor (Cornwall 2002). The GPEDC is the result of a common project brought about by a wide group of development stakeholders, whose participation in the new formal space is recognized rightfully by the GPEDC legislation (Gaventa 2006, Pearce and Vela 2005).

Finally, the GPEDC as a new participation space allows a substantial participation to its members, being supported by a focus on accountability and a sound monitoring process. These characteristics are positive premises for the success of the GPEDC in delivering the effective development cooperation agenda, which can be better appreciated, when compared to the preceding Working Party. However, one has to bear in mind that behind a new architecture, some characteristic features have been inherited from the pre-Busan order, especially concerning the power asymmetries existing among actors. Nevertheless, the GPEDC as a participation space has proven to be dynamic. Hereby, the network of relationships amongst its members has been in a continuous evolution. The acceptance of the proposal of a fourth non-executive co-chair is a clear example of the ongoing change within the GPEDC, in this case working towards the strengthening of the partnership inclusiveness.

Bringing in the voice of non-executive members at the highest decision-making level of the GPEDC is an important step to address power inequalities, assisting progressive changes in the articulation of the GPEDC agenda.

By applying the same space taxonomy elaborated by Gaventa to the CPDE, the latter would fit the category of claimed or created space. This category of space is generally built by less powerful actors. Their space is mainly independent from the spaces of powerful actors and are often the result of social mobilization around issues of common concern (Gaventa 2006, Cornwall 2002). Similarly, the CPDE originated from the aggregation of different CSOs worldwide, working in the field of development cooperation, and was conceived as an autonomous arena for civil society to get organized and coordinate its action to maximize its impact within the GPEDC. As stated in the Nairobi Declaration (CPDE 2012: § 7), the CPDE reference document, the CSOs partnership was especially built to work within the framework of the GPEDC and to actively engage with its agenda. The formation of the GPEDC, and subsequently that of the CPDE, offers a clear example of how the creation of new spaces for participation often paves the way for the emergence of new political subjectivities (Cornwall et al. 2000). In fact, the creation of the CPDE was designed and built in response to the launch of the GPDEC.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the action of CSOs throughout the aid effectiveness paradigm has evolved in a positive way, marking an increasing influence as development actors within different institutional channels, working on the issue of development cooperation effectiveness. Despite the present phase of further shrinking space for civil society as result 'of a general authoritarian pushback against democracy'(European Parliament 2017:5), looking back at the road walked by CSOs so far, Antonio Tujan, founder and ex co-chair of the CPDE, observed that:

> There has been a lot of work in terms of approving CSOs, in general I would say that there are so many new CSOs that are emerging, which means to say that […] the environment, globally speaking, continues to promote CSOs and to promote the citizens association, the right to associate are expressed by the citizens through CSOs'. […]. On the other hand you find that in several places around the world the question of political and economic crisis has made many regimes more and more wary about CSOs, […] the fear that support for International CSOs and international support for national CSOs can be interpreted by some governments as subversion. And then the fact that many CSOs of course are facing different forms of repression, ok? But I would say that is a function of the crisis, because the crisis, in these past few years has been intense, but, at the same times, it also provides the opportunity for CSOs or people to self-organize. (Tujan Interview[76]).

[76] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the

The CPDE representatives recognize being part of the CPDE as an achievement, coming with its opportunities to push forward their agenda, as discussed below, although the shift in governance from the WP-EFF to the GPDEC came with its pros and cons.

The GPEDC is a 'rare bird' (Tujan Interview[77]) for the space and level of participation allowed to civil society actors, especially when compared with other inter-governmental bodies, as the United Nations, where civil society is usually allocated a secondary and separate space. In this sense, the GPEDC represents the final step of CSOs' fight for inclusion at the negotiating table along with governments and other development actors (Tujan Interview[78]).

On the other hand, the transition from the WP-EFF to the GPEDC also had some adverse effect for civil society actors, as noted by the Coordination Committee member Luca De Fraia, from Action Aid International:

> If you look to how the working party system was operating and the way GPEDC now is operating, […] I must come to the conclusion that we have lost something, because the Working party […] was creating lots of opportunities for interaction, […] strands of interaction between practitioners from different constituencies. But GPEDC is now basically based […] on what the Steering committee is doing and the Steering committee is coming together every six, four, eight, six months. So the GPEDC by now is not the kind of space for discussion we had with the Working party […]. So, and, because of the situation CPDE and other constituencies, not as big as the big donors, but we definitely play a role, but we find it hard to find, to have the right entry points to the process. (De Fraia Interview[79]).

So, the GPEDC establishment marked an improvement in the quality of civil society actors' participation in terms of accessing the governance system at the decision-making level, but at the same time, the functioning of the Steering Committee limits the frequency of

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realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[77] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[78] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th May and 6th of June 2016.

[79] Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General at ActionAid Italy. Interview held via Skype on the 22nd of April 2016.

interaction with other constituencies. This aspect affects the chances of CPDE to act strategically by building alliances with other constituencies around convergence points, and cuts down on the range of channels available to civil society to express their view on development effectiveness issues.

Moreover, the shift towards the GPDEC has led to a change in language. The multi-stakeholder approach supplanted the development cooperation, where the notion of stakeholders replaced that of development actors. At the base of this change, is the idea that development outcomes are the result of a complex social and economic process, resulting from the simultaneous interaction of a multitude of factors. 'A holistic approach to stakeholder participation is vital to allow the different stakeholders to meaningfully participate in the decision-making process by balancing their interests, needs and concerns, thus achieving a more just built environment' (Martinez and Olander 2015: 58). However, the term stakeholder has been borrowed from the business sphere, indicating any actors who have an interest in a business.

This meant that the GPEDC, as discussed in Chapter 3 and 5, opened the door to a series of new actors, significantly increasing the number of entities involved in the decision-making process on development effectiveness issues. On this point, Urantsooj Gombusoren, CPDE member and chairperson at Centre for Human Rights and Development, argued that in the renewed context of the GPEDC, it is more difficult for civil society actors to affirm their voice. They feel diluted within the multiplicity of new actors, while in the WP-EFF it was easier for CSOs to make themselves heard and, therefore, make an impact (Gombusoren Interview[80]).

In contrast, Antonio Tujan observed how the adoption of a multi-stakeholder partnership language unified the status of different actors and entities involved. While CSOs have been officially recognized a status of development actors by virtue of the fundamental role they play in development, other actors may not be as relevant, e.g. foundations, but after Busan, they would all be indistinctly labelled as stakeholders. In particular, Tujan states:

> CSO act as independent actors in their own right […] but when it came to Busan, they now created this notion of multi-stakeholders, where you now have a conflation of what is stakeholders, and so besides CSOs you now have local governments, which is not really a stakeholder, because they are governments; you have the foundations, fine, but how important are the foundations […]? And then the CSOs. The foundations, their role is not

[80] Urantsooj Gombusoren, CPDE member and chairperson at Centre for Human Rights and Development. Interview held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

> defined, unlike the constitutional role of CSOs as development actors in their own. What about private sector? […] the role of the private sector is much-much lower of the role of the CSOs. […] The CSOs have a special role in terms of ensuring accountability, and so the CSOs are in GPEDC because they are not simply a development actor who also bring in billions of dollars. They have forgotten that the notion, the original notion, by which CSOs are important […] when you say that they are development actors in their own right is not so much the money, because they are development actors with a special role of ensuring accountability, that's the role of CPDE. (Tujan Interview[81]).

Another constraint to civil society action within the GPEDC emerged in the early phase of its formation. Prior to its launch, the lack of a civil society co-chair was matter of complaint. As seen in Chapter 5, non-executive actors have been asking for the adoption of a non-executive co-chair to balance the power of governments. Previous to the hypothesis of a fourth non-executive co-chair, CSOs pushed for having a civil society only co-chair. Given the official status gained and for being essential actors to promote accountability, 'who also bring in billions of dollars' (Tujan Interview[82]) as donors, CSOs felt the need to have a fourth co-chair. This would effectively exert an influence at the ultimate level of decision making, directed by governmental actors only. The refusal of the proposal of a CSO co-chair led CSOs to leave in protest the meeting previous to the launch of the GPEDC. The refusal was perceived as a betrayal of the inclusiveness principle, which should be at the heart of the new global partnership. Antonio Tujan commented this event as follows:

> We had demanded that there should be a CSOs co-chair. But they could not accept that, for the simple reason that Governments, essentially, are afraid of CSOs, because the CSOs can really […] bring down governments […]. And that's why there is […] mistrust of the power of CSOs. And so they would only accept that there is a CSOs co-chair if the co-chairship is not CSOs, meaning it's a non-state actors' co-chair, which rotates between the CSOs, the local governments, the private sector etc., and there you have defeated the notion of a co-chair, of a CSO co-chair.

On the other hand, the refusal of a CSO co-chair is reflecting a concern with the increased influence gained by civil society as development actors. Then, moving away from the idea of installing a CSO co-chair towards establishing a non-executive co-chair, also points out how in the context of a multi-stakeholders partnership, CSOs and other actors

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[81] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[82] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

needed to negotiate for a plurality of interests in order to achieve at least some of their goals, meaning that 'every step of the way you don't get everything'. (Tujan Interview[83]).

Then, being members of a multi-stakeholders partnership constitutes a double-edged sword: it gives the CPDE the possibility to build alliances with other like-minded constituencies, and consequently, increasing its negotiation power in advancing their asks. At the same time, it requires the CPDE to negotiate with all the actors and compromise, having to lower the bar when it comes to bring on their agenda. Similarly, having gained a position within the GPEDC is definitely a positive achievement, giving CSOs access to an important international arena. In terms of opportunities, this implies to advocate for their vision and acquire visibility. However within the governance framework CSOs are not represented at the highest level of decision-making, which weakens their capacity to successfully affirm their agenda.

The discussion of the GPEDC and of the CPDE as participatory spaces calls attention to the stakeholders' different power status and the progressive building of networks, which reflect the evolving development landscape. The interplay of the stakeholders will shape the action and aims of the GPEDC, which in future may fluidly move between the reinforcement of the neoliberal dominant bloc and the appropriation of new alternative possibilities for action and influence (Cornwall 2002). Dynamism is actually a distinctive feature of spaces for participation. Focusing on the establishment of relationships amongst stakeholders constitutes a key analytical lens for research. This emphasis however cannot be regarded an act of social topology, as pointed out by Bourdieu (1989). The GPEDC is instead to be exclusively read in terms of the different positions that the actors and objects assume within its framework and in relation to others.

This implies going beyond the visible forms of power to unveil its hidden forms, through which powerful actors try to defend their status and interests by controlling the political agenda and the access to the decision-making process (Gaventa 2006). Therefore, the lack of an executive co-chair may be seen as an attempt to restrain the action of the CPDE to access the highest level of decision making, including setting the content of the development effectiveness agenda. For example, powerful donors have been repeatedly trying to dismiss the unfinished business agenda, weakening the commitments undertaken since the

[83] Antonio Tujan, first CPDE co-chair, director of IBON International and founder of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO effectiveness. Interview held on the 28th of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

Paris declaration onwards, which were actually supposed to guide their action in this field. Putting aside an internationally agreed set of commitments and standards, reveals the lack of intention to reform their action and to protect vested interests. It essentially constitutes a manifest attempt to arbitrarily select the issues, being be put on the table. In this regard, the CPDE has been the actor, who, amongst all the constituencies, has been fighting most to keep the unfinished agenda on the table, often supported by some development countries governments.

Mindful of this warning, the research intends to go beyond a purely relational conception of space and to investigate the deep implications attached to schemes of relations. Looking beyond the mere interaction means considering those underlying forces that constantly intervene in the determination of spaces for participation and the articulation of relationships within them. The work of Lefebvre is important to understand space as an active element in the determination of a specific political and socio-economic system, i.e. space taking an 'operational or instrumental [role], as knowledge and action' (1991: 11), rather than being considered a neutral element.

Looking at the GPEDC from this spatial perspective, it is important to consider it as a unique system, living on the combination of dialectical forces that act within (Gottdiener 1993). Thus a meaningful understanding of the GPEDC in relation to the CPDE, must analyse spaces of participation not only in terms of institutional channels for action, but rather as an alive organism, which grows according to its different projects taken on board. Thus, it is important to look at the GPEDC, identifying the mechanisms of production or reproduction of social relations and the structures of power entrenched in it, and to read them in a dialectical dialogue with other forces, that may work as internal antagonistic voices, just as the CPDE.

In this sense, the use of the conceptual model of space by Lefebvre, as introduced in Chapter 1, is appropriate to get a critical understanding of the GPEDC. In particular, it is useful, trying to simultaneously catch its nature of physical milieu, where *savoirs,* i.e., the dominant forms of knowledge are produced, and within which actors negotiate and build their identity and their *connaissances*, i.e., the forms of knowledge created by living bodies out of the institutional framework. In fact, as a development cooperation governance institution, the GPEDC embodies and reproduces the dominant conception of development, which guides and informs the partaking development actors. In particular, a neoliberal perspective of development is affirmed within the GPEDC structures and through its agents. Under this dome of a crystallized doctrine, a substrate of different identities is constantly in action, moulding their different *connaissances* in accordance with their experiences. The interaction amongst the stakeholders and between them creates the conditions for the elaboration of new original forms of knowledge, which at the same time can be characterized by elements of

alterity and of complementarity in relation to the dominant view. As specified above, the dualism of *connaissances* and *savoirs* must not be intended as absolute. On the contrary, it is the concomitance of these dimensions that is important to perceive the nature of the GPEDC as a political space.

In this context, the CPDE represents a moment in the process of creation of new *connaissances*, containing the seed of alternative visions. The CPDE's specific experience, action and perspective differ and partly reject the GPEDC mainstream vision and the CPDE works to affirm its vision against the neoliberal background. However, the CPDE developed in relation to the given mainstream system and it still moves and evolves within it, therefore theorizing its position within the GPEDC as one of total opposition would not be realistic. Then, reflecting on the complexity of the GPEDC as a political space contributes to a better understanding of the CPDE's nature as well, being equally complex and multifaceted. Approaching the CPDE bearing in mind this complexity is necessary in order to fairly assess its action within the GPDCE, with the aim of positioning the CPDE on a theoretical continuum ranging from co-option to internal resistance. The tension discussed between co-option and resistance, or between hegemonic or counter-hegemonic action must be then assumed as a theoretical simplification. A deep understanding of the CPDE's action requires instead to meld mindful of a range of blended positions, which result from ongoing interactions between a plurality of actors and projects, within a vivid, evolving governance body.

7.2 The CPDE Position in Relation to the GPEDC Arena and Development Vision

About the position of the CPDE in relation to the GPEDC, the CPDE policy and advocacy coordinator argued that 'it was born as the civil society counterpart to the GPEDC' (Bena Interview[84]). The perspective given by the CPDE policy and advocacy coordinator evinces the nature of the political position of the CSOs partnership within the new effective development cooperation governance body. The Nairobi Declaration explicitly acknowledges the opportunities made available by participating in the GPEDC, but at the same time states

[84] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

the CPDE critical position towards certain aspects of the Busan Partnership (CPDE 2012: 5-7). In particular, the sixth paragraph of the Nairobi Declaration declares:

> 'We are concerned that the GPEDC envisages the private sector and growth as the driver of development. The Busan Partnership makes only token reference to human rights as the basis of development, and its treatment of women's rights, environmental sustainability and the decent work agenda is weak and instrumental.' (CPDE 2012: 6).

The CPDE opposition to the model of development cooperation adopted by the GPEDC - based on economic growth and on fostering the role of the private sector - was stated for the first time in Nairobi in 2012 at the time of the platform creation and was firmly reaffirmed four years later. Once again in Nairobi, on the second day of the GPEDC Second High Level Forum, the CSOs delegates gathered for the Nairobi Civil Society Forum and condemned the adoption at global level of one single model of development, which equals the development to growth. In the CPDE's vision, that model of development failed to address poverty and will continue to do so, promoting a governance that ensures profits to wealthy actors, but does not ensure the protection of human rights and social justice for billions of people[85].

In its founding document, i.e., the 2012 Nairobi Declaration for Development Effectiveness, the CPDE advocates for a human rights-based approach (HRBA) in development states, which is believed to be especially relevant nowadays:

> To shift the framework of development away from a narrow focus on economic growth towards a more holistic appreciation of the multiple (political, social, cultural, etc.) and interrelated dimensions of human development – where development is understood as the process whereby people are able to fulfil their full potential through realizing their human rights. (CPDE 2018: 8).

In the 2018 report "Policy Research on the Implementation of a Human Rights-Based Approach in Development Partnerships", the CPDE outlined major gaps in employing an HRBA in global development. The current phase of neoliberal globalization has often led to set controversial development goals, so that 'the more neoliberal policies dominate development strategies, the more governments downplay or even deny their human rights obligations […] in favour of commercial or profit-oriented provision of goods and services by the private sector' (CPDE 2018: 9). The CPDE's report called attention to national governments' responsibility in creating a regulatory framework that assures access to

[85] Notes on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and the 1st of December 2016.

essential services to all citizens, regardless of their ability to pay for them. Moreover, it warned about the fact that, in a globalized world, the responsibility for ensuring human rights lays not only with governments, but also with influential international actors, such as international financial institutions and transnational corporations, whose decisions heavily affect national economies, as pointed out by different developing countries. In fact, single states are not able to exert influence and control over the action of such powerful international actors, therefore a HRBA should target national domestic policies and, at the same time, international trade and investment agreements and development partnerships (CPDE 2018: 9).

With regards to the vast GPEDC political agenda, the most controversial themes, on which the CPDE vision sharply diverges from the one advocated by the GPEDC, are the role of the private sector, the protection of human rights, gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability, which are those themes being dear to civil society (Bena Interview[86], Owen Interview[87]). At large, CPDE distances itself from the neoliberal mainstream dominating the GPDEC, largely based on the celebration of market-driven economic growth as the core of development processes and believing in the private sector as a key actor for poverty reduction. In fact, as noted by Bharier (interview), while comprising very different political positions within itself, a big slice of the CPDE members embraces a more radical development agenda, often rooted in a neo-Marxist vision of society. The latter being more popular amongst Southern CSOs, while Northern CSOs tend to be closer to neoliberal views (Bharier Interview[88]). Sharp on this point was the declaration of the CPDE policy co-chair, who argued: 'If we espouse a neoliberal development agenda, we betray our mandate as civil society to fight oppression and violation of peoples' rights.' (Lauron Interview[89]).

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[86] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[87] Thomas Owen, Interview held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[88] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on the 3rd of April 2017.

[89] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on 23rd May 2016, during the realization of a non –participant observation

The special role of the private sector in development represents a hot topic on the CPDE agenda and a cardinal issue to counter the dominant neoliberal view within the GPEDC. Donors traditionally supported the building up and strengthening of the private sector in developing countries, but the discourse has more recently evolved towards being a partner of the private sector. The growing influence of the private sector in development cooperation goes beyond the realization of public-private partnerships (PPPs) for the provision of public assets and goods. Indeed, this growing influence has resulted into a greater involvement of the private sector in finding solutions to development problems, designing plans and projects and implementing them (CPDE 2013*b*).

In a background paper on private sector engagement in development, the CPDE (2013*b*) discussed how the increase of the private sector's influence concurred with the spread of the financial crisis in many major donor countries, including almost all the members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). The implementation of austerity measures in donor countries meant a reduction in aid budgets. This had to be counterbalanced by alternative mechanisms for financing and finding solutions centred on the contribution of the private sector. From then on, the private sector has been gradually given more space in national and international policy debates and donors have been trying to fully engage it in the field of development cooperation. In this context, the Busan Forum finally offered official international recognition to the private sector as development actor in its own right. The Busan Forum was held a year after the meeting of the G20, the latter having ended with the adoption of the Seoul Development Consensus for a Shared Growth, described by Reality of Aid (member of the CPDE) as 'essentially an updated version of the "Washington Consensus" with a sprinkle of equity' (Reality of Aid 2011: line 7). Moreover, the G20 itself had been organized one year after the realization of the "B20", a space created for business actors coming from the G20. Thus the Busan Forum was pervaded by a new global neoliberal spirit, so that the acclamation of the private sector as the new development actor would be able to tackle poverty through the creation of wealth, income and jobs (GPEDC 2013: §32), (CPDE 2013*b*; Reality of Aid 2011).

The GPEDC is a direct emanation of the global neoliberal project having the private sector action at the heart of its mission, which civil society fiercely opposes. In the document

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period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between 11th May and 6th June 2016.

'CSOs Key Asks[90]', which constitutes a clarion call for those CSOs that want to change development cooperation, the CPDE identifies one out of the six key asks as the need to make the private sector work in line with effective development cooperation principles (CPDE n.d.*d*). In the same background paper on private sector engagement in development, the CPDE clarified its position about the private sector role. The CPDE recognises that the private sector is necessary to achieve economic and social development, but warns against potential detrimental aspects shown by projects that not follow the effective development cooperation principles.

First, donors have often promoted their own interests through the realization of PPPs. If not aligned with the country's development priorities this may negatively affect the members of the community, in particular in fragile states with a weak governance system. In this case, the damage caused may be of a different nature, from human rights violations, to environmental degradation, corruption and destruction of the local entrepreneurial and manufacturing sectors, amongst others (CPDE 2013*b*; Nelson 2011). Second, multilateral and bilateral donors have often failed to assess the impact of private sector based projects on poverty reduction, analysing only success stories (which however disregard the quality of the jobs created, the existence of decent work conditions, the respect for human rights etc.). Third, partnerships with the private sector do not usually take into consideration the development effectiveness principles, in particular the country ownership. Therefore, with regards to creating development partnerships with the private sector, the CPDE calls for the elaboration of monitoring and evaluating systems. Such mechanisms are to ensure the respect of accountability and transparency, along with the compliance with the existing international regulatory frameworks (CPDE 2013*b*).

Since its creation, the CPDE's battle for the affirmation of a HRBA in development has been mainly pursued within the neoliberal framework of the GPEDC, playing the role of its civil society counterpart, as stated by the CPDE advocacy coordinator (Bena interview[91]). The action of the CPDE within the GPEDC has been articulated through different channels and in different ways, which are spelled out in documentation produced by the CPDE on the ongoing programme 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Program' (CPDE 2016*a*). According to that documentation, the CPDE participates in the GPEDC's life through

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[90] See Appendix IV

[91] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interview held on 21st March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and 21st of March 2016.

the following channels: the Steering Committee, which is the most relevant process, the Ministerial-level meetings, the work strands and the Building Blocks. These are different entry points through which the GPEDC Advocacy and Policy Group, directed by the CPDE Coordination Committee, access and influence the political life of the GPEDC.

The Steering Committee is the main body for political decision-making and leadership within the GPEDC, therefore it is here that the CPDE seeks to maximise its action. The CPDE managed in 2015 to obtain two seats in the Steering Committee, the second being reserved to the Trade Unions representatives, which are members of the CPDE and whose distinct seat was judged necessary to counter the presence of the private sector. By having two seats, the CPDE increased its capacity to shape the political choices of the GPEDC (CPDE 2016*a*). The CPDE takes part to the GPEDC Steering Committee meetings, usually held twice a year, and to its work strands, namely: Inclusive Development, Private Sector, Domestic Resource Mobilization, and Knowledge Sharing.

The CPDE also engages with the GPEDC Ministerial-level meetings, to be regularly held in the span of 18-24 months. These meetings constitute the main GPEDC occasion for political debate amongst its stakeholders. Thus the CPDE Coordination Committee and the Global Council align its meetings schedule to the Ministerial-Level meetings' calendar, with the aim of articulating a CSOs shared position on the main development issues addressed at this level.

Finally, the CPDE participates in the GPEDC Building Blocks established in Busan, later renamed Global Partnership Initiatives (GPIs). The latter are voluntary initiatives that development stakeholders choose to work on, with the aim of advancing the application of the effectiveness principles and respecting the Busan commitments (GPEDC n.d.*b*). In addition to the main occasions for participation briefly presented, the CPDE representatives commit to be present in other ancillary events (CPDE 2016*a*).

The activity of the CPDE within the GPEDC is essentially based on policy advocacy and monitoring. During the 10th CPDE Coordination Committee held in The Hague[92], the CPDE delegates thoroughly discussed and approved the revision of the advocacy strategic plan for the forthcoming period 2017-2020. The CPDE mission approved to promote development effectiveness and accountability in all areas of work, through active engagement within the GPEDC and through the constant improvement of CSOs' own effectiveness,

[92] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, in The Hague on 20th -22nd June 2016 and on the HLM2 held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and the 1st of December 2016.

addressing exclusion and oppression (especially of women and marginalized groups). This is expected to be tackled by changing those structures of power that perpetuate injustice, by protecting the achievements made in Paris and Accra and by further fostering the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda[93]. The advocacy strategy for the period 2017-2020 addresses 5 focal areas: CSOs enabling environment; private sector accountability, CSO development effectiveness, CSO enabling environment, South-South Cooperation and countries in situation of conflict and fragility.

The narrative proposal of the Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Program for the three-years period from July 2013 to June 2016, stressed the importance of policy advocacy engagement being supported by 'sound research and in depth study' (CPDE 2013*b*). Research activity is deemed as a core action within the CPDE. CSOs published quite a substantial number of materials, especially policy research studies, papers, sector and country reports, and recommendations. The publications are usually based on data collected at the national to global level, but sometimes reviews are published referring to existing literature only (CPDE n.d.*d*; CPDE 2013*b*). The publication of research-based information serves the objective of strengthening the CPDE policy advocacy potential within the GPEDC arena in two ways. On the one hand, it helps to clarify and define CSOs' position on specific issues and at the same time, ensures that their policy analysis is well reasoned. On the other hand, the CPDE research activity is directed outside, towards the other GPEDC members. The CPDE members established processes of knowledge sharing, making their research available to the GPEDC members in the form of recommendations and policy research. The expected result is to diffuse the CPDE views on development and development cooperation issues and therefore, gain support amongst other development stakeholders (CPDE 2013*b*).

In fact, sharing and spreading CSOs positions can positively contribute to the achievement of CPDE goals by opening up new channels of communication amongst actors and therefore, creating the conditions for new potential alliances and coalitions with other GPEDC stakeholders. Building alliances around common views is an important strategic move for the CPDE, which may substantially increase the impact of its action within the GPEDC. On this point, the CPDE policy and advocacy coordinator explained how the CPDE is already working to create stable alliances within the GPEDC:

> For example, civil society is coordinating an informal working group along with other non-executive representatives seating at the Steering Committee, as parliamentarians, local authorities and the same Trade Union. In short, in the last few months there has been

[93] Notes and slides on the CPDE Coordination Committee Meeting held in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016.

a strategies sharing, which is not binding but which is helpful to build a critical mass. (Bena interview[94]).

This is thought to be a crucial strategic step for the CPDE to move forwards its political agenda in a context characterized by a large number of stakeholders with different power status. In fact, gathering together different stakeholders around a shared vision or goal increases the capacity for influence of those who participate in an alliance, and this by building a specific form of power, named as 'power with' as described by VeneKlasen and Miller (2002: 55). 'Power with' is the building of collective strength, which originates from bridging different identities and interests, resulting in the amplification of the individual strengths for goal achievement. This capacity of building *ad hoc* alliances with other stakeholders must be considered a crucial condition for the CPDE to achieve its goals in the GPEDC context, where each actor is allocated one vote.

On the question of building alliances, Pearce and Vela (2005) suggested that a condition for civil society to bring about its agenda relies building 'effective horizontal alliances'. That is, building strategies in different participation spaces and linking them up. On this point, the last CPDE strategic plan, approved for the three year period 2017-2020, agreed to broaden the scope of its action to other relevant fora, targeting the UN Forum on Finance for Development, the UN Development Cooperation Forum and the OECD Task Teams, amongst other[95] . The CPDE is actively working on the strategical broadening of its activities outside the GPEDC and this may enhance their possibilities for action, eventually leading to a strengthening of CSOs position in the near future. In particular, the scope of its action will be fundamental for the success of its agenda, as spaces for participation live in relationship with other political arenas and hereby act at different levels (Gaventa 2006). Therefore, the CPDE's coordinated participation within different policy arenas may also lead to an improvement of its transformative potential.

From a global perspective, the great majority of interviewed CPDE coordination committee members expressed a clear satisfaction for entering the GPEDC as development stakeholders, considering it an effective opportunity to bring in civil society's voice.

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[94] Farida Bena, CPDE Policy and Advocacy Coordinator. Interviewee held on the 21st of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between 20th and 21st of March 2016.

[95] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016 and on the HLM2 held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and the 1st of December 2016.

However, the interviewees are aware of their secondary status as civil society actors within the GPEDC, nonetheless of being granted an equal status. The ambivalent feelings of seating at the GPEDC table, is well expressed by one CPDE representative who argued:

> It's a challenge because […] the global partnership it's a place where we do have a seat at the table, where we can discuss issues that are important to us and where we can technically push some political document forward, then move our agenda forward. But it is within a structure that we are struggling for relevance and identity […] we want to have much more real influence over decision making. (Owen interview[96]).

Another interviewee further stressed the constant pushing to be made by civil society actors for being included at the GPEDC negotiating table in various occasions, pointing out that 'it's never given to us!' (Sanchez Interview[97]). In fact, while the CPDE has been assured a seat in the Steering Committee, its participation in other GPEDC side events or meetings must be achieved by CSOs representatives. This shows how being officially recognized the right to participate in a space does not automatically equate to being able to take part at every level and at any occasion. In fact, it often happens in partnerships that former outsider or marginalized members continue to be approached in the same way, showing that 'prevailing attitudes […] are not magicked away by the use of a participator technique or two' (Cornwall 2002: 7). Similarly, the CPDE actors are aware of the fact, despite carrying in the seed for change, that new institutional spaces are never completely free from previous structures of social relations. On the contrary, they tend to be more or less consciously reproduced (Bourdieu 1977, Cornwall 2002, Lefebvre 1991). This situation implies that different civil society actors still have to put more efforts in than other development actors in order to have their voices heard.

Moreover, the CPDE members are aware that their inclusion at GPEDC negotiating table simply implied to legitimate the adoption of unpopular measures. This requires civil society to be in a continuous state of alert, in order to assure knowing what goes on during the discussion of a specific issue and to quickly identify what could be its inferred implications. In the words of the policy co-chair:

> We should not relax with what we have achieved […] because there is always that danger that if you are in that space you can just be used to legitimise a process that is anti-people,

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[96] Thomas Owen, Interview held on the 20th of March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels between the 20th and21st of March 2016.

[97] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized via Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

> anti-development, and governments can always claim "oh civil society was there!". […]That's why civil society always has to have that radar on! Always watching what is going on, what is not being said, what could be the implications. Because in many, all of the talks around multi-stakeholder partnership there is always that danger of co-optation of civil society, you're the rubber stamp that will give legitimacy to illegitimate outcomes, so we always have to be on guard!' (Lauron Interview[98]).

Thus, acting within the GPEDC as CSOs is not an easy task. The CPDE often assumes a position of internal opposition within the GPEDC mainstream, which it advocates from a status, despite formal agreements, that is still minor, when compared to traditional development stakeholders and other powerful actors.

It is remarkable however, although being aware of the differences existing amongst the various GPEDC stakeholders, the CPDE representatives yet perceive themselves as one of the most effective stakeholders within the GPEDC. This common self- perception is reflected in the words of one of the new CPDE co-chairs elected in Nairobi in 2016. Vitalice Meja, from Reality of Aid Africa claims:

We are one of the strongest stakeholders! In fact governments, including the co-chairs, they have recognized that civil society is the most organized and probably the biggest hitter-group in terms of advancing its interest. (Meja interview[99]).

The conditions that allow the diffusion of this feeling amongst the CPDE members are better understandable, when directly observed in a case of CPDE's intense engagement within the GPEDC, as verified in occasion of the Global Partnership Second High Level Meeting in December 2016, discussed below.

7.3 Surprise, Surprise: the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting

The Second High Level Meeting of the GPEDC (HLM2) was held in Nairobi between the 28th of November and 1st of December 2016 and serving in this section as an illustrative example to discuss how CPDE acts within and in relation to the GPEDC.

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[98] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines between the 11th of May and 6th June of 2016.

[99] Vitalice Meja, CPDE policy chair and Executive Director of Reality of Aid Africa, interview held on Skype on the 4th of March 2017.

The HLM2 was realized in an important moment for the international community of development cooperation, occurring one year after the launch of the SDGs and the related Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development (AAAA). The HLM2 took concomitantly place with the release of the second GPEDC monitoring round. The first two days of the HLM2 Agenda were organized to give to different stakeholders the chance to meet and discuss about relevant development issues before the starting of the High-Level Ministerial Segment held between the 30th of November and 1st of December. The main objective of the HLM2 was "aligning with the global priorities", thus the debate focused on the need to work for the achievement of the SDGs and on how to support and link up with the 2030 Agenda (GPEDC n.d.*e*).

In order to assess the CPDE's capacity of pursuing the transformative potential implied in the GPEDC, this research project included participation at the HLM2 as an observer, organized through the mediation of the CPDE. Part of the considerations formulated are based on the participation at the HLM2 and the previous Coordination Committee meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016 and on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016 in The Hague, respectively.

The two coordination meetings mentioned above were in part dedicated to the articulation of a coherent CSO position during the HLM2. A major concern emerging from those meetings was the renewal of the GPEDC mandate, which could involve the possibility of downplaying its mandate, turning it into a space for mutual learning and knowledge exchange only. This option was supported by many calls and strongly advocated by the GPEDC co-chair representing the providers group, along with several other donors. This perspective highly concerned the CPDE members, believing that denying them a core accountability function, would alter the nature of the GPEDC, making it just another knowledge hub. As discussed above, this would represent a serious setback for the progress of the development effectiveness agenda and would put a serious constraint on the CPDE capacity to shape the GPEDC agenda. In the case that this modification of the mandate would be approved, even the possibility of exiting the GPEDC was discussed, strongly questioning the rationale for staying in such a scenario[100]. Another critical issue emerged during the preparation of the HLM2 was the harsh attack on CSOs role as development actors, supported

[100] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th and 21st of March 2016, in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016 and on the HLM2 held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and on the 1st of December 2016.

by several recipient governments - Egypt standing out among those for their fervour of its position - most of them being new to the process of effective development cooperation.

CSOs representatives arrived in Nairobi knowing that they would have to fight for their position at the HLM2, and this tense atmosphere was still present during the civil society forum, a side event organized by the CPDE, held on the 29th of November on the "universal effective development cooperation, towards a people agenda". On that occasion Julia Sanchez from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation reported to the audience the status of the ongoing negotiations of the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD). The positive achievements for civil society were limited to having maintained their focus on leaving no one behind and managing again to put the role of civil society as independent development actor on the negotiating table. In fact, several recipient countries, Egypt first, were reluctant to recognize any role of civil society in managing development cooperation projects and refused the idea to be accountable to CSOs. The negative aspects of the NOD drafts related to the lack of concrete commitments regarding the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda, they downplayed the GPEDC mandate and displayed a lack of clarity with respect to defining clear processes for the aid effectiveness agenda. Finally, the most alarming issue was seen, in the excessive emphasis put on the role of the private sector and the lack of definition on how it would contribute to enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation, and how it would be held accountable for its intervention. On this point, the former CPDE co-chair Justin Kilcullen stated:

> The early drafts had been very disappointing, with language on human rights and civil society very weak and aspirational. This was in contrast to language around the role of the private sector which was being seen as a license to plunder at will. Even Development Assistance was being redefined as leverage to encourage private investment. The idea of ODA as an instrument to tackle poverty had disappeared.(Kilcullen 2017).

Julia Sanchez, who would be later appointed as the new CPDE co-chair, proceeded with the illustration of the top ten priorities, which were elaborated by the CSOs negotiation team. Amongst those priorities, three were identified as top priorities, marking the red lines for CPDE participation at the HLM2, meaning that a failure in achieving those priorities would result in the CPDE exit from the negotiations. The red lines identified were the following: (i) reaffirm the commitments made since Paris and support an enabling environment for CSOs, (ii) ensure private sector accountability and its alignment with the

Busan principles and international agreements, and last, (iii) maintain the accountability function of the GPEDC[101].

In the following days, civil society representatives and the negotiation team met in the early morning, discussing the evolution of the negotiations. Further, they defined their positions on the base of the news provided by the negotiation team. The advancement in terms of achieving civil society top priorities was not satisfactory, and hence the discussions pointed towards leaving the negotiations[102]. In addition, on the last day of the HLM2 civil society representatives organized a stunt to show their disappointment for the NOD drafts presented so far, shouting out loud their call for accountability, commitments, transparency and inclusiveness.

To this point, after all the negatives experiences made at the HLM2, the CPDE had no exceptions for a positive outcome. As on the last day at lunchtime the final document was released though, it left the CPDE delegates in positive astonishment: the CPDE key asks[103] were all met. The surprise and satisfaction of the CPDE members was vividly expressed by the same Justin Kilcullen:

> We were thoroughly surprised. It was difficult to believe that just four days previously, at the CPDE board meeting, we were having a contentious discussion as to what would be the appropriate timing for a walk out from the negotiations. Of the four possible outcomes we had discussed the one symbolised by a bottle of champagne, that we would get all our key asks met, was quickly dismissed. Now we wondered why we hadn't brought a bottle with us just in case (Kilcullen 2017).

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[101] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings held in Brussels on the 20th of and 21st of March 2016, and in The Hague on the 20th to 22nd of June 2016, and on the HLM2 held in Nairobi on the 28th of November 2016 and the 1st of December 2016.

[102] Notes and participation in CPDE representatives informal meeting during the HLM2

[103] The CPDE tasks were discussed at the Civil Society Forum held in Nairobi on the 29th of December 2016 and they were resumed as follows: Reaffirm the commitments made since Paris and Accra; support the creation of a CSOs enabling environment, through the creation of legal and regulatory frameworks at national level; ensure private sector accountability, and that its action is consistent with the development effectiveness principles and international development agreement; maintain the global accountability function of the GPEDC; binding the commitments made with respect to the development effectiveness agenda to specific targets and concrete deadlines; protecting the integrity of the effective development cooperation agenda, in particular of its monitoring framework; add a fourth non-executive co-chair to the GPEDC leadership. The first four of these priorities have been identified and combined to form the so called red lines, which are the top priorities mentioned in the text. A more detailed discussion of the priorities is contained in the document "The CSOs' Asks for a Stronger Global Partnership", circulated by the CPDE secretariat amongst its members along with the other documents related to the HLM2. The latter is available on the website: < https://www.csopartnership.org/single-post/2018/08/23/CSO-Key-Asks-for-a-Transformative-Agenda > [14/03/20].

CSOs achievements at the HLM2 were several. Amongst the most relevant was the reaffirmation of the so called 'unfinished business', that some traditional donors would have liked to dismiss. Furthermore, the NOD pledged to 'develop time-bound action plans in relation to these commitments' (GPEDC 2016*b*: 10; Tomlinson and Bena 2017: 3). A further major achievement was the confirmation of the monitoring framework being relevant for GPEDC's success, described in the NOD as a 'unique instrument for mutual accountability' (GPEDC 2016*b*: 1). With regards to the promotion of an enabling environment for civil society, CPDE delegates asked for the inclusion of the language already contained in the Accra and Busan documents, without negotiating for a new wording. This proposal was adopted and civil society also obtained a commitment 'to reverse the trend of shrinking of civic space wherever it is taking place' (GPEDC 2016*b*: 6). Finally, the Trade Unions were coping with negotiating the terms for the private sector engagement in the development effectiveness agenda, and managed to assert the need for the private sector to work 'in accordance with the International Labour Organization labour standards, United Nations Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises' (GPEDC 2016*b*: 21). Beyond the top priorities, a major unexpected achievement was that civil society's call for the establishment of a fourth non-executive co-chair was eventually accepted. The importance attributed to this achievement is related to the fact, that it is a 'rare opportunity for stakeholders other than governments to shape the development co-operation agenda from a position of leadership' and 'a clear sign that the time has come to bring the principles of inclusiveness at the top of the alliance too' (Tomlinson and Bena 2017: 4).

From a global perspective, the action of the CPDE within the GPEDC in occasion of the Nairobi HLM2 was unexpectedly successful in pushing forward its agenda. Against this background, it is necessary to analyse the factors that permitted such a positive outcome for civil society given the adverse premises.

The first positive factor is the capacity of the CPDE to speak with one voice, a feature that has been praised by all the coordination committee members interviewed as the main strength of the CPDE. Governments and other stakeholders took part in HLM2 expressing their single position, each putting forward its own interests and vision, while the CPDE coordinated a vast set of voices and identities, which summed up into a strong voice. So, the various governments' positions remained divided and fragmented, too weak to confront the united voices of CSOs. The future co-chair Julia Sanchez commented with enthusiasm:

> We had in Nairobi, I can't remember, 400 people there? And everybody is on the same page, we're all part of the same team […]. So we are a large number of people in negotiating settings […] and we are working hard to be on the same page, and pushing on

> the same issues, and clear about what our priorities are and what we want on the table. So it's not surprising in a way that we are able to use that space so well, because we are very well organized and […] there is a lot of us pushing in the same direction from all countries, from all regions, it's a pretty powerful the way we organized forces.' (Sanchez Interview[104]).

In addition, CPDE presented a strong coherent vision, which was the fruit of months of work. Civil society sector was the most prepared sector, the two negotiators were supported by a negotiation team of eight members, and drafts about the CSOs key asks were punctually passed around the constituencies for improvement (Kilcullen 2017). The capacity to put in relation and combine the great variety of issues, structuring the development effectiveness agenda into a logical and consistent framework, also constituted an important competitive advantage during the NOD negotiations. Given this premise, 'the negotiations chair, Ambassador Kamau from Kenya […] saw the wisdom of the civil society approach and supported it' (Kilcullen 2017).

The CPDE strategic building of alliances also contributed to the positive outcome. For example, the CPDE collaborated with other non-executive stakeholders to advance the request for a fourth co-chair, which was finally taken into consideration. Further, the CPDE representatives built a relationship of respect and mutual trust with Ambassador Kamau, a supportive factor during the negotiation process. Amongst those who backed CPDE at the HLM, there were also several Northern countries governments, especially Sweden.

Finally, the CPDE capacity for affirming its voice benefited from the lack of engagement of the private sector and other actors. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that CPDE may still be regarded as a minor actor within the GPEDC, especially when compared to other powerful actors as the private sector, it is still able to succeed in important battles, thanks to a profound level of engagement and a strategic use of its resources.

7.4 Conclusions

This chapter addressed the research questions related to the existence of constraints and opportunities made available by the participation of CPDE members within the GPEDC. Further, the establishment of power relationships amongst the GPEDC stakeholders is

[104] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized via Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

discussed. From a global perspective, the GPEDC constitutes a new institutional space that still represents a unique occasion in this field for inclusiveness and participation for development stakeholders as CSOs, especially when compared to other international governance bodies (Simonds 2014). However, in order to successfully realize its agenda, the CPDE has to make its voice stand out within a great variety of other actors and deal with the persisting asymmetries of power status amongst the different GPEDC stakeholders. In particular, CSOs seem still to be regarded as secondary actors, especially when compared with more powerful actors, as the traditional and emerging donors, and the private sector amongst others. Against this background, the CPDE has to learn how to act strategically to overcome the constraints experienced to achieve its aims.

The CPDE's ability to speak with one voice, build strategic alliances and elaborate a coherent position seem to positively contribute to the CPDE chance to successfully push for the realization of its agenda within the context of the GPEDC. The CPDE stands in the GPEDC as a single actor, gathering together the plurality of voices of various civil society actors working in the development cooperation. As argued, this gives CPDE a strategic advantage over the other actors, which due to lack of coordination are not able to produce the same impact on the ongoing discussions. Their position may lose strength amongst a collection of fragmented views, while the CPDE gains from its unity (Sanchez Interview[105], Lauron Interview[106]).

Another major factor explaining the CPDE success is the strategic choice to build a coherent position. The CPDE connects a multiplicity of themes that makes up the wide political agenda of development effectiveness and brings them all within a cohesive analytical framework. The capacity to build a coherent vision, is directly depending on the CPDE's high level of organization and preparation. The CPDE definitely seems to be the most prepared and engaged actor amongst the GPEDC constituencies (Sanchez Interview[107], Lauron Interview).

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[105] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized via Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

[106] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on the 23rd of May 2016, during the realization of a non-participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between the 11th of May and 6th of June 2016.

[107] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized via Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

The CPDE provides a space for CSOs participation that aim at changing mainstream development cooperation. As advocated by Gaventa (2007), given the simultaneous occurrence of two conditions, that is, (i) the existence of a new institutional space for participation on one hand, and on the other hand, (ii) the existence of highly organized social groups ready to act within it, increased the possibilities for changes substantially. According to this perspective, the co-existence and interaction of the GPEDC and the CPDE provides a fertile ground for the reaping of benefits by those groups of actors, who previously actually have been marginalized by the global neoliberal system.

A satisfactory understanding of new institutional spaces for participation requires considering them in relation to the broader socio-economic and political context in which they are immersed. The GPEDC must be considered in the global order from which it originated. The international development cooperation system has become more fragmented as a consequence of the proliferation of new development actors, so that, 'while some constitute key nodes of power within the system, none is hegemonic and the global development governance has no apex' (Mawdsley 2012). This situation of decentralized and multipolar power at the global level may represent an advantage for those traditionally less powerful actors, like civil society, which could find it easier to affirm itself and occupy a portion of space within this fragmented system. CSOs managed to gain their seat amongst global development stakeholders, from where they strategically organize their activity to expand, deepen their influence and push forward their agenda. The HLM2 case made clear that CPDE strategic action can be successful in an environment characterized by fragmented voices and a low degree of engagement of certain powerful actors. This kind of political context has significantly contributed to the CPDE success at the HLM2, where donor governments were divided, and emerging donors and the private sector were barely present.

However, it is important to remember that political and ideological divisions that may split development actors, e.g. traditional and emerging donors, have often dissolved, when it comes to support and foster the implementation of a global neoliberal system. As noted by Eyben and Savage (2013) the usual geographies of power fused in Busan, and a significant distinction could be marked between civil society and the rest of the development actors. The supremacy of the 'updated version of the "Washington Consensus" with a sprinkle of equity' (Kwakkenbos and Reilly-King 2012: line 4) remained essentially unaltered since Busan, and still the stronger opposition seems to come from civil society actors, which openly call for a deep reform of the development cooperation agenda inspired by principles of social justice and respect of human rights. The dominance of the neoliberal discourse at the global level, sustained by a wide coalition of powerful development actors, seems to leave no space for the realization of meaningful change in the global development agenda.

In this scenario, the achievements of civil society actors may be interpreted as a sort of concession made by more powerful actors to safeguard the legitimacy of the system and tame rebellious actors. Then, it would be reasonable to think that the only achievements possible out of the neoliberal order would be those that do not have the potential to seriously alter the established dynamics of power.

In the outlined context, delivering a truly transformative agenda constitutes an extremely hard task for CSOs gathered in the CPDE. Nevertheless, power relationships in spaces for participation are never static but are rather in continuous evolution, and each emerging occasion for change must be maximized by civil society to bring about transformation in this field. A strong strategic action by civil society may progressively orient the change of the established neoliberal system in a desirable direction for civil society. Therefore, in a deeply hierarchical socio-economic and political system, any change requires a thoroughly thought out plan for strategic action. CSOs should continue their action of sharing policy advocacy, research and positions, with the aim of gradually increasing the CPDE net of alliances, both within and outside the GPEDC, in different global policy arenas. The best strategic move for CPDE would be building what was defined as 'power with', that is increasing the collective strength of development actors united in alliances based on shared views and goals (VeneKlasen and Miller 2002: 55).

Building alliances, as many and as wide as possible, and boosting processes of knowledge sharing at all levels - from local, to national, to regional, to global - , as the CPDE is already doing, may be an effective way to slowly build a widespread critical mass. In fact, when essential groups reach a consistent and organized base, and in addition, manage to coordinate their actions with other groups, then the conditions are supportive to successfully engage in political arenas and oppose powerful actors, and civil society actors may achieve important goals. Creating a critical front on shared issues is fundamental, since the powerful actors standing together under the banner of global neoliberalism are sometimes disintegrated by the pursuit of peculiar interests, as happened at the HLM2.

However, CSOs should seek to advance their mission through measured steps, given the concern of other development stakeholders that see in the growth of civil society's influence a threat to their interests. The fear is that if other stakeholders feel uncomfortable with the increasing civil society actors, they could leave the arena, depriving it of legitimacy and political relevance (Kilchullen 2017). If different actors abandon the GPEDC arena, this would come to an abrupt closure, and CSOs would lose the rare possibility of participating on an equal basis in a global multi-stakeholder policy arena. This lesson must have been learnt by CSOs, since the realization of the HLM2. In fact, after its conclusion, CPDE delegates were asked by some government representatives to lower the bar, because their aggressive

attitude made the private sector representatives feel intimidated, raising concerns about the civil society power within the GPEDC (Sanchez Interview[108]). Therefore, the revised strategy has been that CSOs progress on their path towards the affirmation of a truly transformative development agenda through constant small steps. As suggested by Justin Kilcullen, former CPDE co-chair: 'If Civil Society is seen to become too influential it will weaken the interest of many governments in the GPEDC process. We must look for win-win scenarios that keep every partner engaged' (Kilcullen 2017).

In conclusion, bringing about an alternative development agenda is doubtlessly a very ambitious mission within the prevailingly neoliberal agenda of the GPEDC, and to be successful, CSOs need to elaborate and put in place, in agreement with other development stakeholders, a gradual and measured strategy to affirm their vision of development effectiveness at the international level. This way, CSOs do not abandon the project of subverting the order imposed by global neoliberalism, but rather proceed with a silent gathering of collectively built acts of resistance, opening up a viable path towards a successful action right at the heart of the GPEDC.

These considerations on the action of CPDE recall a neo-Gramscian model of conceiving civil society as a potential vector for social change and a possible counter-hegemonic actor within the dominant neoliberal capitalist system, a theoretical framework that will be discussed in depth in the conclusions.

[108] Julia Sanchez, President-CEO of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) and CPDE finance co-chair, interview realized via Skype on the 4th of April 2017.

Chapter 8
Conclusion: the rise of a counter-hegemonic force in international development cooperation

Introduction

The research project has investigated the transition phase which is being experienced in the field of development cooperation from the 'aid effectiveness paradigm' towards the 'development effectiveness paradigm'. The turning point was marked by the Busan High Level Forum in 2011, which built the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), a new governance architecture for maximising the impact of the aid system.

In particular, the Busan High Level Forum and the process of reform of the aid architecture inaugurated by it constituted the background for the elaboration of the research project. A further focus on the ongoing evolution of civil society actors' action in this field has led to research into the recently born CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), which was created to allow the CSO to actively engage with the GPEDC. Thus, the theoretical framework has been set up within the large body of literature on civil society's role in political theory and international relations, especially within the context of development cooperation. A broad-based distinction was made between the mainstream literature and the critical literature on the role of civil society (Mercer 2002; Howell and Pearce 2001). The categories identify two potential opposite functions of civil society in relation to the established order in international relations: as a vehicle for the maintenance and reproduction of the status quo, or alternatively, as a challenger of the current neoliberal world order and a vehicle for social transformation. The mainstream and the critical literature constitute the reservoirs from which research has drawn most, especially for employing a neo-Gramscian analytical framework, around which the main research question was built. The research question aims at defining the extent to which the CPDE is acting as a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic force with the GPEDC, and in what ways its actions respond to this function.

The first section of this concluding chapter assesses the CPDE's potential to act as either a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic force against the main features identified in the relevant literature as distinguishing those forces. The analysis of the predisposition of the CPDE to act in a hegemonic way was discussed in relation to three features: (i) apolitical

character of its action; (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors; and (iii) a high degree of internal professionalisation. Following this, the potential of the CPDE to act as a counter-hegemonic force was assessed against four essential features, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung*; (ii) the ability to bridge different interests and voices; (iii) to intertwine local, national and global levels of action; and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure. The following discussion weighs the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic potential of the CPDE, and concludes with an overall assessment of CPDE action as predominantly counter-hegemonic.

The second section analyses how the CPDE works to bring about its counter-hegemonic strategy. It is discussed how the promotion of research, capacity building, and practices of knowledge sharing by the CPDE are aimed towards the creation of a common consciousness amongst civil society actors, showing the partnership's educational potential. This educational function is oriented to give civil society actors the competencies to actively engage with the action of political institutions. It is noted that the CPDE aims at influencing both cultural and institutional dimensions of social and political life and openly challenges the dominant neoliberal paradigm in this field, appropriately reflecting the action of a 'Post-Modern Prince' (Gill 2000) within the GPEDC.

While the first two sections directly respond to the main research questions, identifying the CPDE as an actual hegemonic or counter-hegemonic actor in the field of development cooperation, the third section discusses potential scenarios for the future evolution of CPDE action within a globally hegemonic neoliberal order.

Finally, the last section locates the research presented within the academic debate and introduces the related potentials, shortfalls and suggestions for further investigation.

8.1 Recognizing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic features

From the literature analysed, the coexistence of three essential features that characterise the action of organisations acting, more or less intentionally, in support of the neoliberal hegemonic system were identified: (i) apolitical character of its action; (ii) the utilisation of funding coming from hegemonic actors; and (iii) high degree of internal professionalisation (Kamat 2004; Miraftab 1997). Similarly, four essential features have been distinguished to attribute a potentially counter-hegemonic nature to new forms of political agency, namely: (i) the purpose to challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalisation and to promote an alternative *weltanschauung* (Cox 1983, Cox 1999; Carrol 200; McNally 2009;

Schwarzmantel 2009*a;* Schwarzmantel 2009*b*); (ii) the ability to bridge different interests (Boggs 1986: 57; Cox 1999, Schwarzmantel 2009*a;* McNally 2009; Gill 2000; Gill 2012; VeneKlasen and Miller 2002); (iii) to intertwine local, national, and global levels of action (Cox 1999; Gramsci 1977:69; McNally 2009); and (iv) a well-grounded organisational structure (Cox 1999; McNally 2009). The action of the CPDE has been assessed against those features, with the aim of understanding where the CPDE is located on an abstract scale ranging from two opposite positions: hegemonic or counter-hegemonic force.

Starting from the set of features which distinguish hegemonic actors, the apolitical character of an organisation's action is thought to be a strong indicator of its potential to assume a hegemonic character. As discussed in chapter 1, the establishment of a neoliberal hegemonic system led to a change in the activities carried out by CSOs, especially NGOs. These organisations have progressively distanced themselves from an attitude that was critical towards existing power relationships in the development cooperation field, becoming more closely aligned with traditional development actors and institutions, which, in turn, embraced their criticism and succeeded in slowly assimilating civil society actors into the dominant hegemonic system. This process of co-option has brought CSOs to smooth their political profile, so that their activities have mostly lost their political relevance and become instead more technical interventions which do not require the status quo to be questioned. As shown in chapter 5, both of the CPDE programmes described — 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Effectiveness' and 'Enhancing Civil Society's Role in Development Partnerships Post-2015' — have a strong 'focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation' (CPDE n.d.*e*: §3). The CPDE is constantly working with people to encourage them to actively engage and participate in policy arenas at all levels. The aim is to enable them to be in control and able to influence and shape the policy making processes that directly affect their everyday lives. In this sense, the action of the CPDE is designed to increase civil society opportunities for policy engagement, and to create a truly genuine enabling environment for civil society to participate. At the same time, it aims to be aware of the concrete risk of co-option implied in participating in decision-making processes.

CPDE members are clearly aware of the existing mechanisms of co-option, especially in acting as watchdogs in policy-making processes, where their participation might serve to 'give legitimacy to illegitimate outcomes' (Lauron Interview). The CPDE is also aware that another restriction that might prevent civil society actors to fully express their potential as political actors is that 'either they do not have the sufficient capacity to do research, advocacy and campaign or they lack a common platform from which to coordinate' (CPDE n.d.*f*: 5). Hence, a pillar of CPDE action is building strategic capacity development on monitoring development cooperation, research, advocacy, and mobilisation. This is organised through different initiatives, such as seminars and training sessions, advocacy toolkits, and

mechanisms for knowledge management and information sharing. The action of the CPDE is to be framed within a set approach to development which has the affirmation of individuals and collecting human rights at its core, whilst refusing the centrality attributed to economic growth and the private sector by the hegemonic neoliberal paradigm. The CPDE approach to development is also led by the pursuit of global justice to address the structural causes of poverty and inequality, with the aim of leaving no one behind. In this sense, the action of the CPDE shows a clear anti-neoliberal profile, and works to build a political consciousness amongst people so that they can acquire a voice and own those political process that regulate their life. Therefore, the action of the CPDE deeply differs from that of many hegemonic civil society organisations, who are mainly concerned with service delivery and acritical watchdog functions. On the contrary, the CPDE questions and challenges the hegemonic order through its action and its members' participation in policy arenas at different levels. Thus, its political profile does not align with that of co-opted civil society organisations.

However, in assessing CPDE action, it is important to consider the question of funding. With regard to the current programmes, the 'Civil Society Continuing Campaign for Development Effectiveness' was supported by 5 donors — the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), IrishAid, the Austrian Development Agency, Finland's Foreign Ministry, and Global Action Canada. Meanwhile, the 'Enhancing Civil Society Role Development Partnerships Post-2015' programme is supported by the European Commission and co-financed by SIDA (20%). The sources of funding point to a certain degree of closeness between the CPDE and traditional donors, a condition that is highly relevant for determining CSOs co-option within the hegemonic system (Banks and Hulme 2015; Cox 1999). Also, the members of the Coordination Committee have expressed a clear concern about the lack of resources and the consequential restricted capacity of the CPDE to bring about its projects (Owen Interview; Tujan Interview). Mr. Tujan, first CPDE co-chair and director of IBON International, stated that the question of funding is indeed influential in shaping CPDE activities. As outlined in chapter 5, Mr. Tujan stated that the equilibrium between programmatic and political dimensions of CPDE actions ultimately depend on funding. In his view, the political dimension, which is intended to be the ability to articulate internal strategies with the aim of effectively engaging in different political arenas, is losing ground to the programmatic dimension. The pre-eminence of the programmatic dimension results from the members' commitment to not leaving donors to dominate existing spaces of action. This implies the necessity for civil society actors to follow donors' movements, in order to effectively play in favour of civil society needs within the given spaces and opportunities (Tujan Interview). CPDE action is therefore affected by donors' decisions about which programmes to fund, since energies and resources from the CPDE are diverted towards these at the detriment of other activities that would further boost their political profile.

Acting in accordance with donors' movements is understood as a strategic decision by CPDE members to prevent donors from being given a blank cheque in development programmes, and to make sure that civil society voices are heard and their needs met. So, while it is important to consider the effects of the quest for funding on shaping CPDE activity, their participation in donors programmes also represent a calculated step within a larger counter-hegemonic strategy, rather than a mere moment of co-option. Overall, the question of funding seems to affect and slow the capacity of the CPDE to push forward its vision. However, its political profile is not lessened, as the political component and aim of its actions to tackle the structural roots of poverty and inequality have not been called into question, nor downplayed to make room for the realisation of more technical activities.

The process of depoliticisation concerning the action of CSOs has been accompanied by professionalisation of their staff, a requirement resulting from the diffusion of a managerial approach to development issues within the dominant neoliberal paradigm. The progressive professionalisation has often implied a disconnection from grassroots (Kamat 2004), in the sense that 'today in order to serve the poor they [NGOs] advocate professionalisation and working *for* the poor as consultants instead of working *with* the poor as de-professionalised activists' (Miraftab 1997:362). In the CPDE, the accumulation of knowledge is assumed to be an ongoing process collectively shared and shaped, rather than a given set of skills. While it is true that policy advocacy experts from Northern CSOs have contributed comparatively more to policy work in international arenas than grassroots representatives of the CPDE, it is also worthwhile to consider that the CPDE fervently works towards circulating knowledge through all levels, from global to local and through different geographical realities, for it to be appropriated by people and made meaningful to their lives. The policies that are discussed in international arenas are the result of data collected on the ground with grassroots representatives worldwide. This means that the positions advocated are imbued with local knowledge and experiences, and not a set of technical tools independently designed by experts for a range of beneficiaries. In the CPDE, people and their knowledge are highly valued. Bringing these into the official development cooperation system is thought to be essential for the creation of authentic and meaningful partnerships.

The knowledge that is built through cooperative mechanisms circulates all over the CPDE without following hierarchical paths from global to local, or North to South. In fact, as discussed earlier, the processes of knowledge sharing and building within the CPDE are aimed at strengthening the voices of people and their capacity to speak up for themselves within political arenas. The ultimate objective is in fact to empower civil society actors, and for them to acquire skills that might help in successfully engaging and participating in policy making at all levels. Therefore, the distinction between a highly-skilled staff and the beneficiaries that is observable in hegemonic CSOs does not constitute a case for the CPDE, where this

distinction actually dissolves. In fact, CSO representatives are not considered as beneficiaries, but are instead active players, at the same time contributing and benefiting from the circulation of knowledge. Also, the difference in nature between the knowledge and skills embodied by the professional staff of hegemonic NGOs and civil society representatives of the CPDE might be interpreted through the dualism introduced by Lefebvre (1991) of *savoirs* and *connaissances*. As discussed in chapter 6, *savoirs* represented the crystalized knowledge embedded in the hegemonic system, supported and reproduced by actors that live in that system. On the other side, *connaissances* are those forms of knowledge created by living bodies outside of institutional frameworks, based on their life experiences. According to this distinction, professional staffs of hegemonic NGOs are constantly reproducing mainstream knowledge, acting as conveyors of the status quo. In contrast, representatives of the CPDE appear to work more as agents of alternative sources of knowledge, which is generated through the synthesis of a plurality of identities and experiences, and constitutes an underlying dimension that ferments under the dominant structures.

Therefore, assessing the CPDE against features that characterise hegemonic CSOs in the field of development cooperation has shown that the CPDE does not entirely reflect these. However, there are some convergent elements. Especially relevant is the main reliance on donors funding, which has an impact in shaping the activities of the platform, and makes the CPDE more susceptible to donors' decisions. However, the CPDE has proven to not be completely subject to donors' decisions, as it has indeed maintained a critical attitude, using its participation in donors' programmes in a strategic way. In fact, it has been argued that its participation is generally designed to limit donors' room for manoeuvre, in an attempt to bring in the visions and voices of CSOs.

The discussion of the hegemonic features presented must be balanced by considering whether and how the CPDE is embodying counter-hegemonic features. Chief amongst these features is the purpose to challenge the hegemonic neoliberal project and create an alternative narrative, for constituting a premise for the emergence of counter-hegemonic forces. In this regard, the CPDE openly opposes the neoliberal vision that permeates the aid system and rejects its core principles as drivers of development, as stated within the Nairobi Declaration (CPDE 2012). On this point, the communication of the CPDE policy co-chair, is eloquent: 'If we espouse a neoliberal development agenda, we betray our mandate as civil society to fight oppression and violation of peoples' rights' (Lauron Interview). Also, as noted by a member of the CPDE Independent Accountability Committee, a significant portion of CPDE members support a neo-Marxist perspective — especially among Southern CSOs — (Bharier

Interview[109]), which aims at overthrowing the neoliberal establishment. The counter-hegemonic aims of the CPDE clearly emerged during the civil society global forum, held in preparation to the 2nd High Level Meeting of the GPEDC (HLM2) in December 2016. On that occasion, civil society actors gathered together to refine their positions in relation to the HLM2 political agenda. Then, the inaugural speech vehemently asked, 'Who is developing who?', expressing a radical criticism towards the aid system, even questioning the legitimacy of its existence and of its intrinsic neoliberal narrative[110]. The critical spirit of the CPDE was brought into the negotiation of the HLM2 outcome document, where CSOs worked hard to oppose the celebration of private sector as a driver for development. The CPDE managed to include in the final outcome document the need for the private sector to align its action with the principles for an effective development cooperation, and to act in compliance with International Labour Organization labour standards, United Nations Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises (GPEDC 2016*b*: 21 §180).

Furthermore, in opposition to the mainstream perspective, the CPDE elaborated its own alternative vision of development and development cooperation, which is built upon human rights, social justice, and people empowerment, and calls for a reform of development partnerships based on solidarity, sovereignty and mutuality (BetterAid 2012; CPDE 2012). However, considering the CPDE position on development issues in pure opposition to the GPEDC mainstream would be simplistic. In fact, the CPDE is at the same time the natural civil society counterpart to the GPEDC as well as a member and founder of this institution. Therefore, while the CPDE harshly criticises some components of the GPEDC, it shares support for many other issues and principles, having participated itself in their formulations and affirmation. For example, over time, CSOs have advocated the orienting principles of the GPEDC, especially inclusiveness and accountability. Their inclusion in the GPEDC agenda reflects and meets CSOs vision of development, as proven by the strong defence of the GPEDC monitoring framework made by the CPDE in the 2016 HLM2. Similarly, the same concept of development effectiveness was brought into the GPEDC by CSOs, which they vindicate and argue for. Thus, in general, we must take into consideration that, despite contested crucial issues, convergence elements are not lacking. What is at stake in this context

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[109] Jake Bharier, Chair of the Independent Accountability Committee of CPDE, interview realized on Skype on 3rd April 2017.

[110] Notes on the HLM2, held in Nairobi on 28th November 2016 and 1st December 2016

is their subordination and adjustment to a prevailing neoliberal framework, which results from the dynamics of power pervading the GPEDC arena.

A second key feature of a successful counter-hegemonic force is the ability to bridge different interests and entities, where the *trait d'union* is the opposition to capital (Rustin 1988: 171), with current neoliberal ideology and to the architecture of global power (Boggs 1986: 57; Cox 1999, Schwarzmantel 2009a*;* McNally 2009; Gill 2000; Gill 2012). As stressed by Gill (2012) when referring to the emergence of new forms of global praxis, 'this set of radical potentials is developing in the plural, albeit unevenly and in a variety of contexts' (Gill 2012: 517). The CPDE is in fact made up of a variety of interests and voices that ensures broad representation, both in terms of sectoral and geographical affiliation. The capacity to unify so many voices worldwide which has been built up over time through a continuous process of dialogue realized at different levels, was felt by the majority of the Coordination Committee members interviewed to be the great strength of the CPDE.

On this point, the pluralistic nature of CPDE activity also refers to the different levels of its action: local, national, regional, and global. This reflects the third feature presented as characterising a counter-hegemonic force. The capacity to work simultaneously at different levels of action fits well with the Gramscian concept of internationalism, which, while assuming that 'capitalism is a world historical phenomenon' (Gramsci 1977: 69, cit. in McNally 2009: 60) and that the resistance to it must be elevated at the international level, maintains the national dimension as the essential site of struggle. Gramsci elaborated on the category of national-popular to sharpen his strategic vision, since the international effects of capitalism would combine with specific national features to create unique and specific situations to deal with. This intertwining of international and national struggles also serves to avoid the risk of creating an intellectual elite who are unable to connect with the popular base and with its demands and problems. Thus, the national dimension of struggle represented the necessary starting point to successfully articulate a global revolution (McNally 2009). The solid connection of the CPDE as a collective global actor with narrower realities — regional, national and also local — represents a further advantage in terms of counter-hegemonic potentials. This is especially true when compared with other forces judged to be counter-hegemonic, such as the Alter Globalization Movement, with its fierce cosmopolitan ideology and global political strategy (McNally 2009). Differing from this and other international organisations, the CPDE does not fail to focus and produce effects on narrower geographical units (Cox 1999; McNally 2009). Conversely, the national level is identified as the focal point of CPDE action and research. For example, the complex discussion about how to translate global principles or initiatives into national action constituted an important node in the Coordination Committee Meetings and related more or less directly to a significant part of the

debate held[111]. Another example of the importance given to national and local realities by the CPDE is the delivery of capacity building workshops and other training activities described in chapter 5. These are especially designed to fit the specific needs and peculiarities of the relevant social fabric to enable local people to effectively act to influence public policies in their specific context.

Finally, the CPDE is deemed to have a well-grounded organisational structure. In fact, the CPDE advocacy strategy results from long processes of consultation of all its constituencies, and is built through mechanisms of mediation and syntheses of the different needs and statements supported by the variety of actors on the base of their national experiences and national-based reports (Country level focal points). The process of consultation of constituencies of the CPDE and the flow of communication from grassroots to a global level and vice versa may be cumbersome due to the complex articulation of the CPDE and the great plurality of the constituencies involved. This was in fact pointed out as a fundamental organisational dimension to be improved to increase the impact of CPDE action (Gombusoren Interview[112]). The employment of technical language and the need for translation are also factors that make communication within the CPDE more laborious (Andela Interview[113], Guzman Interview[114]). However, they constitute organisational features which the CPDE is constantly working to improve on, being problems that are inherent to all organisations with complex bureaucratic structures. From a global perspective, despite the existence of organisational challenges yet to be overcome, international, national, and local dimensions within the CPDE seem to work synergistically and to mutually shape each other.

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[111] Notes on CPDE Coordination Committee Meetings, held in Bruxelles on 20th -21st March 2016, and in Den Haag on 20th -22nd June 2016.

[112] Urantsooj Gombusoren, CPDE member and chairperson at Centre for Human Rights and Development. Interview held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th -21st March 2016.

[113] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interviewee held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th - 21st March 2016.

[114] Pedro Guzman, Representative of People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty. Interview held on 21st June, during the non-participant observation period realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting, held in the Hague from 20th - 22nd June 2016.

The CPDE capacity and commitment to actively involve and reach its constituencies at any level suggests a third feature that can facilitate the unleashing of the CPDE counter-hegemonic potential: a well-grounded organisational structure. In chapter 5, the discussion of the interviews conducted with members has indicated that despite the reforms, the CPDE decision-making process and related bureaucracy is thought to be excessively resource- and time-consuming. However, the CPDE governance structure has shown to be effective enough to reach, connect with, and successfully coordinate over 4000 constituencies worldwide, as has been the case so far. In fact, the interviews have also revealed that most of the Coordination Committee members praise the fact that the CPDE is the most organized and prepared actor amongst the GPEDC members. The same impression was confirmed and reaffirmed at the HLM2. Thus, despite the ongoing calls for improvement, the bureaucratic apparatus of the CPDE has not seriously affected its degree of effectiveness as a political speaker within the GPEDC.

The current discussion has shown that elements of co-option are detectable in the CPDE's actions, but they do not seem to outweigh the counter-hegemonic features. A global consideration of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic features has led to an assessment which sees the counter-hegemonic features as prevailing. On this point, it must be acknowledged that resistance and co-option, and hegemony and counter-hegemony, coexist in reality, while their status of antinomy belongs to pure abstraction. Given a combination of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic features, what is important to define a counter-hegemonic force is to understand whether the political project of challenging the dominant system is left untouched at its core. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the right combination of degrees of co-option and resistance within the CPDE in order to understand whether it excessively increases its risk of co-option, or effectively serves to achieve its goals. The CPDE has maintained the intention to challenge the status quo at the very core of its action, thus confirming the overall assessment of its counter-hegemonic purpose and direction. The next section will explore the challenges that lie ahead for the CPDE in shaping its praxis for best advancing its vision.

8.2 Actions of counter-hegemonic forces

The features discussed above are presented in the neo-Gramscian literature as desirable for building an effective counter-hegemonic force. These features outline the organisational profile of a potential counter-hegemonic force, anchoring the identification of a counter-hegemonic attitude to a series of formal requirements. Meanwhile, 'the vexed question of whether and how counter-hegemonic politics might be defined in a more

proactive, visionary sense' (Carroll and Ratner 2002: 6) has not been addressed. In this sense, while principles may provide guidelines to inspire action, CSOs and other aspirant counter-hegemonic forces are left with the practical challenge of imagining a different economic, political and social system, and of finding the ways to build it up (Carroll 2006:54).

Based on the documentation produced by the CPDE and the interviews carried out, the research project has identified the main strategic actions and steps undertaken by the CPDE to reach its goals whilst moving in a counter-hegemonic direction. The CPDE has not only conceived an alternative manifesto of development and development cooperation which ideally subverts the mainstream vision, but it also actively works to make it the base of a shared vision which is capable of transcending particular groups' interests and inspiring the creation of a common consciousness amongst civil society actors (Cox 1983). This aim leads the CPDE to carry out an intense activity of research and publication, and to the organisation of capacity building initiatives such as seminars and workshops.

The literature which has been produced mainly employs primary data coming from local and national levels, and it is circulated through the various constituencies, from global to local and grassroots levels. The process of knowledge sharing does not conform to the traditional axis where knowledge transfer occurs from experts to civil society or from Northern to Southern actors. Knowledge sharing within the CPDE follows a more articulated and multidirectional process, where a big pool of expertise brings together local and context-specific knowledge, and more 'technical' knowledge, as in the case of policy advocacy. In this context, the shared perspective of an alternative order is embraced and appropriated by the various members, further enriched, and collectively shaped. Knowledge is diffused within the CPDE, and it does not follow a hierarchical organisation: learning processes are collectively experienced. By building and spreading the seeds of an alternative order, the CPDE comprises an alternative shared consciousness. In this respect, it is worth recalling the experience of Christine Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGO network for food security and rural development, who, as related in chapter 5, stated:

> I am working at ground level in my country so […] what I can say is that the CPDE has helped a lot to build capacity in different countries […]. We operated on civil society [for people] to be able to better understand their own role. Now, there is a political role of civil society coming up, and I think that CPDE has helped a lot […] to build this capacity and to strengthen civil society throughout. It is very important, and building this capacity to better understand the role of civil society as an actor [in its own right] […] has been a […]

> turning point in the […] way civil society sees its own role in specific countries (Andela Interview[115]).

Christine Andela's words describe the specific contribution of the CPDE to the formation of a collective consciousness and highlight its formative function. In doing so, the CPDE brings about a 'moral and intellectual reform', laying the foundations for a war of position (Gill 2012; Schwarzmantel 2015, Schwarzmantel 2009).

However, the praxis promoted by the CPDE does not only address the ideological and cultural dimensions but aims to gain influence within the political institutions. Therefore, the CPDE action reflects Gramsci's strategic indications, which require simultaneously fighting against hegemonic forces on two levels: ideological and institutional. The ideological fight occurs within civil society, whereas the institutional fight occurs within the state institutions (McNally 2009: 66). Translated into the current context, the institutional fight occurs within the GPEDC framework. The action of the CPDE evokes the figure of the Gramscian Modern Prince, whose role was to spread the idea of a new alternative world order and to inspire citizens to action (Schwarzmantel 2009). As discussed in the literature review, Gill (2000) suggested defining emerging counter-hegemonic forces as a 'post-Modern Prince' to stress the adaptation of the Gramscian notion to a renewed international scenario in the early twentieth century. Gill (2000; 2012) looked at the field of international relations and recognized the role of the Post-Modern Prince to the Alter Globalization Movement. The research project has argued that the CPDE plays an analogous role in the narrower field of development cooperation, especially within the framework of the GPEDC. In line with a neo-Gramscian thought, the research project shares the assumption of civil society as the site where the contemporary struggle against global capital takes place.

As previously mentioned, the CPDE acts within political institutions, dealing with international organisations and with states. It is concerned with providing its members, and people in general, with the necessary instruments to carry on their political struggles and fully exert their citizens' rights within institutions. Again, it is possible to establish a parallel between the strategy adopted by the CPDE and the approach described by Gramsci in relation to the institutions of representative democracy (Schwarzmantel 2009). In his view, democracy should eliminate the distance existing between rulers and ruled, based on the assumption that every citizen is able to govern and should be enabled to do so by society. Each citizen should

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[115] Cristina Andela, founder of the National Platform of Cameroonian CSOs and member of the NGOs Network for Food Security and Rural Development. Interviewee held on 20th March 2016, during the non-participant observation realized at the CPDE Coordination Committee meeting held in Brussels, between 20th - 21st March 2016.

be taught the technical skills necessary to govern, to complete the passage from a controlled individual to that of a citizen possessing rights (Schwarzmantel 2009). With its empowering programmes and workshops for the acquisition of a full political consciousness by civil society actors, the CPDE echoes the Gramscian assumption, and re-affirms its role as the promoter of a more radical form of democracy which revolves around greater and more meaningful participation of civil society within the life of the state.

Finally, the CPDE is continuously and intensively working to create alliances within and outside the realm of civil society. The fact that the CPDE has been successful in keeping together a great variety of interests which come from different sectors of civil society and different geographical backgrounds constitutes an exceptional result, and a key strategic step towards the rise of a counter-hegemonic force. The CPDE is managing to bring and keep together a plurality of groups marginalized by the neoliberal global capital, including women, indigenous people, and farmers, among others. This is the first step towards the successful creation of a new historic bloc. To reiterate, referring to the CPDE as a historic bloc represents an intellectual exercise, as the term was originally coined to describe hegemonic practices and ideology within the boundaries of the state. Regardless, this allows us to appreciate the capacity of the CPDE to create an alternative shared vision and a broad yet cohesive civil society front within the GPEDC. Moreover, the CPDE is actively working to enlarge its network of alliances outside of the GPEDC through attempts to turn occasional ad hoc collaborations into a more stable basis of support, thereby increasing its 'power within' (VeneKlasen and Miller 2002: 55).

In conclusion, the analysis of the strategy of the CPDE to promote its goals and vision resulted in a positive assessment of the CPDE's potential to successfully act as a counter-hegemonic force within the GPEDC.

8.3 Between a steady war of position and the shadow of co-option: potential future scenarios

The present discussion has shown that the CPDE is predominantly behaving as a counter-hegemonic force within the GPEDC, performing a long-run war of position within that framework. However, while the CPDE has clearly shown its willingness to pursue an alternative development agenda, the extent to which it has been successful in bringing it about has not always completely tilted the balance in favour of a counter-hegemonic plan. For instance, the case of the HLM2 was discussed in chapter 6 as an unexpected success for the CPDE, which had all its key asks met within the official outcome document. This was

certainly a positive achievement for the CPDE, showing its capacity to effectively defend and promote its perspective within the GPEDC. At the same time, the CPDE had to cede on some points, amongst which were the lack of any mention of 'democratic ownership', the new increased role of international finance, and the loss of focus on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality (Kilcullen 2017).

The experience at the HLM2, and especially the harsh backlash against civil society's role as an independent development actor, highlights the difficulties met by the CPDE in advancing its agenda, as well as in defending the status gained so far. Therefore, although the HLM2 represented a success from a global perspective, with all the CPDE key asks having been met, it was also marked by some losses and defeats. Drawing on this case serves as a reminder of the importance of understanding the overall assessment of the CPDE action as either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic as a contingent blending of both attitudes.

When considering the CPDE within the international political context, it is important to bear in mind that despite the different interests that sometimes split the GPEDC stakeholders, the same stakeholders have usually come together to support the existing neoliberal system. In this regard, what happened in Busan in 2011 stands out as a clear example: the classic geographies of power vanished, and a line of division ran between civil society and the rest of development actors (Heyben and Savage 2013). In this context, the potential neoliberal cartel may put a severe constraint on the fulfilment of the CPDE's potential for change. This observation could be an indicator that any gain made by civil society has the potential to be accepted within the GPEDC as long as it does not constitute a serious obstacle to the smooth maintenance of the status quo. Moreover, concessions made to civil society actors may also be a strategy for the GPEDC to increase its legitimacy in the face of the challenges posed to its relevance by a multipolar landscape.

In light of the considerations presented above, the risk of a deceitful co-option of the CPDE by the GPEDC appears more cogent. However, the CPDE members and its leadership seem to constantly stay alert to this possibility, as stated by the policy co-chair: 'there is always that danger of co-optation of civil society, you're the rubber stamp that will give legitimacy to illegitimate outcomes, so we always have to be on guard!'(Lauron Interview[116]).

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[116] Maria Theresa Nera Lauron, previous CPDE policy co-chair, actual Program Manager of IBON International's Climate Justice Program and member of the Asia Pacific Research Network, amongst other. Interview held on 23rd May 2016, during the realisation of a non–participant observation period at the CPDE Global Secretariat in Manila, in the Philippines, between 11th May and 6th June 2016.

Also, the CPDE is a synergetic union of different interests and therefore difficult to co-opt, given the collective control and solidarity mechanisms that this would trigger.

In synthesis, the CPDE has indeed shown a counter-hegemonic posture and has a considerable transformative potential, but the hegemonic bloc makes it arduous to bring about an alternative development agenda. The CPDE has so far successfully acted in a strategic way within the GPEDC and its achievements were sometimes unexpected. Both the CPDE and the GPEDC are still in relatively early stages, and it is reasonable to consider that a change in the pattern of their action may occur in the future. In particular, CPDE action might be reduced as a result of two opposite scenarios. On the one hand, the CPDE culture and praxis may be slowly absorbed by the GPEDC neoliberal mainstream, while on the other hand, an excessive advancement of CSOs' positions may concern other stakeholders, who may leave the partnership for their interests not to be hindered. This possibility was especially felt during the HLM2, when it was suggested that CSO members in a less aggressive way because their attitude was raising the concerns amongst the private sector actors, who felt uncomfortable with the CPDE requests. If the GPEDC lost stakeholders, especially the major ones, it would lose both legitimacy and relevance. This would result in the CPDE suffering the loss of the arena it was established to deal with (CPDE 2012).

The scenario of CPDE co-option seems less likely given the awareness of its members. However, a scenario where other stakeholders grow concerned about CPDE action and then lose their interest in the GPEDC has the potential to occur in the future. Therefore, the CPDE's progressive advancement through a war of position must be conducted through a collection of strategically measured steps, acting with perseverance to progressively undermine the established order without unleashing adverse reactions from more powerful development actors. This approach 'does not entail a renunciation of revolution, only a change in its strategy and form' (Forgacs 2000: 223), by opening a viable path for change right at the heart of the GPEDC. In this respect, while discussing the potential of the alter-globalization movement as a counter-hegemonic actor, McNally (2009:74-75) makes a point that applies to both the CPDE and other potential counterhegemonic forces more widely. In particular, he suggests the adoption of 'a good deal of Gramscian realism about the current relation of forces both at the national and international level in order to avoid setting unrealistic objectives', and reminds us that 'history teaches us that radical change frequently occurs when it is least expected, and it is inevitably those forces that have most consistently promoted and predicted it –and crucially prepared for it – that are best placed to fully exploit it'.

8.4 Researching the CPDE

The present research has investigated the most recent evolution of the aid effectiveness debate, which led to the shift towards the new 'development effectiveness paradigm' and to the launch of both the CPDE and the GPEDC. Despite great interest from the international community in 'the Great Aid Debate' at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the recent evolution towards the development effectiveness paradigm has not received the same level of attention. This may be the result of a decline in political interest in the aid effectiveness debate, confirmed by the fact that the GPEDC has been struggling to gain political relevance, as shown by the lack of ministerial representatives at the HLM2. As a result, the GPEDC as a new governance body in the field of development cooperation is still under-investigated within academia, while the CPDE has barely received any attention at all. Thus, this research was conducted to contribute to the literature about the latest evolutions within this domain, especially shedding light on the work of the CPDE.

The research resides within critical theories of the international relations discipline, especially within the paradigm of neo-Gramscian studies. Building upon a neo-Gramscian perspective, the research project addresses the question of agency, considered as 'the analysis of those forces and 'movements' which bring into being the alternative society sketched out by the theory in question' (Schwarzmantel 2009:79). Related to the idea of agency are two important questions: (i) the identification of the social forces that are in the best position to lay the foundations and realise an alternative world order; and (ii) the definition of pragmatic ways to bring about alternative societies. The research borrows the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony and counter-hegemony from the field of international relations, where neo-Gramscian approaches have recently flourished, and applies it within the field of international development cooperation. The research project assumes the existence of a global neoliberal hegemonic project which is deeply rooted in the narrower field of development cooperation, and which reflects and constantly reproduce the established global order. In this sense, the GPEDC is a direct emanation of the neoliberal global project.

Identifying spaces for alternative social forces to operate within is a crucial issue in critical international relations. This has been addressed within the present research by choosing the GPEDC as a case study, which embodies a recently created arena for potential counter-hegemonic forces to act within. In line with the resurgence of interest in civil society and social movements as counter-hegemonic actors, this research focused on the transformative potential advocated by civil society actors within the field of development cooperation.

Analysing the actions of the newest civil society actors at the highest level of global governance in this field allowed the identification of an effective force of resistance within

the neoliberal mainstream. In particular, the CPDE, in concertation with other development actors, is successfully building several collective moments of resistance right at the heart of the renewed governance system. This progressively creates the conditions for more substantial achievements towards the realisation of an alternative, anti-neoliberal, agenda for development.

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APPENDIX I

Interviews to the members of the CPDE Coordination Committee

I.I Interviews questions

1. What CSO do you represent? Would you like to introduce it to me?
2. How and when did you become a member of the CPDE? What is your role in it?
3. How would you describe your experience within the CPDE so far?
4. There has been a great deal of talk about the 4th Busan High Level Forum on Development Effectiveness and the official recognition of CSOs as independent development actors. According to your experience, what has changed and what has not changed for CSOs since then?
5. How would you describe the position of the CPDE within and in relation to the GPEDC?
6. Regarding the conceptualisation of development and development cooperation articulated by the GPEDC, to what extent does it reflect the specific CPDE vision on such issues? Are there any differences between CPDE and GPEDC perspectives? And if so, what are the key issues on which the respective perspectives differ?
7. The inclusion of the CPDE within the GPEDC was commonly felt as a positive achievement by CSOs. What are the key opportunities made available by participating in the GPEDC? What are the challenges?
8. In your opinion, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the CPDE?
9. Looking at the CPDE organizational functioning, is there any improvement that would you like to suggest?
10. The document 'CSOs key asks for a transformative Global Agenda' states that CSOs key asks challenge all development actors to deliver on a truly transformative development agenda. In which concrete ways does the CPDE intend to challenge other actors? Which further actions might be taken in this direction?

I.II Explored themes

The analysis of the interviews led to the identification of different codes, which were organised into two categories — challenges and potentials —, each composed of several themes and, possibly, sub-themes, as illustrated below:

Challenges:

1. Internal management:

   - agenda;

   - bureaucracy;

   - resources;

   - communication

2. Power:

   -North-South relationship;

   - Donors-CPDE relationship;

   - IBON-CPDE relationship

3. Representativeness

Strengths:

1. Unity
2. Learning platform
3. Expertise and literature production

APPENDIX II

CPDE Coordination Committee interviewees table

Name	Designation	Organization	Interview plan
Aurelien Atigdela	Africa Regional Representative	Réseaudes Plates-formes nationals d'ONG d'Afrique de l'Ouestet du Centre	n.a.
Christine Andela	Africa Regional Representative	COSADER	Bedford Hotel, Brussels, 22/03/16
Emele Duituturaga	Asia and the Pacific Regional Representative	Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO)	Bedford Hotel, Brussels, 21/03/16
Urantsooj Gombosuren	Asia and the Pacific Regional Representative	Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)	Bedford Hotel, Brussels, 20/03/16
Izabelle Toth	Europe Regional Representative	Cordaid	n.a.
Alberto Croce	Latin America & the Caribbean Regional Representative	Fundacion SES	n.a.
Ziad Abdel Samad	Middle East & North Africa Representative	Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)	Skype, 2/04/17.
Fraser Reilly-King	North America Regional Representative	Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC)	Bedford Hotel, Brussels, 20/03/16
Eva Ekelund	Faith-Based Organisations Sector Representative	ACT Alliance	n.a.

Name	Designation	Organization	Interview plan
Paola Simonetti	Labour Sector	International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	n.a.
Azra Sayeed	Agriculture & Rural Development Sector Representative	Roots for Equity	n.a.
Luca De Fraia	International CSOs Sector Representative	Action Aid International	Skype, 22/04/16
Nerea Craviotto	Women & Feminist Group Sector Representative	Coordinadora de la Mujer	n.a.
Beverly Longid	Indigenous Peoples Sector Representative	Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)	IPMSDL Offices, Manila, 2/06/16
Rey Asis	Youth Sector Representative	National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO) Zimbabwe	Skype, 15/01/17
Antonio Tujan Jr.	Ex-Officio/Fiscal Sponsor	IBON International	IBON offices, Manila, 1/06/16
Maria Theresa Nera- Lauron	co-chair	Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN)	IBON Offices, Manila,
Justin Kilcullen	co-chair	CONCORD	n.a.
Patricia Blankson Akakpo	co-chair	Network for Womens' Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT)	Mercure Hotel, Den Haag, 21/06/16
Jorge Balbis	co-chair	ALOP	n.a.

Name	Designation	Organization	Interview plan
Pedro Guzman	Latin America and Caribbean Representative	Coalición de los Pueblos por la Soberanía Alimentaria	Mercure Hotel, Den Haag, 22/06/16
Farida Bena	Policy and Advocacy Coordinator	International Rescue Committee	Bedford Hotel, Brussels, 21/03/16
Jake Bharier	Independent Accountability Committee	Mountain Rescue England and Wales	Skype, 3/04/17

Source: Author elaboration

APPENDIX III

The Istanbul Principles

Source: GPEDC Principles. [online] Available from: http://effectivecooperation.org/about/principles/

APPENDIX IV

CSO Key Asks for a Transformative Global Development Agenda

Source: CPDE Secretariat PowerPoint Presentation

APPENDIX V

Output from the thesis

8th-9th May 2018 | University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
Sheffield Institute for International Development Postgraduate Research Conference
Presenter: The CSO Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the new aid architecture: room for manoeuvre for counter-hegemonic civil society

29th November 2016 | Nairobi, Kenya
Civil Society Forum at the GPEDC Second High Level Meeting
Presentation of the research project

27th April 2016 | Coventry University, United Kingdom
Poster Symposium
Poster Presentation

20th-21st March 2016 | Brussels, Belgium
CPDE Coordination Committee Meeting
Presentation of the research project

17th- 20th November 2015 | Cotonou, Benin
Colloque International: La Fabrique de l'Action Publique dans les pays 'sous regime d'aide'
Presenter: The new role of civil society within the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (draft paper submitted)

11th- 13th November 2015 | University of Porto
From Decolonisation to Postcolonialism: a Global Approach
Presenter: The imperialism of anti-imperialism grand strategy in South-Sudan: an overview of the hegemonic role of civil society organizations (draft paper submitted)

16th October 2015 | University of Leeds
Conference for Interdisciplinary Approaches to Politics (CIAP) 2015
Presenter: The Imperialism of anti-imperialism grand strategy in South-Sudan: an overview of the hegemonic role of civil society organisations (draft paper submitted)

16th October 2015 | University of Leeds
POLIS PGR Conference
Organiser
Presenter: The CSO Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: a neo-Gramscian perspective

21st- 22nd November 2014 | University of Newcastle, United Kingdom
International Development Society Conference. 2015: Looking Back, Moving Forward
Attendant