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Jon Harald Sande Lie

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UGANDA FOCUS
Developmentality: indirect governance in the World Bank–Uganda partnership

Jon Harald Sande Lie*

Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, PO Box 8159, Dep 0033 Oslo, Norway

The instituted order of development is changing, creating new power mechanisms ordering the relationship between donor and recipient institutions. Donors' focus on partnership, participation and ownership has radically transformed the orchestration of aid. While the formal order of this new aid architecture aimed to alter inherently asymmetrical donor–recipient relations by installing the recipient side with greater freedom and responsibility, this article – drawing on an analysis of the World Bank's Poverty Reduction and Strategy Paper (PRSP) model and its partnership with Uganda – demonstrates how lopsided aid relations are being reproduced in profound ways. Analysed in terms of developmentality, the article shows how the donor aspires to make its policies those of the recipient as a means to govern at a distance, where promises of greater inclusion and freedom facilitate new governance mechanisms enabling the donor to retain control by framing the partnership and thus limiting the conditions under which the recipient exercises the freedom it has been granted.

Keywords: aid relations; developmentality; governmentality; partnership; World Bank; Uganda

International aid is constituted on the relationship between donor and recipient institutions. Despite being inherently asymmetrical, this relationship has over the past decade and a half increasingly come to pivot around the morally charged concepts of partnership, participation and ownership. This change, driven by donor and recipient institutions alike, has meant a transition from top-heavy, donor-driven conditionality approaches to more inclusive, bottom-up-oriented ones intending to put the recipient institution at the helm of the overall development process – from planning and implementation to reporting – instead of being chiefly managed by the donor institution itself. This new architecture of aid has thus meant that the donor has withdrawn from direct operational activities and running its own projects, to a more distanced role focused primarily on funding and monitoring the activities of its partner institution.[1] The rationale for

*Email: jon.lie@nupi.no

this change has been framed as both a moral one – ie an attempt to escape donors' policy imposition and trusteeship – as well as a means to increase aid effectiveness and efficiency through greater local ownership, contextualisation and commitment.

The new aid architecture and its formation of partnership represent, at least nominally, a seeming empowerment and emancipation of recipient institutions, with the intent to reverse the lopsided donor–recipient relationship. It involves investing the postcolonial state with agency,[2] thus transforming the aid-receiving government from a passive client to an active partner. As a corollary, this reversal also involves a parallel loss of donors' control over how their money is spent and for which purpose. Now, however, a decade and a half after bi- and multilateral development actors started to unroll this new form of partnership, its power effects are becoming conspicuous. The transition from conditionality to participatory approaches does not mean that the latter have replaced the former – rather there is a nexus between them. This is not only a result of the inertia of discursive change, challenges with centrally led dirigisme or the fact that culture eats strategy for breakfast. Notably we see how donor institutions, in response to having conveyed power in one way, seek to reassert it in others by applying more indirect means of governance, as opposed to direct rule as implied by the erstwhile top-heavy conditionality approaches. This form of tacit governance is made possible by, but also challenges, the new aid architecture's liberal tenets, and draws on the donor's ability to frame the partnership formation and thus the conditions under which the recipient exercises the freedom it has been granted.

There is much in the new aid architecture that signals a turn to this indirect form of power, it is not *a priori* given. Rather it draws attention to the relational aspect of power, meaning that deciding on power asymmetries becomes an empirical question drawing on the analysis of the particular partnership formations. Retaining power thus becomes contingent on the donor's ability to frame partnership, which also means framing – and indeed curtailing – the freedom granted the recipient. This inversion of power is neatly captured by a donor informant stating that 'ownership exists when they do what we want them to do but they do so voluntarily'.[3] I call this tacit and subtle mode of power 'developmentality'. Developmentality draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality.[4] But, where Foucault saw governmentality emerging as an *effect* of modern European state formation, developmentality draws on the particularities of a governmentality analysis within the development sector and on donor and recipient institutions' explicit *intent* to revamp inherently asymmetrical aid relations. The developmentality perspective, moreover, helps disengage this association with the state and its power, all the while retaining the key features to analyse similar governance dynamics and mechanisms within the development sector. This article is about the notion of developmentality,[5] drawing on a multi-sited ethnography of the World Bank–Uganda partnership.[6]

Developmentality seeks to grasp what characterises the exercise of power within international aid, and how the notion of partnership has altered aid relationships and affected the relationship between governing and the governed. As with the increasing neoliberalisation of society, the new aid architecture comes with a logic that requires aid recipients to be free, self-managing and self-enterprising actors.[7] Developmentality refers to a modality of power in which presumably subaltern aid recipients are deliberately inscribed a particular logic that renders their unconscious self-governance in accordance with the governor's, or donor's, mentality. Developmentality describes the emergence of new forms of governing and being governed that draw on various calculative technologies and mechanisms of subjection and subject-making. As with governmentality, developmentality refers to a particular art of governing concerned with 'the conduct of conduct',[8] which allows the ruler – or donor – to 'govern at a distance'.[9] Its logic is conditioned on individuals' – or aid recipients' – active freedom, thus making 'freedom a formula for rule',[10] since the freedom granted the aid recipients is restricted by the donor itself.

The developmentality perspective extends the critical anthropology-of-development perspective that sees the official development discourse as a form of governmentality regime.[11] Here, governmentality, and indeed developmentality, 'works *neither* through the extension of bureaucratic or military control to underdeveloped border regions…*nor* through the logic of repression and control implied with a western project of development…but instead through a form of "positive power that wins legitimacy and empowers action"'.[12] Developmentality is, as such, both a decentralised and productive power. It is productive in the sense that it does not operate over but through self-reflecting, conscious development actors, representing 'forms of action and relations of power that aim to guide and shape (rather than force, control or dominate) the action of others'.[13]

Contextualising developmentality

I first started to write about developmentality after my fieldwork among a group of agro-pastoral nomads in Ethiopia's northeastern Afar region in 2002, who were the beneficiaries of a small, participatory project funded by a Norwegian NGO and implemented by its Ethiopian counterparts.[14] Studying this project and its donor–recipient relationship, I initially set out to do an empirically oriented post-development discourse analysis, but soon realised its shortcomings in accounting for agency and practice, leading me to complement the analysis with an actor-oriented approach. This shift of analytical focus enabled not only an empirical and analytical comparison between the two levels. The two-pronged approach also demonstrated how these levels were interconnected, in effect nuancing the power usually ascribed the development discourse by post-development scholars.[15] It showed how actors at the receiving end took part in reproducing the discourse they were part of – not always as an act of subordination but sometimes as a wilful strategy of manipulation, brokerage or translation enabled by their knowledge of the donor discourse itself.[16] Rather than being colonised by the aid discourse,[17] the actor perspective demonstrated aid practitioners' reflexivity towards it. In this way the participatory rendering of the project was reproduced, though through non-participatory practices. For instance, the inclusion of a good governance component to the project came as a result of paying lip-service to the back-donor in order to secure further funding and not because it was a demand made by the beneficiaries. While funding was guaranteed, the power effect – which initially made me think in terms of developmentality – was that those on the receiving end had now become accountable to the donor for implementing the latter's policy, since it was now nominally 'owned' by the recipient.

Harrison's notion of 'post-conditionality',[18] which he employs to make sense of the dynamics of external agency involvement in African states, points to related mechanisms to developmentality. Post-conditionality refers to how some states, among them Uganda, 'embody a politics of donor intervention which cannot adequately be encapsulated by the general notion of conditionality'.[19] The term serves as a 'useful characterization of a set of significant developments within donor–state relations…and forms of donor intervention which are not merely based on the threat of sanction which is at the heart of the conditionality mechanism'.[20] As with developmentality, post-conditionality is contingent on the way in which aid recipients have internalised the donors' way of thinking and the extent to which there is a political environment conducive and receptive to donor policies. Post-conditionality thus signifies a move away from the direct coercive measures of conditionality, making this largely redundant, to a situation where donors apply their productive capacities to use funds to promote change – which 'requires more carrots than sticks'.[21]

There is one important distinction between developmentality and post-conditionality. Harrison posits post-conditionality as based on selectivity, meaning that donors (and the Bank in particular) choose to operate in those countries where there is already a conducive policy environment and where the coercive measures of conditionality are not needed. Post-conditionality is thus a denotation of client states where such a conducive environment exists. Developmentality includes the production of such conducive environments. The distinction, then, is that post-conditionality is dependent on that which is also *produced* by developmentality, ie docile counterparts, credible partners, a conducive policy environment and 'ownership' by rendering the donor's policies those of the recipient. As such, developmentality is a productive power contingent on influencing the actions of others who are then made responsible for governing and developing themselves.

The Bank's PRSP model: participation as governance

The ideas inherent to the new aid architecture have a solid footing in the NGO sector, where the notions of partnership, participation and ownership were already drawing on the idea of 'putting the last first' by the late 1970s.[22] It was not until the late 1990s that similar thinking would become commonplace and direct the practices of most bi- and multilateral actors, in particular with the World Bank's adoption of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) in 1999, and later with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness's outline of particular partnership principles committed to by most donor and recipient institutions.

The CDF marked a watershed by introducing the Poverty Reduction and Strategy Paper (PRSP) model as the Bank's preferred policy instrument,[23] thus replacing the castigated Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) so criticised for its paternalistic top-down approach and imposition of one-size-fits-all policies moulded around the prevailing ideologies of neoliberalism and privatisation.[24] In theory the PRSP would revamp the SAP, drawing on the assumption that 'ownership is essential. Countries must be in the driver's seat and set the course. They must determine the goals and the phasing, timing and sequencing of programs.'[25] The PRSP model thus called for a fundamentally new partnership formation in which the client state would be responsible for formulating its own, national development strategy, as formulated in the PRSP, whereas the Bank would retreat to a role primarily as funder. Instead of running its own projects, the Bank would give its support directly to the client government's budget, either as general budget support or as sector support, in order for the government to implement its own programmes. Hence, the PRSP model effectively institutionalises the ideas inherent in the new aid architecture within the Bank's realm. This would also have ramifications for other donors: since the PRSP is formally the government's own development strategy, all other development activities in the country, whether funded by domestic or external actors, should be complementary and sustain it, thus demonstrating the Bank's gatekeeping potential over international discourses of development.

The PRSP model enhances and depends on recipient participation for the Bank's client to devise and implement its own strategy, but 'where there is not adequate capacity in the government to do this, we must support and help them to establish, own, and implement the strategy'.[26] This means that the Bank, already at the structural level and from the very outset, is not completely disengaged from the government's own PRSP process, but that it plays a role in scrutinising and monitoring the government's performance. Herein lays a route to power in the form of an indirect, tacit trusteeship – or developmentality. Moreover, the client government needs to have its PRSP accepted by the Bank's board in order to become effective and open the Bank's purse of concessional lending. Yet having an approved PRSP is no guarantee of the Bank's full financial support. Because the PRSP is formally the government's document, the Bank merely selects those policies it is willing to support financially.

The PRSP also holds a larger function, since an approved strategy means the country is qualified for debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative, while also ensuring access to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. Having an accepted PRSP seems just as important for what it entails and opens as for the policies it outlines. Yet the PRSP is a precondition for clients entering into partnership with the Bank and thus gaining access to much-needed loans and credits. As such, the PRSP seems to have become a new conditionality in itself.[27] Those on the client side are obviously aware of the importance of the PRSP, knowing that they need to produce a PRSP that in form, content and process is acceptable to the Bank and that aligns with the Bank's prevailing development discourse, in order to have it accepted. As such, the notion of an indirect power, or developmentality, comes to attention both at the formal and structural level of the PRSP model.

The PRSP model reflects the new aid architecture within the Bank, involving profound changes at the levels of both structure and policy. While the structural side relates to a new partnership modality centred on greater recipient participation and ownership, the policy side draws on the good governance realm and the Bank's increased reorientation from a one-sided focus on economic growth to one that includes poverty reduction. The structural and policy sides are, however, interrelated; together they draw attention to the conditionality–participation nexus. Parallel to giving the client side responsibility for devising and implementing policies subject to Bank funding, it became paramount for the Bank to ensure not only that the right policies were produced but also that they were realised in the right way. Hence the Bank, against its apolitical mandate, started to address what it deemed detrimental political concerns internal to its counterpart – such as corruption and weak governance – in order to promote a more conducive policy environment and thus to enhance aid effectiveness. This drew on a view that soon gained prominence within the Bank: although good policies mattered, it was now recognised that policies work better and yield more development per dollar in good policy environments than in weak and unstable ones.[28] The Bank's search for greater 'bang for its bucks' eventually translated into greater emphasis on capacity-building and good governance policies by the Bank, leading to public sector reforms and state-building initiatives enabling it to forge its clients into capacitated counterparts able to act as credible partners.

Adding good governance to the laundry list of prioritised Bank policies illustrates two crucial aspects of the new aid architecture. First, it demonstrates an ambiguity, as the Bank's aspiration of entrusting its recipient with greater freedom and responsibility to devise its (recipient's) own policies is undermined by the former's promotion of its own policies. Second, and inter-relatedly, it demonstrates the resurgence of the state as both means and objective of development. The state is both being developed and simultaneously expected to do this development, illustrating the expected auto-entrepreneurship and state formation implied by the new aid architecture. The erstwhile structural adjustment policies 'went too far towards laissez-faire and the dreaded *dirigisme* with its rent-seeking propensities, so in the mid-1980s and early 1990s the Bank and its peers turned back slightly to politics and the state. The banking behemoth took on political discourses of democracy and good governance.'[29] Instead of dismantling states, the Bank was now to assist them build themselves. Come the new aid architecture and the PRSP model, client states are now supposed to build themselves by voluntarily adopting the good governance package of 'increased governance transparency and accountability, with checks on corruption and human rights abuses; political decentralisation… [and] multiparty democracy'.[30] The challenging task facing donor representatives – 'to maintain geopolitical loyalty of fickle African politicians, while persuading them to adopt the precept of bourgeois governance – transcendentally transparent, level with the law, and pre-eminently participatory'[31] – largely concerns the ability to craft conditions that can prevent questions of who rules and how. This ability directly relates to the formation of partnership as part of the new aid architecture, thus directing attention to the conditionality–participation nexus and, in turn, to developmentality.

Governing through partnership in Uganda

Having gained interest in the partnership dynamics from studying the development project in Ethiopia, I relocated my research to Uganda to study the PRSP model in practice.[32] This move entailed a shift from studying a small NGO-funded development project amounting to merely 150,000 to a focus on the partnership between state and multilateral actors involving a budget support portfolio totalling over $150 million. In Uganda, representatives of the government, the Bank and other bilateral donor agencies all asserted strong national participation in and ownership of the PRSP, locally dubbed the Poverty

Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). In fact, it was commonly held among both government and donor representatives alike that the Ugandan government did not only 'own' the PEAP, it also provided the inspiration and template for the Bank's PRSP model. By 1995 the government had embarked on a nationwide consultative process, involving members of parliament, government ministries and donors, to devise a national development strategy.[33] The first PEAP was adopted in 1997 and Uganda was selected to become a PRSP pilot country when the Bank started to roll out its model in 1999. This both reflected and strengthened the erstwhile image of Uganda as a donor darling and development showcase. The government had enjoyed cordial relations with the donor community ever since the structural adjustment era when the government, despite its leftish, Marxist orientation, embraced the Bank's adjustment package of privatisation and liberalisation in order to gain access to much needed donor monies.[34]

Whereas other PRSP pilot countries had to formulate their first national development strategy from scratch, Ugandan authorities merely revised their existing PEAP to fit the Bank's seminal format. The revision process went unprecedentedly fast thanks to the Bank's need to kick-start its new partnership modality. National revision started in December 1999 and a draft version was presented in March 2000. In May the Bank and the IMF approved a summary of the revised, second PEAP as the Ugandan PRSP, which thus became Uganda's entry point into the new aid architecture and its partnership modality. The original PEAP outlined Uganda's national, strategic policy framework for poverty eradication throughout 2017. The seminal PRSP model, however, typically favours a mid-term outlook of three to five years. After negotiations with the Bank, the first PEAP was terminated in 1999, thus making the second PEAP (2000–04) Uganda's first PRSP. While the second PEAP was fast-tracked through the Bank system into a PRSP, revising it was much more extensive and characteristic of the Bank's interface with client countries. Although the second PEAP was to run throughout 2004, the revision process had already started in November 2002, subsequently leading to the third PEAP, running from 2004–05 to 2007–08. With time the Bank's plethora of demands regarding procedures and policies weighed more heavily in the process, gradually inscribing the Ugandan PEAP into the Bank's realm.

The process from the first to the third PEAP has brought to the fore a strategy that increasingly bears the Bank's stamp in terms of structure, procedure and policy. At the structural level the first PEAP outlines various general prioritised programme areas. In the second PEAP, which was accepted as the PRSP, these were renamed 'pillars' and in the third PEAP they were expanded from four to five – all in accordance with common Bank parlance and the PRSP set-up.[35] At the procedural level new mechanisms were demanded by the Bank, including, the formulation of a Poverty Status Report, now installed as a regular undertaking of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED). Following the new aid architecture's enhanced focus on poverty reduction at the cost of the conventional growth paradigm the government was requested to convey the partnership dialogue from the MoFPED to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). As a corollary OPM became designated to manage the overall PRSP process and to coordinate the government's relations with external donor agencies, as part of the new partnership formation and despite the fact that it lacked MoFPED's technical expertise. Because of the Bank's demand for increased civil society participation, NGOs were consulted. To oversee the revision process and to have a node for internal (among ministries and with civil society organisations and the private sector) and external (with donors) communications, a secretariat was established within MoFPED. The revision process officially started in mid-July 2003 with a 'stakeholders' workshop', which required further consultations at the levels of central, district and local government, and with(in) civil society. The central government's consultation with civil society and the Bank was divided into 14 sectoral working groups that corresponded to the structural and thematic template outlined in the seminal PRSP framework.[36]

At the policy level the most important change relates to good governance, which was not part of the PEAP before the Bank weighed in. In referring to the process by which decisions are made and implemented or not, good governance policies concern the internal workings and practices of the recipient state, including the PEAP-making process. The good governance theme became increasingly prominent in Uganda's own development strategy, parallel to the Bank's growing involvement in the process and under the auspices of aid effectiveness, since development aid works better in a good policy environment.[37] For the Bank it thus became paramount to enable such policy environments, so that the aid-receiving government could not only devise its own policies but also implement them – as per the new aid architecture and the PRSP model. In particular, the promotion of good governance as both a means and an objective signals greater ambitions on behalf of the Bank pertaining to state building, and shows that it seeks to build a credible counterpart that can fulfil the credentials of the new partnership model so that, in brief, the developing state can develop itself in accordance with the developer's intentions – as captured by the notion of developmentality.

The overall changes from the first to the third PEAP demonstrate the ambiguous conditionality–participation nexus of the new aid architecture; how the official rhetoric with promises of greater freedom and self-determination over one's own development process are accompanied by practices and control mechanisms that frame and thereby limit the freedom initially granted to the recipient. Unpacking the PRSP in practice further reveals mechanisms and practices part and parcel of the PRSP model that are not only counterproductive to its overarching partnership principles of ownership and participation, but also intrusive on the client government's sovereign realm and domestic policy processes. First, the government's strategy is reviewed by and needs to pass the Bank's board in order to become effective and to qualify for the Bank's lending arrangements. Second, the Bank devises its own policy response to the PRSP, in the form of a Country Assistance Strategy (CAS), which involves a selection of the government's policies the Bank is willing to support financially, rather than overall support of the government's PRSP: 'the PRSP is designed to reflect the country's strategy whereas the CAS is the World Bank's own programming exercise. Nonetheless, the World Bank expects to see considerable synergy between a country's CAS and PRSP.'[38] Third, the CAS and Bank support is further limited by what it in fact chooses to support financially, which gets articulated by the Poverty Reduction Support *Credit* (PRSC) – and it is here that the model's intrusive character and tacit governance mechanism become susceptible. The PRSC is under the sole supremacy of the Bank, but entails procedures that involve detailed and intimate discussions with the client government enabling the Bank not only to transfer its policy and conceptual apparatus to its counterpart, but also to put forward direct conditions, or prior actions, that need to be implemented before the PRSC can be approved and thus release funding.

The notion of prior actions is central to the debate about conditionality – and indeed the workings of developmentality as a tacit form of governance. Discarding structural adjustment lending led to a decrease in the number of binding conditions imposed by the Bank. This decrease has, however, 'been accompanied by a sharp upturn in the number of benchmarks of "soft" conditions',[39] or 'prior actions' as the Bank calls them. The prior actions constitute measures deemed vital by the Bank for the government's implementation of its own strategy. The Bank does not see prior actions as imposed conditions since, at least nominally, they have been defined and agreed upon by the Bank and government in the annual PRSC negotiations. The Bank sees prior actions as 'policy actions that the country agrees to take before the Bank's…Executive Board approves a loan'.[40] Compliance with prior actions and their stipulated benchmarks is required before funds are released, as the Bank needs to be convinced that 'satisfactory progress' as per its own assessment has been made. Thus, the client government perceives prior actions as little less than conventional conditionalities, whereas the Bank reasserts they are not, since they are not imposed but agreed upon by both parties. Rather, the Bank sees prior actions as policy measures the government agrees to take to implement its own development strategy.

Prior actions are negotiated as part of the Bank's annual project cycle, also known as 'missions', in which Bank staff from the headquarters level go to 'the field' to discuss the budget support mechanism (ie PRSC) with representatives from both the Bank's country office and the government. The mission typically consists of four stages. The first is an identification mission where the Bank looks into needs and possibilities. The second is a pre-appraisal mission where the government's results and achievements are measured and reviewed. In continuation, the third is an appraisal mission, involving close dialogue with the government to agree on the assessment that forms the basis for the upcoming budget support. The final phase is the negotiations, where the Bank and government decide on the technicalities of disbursing loans and to which sector. Moving into the negotiation phase is thus a token that agreement has been reached between the two parties.

The pre-appraisal and appraisal missions are therefore the most important ones, as they involve close policy dialogue with the government in negotiating the assessment of old and stipulation of new prior actions. According to the Bank itself, the budget support mechanism provides for an 'important forum for dialogue, especially on issues related to growth and structural reforms' and 'important opportunities to engage in policy dialogue on wide-ranging structural issues' to address 'key structural issues that hinder more robust growth for the private sector'.[41] In negotiating the prior actions the Bank weighs in with its analytical work. Any disbursement of budget support is put on hold until agreement is reached about the prior actions, thus signalling a conflicting logic – akin to the participation–conditionality nexus – between the policy realm of PRSP allegedly owned by the government and the financial support mechanism (ie PRSC) controlled by the Bank: the government has been empowered to devise its own development strategy but the Bank retains the means to see it implemented. To the Bank the prior actions represent milestones and operational measures the government needs to undertake to implement its own development strategy. And, as the name suggest, these actions, often policy reforms, need to be executed before funds are released, thus illustrating the move from an *ex ante* to an *ex post* planning and disbursement mechanism. Moreover, as they have been agreed upon by the government, the Bank asserts that the government owns the prior actions, which, in turn, warrants the Bank holding the government responsible for potential misconduct in not implementing its 'own' policies. As such, the prior actions mechanism represents a new disbursement tactic from the Bank's side, where policy reforms must be executed before funds are released, thus demonstrating that the carrot of aid is as disciplinarian as the stick in shaping the conduct of the aid recipient.

The Ugandan political transition: friction in the partnership

Friction emerged in the Bank–Uganda partnership during my fieldwork in 2005 and 2006, eventually accentuating disagreements about the prior actions. From great expectations to the government's new development strategy, ie the PEAP 3, and novel attempts among bi- and multilateral donors to harmonise their approaches in a joint strategy to be aligned with and supportive of the government's strategy – all in line with the ambitions of the new aid architecture and the precepts of the Rome and Paris declarations[42] – the cordial partnership relationship was derailed thanks to aspects external to the realm of partnership itself. From being a donor darling, president Museveni increasingly antagonised the donor community when he embarked on a political transition, featuring three critical changes that most donors saw as detrimental to their overarching work on good governance. First, Museveni revealed that he would lift the presidential term limits by amending the constitution he crafted and passed in 1995 – and for which he was celebrated – to allow him to run for a third term in office. The second change relates to the announced referendum to decide on the transition from a non-party to a multiparty system, about which donors were highly sceptical not only because the referendum was a costly affair but also because no one really opposed reinstating a multiparty system. Third, further headaches among the donors were caused by the process leading up to the multiparty election in February 2006, in which the main opposition candidate was repeatedly imprisoned and taken to court over allegations of treason and rape, thus preventing his campaign throughout the time Museveni was touring the country.

Both donor harmonisation and donor–government relations were critically impaired against the backdrop of what the donor community saw as a mismanaged political transition. The donors were far from harmonious in how to respond to the government. Most bilateral agencies reacted by issuing critical official statements and threatening to cut aid if the situation did not improve – which the government responded to by stating that the donors should not meddle in its domestic political affairs.[43] The multilateral agencies and the World Bank in particular refused similar measures, because of their apolitical mandate.

This hampered the donors' harmonisation agenda, and was among the key reasons it took the donors two years to finalise their joint strategy. However, it also impaired the Bank–government partnership – since the Bank was pressured by its member states and also feared jeopardising the harmonisation process – but behind closed doors and in the context of the prior actions negotiations.

The cordial relations that were expressed at the start of the Bank's combined two-week pre-appraisal and appraisal mission had severely deteriorated by the time of the wrap-up meeting. In the former the mission team leader opened by saying that the Bank would not move into the negotiation phase and thereby complete the project cycle and disburse funds unless progress on the prior actions was made. Prior actions involved highly subjective measures, where the Bank would like to see 'improvement', 'progress' and 'satisfactory implementation' of the 11 prior actions stipulated. These were classified hierarchically as 'off track', 'at risk', 'on track', 'partially met' or 'completed'. Of the 11 Ugandan prior actions, two were regarded as 'at risk' and one related to good governance was deemed 'off track'. The two anticipated prior actions considered to be 'at risk' concerned public administration expenditures and dispersed inter-ministerial budget allocations to promote poverty eradication. Government officials, however, disagreed with the Bank's assessment, stating that what had been asked of them had already been done and that Bank staff had misunderstood or not read the government's recent updates. At the government's request the Bank pledged to revisit its assessments. Thus, by the time of the wrap-up meeting, all prior actions were deemed 'completed', including those previously assessed as 'at risk' or 'off track' – with one important exception: the prior action on budget execution had been downgraded from 'on track' to 'partially met' because the public administration expenditures exceeded budget. Despite this, the government representatives were satisfied, happy that the Bank had revised the facts by recognising their efforts, and saying that the downgrading was as expected: the budgetary transgression was the result of extensive reform programmes pushed for by the donors, but also of the extra expenses caused by the 2005 census, preparations for the referendum on reinstalling a multiparty system, the general 2006 election and running costs to the Electoral Commission.

The downgrading of the prior action on budget execution in June 2005 did not have any effect before the lending programme, ie the PRSC, was brought to the Bank's board in January 2006. The belated treatment of the credit scheme came as a result of disagreement among donors – also members of the Bank and thus represented in its board – on their joint strategy and how to respond to the mismanaged Ugandan political transition. The Bank's country and mission teams feared it would be impossible for their directors to approve the $150 million budget support while the main opposition candidate was behind bars, and the donors had raised the red flag over government malpractice and its mismanaged political transition. Thus, once the credit scheme was presented to the Bank's board – together with the joint donor strategy now finalised after a two-year process – the prior actions weighed in, enabling the directors to cut support by a tenth 'to reflect their concerns about expenditure overruns in the public administration budget'.[44] The cut came as a surprise to most actors involved. The bilateral actors welcomed the cut, although many argued it was for the wrong official reason – political and not economic mismanagement was what warranted the cut – as all seemed to be familiar with the backstage discussions among the Bank's executive directors. Government representatives were surprised that exceeding the public administration budget had triggered this harsh, and belated, reaction, causing them to cut the planned activities spelled out in the national strategy (PRSP) already approved by the Bank.

The role and function of the prior actions reveal a disjuncture with the overarching partnership objectives of the new aid architecture – as articulated by the PRSP model. Interestingly the prior actions mechanism does not only undermine the notion of an equal partnership relation and the liberal and morally charged concepts on which it rests. The mechanism also comes as part and parcel of the overall PRSP model and its promise of greater freedom, self-determination and responsibility for those on the receiving end in devising, implementing and monitoring their own national development strategy. Alongside the prior actions other acronym-heavy mechanisms and structures – for example, the CAS, PRSC, PER, etc – enabled the donor to retain control while also undermining the presumptive freedom of the PRSP structures and its partnership model. The Bank–Uganda case demonstrates the PRSP model and its mechanisms, and illustrates how the partnership formation and the morally charged concepts on which it rests have been accompanied by new technologies undermining the freedom of the recipient and participatory, bottom-up approaches which initially warranted the turn to partnership. As such, the practical role of the prior actions reveals a critical disjuncture in the formal order of the Bank–Uganda partnership, as well as how the government is formally made responsible for implementing the Bank's policies.[45]

Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the formal order of partnership and its practical rendering does not mean that the new aid architecture is irrelevant to practice. Indeed, these ideas have profoundly altered how donor and recipient institutions relate to each other and how policies are devised and implemented. What has not changed, however, are the asymmetrical power relations between the Bank and its client – which was the main motive and rationale, at least at the rhetorical level, for the Bank to embark on the new aid architecture. Rather, what we see is a metamorphosis of power, from direct coercion to a subtle and tacit governance mechanism, where the client is granted freedom and self-determination over its own development policy. However, as this freedom is framed, it is also restricted. Herein – in the nexus of conditionality and participatory approaches – lies the power of developmentality.

Developmentality

Inspired by the governmentality literature, developmentality attends to the effects and intentions of the new aid architecture and how the institutional set-up and formation of aid partnerships constitute means for governance, despite the liberal rhetoric. The concept captures how the asymmetrical power relations inherent in donor–recipient relationships are being reproduced in profound ways, although the rhetorical claims integral to the new aid architecture suggest the opposite. Developmentality points to the liberal, yet calculated and rationalised, practices established by authoritative actors within the global development apparatus, which have supplied the new aid architecture with various techniques and a particular knowledge formation, both designed to shape the conduct of the actors involved by means of reciprocal partnership instead of trusteeship and conditionality. The liberal rationality of the new aid architecture, being constituent of developmentality, is reflected both in the current policy regime (with good governance and capacity building) and in the institutional set-up of aid relations (partnership and participation). Developmentality draws attention to the proposition that, despite indications of a transfer of power from donor to recipient, the donor institutions are applying new forms of governance that enable them to retain control by orchestrating the 'conduct of conduct' of aid recipients.

The notion of developmentality as a tacit form of governance within the aid sector and donor–recipient relationship draws on an apparent paradox in development aid: the contradiction between conditionality and participatory approaches. This contradiction becomes evident when comparing the formal order of development with practice, which alerts us to how practices installed as part of the new aid architecture's liberal partnership principles in fact enable the donors to retain control and thereby undermine the notion of partnership itself. This disjuncture with the formal order should not only be understood as the result of weak implementation, bad policies or uncommitted actors. It also signals an intention on the part of the donor to make indirect use of force as a means of retaining its control of and governance over the content and practices of development. Through the formation of partnership, donors attempts to install their own concepts, practices and policies in and among recipients so that the actors on the recipient side – be they an individual, 'the people' or an agency – can take control over and become responsible for their own development, to facilitate self-governance. Altering the personal and collective mentalities of aid practitioners – as with, for instance, the good governance realm – thus seems integral to institutional development. This evokes power/knowledge formations as a means of indirect governance, as illuminated by Foucault in his concept of governmentality. The latter is a modality of power concerned with the 'conduct of conduct',[46] building on the autonomous and free subject but where the degree of freedom and self-governance are contingent on the extent to which the self-governed subjects have internalised the governor's mentality and thus are able to act as the governor wishes without direct instructions. The governmentality perspective thus has a seductive fit with the contours of the aid architecture and its seemingly liberal notions and practices of partnership, ownership and participation, which allow for ruling not through coercion and policy imposition but through complicity, by installing concepts of self-discipline among subjects and aid recipients that serve the interest of the donor institution.

This form for developmentality entails explicit and intentional processes and mechanisms to make the donor's discourse and policy those of the recipient, in order to enable its self-governance. As such, the partnership relationship comprises an indirect exercise of power that involves altering people's mentalities in profound ways, while the developmentality perspective allows us to identify the structural, practical and rhetorical means through which aid recipients 'assume responsibility for ensuring the smooth operations of policies…engineered and imposed by external players'.[47]

The developmentality perspective demonstrates how the instituted orders and structures of the postcolonial development state seem to be changing, relinquishing its once – if ever? – supreme regulatory hold over domestic policy processes. The state is being subverted and cross-cut by external actors dwarfing the political and economic power they nominally have granted the aid-recipient state.[48] With the partnership concept – formed in the interface between the formal order of participatory approaches and its conditionality practices – the postcolonial state is put under external supervision; instead of acting on behalf of and being accountable to its citizens, the state becomes accountable first and foremost to donors.[49]

The concept of developmentality points to this metamorphosis of power and the effects of the emerging political forces transcending the state. Developmentality draws on an orchestrated shift in the political culture of governing, and the way many postcolonial development states 'have entered a new phase of state formation…signalled by a reconfiguration of the social forces commanding action in the name of the state'.[50] This orchestrated shift draws momentum from the new aid architecture's intentional aspiration of revamping inherently asymmetrical aid relations – 'what were until recently, uneasy modes of bondage based on harshly imposed borrowing conditions are now portrayed as "partnerships" based on mutuality and trust'.[51] The new aid architecture's shift from structural adjustment lending's policy imposition to the PRSP model pivoting around 'partnership' illustrates this orchestrated shift, which has caused the emergence of indirect social forces and tacit governance mechanisms, ie developmentality.

Coda – with a caveat

Developmentality attends to the effects and intentions of the new aid architecture and the way the institutional set-up and content of aid partnerships constitute means of governance, despite the liberal rhetoric. One should, however, refrain from seeing developmentality as a hegemonic, totalising power. There is room for strategic action, manipulating practices and resistance. Those within the government responsible for devising the PRSP document know what to write in order to have it accepted, which gives them a certain leverage and leeway, as does also knowing that the strategy document is merely a document and not practice. Moreover, the friction in the Bank–Uganda relationship and the fact that the government moved ahead with its political transition against the donors' warnings, illustrate a form of contestation that would not have taken place had the authorities fully internalised the Bank's discourse. With the friction in the partnership, the Bank moved to more direct coercion and arm-twisting regarding the prior actions. This arm-twisting, however, forced the government to agree to the prior actions, through which it was made responsible for the Bank's policies – thus illustrating how the developmentality also becomes relevant to situations of contestation.

The concept of developmentality rests on the analysis of the new aid architecture and the Bank–Uganda partnership. The developmentality concept itself, however, is not contingent on this particular aid relation. Developmentality is a feature of the way in which international development discourse has intentionally been altered by donor institutions, evolving as an effect of the emergence of the new aid architecture and its girding ideas of partnership, ownership and participation – all of which are ideas embraced by the donor community in general. Since the concept draws on ideas widely shared by the international development community, developmentality should be relevant and provide a framework for analysing other aid relations that draw on these ideas and how they might make possible new mechanisms of governance, in the face of their seemingly liberal appearance.

The relevance of developmentality to other development partnerships nevertheless remains an empirical question to be further explored. The concept should, however, not be disregarded in studies involving the World Bank, since its partnership model revolves around the PRSP which, in its formal order, seems already to imply developmentality at the structural level of the aid relationship. How and whether developmentality is enacted involve questions that must be decided through empirical study. Such empirical analysis will necessitate a two-pronged approach that can account for the levels of structure and practice – as well as how they interface – in order for us to identify and understand the workings and effects of developmentality.

Notes on contributor

Jon Harald Sande Lie is a Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and co-editor of the journal *Forum for Development Studies*. Focusing on governance and resistance, his research interests include development aid, humanitarianism and postcolonial state formation in Eastern Africa. His research has appeared in, among others, *Social Analysis*, *Millennium*, and *African Security*. He co-edited the anthology *Security and Development* (with John McNeish, 2010) and his monograph *Developmentality: An Ethnography of the World Bank–Uganda Partnership* will be published in September 2015.

Notes

1. What is referred to as the new aid architecture is more comprehensive than this structural change. Mosse asserts that the new aid architecture refers to three broad transformations in international aid. The first is a focus on neoliberal policy reform rather than conventional investments projects. The second is the international commitment to poverty reduction, limited not only to economic growth but also inclusive of environmental and social issues. The third is donors' transcendence of the traditional economic and financial management to a focus including institutions and general governance issues. Mosse, *Cultivating Development*. In this article I mainly focus on the structural changes and the power effects emerging, particularly in conjunction with the increased focus on governance issues.
2. Brown, "A Question of Agency."
3. Cited in Randel et al., *The Reality of Aid*, 8.
4. Foucault, "Governmentality"; and Dean, *Governmentality*.
5. Others have used the 'developmentality' term. In 2003, when I first made use of the concept, it was limited to behavioural child psychology. Later it has been used with reference to computer technology and programming and more recently, somewhat akin to my own usage, in referring to the development aid sector. The latter usage can be found in the works of Legg, "Post-colonial Developmentalities"; Ilcan and Phillips, "Developmentalities and Calculative Practices"; Deb, *Beyond Developmentality*; and Mawuko-Yevugah, "Governing through Developmentality." Of these, Ilcan and Phillips' work is most relevant to my own in analysing the organisation of development aid. This work, however, limits the concept to the UN Millennium Development Goals, whereas I apply developmentality to the new aid architecture and the formation of partnerships within the development sector in general. Although these references to developmentality emerged after my initial mention of it, they have inspired this current work.
6. Lie, *Developmentality*.

7. Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*.
8. Dean, *Governmentality*, 10.
9. Rose and Miller, "Political Power," 181.
10. Abrahamsen, "The Power of Partnerships."
11. Li, *The Will to Improve*; Mosse and Lewis, *The Aid Effect*; Gould, *The New Conditionality*; and Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*.
12. Watts, quoted in Lewis and Mosse, "Encountering Order," 3 (emphasis in original).
13. Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower*, 4.
14. See Lie, "Discursive Development Order."
15. Lie, "Post-development Theory"; and Lie, "Post-development and the Discourse–Agency Interface."
16. Bierschenk et al., *Local Development Brokers in Africa*; and Lewis and Mosse, *Development Brokers and Translators*.
17. Brigg, "Post-development."
18. Harrison, "Post-conditionality."
19. Ibid., 658.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., 659.
22. Chambers, *Rural Development*; Nelson and Wright, *Power and Participatory Development*; and Cooke and Kothari, *Participation*.
23. Wolfensohn, "A Proposal"; and Mallaby, *The World's Banker*.
24. SAPRIN, *Structural Adjustment*; Pincus and Winters, *Reinventing the World Bank*; and Einhorn, "Reforming the World Bank."
25. Wolfensohn, "A Proposal," 9.
26. Ibid.
27. Gould, *The New Conditionality*.
28. Burnside and Dollar, *Aid, Policies, and Growth*.
29. Moore, "Introduction," 20.
30. Pomerantz, *Aid Effectiveness in Africa*, 41; and Weiss, "Governance."
31. Moore, "Introduction," 7–8.
32. Fieldwork was conducted over two periods, totalling 10 months, in 2005 and 2006. This included, among others, participatory observation within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which is responsible for the government's dialogue with external development donors and actors. See Lie, *Developmentality*; and Lie, "Challenging Anthropology."
33. Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*.
34. Dijkstra and van Donge, "What does the 'Show Case' Show?"; Kuteesa et al., *Uganda's Economic Recovery*; and Brock et al., *Unpacking Policy*.
35. These renamed pillars now appear in a language closer to that of the Bank. For instance, 'directly improving the quality of life of the poor' is now 'human development', while 'creating an enabling environment for sustainable growth and transformation' is now simply 'economic management'. These new pillars all correspond to designated thematic networks within the Bank's own organisational structure.
36. Moreover, in Uganda (and elsewhere) bi- and multilateral donors meet regularly in various donors' working groups to discuss and share information pertaining to their specific working group. These thematically focused working groups largely correspond to the PEAP and PRSP sectors (thus the government's working groups).
37. Burnside and Dollar, "Aid, Policies, and Growth."
38. Marshall, *The World Bank*, 67.
39. Wood, *World Bank's Poverty Reduction Support Credit*, 1.
40. Bull et al., *The World Bank's and the IMF's Use*, 4.
41. Taken from paragraph 51 and 60 of the Ethiopian 2008–11 Country Assistance Strategy, where the Bank, after having discontinued budget support since 2006, reflects on what it had lost out on, ie the advantages of the budget support mechanism and prior actions. The document is available at http://go.worldbank.org/ZBCG9IF761.
42. In 2004 a group of 'likeminded' donors, or development partners – ie the World Bank together with the African Development Bank, the EU, the IMF and the bilateral agencies of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK – embarked on a consultative process to make a joint strategy in response to the government's PEAP. The strategy was named the Ugandan Joint Assistance Strategy (UJAS) and expands and builds on the Bank's CAS structure, thereby integrating the development partners into the Bank's discursive realm. The UJAS was regarded as a novel and bold attempt at donor-wide harmonisation, aimed at establishing a more congruent and holistic donor approach to reduce the government's transaction costs caused by multiple and dispersed donor policies and procedures. According to the donors, they were requested by the government to harmonise. Government staff, however, hold that the donors asked them to make a request for such harmonisation. It took the development partners two years to agree on a joint strategy, in a process with the donors at loggerheads about which matters to prioritise and the distribution of responsibility.

43. From April 2005 and throughout the year, most agencies withheld or reduced their bilateral aid. The UK first withheld £5 million in direct budget support because of concerns with the political transition and insufficient progress in establishing a multiparty system. Ireland soon followed, cutting €3 million and citing the government's lack of progress in introducing a multiparty system. In July Norway cut one-third of its budget support – about $4 million – as a result of the government's negative handling of democracy, human rights and the fight against corruption. In the autumn the Netherlands reduced its aid by €6 million, Sweden cut $8.3 million and, finally, in December the UK cut another £15 million and withheld another £5 million pending the February 2006 elections, on which disbursement was made contingent. This reduced the British budget support by £20 million from the pledged £50 million, because of concerns over 'the government's commitment to the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press and freedom of association following the events surrounding the arrest and trial of the [main opposition] leader of the Forum for Democratic Change, Kizza Besigye; delays in the government's own road map for the political transition; the continuation of state financing for the ruling party in a new era of multiparty politics; and a significant overrun on public administration expenditure'. DFID, "UK cuts Direct Budget Support to Uganda by £15 million, withholds further £5 Million." Press release, December 20, 2005. www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/pressreleases/uganda-reduction.asp.
44. World Bank, Press release no. 2006/239/AFR. http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2006/01/17/uganda-joint-assistance-strategy-and-world-bank-approval-of-us135-million-for-fifth-poverty-reduction-support-operation.
45. Lie, *Developmentality*.
46. Foucault, *Governmentality*.
47. Gould, "Timing, Scale and Style," 65.
48. Kapferer and Bertelsen, *Crisis of the State*.
49. Doornbos, "State Formation Processes."
50. Gould, "Poverty, Politics and States of Partnership," 1.
51. Ibid.

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