



**Emerging and submerging powers.
Imagined geographies in the new development partnership
at the Busan Fourth High Level Forum**

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Emerging and submerging powers

Imagined geographies in the new development partnership at the Busan

Fourth High Level Forum

The geo-politics of development is in a state of uncertainty and transition that the Busan High Level Forum both mirrored and contributed to. Busan established a new discourse of international development co-operation in which the old donor-recipient relationship is replaced by an equator-less landscape of a multi-stakeholder global partnership. But by analysing the Busan preparations and conference through textual analysis and participant observation we found it to be a fractured landscape of variable imagined geographies, suggesting that the question of who is 'North' and who is 'South' will continue to shape global negotiations on the future of development co-operation.

Introduction

In late 2011 the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4), convened by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and hosted by South Korea, met in Busan and agreed to establish a Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. At Busan partnership became a horizontal and complex set of relations including not only traditional donors and aid recipients but also the emerging powers, the private sector, philanthropic foundations, civil society, think tanks – all of them present at Busan – and development co-operation now meant supporting countries achieve 'development effectiveness', including through trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as technical assistance and concessionary finance. The old certainties about the norms of international development co-operation were disappearing in a rapidly changing global political economy, while new modes of behaviour were yet to strongly emerge.

These uncertainties were reflected in the shifting purpose of Busan. Originally planned to review progress in the implementation of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, during the preparations attention switched to whether and on what terms the world's emerging powers would agree to be included. Countries such as China, India and Brazil – often referred to as the 'BRICs' - were challenging how the 'West/North' defined the means and ends of development (Woods, 2008; Oh-Seok and Arnold, 2010; Mawdsley, forthcoming), distinguishing themselves as knowing from first-hand experience what it is like to do development, as well as to receive aid. Through 'South-South' co-operation, they claimed a relationship with their development partners based on mutual self-interest and respect for autonomy,

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3 which they contrasted sharply with the old colonial powers' vertical relationship with their erstwhile
4 subjects, based on charity and dependency (Mawdsley, 2011). These were the stark differences between
5 South-South cooperation of the emerging powers celebrated at Busan in contrast to the criticism of North-
6 South aid of traditional donors - the submerging powers, struggling to survive economic crisis in a new
7 multi-polar world.
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13 Only in the last decade did OECD donors become anxious about the emerging powers' increasing profile
14 as donors who were offering recipients more choice about their sources of aid. There is a growing
15 literature on these new donors (Bräutigam, 1998, 2009; Mawdsley, forthcoming, 2009; Gray, 2011;
16 Mawdsley and McCann, 2011; Mohan and Power 2009, Shankland and Constantine, 2010, Walz and
17 Ramachandran, 2011). Whereas, those studies focus on the behaviour of the emerging powers, the
18 present article concerns the relations between these and the 'submerging powers' and low-income
19 countries as played out at Busan, a microcosm of the discursive uncertainties and contradictions in
20 constructing a new and inclusive global partnership. In the context of rapid change, 'what particularly
21 merits scrutiny', proposes Sidaway (2011:9) 'is how geo-political shifts are represented'. The politics
22 of such geographies play a crucial role in moments of international transition and realignment of
23 relationships (Hagen, 2003). From a variety of possible framings to explore the representation of such
24 shifts, we have chosen discourse analysis to illuminate a kaleidoscope of fractured identities formed and
25 re-formed at Busan into new patterns of imagined geographies with respect to varying discourses of
26 political history, cultural values and the purposes of development. Understanding identity as a contingent
27 and mutually constituted relationship in which how others label us shapes how we relate to them (Jenkins,
28 2008), we show how international development actors are clinging to old maps of North and South while
29 struggling with the representation of a country's or an organization's geographical location.
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42 Our material derives from observation and informal conversations at the conference, complemented by
43 pre- and post-Busan semi-structured interviews, analysis of the successive drafts of the Outcome
44 Document¹ and Busan stakeholders' comments on them, as well as the many tweets and blogs. Through
45 being ethnographically observing participants (Mosse, 2011) at a number of preparatory meetings in
46 Paris, we gained access to Busan as researchers. We found that the event (and our ability to do research)
47 was shaped by the arrangements of its physical space and by what one participant referred to as its
48 'organisational chaos'.
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55 HLF4 took place at a large convention centre and more informally in the lobbies and lifts of delegates'
56 hotels, where networking and animated conversation took place. Informal spaces for dialogue were also
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3 found in the centre: in the basement food court, in the huge atrium and in the winding queue for the one
4 coffee shop at the bottom of a staircase leading up to where the formal business of HLF4 was conducted
5 in three large plenary halls hosting the main thematic sessions. Around the corner were smaller rooms for
6 the forty-nine Side Events, where the bigger picture questions of aid and development were debated. As
7 no delegate list was released nor speaker lists available for side events, delegates hopped from room to
8 room in search of the 'best' panel discussion while rooms grew progressively emptier, as private meetings
9 and chance conversations took precedence. For a researcher this meant learning about what was
10 happening through existing contacts or new introductions, by following the official OECD newsletters
11 (which predominantly featured writers of the Northern think tanks/NGO universe), by twitter and daily
12 blog, and by intuition and imagination. We use this semi-ethnographic approach to illustrate positionality
13 in relation to discursive diversity taking a constructivist, anthropological approach to illuminate an event
14 in which both researchers and the researched were conscious of engaging in conflictive historical
15 processes (Kapferer, 2006), although we make no claims to capture all of Busan's complexity.
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26 Starting with the lead up to Busan and its agreed Outcome Document, we analyse the representations of
27 the emerging and submerging powers and the dealings between them by examining how conference
28 participants constructed imagined geographies to explain, distinguish and contest their own and others'
29 location in the international development landscape. These identities were context-dependent, shifting in
30 accordance to who was making the representation and to the discursive content of the discussion.
31 Distinguishing overlapping identities relating to history, cultural values and development purposes, we
32 analyse how the imaginary divide between North and South is more complex and nuanced than would
33 appear at first sight, noting that a constructed divide allows organisations and countries to identify
34 themselves as bridges spanning these fractured geographies. We conclude with a postscript about the
35 negotiations since Busan and propose some issues for further research.¹
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45 **Getting to agreement at Busan**

46 Busan was the last of four 'aid effectiveness' conferences where the traditional donors have responded to
47 movements in the geo-political landscape and the consequent growing demands of aid recipients for
48 greater voice in shaping development policies. At Busan these 'submerging powers' had to reposition
49 themselves in a world where they were no longer the only game in town.
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55 The large number (three thousand) and diversity of participants in Busan contrasted sharply with the first
56 conference in Rome (2003), where representatives from recipient country governments were included for
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3 the first time as equals to OECD donor governments and multilateral organisations (Manning, 2008).
4 HLF2 (in Paris, 2005) had 500 delegates compared to Rome's 150. Brazil, India and China came as
5 observers, as did many other middle-income countries (MICs). They perceived the agenda as skewed
6 towards traditional aid relationships (McGee and Heredia, 2010). Brazil stressed afterwards it had not
7 signed the Paris Declaration due to its 'North-South character'². Yet by 2005 the DAC's parent body, the
8 OECD, had already sought to move beyond the old North-South binary. Mexico, an emerging power,
9 joined the OECD in 1994 and since 2006 is providing its Secretary-General, Angel Gurría. Mexico,
10 although an aid provider, has chosen not to join the DAC³, opting to represent itself as a 'bridge' between
11 North and South⁴.
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19 Because of the DAC's Northern identity, its suitability for discussing development was also now
20 challenged. In 2008, the United Nations held its first Development Co-operation Forum (DCF), where
21 South-South Co-operation was a major agenda item (ECOSOC, 2008), followed in 2009 by a UN
22 Conference on South-South Co-operation. South-South co-operation was celebrated for its roots in the
23 Non-Aligned Movement, but by now has expanded to much more than the exchange of technical
24 expertise, becoming 'an essential mechanism for promoting economic development and self-reliance,
25 increasing understanding and solidarity within the South and being able to negotiate its demands in world
26 forums' (Ghimire, 2001:1000). In this rapidly evolving context, HLF3 (2008) in Accra had 1000
27 delegates with greater representation from MICs who contributed several references in the Outcome
28 Document to 'South-South Cooperation. Civil society, ignored in 2005, was invited to organise a parallel
29 event. The references to civil society in the Outcome Document, along with a greater emphasis than in
30 Paris on gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability, were seen as progress by those
31 for whom development is about social transformation, as distinct from economic growth - a discursive
32 conflict about development discussed later.
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44 Accra's purpose had been to review progress in the implementation of the Paris Declaration's principles
45 of country ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results-based management and mutual accountability.
46 Korea, after joining the DAC in 2010, was disconcerted to discover that long-standing members treated
47 the Declaration as well past its sell-by date, trying to remove commitments that, according to a Korean
48 official's comments at a Busan preparatory event, 'so far they have scarcely managed to achieve'. Hence
49 Korea⁴, when invited to host HLF4 as a bridge between traditional donors and the emerging powers, and
50 realising that Paris was not an untouchable sacred text, sought to stress diversity, rather than the
51 commonality of donor approaches to which Paris had aspired. The Korean position had important
52 implications for Busan. Was the main purpose to develop a new global partnership as proposed by Korea,
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3 one no longer framed by the old binary relationship of Northern donors and Southern recipients? Or was
4 it once again to review progress of the Paris Declaration? If the latter, the Koreans and their OECD allies,
5 the Mexicans would fail to bring the BRICs to Busan. This in turn would have made Busan a very low-
6 level affair, as the donors had achieved little since Accra (Wood et al, 2011).
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11 As plans for the conference developed, the emerging powers became increasingly more important and
12 Busan's purpose shifted distinctly to establishing a new global partnership. This revived interest in Busan.
13 The aid blogosphere exploded with commentaries; position statements were produced by practically every
14 organisation even remotely involved in aid expenditure. Political momentum gained. Everyone needed an
15 opinion. Everybody wanted to go to Busan. But not everyone was happy. Civil society activists in the
16 South, particularly where Chinese influence was growing, expressed alarm about deleterious effect on
17 human rights. And low-income countries, still heavily dependent for their health, education and other
18 services on the traditional donors, feared that Europe's governments, hard-pressed to justify their aid
19 budgets at a time of austerity, would use the new global partnership to wriggle out from their Paris
20 commitments.⁵ African Union(AU) comments on the second draft of the Outcome Document stressed the
21 importance 'of the unfinished aid agenda' and proposed to include the statement that 'partner countries
22 have undertaken far more challenging reforms, while policy and procedure reforms required on part of
23 development partners have not been adequately addressed'. Honduras, commenting on the third draft,
24 emphasised the new global partnership 'should not divert from the technical advances that have already
25 been put in place with much work and great effort'. Relating to these concerns and to the original purpose
26 of the conference, Day 1 was designed to review achievements since HLF3. But those interested in the
27 implementation of Paris were to find themselves involved regardless in an event dominated by how to
28 include the BRICs in the Outcome Document. On the eve of the conference it became clear this would not
29 be achieved before the conference started, as a Chinese academic let it be known that China, Indonesia,
30 Malaysia and Mexico felt let down, 'feeling [the draft Outcome Document] is a DAC document'.
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45 On Day 1 'all the attention was focused on whether the new development actors would come to the table:
46 it was clear that these new actors are the key drivers of change at a political level' (British NGO
47 participant). Rumours abounded. Northern think tanks and NGO delegates tweeted that the BRICS were
48 refusing to sign. 'A sunny view on the platform, gloomy view on the floor', tweeted one. A delegate from
49 an African civil society network was irritated by the BRICs dragging their feet in endorsing the
50 Document: 'The whole thing here has been about whether and who is going to opt in or out'. Yet, despite
51 the emerging powers being the focus of attention, their representatives rarely featured in the conference's
52 thematic and parallel sessions other than in some discussion of Korean approaches (in a session hosted by
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3 the China DAC Study Group, a Chinese Ministry of Commerce representative was listed as a panellist but
4 failed to appear). Only Brazil was present in the otherwise well-attended session on 'South-South co-
5 operation', organised by Colombia. There had been a similar lack of engagement in the preparatory
6 process. 'In Paris [China] sent a second secretary to the sherpa meetings and 'the poor woman just sat
7 there reading out emails from Beijing and taking notes' (traditional donor official). The BRICs'
8 ambivalence was variously interpreted as gamesmanship, disorganisation and lack of coordination
9 between different government departments involved, or internal policy disagreements. A bilateral aid
10 official described his visit to Beijing immediately after Busan:

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18 'I went with our DG to Beijing afterwards and one official tells one thing and another contradicts
19 him without even being aware that he is saying something different to the first one. For instance,
20 the vice-minister of commerce which is our main contact on development matters told us that
21 China does not do triangular co-operation, which is not true - they do but he didn't know it.'

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26 By the end of Day 1, everyone knew that India and China had rejected a sixth version of the Document –
27 although Brazil apparently agreed. 'China was never going to sign anyway, so why all the shock?'
28 muttered a DAC official over a drink at the gala reception that night. On Day 2 energy was at a low level
29 and side events less well attended; but in a closed room negotiators were hard at work on a seventh draft.
30 Rumour had it that China and India had overnight put something on the table. By 8 pm we overheard an
31 adviser to the Australian foreign minister whispering to his boss that 'It's now make or break time'. The
32 British aid minister came into the room with the USAID Administrator and the three held an intense
33 conversation. According to Australian NGO participants the British minister, urged that China need not
34 adhere to mandatory commitments, whereas the Australian and the American thought they should.⁶ Even
35 for habitués of international conferences whether or not China (and India) would agree to sign - which it
36 did at 2.30 am on the third day - was felt to be particularly dramatic. This last-minute agreement made
37 Busan a 'success' and speakers at the closing ceremony - once again without a BRICs representative on
38 the platform - applauded the 'Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation' as a pivotal
39 moment. A globally inclusive development co-operation regime had been discursively constructed.

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50 From the start, the Korean hosts had urged that the Outcome Document should better reflect 'the
51 changing global context of development and the evolving global development architecture' and that
52 'Busan should seek a new global compact for development based on a set of new partnerships'.⁷ They
53 conjured a new and all-encompassing geography most cogently in their organisation of the opening and
54 closing ceremonies and in the media centre, where the 'Global Partnership' was celebrated. Delegates
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3 rushed to report - to headquarters, to the media, to the public - the positives of this new partnership. But
4 there was also disappointment. Getting China and India on board had led to a watering down of the
5 document by the last-minute insertion of a Paragraph 2 stating that the 'nature, modalities and
6 responsibilities that apply to South-South co-operation differ from those that apply to North-South co-
7 operation', and therefore the 'principles, commitments and actions agreed ... shall be the reference for
8 South-South partners on a *voluntary* basis' [emphasis added]. For many, this paragraph indicated that the
9 vision of partnership was hollow and that the signatures of the BRICs were of little value because they are
10 not 'real commitments like Paris' (Russian think tank participant). Nevertheless, this paragraph changed
11 the geography of development co-operation. In commenting on the first draft of the Outcome Document,
12 the Mexican government noted that 'the old North-South paradigm acknowledged only two bilateral
13 actors: donors and recipients'. Paragraph 2 now abolished that binary by recognising two Souths whose
14 relationship was framed as development effectiveness that did not differentiate between the various ways
15 (of which aid is just one) in which one country could help another develop.
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26 **Busan's Fractured Geographies**

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28 Paragraph 7 of the Outcome Document states, 'At Busan, we [our emphasis] now all form an integral part
29 of a new and more inclusive development agenda'. Preparatory meetings agonized over who was 'we'.⁸ It
30 was not the same 'we' that had met in Paris and Accra. To include the emerging powers meant that
31 development support from one country to another was not just from North to South but also between
32 countries in the South. But the significance of North and South shifted in function of the speaker and the
33 topic under discussion, particularly in relation to three overlapping aspects of identity relating to history,
34 cultural values and development purposes.
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40 **Historical Geographies**

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42 Busan discourses of geographical identity were shaped by differential perceptions of world history.
43 Colonial relations and the legacy of the Cold War's Non-Aligned Movement were undercurrents running
44 through the conversation about traditional donor-recipient relations and South-South co-operation.
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49 At a session on South-South co-operation, an African civil society participant challenged the audience to
50 overcome their internalised colonial oppression that makes them believe that what comes from the North
51 is better than that from the South. An OECD staff member explained that the word 'voluntary' in
52 Paragraph 2, cause of Busan's main controversy, was important because the BRICs wanted to avoid any
53 association with traditional donors and the historical baggage that former colonising countries cannot
54 easily lose. Hence in depicting the new partnership, Paragraph 2 traced a border across time to distinguish
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3 those who have historically exerted power and influence over the ‘developing’ world, and those who have
4 emerged from the position of dominated to ‘developed’. South-South co-operation was thus advertised as
5 the ‘horizontal’ option - one based upon equality, sovereignty and an end to dependence. Likewise the
6 emphasis by low-income countries such as Rwanda on development rather than aid effectiveness was
7 inherently concerned with the ‘power relations and inequality in the donor/recipient relationship’ and the
8 need to ‘make it a level playing field’ (UN official). The image of a neo-colonial and power-wielding
9 North was contrasted with a Southern approach of non-interference and honest mutual benefit.
10 Development co-operation between the ‘South’ (‘emerging’ donors) and ‘South’ (recipients) ‘is different
11 from North-South structural power: it is not hidden, it is not free [i.e. not charity], and there can be no
12 blame’ (Chinese academic).⁹

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21 The imperialist legacy of traditional donors meant they interfered and imposed conditions on their aid. At
22 an eve-of-conference meeting, a speaker from the ‘North’ defended the role of donors in state-building,
23 arguing it was counter-productive to adhere to the new orthodoxy of non-interference - for ‘we have a
24 common interest in effective states’ - challenging the Chinese premise that effective states already exist in
25 aid-recipient countries. A Chinese academic’s response provoked laughter from the (predominantly
26 ‘Northern’) audience when he stressed that partner countries were responsible for themselves and that
27 China ‘didn’t care’ what they did. Aid, he said, is based upon the idea that we must help these uncivilised
28 people – it is an intervention to transform them. Moreover, he argued, much aid comes as expensive
29 expertise and complex management processes, a theme echoed by Rwanda’s Kagame in his conference
30 speech: ‘Developing countries spend more time and energy agreeing on procedures and accounting to
31 donors and an ever-increasing number of related non-state actors than in actual development work’. In
32 commenting on the third draft of the Outcome Document, the AU complained that aid money spent on
33 parallel systems and foreign experts could more usefully be devoted to capacity development, ‘the driving
34 force to achieve development effectiveness’.

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45 South- South co-operation uses partner country systems – ‘*they* do the feasibility study’, said another
46 Chinese academic at the eve of conference meeting – which, he added, helps strengthen capacity.
47 Technical assistance is the ‘friendly, non-conditional’ kind. What matters, he emphasised, strongly
48 supported by an African civil society speaker, are the historical attitudes that accompany it. In sum, the
49 discussion concerned how South–South co-operation provides the right kind of capacity development and
50 North-South the wrong kind. Hence, during the Outcome Document’s negotiations, the AU’s insistence
51 that donors use the development partners’ country systems, rather than parallel ones, was interpreted as
52 ‘the empowering approach to capacity development’.

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Cultural geographies

With cultural geographies we get closest to the theories of Said (1978) and Anderson (1994), where communities are 'imagined' on the basis of the other, creating an overriding impression at Busan not of a new partnership but of choice among competing values. South-South co-operation discussions manifested a notable focus on the 'Asian approach' as a particular cultural tradition of the first 'South' (providers of development co-operation). The Asian approach, warranting an entire session on Day 1, was described by a Korean speaker as a direct challenge to the development consensus. Asian culture, an Indian panellist explained, is based on compassion, kindness and co-existence. Another Korean described it as originating in 'the history of proud ancient civilisation, national humiliation, revival and resurgence'. Delegates from Japan, Korea, China, Vietnam and India articulated an Asian distinctiveness. In another session, a Japanese academic – possibly finding it difficult to describe Japan as 'the South' - positioned his country as 'oriental', emphasising Japan's difference from 'the core donors' because of its 'Eastern' respect for the past and future that has an ethic of 'self-help', distinct from 'the north-west Europeans' who hope 'to build ownership'. Others also sought to align themselves with these values. A GIZ (German international co-operation agency) official said:

'We have always been uneasy with "aid effectiveness" [for] we are about technical co-operation. This is about partnership; it is in our mutual interest. It is not lecturing or charity but co-operation; it is not aid; it is not a donor/recipient split and has never been'.

Who is the 'North' in this imaginary? At the Busan Youth Forum two days before HLF4, a Chinese student spoke of aid as a Christian charitable tradition creating dependency of the poor upon the rich, which she contrasted with the egalitarian approach associated with the Chou En Lai solidarity discourse (Xu 2011). In this discussion of values, 'human rights' was either a Northern instrument to dictate what the South should do or- as a mirror image - an authoritarian 'first South' abuses the human rights of those in the 'second South'. The choice was presented most starkly by Hilary Clinton. 'Smart shoppers', she said, 'would choose the donors that promote democratic governance and human rights rather than the land- and resource-grabbing alternative' (by which, everyone assumed, she meant China).

The notion of Latin American values was less evident in discussion, but like the Asian emerging powers, Brazilian Minister Marco Farani spoke of his country having no historical baggage in its relations with partners and of a 'non-ideological' approach to Busan.¹⁰ 'Africa regards Brazil as a cousin who's doing well', he said. Using similar language to the Mexicans and Japanese, he thought his country could be 'a bridge between the West and the developing world' because Brazil had a cultural heritage from both

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North and the South. Brazilians are an emotional people, he said, and are therefore good at development co-operation, because they value relationships.

Geographies of development purposes

‘The true achievement of the Busan HLF4 is the shift from talking about aid to talking about development’, tweeted OECD Secretary General Gurriá on Day 3. But of what kind of development was he thinking? ‘Development’ carries multiple and contested chains of meanings (De Paula and Dymski 2005, Hart 2001, Rist 2002), as revealed through Busan’s fractured geographies of political ideology.

The association of emerging donors with the South and traditional donors with the North was reinforced by narratives of the former practising development co-operation that prioritises economic growth and infrastructure, while the latter provide aid in support of the direct poverty reducing MDGs and democratic governance. There is a supposition that ‘the South’ is far more accommodating of private-sector investment than ‘the North’ has been. The majority of Chinese investments in development co-operation are loans for construction and infrastructure through private companies, guided by the government, said a Chinese official interviewed after Busan. A senior retired DAC official commented,

‘[It was] already evident in last year’s G20 that helped set the agenda for Busan: East Asians don’t like north European welfarist approaches to the poor. They believe they themselves developed successfully through international competition, and many poor countries also criticise the Northern donors for being over-reluctant to help develop economic infrastructure’.

Korea is perhaps the most striking example. An image of ‘poster child’ economic development was presented at Busan, tracing Korea’s war-ravaged and poverty-stricken status in the 1950s through to technological and manufacturing success story of the early 21st century. Korea’s success was lauded not only by the ‘emerging’ powers and African governments but by a wide variety of delegates as proof that development can indeed happen. Nevertheless, whispers of discontent were heard from Korean academics who argued that Korea’s economic growth was built on authoritarian control and restricted freedom. In a post-Busan blog Richard Ssewakiryanga, the Chair of Uganda’s NGO Forum, wrote:

‘If indeed results are about people, then processes are important so that we do not only look at results as if they are produced without any impact on people’s lives’, citing what he had heard in

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3 Busan about Korean support to private-sector development in the Philippines in which
4 insufficient attention was paid to the health and safety of workers building a shipyard.¹¹
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8 **Bridges and impasses in a more complex imaginary**

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10 So far we have described an imagined neat division (though still variable and shifting as to who belongs
11 to which side) between Southern providers and Northern donors. Busan's official rhetoric of a unified
12 partnership seeks to respond to an imaginary in which the South has a shared experience of Northern
13 colonialism and hierarchical power relations, in response to which South-South co-operation places a high
14 value on mutual self-interest, relationships and autonomy. This distinguishes it from the North's top-
15 down and charitable approach to poverty reduction that seeks to control other countries' governance
16 systems through aid conditionalities. The reverse imaginary, most starkly presented by Clinton, is the
17 North's support to development as freedom in contrast to the First South's aggressive exploitation of the
18 Second South's resources. But we found these sharp differences complemented by more complex and
19 nuanced imaginaries, offering both opportunities and challenges for countries and organisations seeking
20 to position themselves within this changing landscape.
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29 The dichotomised picture of South-South versus North-South co-operation erases the power and politics
30 within the South, including among the emerging powers. It does not explain why for example Brazil was
31 apparently content to sign the document when China and India were still resisting, and it depicts China's
32 behaviour on the eve of Busan and their unwillingness to be held accountable to 'Northern' principles as
33 nothing more than resistance to a historically-derived pecking order. Moreover, polarised distinctions of
34 colonised/coloniser and developing/developed ignore the interest-based alliances formed at the
35 negotiating table. France and Japan (the latter in any case seeking to reposition itself as an Asian partner
36 in South-South co-operation) were rumoured to be thinking of pulling out five days before Busan; the UK
37 seemed to view the principles as contrary to its own focus on results and value-for-money. Furthermore,
38 the distinction of colonizer and colonized does not apply only to the 'real' geography of the South:
39 IrishAid, for one, uses the former colony narrative to build trust with recipient countries (O'Sullivan,
40 2011). The outcome of World War Two also matters. Schirm (2009) identifies Germany and Japan as
41 emerging powers excluded from a seat at the top table in the post-war global order; today, just like the
42 emerging powers, they are seeking greater political influence on the world stage. At Busan, the
43 previously-mentioned German official stressed that his organisation followed the principles of shared
44 ownership and responsibility similar to those of South-South co-operation. Leiderer and Klingbiel (2011)
45 suggest that the future divide may not be between the traditional donors and the BRICs but rather might
46 occur within the OECD between those who had been enthusiastic about the Paris Declaration and those
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3 who had dragged their feet - France, the USA and Japan. The U.S.A., for example, appears to have more
4 in common with the 'South' in its lack of willingness to entirely untie aid, justified by Clinton in her
5 speech at Busan as a matter of political culture. Yet, as evidenced by their comments on the various drafts
6 of the Document, Japan - who also resists untying - was at the opposite extreme to the United States in
7 seeking to water down text on gender equality.
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13 Russia's and the Arab states' position differed from any of the above. Russia sent only a small, fairly low-
14 level delegation to Busan, having already clearly distanced itself from the emerging donors by
15 emphasising, as a Russian think tank delegate put it, that Russia is 'not a South-South co-operation
16 provider'. It could not cast itself as part of the anti-colonial 'South' but seems to be 'bending over
17 backwards to play by the rules of the development club' (Gray, 2011:8). Russian official speakers at
18 Busan made strong arguments for multilateralism and distanced themselves from the approaches of Brazil
19 and China. Russia's self-image simultaneously includes (it defines itself as a BRIC) and excludes itself in
20 an imagined geography of emerging powers. Nevertheless, there was a sense of grievance among the
21 Russian delegates that India and China had much more weight than Russia. As one of them put it, 'In his
22 closing speech [OECD Secretary-General] Gurría said all the BRICs had participated in the meeting and
23 all were involved in drafting the Outcome Document. But it wasn't true'. The Arab states were also in an
24 impasse. Estimated to be providing three-quarters of non-DAC aid, nevertheless they kept a low profile at
25 Busan and received little recognition from other participants.¹² Neither Arabs nor Russians fit neatly
26 within a North-South binary.
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37 Although civil society delegates organised through Better Aid and the Open Forum for Civil Society
38 Organisations' (CSO) Development Effectiveness had an apparently unified distinctiveness that cut
39 across North/South/ East/West categories, according to one staff member from a northern NGO, the
40 fractures along North-South lines are deepening, leaving her trapped by her geographical label.
41 Nevertheless, civil society participants shared common values and meanings of development. A delegate
42 from Cambodia compared favourably the human rights and good governance agenda of the traditional
43 donors with that of the BRICs, who were contributing to a shrinking of the democratic space as traditional
44 donors pulled back in the face of merging powers' competition. In a similar vein, the African civil society
45 network reported that many CSOs see the engagement of new players as a reversal of democratic and
46 governance gains (ACP 2012). At the same time, civil society attachment to rights went beyond Clinton's
47 liberal rhetoric as they insisted on their understanding of development as social justice rather than
48 economic growth. A Northern NGO participant reflected favourably on what a Korean trade union leader
49 said at the opening ceremony:
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‘All the other speakers had been saying brilliant things about Korean development and achievements, but he spoke about Korea having the worse labour laws, the most exploitative working conditions etc and then said, “If this is what Korea is exporting then the world is doomed”’.

African civil society activist, Richard Ssewakiryanga, blogged:

‘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’¹³

Development as social justice contrasted with neo-liberalism 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 - development as growth. Saifa Hage from the Ministry of Planning, Liberia, said that working with the private sector for development is crucial. ‘The public-private partnership is all about job creation and growth. Busan represents a story of how enterprising business can move countries away from aid’, he said.¹⁴ The only sub-fracture – as identified by Clinton – was along the lines of liberal or authoritarian capitalism, a split, for example, that potentially separates Brazil and India from China and Russia (Armijo 2007). Brazil’s stance on the role of the private sector was more nuanced than that of the Asian emerging powers, as evidenced by its comments on the first draft of the Outcome Document that criticized the traditional donors’ emphasis on the private sector and FDI, suggesting more attention should be paid to the role of the state in economic and social development.

The North’s understanding of development as social welfare and direct poverty reduction (typified by the MDGs) may not be how much of the North now imagines itself. For example, a group of bilateral donors published a Busan position statement emphasising the importance of the private sector.¹⁵ ‘Business as a development tool gains traction at Busan’, observed a news agency, citing interviews with Dutch and German ministers. ‘The Korean model is inspiring both donors and aid recipients’.¹⁶ The privileging of economic growth was apparent in the Busan Joint Action Plan on Gender, drafted by Korea and the USA. In response, Busan’s civil society coalition published a statement rejecting the plan because of its premise that gender equality is smart economics rather than a right ‘that requires fundamental shifts in social, political and economic structures’.¹⁷ The only other evidence of dissenting voices was the United Nations Group representative in the pre-Busan negotiations in Paris, who tried but failed to insert ‘society’ and ‘persistent gender inequality’ into the text in paragraph 4 and ‘social responsibility’ into language on the

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private sector. Global social development, as articulated at Copenhagen in 1995, appears to have been jettisoned at Busan. Like organised civil society, multilateral institutions straddle North and South; while the United Nations tried to sustain at Busan a commitment to the human-rights-based development agenda of the 1990s, others are adapting very fast to development as growth.

The Bretton Woods Institutions and the OECD have been the strongest allies and institutional partners of G20 emerging powers, which in return 'have been unswerving ... in their support for a liberal global regime of open markets, competition and international finance institutions' (Cammack, 2011: 2). In the early years of the last decade, the World Bank established a Middle Income Country task force, concerned to ensure that countries would still want its technical advice, even when no longer interested in borrowing money (Eyben and Lister, 2004). In 2008, it set up a World Bank Institute trust fund on South-South Cooperation financed by Mexico, China, UK, Denmark and Spain. A World Bank fact sheet states that 'as a global connector, the World Bank can play an important strategic role in South-South co-operation ... It can be a global knowledge broker across regions'.¹⁸ The 2008 financial crisis created the conditions, argues Cammack, for the OECD and the World Bank to promote energetically the eastward and southward shift of the centre of gravity of the global economy (2011: 2). The post-WW2 institutions established by 'the West' have thus shifted their allegiance to where they believe their future lies. According to an insider, Gurriá's tweet about the move from aid to development reflects the internal tension between the long-standing members of the OECD and the Secretary General, who wants the big emerging powers to be brought into all the discussions about the OECD's future development strategy.

Busan revealed the importance of geographical identity: countries avoided being identified with the North wherever they could. Yet, where there are two camps, there is a role for intermediaries; claiming to be a bridge between two worlds provides the means to shift one's own location. Japan and Korea – members of the OECD - were proposed as a bridge between North and South, between East and West, and between traditional and non-traditional donors. Mexico and Brazil also identified themselves as bridges. The World Bank and the OECD were also claiming this status. At Busan it was easier for some than others to escape from the pejorative North and tactically become bridges or even part of the South.

Conclusion

Our paper has used Busan as a window onto the discursive complexities in a changing geo-political landscape. An equator-less, inclusive global partnership exposes the fractures and fluidity of the imagined

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3 geographies of development co-operation, where both differences and similarities are exaggerated to
4 create acceptable locations in the new landscape.
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8 Busan's striking emphasis on South-South co-operation cast an air of negativity around the concepts of
9 'aid' and 'donor' articulated on plenary panels as well as 'on the floor' and across conventional categories
10 of development actors. It has been claimed that Busan saw the successful eradication of the
11 donor/recipient binary of old (Barder, 2011). Yet a two-sided 'new' paradigm of donor versus provider
12 seems to be emerging, where the 'North' of North-South aid is treated pejoratively, and the 'Southern'
13 providers are depicted as the answer to the failures of the past. 'You can illustrate how aid results are not
14 really there, despite all of the money. But China gives us a loan, and in six months we have results' (AU
15 negotiator). Busan left an overriding impression that 'donors don't know how to do it: the solution is
16 South-South co-operation' (a UN official). Aid was seen as 'not smart; not trendy' (bilateral donor
17 representative). South-South co-operation was the subject of a whole stream of events but only rarely of
18 critical comment. Post-Busan, there have been hasty efforts to clarify this picture. 'South-South co-
19 operation is only supposed to be complementary to aid; it is not intended to replace it' (African
20 government official).. South-South co-operation is 'very limited; it cannot play a pivotal role' (Chinese
21 government official). 'Both types are needed' (OECD delegate). Yet the Busan discourse told a different
22 story, of a normative shift centred on a simple geographical distinction.
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34 Following six months of post-Busan negotiations, a meeting in June 2012 established a joint DAC/UNDP
35 secretariat to be overseen by a multi-stakeholder steering group and a ministerial system of three co-
36 chairs: one chosen from among DAC membership, one from countries that are recipients of development
37 co-operation, and one from 'south-south co-operation partners'.¹⁹ Overall, so far little progress has been
38 made in fully involving the emerging powers in the negotiations. 'They are hovering on the edge',
39 commented a DAC delegate;²⁰ 'they haven't rejected Busan but haven't embraced it either'. The question
40 of who is 'North' and who is 'South' does not appear at first glance as a key influence in these
41 negotiations. However, the complex and fractured imagined geographies and the efforts to bridge them
42 that we have identified in Busan we believe will continue to influence the future shape of global
43 development co-operation.
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52 These influences will also play out in other spaces. The emerging powers are more interested in the G20
53 than the Busan partnership as a forum for discussion, and if the G20 development working group
54 continues to share a common view on the centrality of economic growth in development, the dissenting
55 voices at Busan will have little chance to resist successfully a vision of development as the 'remorseless'
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drive ... towards capitalism on a global scale' (Cammack 2011: 14). Pieterse (2011) takes a more optimistic view. There are many forms of capitalism, he argues, and in a multi-polar world we are seeing a shift in which the West has lost its moral authority, emerging powers have greater political influence in the structures of global governance and South-South co-operation grows. This holds out hope for the majority of the world's citizens. Whether Pieterse's thesis proves sound may depend on the success of civil society actors, particularly those from the emerging powers, in sustaining a transformative and emancipatory vision of development - both by bringing back home the global policy debates and by greater engagement with the Second South. Conversely, if Cammack is right about the weight of the ideological collusion between the international finance institutions and the elites who are doing the bargaining for the emerging powers, then the chances of greater social justice through the geo-political shift in who shapes development appear to be limited. These are areas, we suggest, for further research.

Finally, in the short term traditional aid is not going to disappear. For those involved directly with its policies and implementation or indirectly as its recipients, there is an important task in appreciating and responding to how development aid from the North – and those delivering it – are perceived. Such perceptions are not new, but the discursive and political influence of the emerging powers means a more open discussion than before of aid's colonial inheritance. Whether or not his remarks were just political positioning in advance of Busan, Brazilian Minister Farani struck a chord when speaking about the importance of history and the significance of relationships. To cultivate a capacity for historically informed critical reflexivity is long overdue for aid practitioners.

Notes

¹ Acknowledgements.

² When commenting on the first draft of the Outcome Document

³ Whose membership is drawn from OECD donor governments, with multilateral observers.

⁴ South Korea, , joined the OECD soon after Mexico .

⁵ The consequent downplaying of the Paris principles may explain why there was a stronger OECD ministerial presence than had initially been forecast.

⁶ 'Busan – a new global divide' <http://devpolicy.org/busan-%E2%80%94-a-new-global-divide-on-aid> (accessed 1 March 2012).

⁷ Korean Government comments on first draft of the Outcome Document.

⁸ Group of HLF4 Outcome Document sherpas' draft summary record of discussion on 27 October 2011. DCD/DAC/EFF/M(2011)3/PROV

⁹ See also Mawdsley (2011).

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¹⁰ At a seminar in the UK, March 2012.

¹¹ www.devex.com/en/news/busan-reflections-we-came-we-saw-we-conquered/76877 (accessed in December 2011).

¹² Personal communication from Inken Wiese.

¹³ <http://www.devex.com/en/news/busan-reflections-we-came-we-saw-we-conquered/76877> (accessed on December 2011).

¹⁴ <http://ins.onlinedemocracy.ca/?p=26095> (accessed 5 December 2011).

¹⁵ <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/Speeches-and-articles/2011/Letter-Development-Ministers-call-for-aid-to-become-more-transparent-and-effective/> (accessed 5 December 2011).

¹⁶ <http://ins.onlinedemocracy.ca/?p=26095> (accessed 5 December 2011).

¹⁷ <http://www.awid.org/Library/Busan-Global-Women-s-Forum-Political-Statement> (accessed 5 December 2011).

¹⁸ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/FactSheetBogotaConference.pdf> (accessed 5 December 2011).

¹⁹ DCD's report on the final meeting of the WP-EFF, 28&29 June 2012 – Paris, Unesco. At this meeting only the DAC membership nominated their representatives on the steering group and elected their co-chair.

²⁰ Interviewed in July 2012.

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39 [content/uploads/Jiaju_XU_2011_Busan_Youth_Forum_final.pdf](http://www.globaleconomicgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/Jiaju_XU_2011_Busan_Youth_Forum_final.pdf)
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