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The Global South at the UN: Using International Politics to Re-Vision the Global

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Abstract

This article argues that the countries of the global South have defined themselves in a globally-positioned way since the 1960s - long before the current wave of neoliberal globalization or academic thinking about the 'global South'. This is shown by tracing the history of the formation of the global South as a political bloc in the form of the Group of Seventy Seven, or G77, and in their aspirations and negotiations at the United Nations. The article explores how the G77 acts in the global political system, and how it tries to act *on* the global political system in order to produce a particular vision of the global. This is done through an analysis of some of the G77's proposals of how to restructure the global order, including the NIEO and more recently in the UN's Financing for Development conferences. The South's vision of the global with stark disparities between North and South and their proposals to ameliorate the situation, is contrasted with a newly emerging Northern vision of the global which seeks to dissolve North and South into a neutral, holistic vision in which power and inequality is not salient.

Introduction: The Global South in World Politics

This paper argues that the countries of the global South have defined themselves in a globally-positioned way since the 1960s - long before the current wave of neoliberal globalization or academic thinking about the 'global South'. I show this by tracing the history of the formation of the global South as a political bloc in the form of the Group of Seventy Seven, or G77, and in their aspirations and negotiations at the United Nations. They have consistently defined their problems as being largely brought about by the unjust nature of the international order and have sought to improve their situation by using international law and global political processes to re-shape that order. Their *raison d'être* as a political bloc has been to propose alternative visions of the global and to try to bring them into being. They have pursued this strategy consistently from the 1960s right up to today¹.

The terms 'developing countries', 'third world', 'poor countries', 'South' and 'global South' are often used interchangeably by scholars and policy-makers. But this belies the significant differences in the various conceptual frameworks that underlie the different terms. Whilst 'developing countries', 'poor countries' and (most of the time) 'South' are based mainly on an *economic* categorization of the countries of the world, 'third world' and 'global South' emphasize *political* positions in global power relations. While the first group of terms emphasize poverty, under-development and backwardness, the second group emphasize marginal positions within global systems of decision-making. Whilst the economic-based terms draw a picture of the world as divided between rich and poor countries without calling into question why these wealth differentials exist, the political-based terms stress that this wealth inequality results from unequal power relations within the global order. It is perhaps noteworthy that many scholars and politicians from the North tend to emphasize the economic aspects, while those from the South more often focus on the political nature of their predicament.

The two political terms, ‘third world’ and ‘global South’, are based on different political analyses of the world situation and closely align with two different political groupings that formed soon after the former colonial territories in Africa, Asia and Latin America gained independence – the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of Seventy Seven (G77). The NAM conceived of itself as a group of countries not aligned to either of the two big superpowers (the USA and the USSR) or their ideologies (capitalism or Stalinist communism). Instead they sought to find their own alternative path to development, whilst stressing non-involvement in the Cold War and anti-imperialism (Gupta 1992: 65). The G77, on the other hand, perceived themselves as countries that were at a structural disadvantage in the international economic order (Najam 2003). They thus sought to unite as a political bloc in order to try to change the international economic system through the then new international organisations of global governance, particularly the United Nations.

In this article I will interrogate the global South as both a political concept, and in the form of the G77, as a political actor in the global system. The G77 has been described as the “influential and authentic voice of the global South” in international politics (Najam 2003:213). Today it has over 130 members. China supports the group and often acts with it, although is not a member, and thus many statements are made in the name of ‘the G77 and China’. On its website the G77 describes itself as:

the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations, which provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major economic issues within the United Nations system... (www.g77.org/doc).

I will focus on the activities of the G77 at the UN, where the member countries of the G77 self-identify as being the global South, and where most discussions tend to split on fairly clear North-South lines (Malone & Hagman 2002). While the G77 often use the terms ‘South’ and ‘global South’ interchangeably, and also frequently refer to themselves as ‘developing countries’, their analysis of their situation and their proposed solutions are consistent with the global political framework implied in the concept of ‘global South’, ie. one based on a particular positionality in an unjust world system.

This article seeks to explore how the G77 acts in the global political system, and in particular, how it tries to act *on* the global political system and tries to shape it in order to produce a particular vision of the global. Thus rather than focusing on the nature of the ‘South’ within the term ‘global South’, this article instead problematizes and explores the nature of the ‘global’. At its centre is an exploration of the alternative vision of the ‘global’ that the G77 is calling for, and how this contrasts with the dominant vision of the global held by the North. Whilst it is often claimed that ‘there is no alternative’ to neoliberal globalization, it remains the case that the G77 have been proposing alternatives for decades.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section looks at the history of the G77 and some of their more well-known proposals of how to re-structure the world order, The following section looks at some of the most important global discussions that have taken place in the twenty first century about the shape of the future global order – those that have taken place within the framework of the UN’s Financing for Development conferences – and discusses some of the different visions proposed by actors from the North and from the South. The fourth section then focusses on the discussions that took place at the most recent Financing for Development conference which took place in Addis Abeba in 2015 and analyses in depth the different visions of the global called for by the global South and the global North. Finally, the conclusion revisits the concept of the ‘global South’ and suggests that it indeed has continuing salience in global political analysis and struggles.

The G77 and their Vision of the Global

The history of the G77 is intimately tied up with their analysis of their marginalized positionality in the global economic order. In the early 1960s a number of countries from three different continents -

Africa, Asia and Latin America - came together to call for an international conference on trade issues under the auspices of the UN. This led to the first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in June 1965. At this conference these developing countries voted together as a bloc for the first time, ignoring their internal differences and conflicts of interest. In the one-country-one-vote system of the UN they thought that by sticking together they could secure majority votes and thus bring about change through the international political system. This, however, turned out not to be the case, as out-voted developed countries simply refused to offer the concession on which they had been out-voted (Toye 2014:1761). Nonetheless, the 77 developing countries saw the potential in working together in this way and at the end of the conference they signed the Joint Declaration of the Seventy Seven Developing Countries, pledging mutual cooperation in the common cause of a new world order. A few years later, in October 1967, they held their first Ministerial meeting in Algiers where they constituted the group as a permanent organization.

The formation of the G77 was seen as radical and surprising at the time. Dominant narratives saw the three continents as differing sharply in their background, culture and developmental needs. But in its formation the G77 created a different narrative based on unity, complementarity, cooperation and solidarity between the politically marginalized countries in the global order. Although the G77 talked about themselves as 'developing countries', using the dominant terminology at that time, they clearly saw themselves quite differently and in a way that fits much closer with the term 'global South', even though this term was only to be developed several years later.

Throughout the 1960s the developing countries mobilized under the auspices of the G77 and advocated reform of the laws governing international economic relations that reflected their post-colonial demands for control over economic activity within their own borders, for participation in the governance of the globalizing economy, for fair access to technology, and for improved terms of international trade, finance and investment (Salomon 2013: 36). In the 1970s, as their numerical superiority in the UN grew, they instituted a deliberate campaign to change the existing international economic structure and the law which supported it (Ellis 1985:655). In the early 1970s the G77 set out for the first time its vision for a global society in its Declaration of the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO). In it they proposed an alternative global order, which in their words would be:

based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all States, irrespective of their economic and social systems which shall correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic and social development and peace and justice for present and future generations (United Nations 1974:1).

Their proposed alternative world order was not based on liberalism, but on a kind of neo-Keynesianism that emphasized state sovereignty and the role of the state in shaping and regulating markets (Krasner 1985). In this alternative vision of the global there would be no imperialism or neo-colonialism but the sovereign equality of states and self-determination of all peoples. All states would have full sovereignty over their natural resources and the ability to regulate transnational corporations that operate within their borders. At the international level all states would participate equally in decision-making about global economic issues and cooperate to solve economic problems in a just and equitable way. Efforts would be made to minimize the disparities in wealth that existed between developed and developing countries by extending financial assistance without conditionalities, by improving the terms of trade, by ensuring the flow of finance to developing countries and by reforming the international monetary system

Although the resolution on the NEIO was passed at the UN General Assembly the world order that it proposed did not come into being. Nonetheless the G77 have continued to develop their ideas about alternative 'globals' and continued to try to bring them about through the institutions of global politics. Thus it is the case that many of the North-South debates at the UN are fundamentally debates

about alternative world orders. In the next section I will look at some of the most important UN discussions about the nature of the future world order – those that have taken place within the framework of the UN's Financing for Development conferences.

The G77 and Financing for Development

Financing for development (FFD) has been one of the central concerns of the G77 since its formation. The issue loomed large in the first UNCTAD conference in 1965, was a major element of the NIEO in the 1970s and has continued to be a major concern to the present day. For many decades the G77 has called for a financing for development process to be held at the UN. It was only in the late 1990s, after a series of high profile UN conferences calling for various development actions and in the context of both the Asian financial crisis and the new millennium, that a UN Financing for Development process was finally agreed.

The first UN Conference on Financing for Development was held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 and was followed by a second conference in Doha in 2008. In between the General Assembly held biannual High Level Dialogues on Financing for Development to follow up on implementation, thus keeping the issue firmly on the UN agenda. In 2015, in parallel with discussions about the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), a third FFD conference took place in Addis Abeba.

The first conference in Monterrey was in many ways a landmark event. Not only was it the first time that high level discussions about global finance had taken place under the auspices of the United Nations, it was also the first United Nations conference to bring together governments, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, plus business and civil society, to try to find a shared solution to a global problem (Bouab 2004:359, Haque 2004: 219, Nunnenkamp & Thiele 2013:75). It was also unusual in that the discussions did not focus just on the traditional development topics, but also looked at more mainstream financial issues such as trade and investment, foreign debt, establishing domestic financial markets, and reforms to the international financial system.

Despite wide-ranging discussions and proposals that circulated before the conference – which included all manner of innovative proposals for financing development such as global taxes, a global lottery and using Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to fund development (Atkinson 2004a, 2004b, Herman 2013) - the outcome of Monterrey was far from innovative. The final document set out a development focus on poverty reduction set in the context of a general neoliberal framework of economic growth (Martens 2002:4). It suggested a varied mix of financing options including Official Development Assistance (ODA), or aid, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), trade and debt relief. Northern countries pledged to give more aid and also to offer more debt relief in what was hailed as a new 'partnership of solidarity' between the North and the South. The private sector was encouraged to contribute to development through increased foreign direct investment, trade was seen as an 'engine of development' and open markets and liberalisation were applauded. Little in the status quo was changed. NGOs criticised the Monterrey Consensus as simply being "the Washington consensus under a sombrero" (Martens 2007:1). In Doha the outcome was much the same – a compromise mix of policy proposals in a broad neoliberal framework with little change from Monterrey.

In the Monterrey and Doha conferences negotiating positions did not diverge on clear North-South lines. Whilst the South mainly put forward a united position as the G77 and called for NIEO-type reforms, the Northern countries had quite different positions on many issues. In particular there was a significant split between many of the European countries, which favoured more progressive policies and were open to discussing several of the more innovative options, such as a currency transaction tax to fund development or the establishment of a Global Economic and Security Council, and the JUSCANZ bloc of Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, who strongly resisted any moves in that direction.

However after the 2008 financial crisis the political-economic landscape began to change as most Northern governments found themselves extremely short of money while private capital was in search of new places in which to invest. Thus between the Doha conference and the third FFD conference in Addis Abeba a number of policy ideas were developed in Northern think tanks and international business forums and widely disseminated in various North-dominated international policy networks (eg. IRF 2015, Kharas & McArthur 2014, Sandor et al 2009, World Economic Forum 2012, 2014a, 2014b). The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness at Busan in 2011 was particularly influential in reformulating the Northern position, as was the project on Redesigning Development Finance which was carried out by the OECD and World Economic Forum and in which many senior politicians and business people were involved. The result was that by the time of the Addis Abeba conference the North had, for the first time, unified around a widely agreed set of policy proposals.

Over the same period the South had grown more diverse. China and India, along with Brazil, Russia and South Africa had become significant economic forces and had gained geopolitical importance with the formation of the BRICS grouping and the inclusion of their leaders in the newly reformulated G20. Meanwhile the Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were falling even further behind. Thus the unity of the Global South, always somewhat fragile, was becoming more and more difficult to sustain (Toye 2014). In other UN forums, particularly in the discussions on climate change, inter-South disagreements were so intense that the G77 was threatening to disintegrate. However in the FFD process the G77 managed for the most part to put their differences aside and to negotiate as one bloc. Thus the Addis conference in 2015 is particularly significant because this was the first time that there was a marked North-South split and an extremely contentious battle between two clearly defined policy positions regarding the shape of the future global order.

The 2015 Financing for Development Debates

The negotiations in the run-up to the Addis conference were extremely tense and heated affairs (Muchhala 2015). Observers remarked that there was a marked clash between the positions of the North and South (IISD 2015). Extra drafting sessions were added but still agreement could not be reached. In the end the final document was only agreed at the Addis conference itself after a series of closed-door meetings between key countries from the North and South. Some of the points of contention were the role of the private sector, the nature of Official Development Assistance (ODA or 'aid'), the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), the integration or separation of climate and development issues, debt relief and tax. But in this article I will argue that in order to understand what was really at stake in these negotiations it is necessary to not get lost in the minute details of each disagreement, but instead to step back and look at the two negotiating positions as whole policy visions about the nature of the future world order. Analysed this way we can see that the North and the South were in fact proposing different ways of 'producing the world' – they were arguing for different visions of 'the global'.

Based on a review of publically available documents from the drafting sessions, articles and reports produced by observers, and interviews with civil society representatives who were present in Addis during the conference, this paper seeks to bring into focus the different visions of the 'global' of the North and the South in 2015.

The 'Global' of the Global South

The vision of the global proposed by the South was in many respects a reformulation of the vision encompassed in the New International Economic Order (NIEO). In this vision separate countries have their own sovereignty and make their own decisions about the best policies and approaches to development. These countries are then embedded in a loosely connected international order in which,

they argue, the rules should be democratically decided by all countries and should be based on a relationship of solidarity between the rich North and the poor South.

This vision can be seen in the statements made by representatives of the G77&China, the African bloc, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as by individual countries of the South. Throughout the negotiations they continually stressed the importance of a global order in which independent national governments were in charge of the development processes within their countries. In line with this they stressed that it was fundamental that governments have enough policy space to make their own decisions about national policies. For example, in their comments at the second drafting session, the representative of the G77 and China said:

The issue of policy space for national governments must also be respected. Individual Member State regulations on public domestic financing must be the prerogative of national governments, in accordance with their own specific needs and objectives. (G77 & China 2015:3)

In line with the vision of sovereign governments in charge of the development processes within their own countries the South also placed considerable emphasis on the need for public sector funding and they argued repeatedly that “public funding should always take precedence over private financing” when it comes to matters of development and poverty reduction (G77 & China 2015c:1). This vision, we can see, is what drove their negotiating positions with regard to ODA, to tax, and to debt.

They argued that ODA is vitally important for developing countries and must remain central to development financing. They criticize Northern countries for not meeting the ODA commitments that they made at previous Financing for Development conferences and urge them to pledge to increase their aid in the coming years. For example in the second drafting session the representative for the G77 & China said:

The Group of 77 and China ... is of the firm view that ODA represents the major source of financing for the development of many developing countries and it must target the eradication of poverty in its multiple dimensions (G77 & China 2015:3).

They also noted that in recent years the amount of ODA they receive has been decreasing as there has been a new trend to channel ODA to humanitarian disasters and to in-country programs in the North, for example to fund refugee assistance. And they further feared that the re-framing of ‘development’ as ‘sustainable development’ would mean that the supposedly additional funds promised for climate initiatives will in fact be taken from existing ODA budgets. Thus they argue for these different things to be delineated and measured clearly.

Above all they argue that ODA is an expression of the ‘partnership of solidarity’ between the North and the South and they reiterate the need for a global partnership for development. For example in the second drafting session the G77 representative said:

The Group of 77 and China calls upon developed countries to agree and commit to a new phase of international cooperation through a strengthened and scaled-up global partnership for development, which should be the centrepiece for completing the unfinished business of the MDGs and implementing the post-2015 development agenda (G77 & China 2015:5-6)

Again and again they stress that ‘partnership’ means partnership between Northern and Southern countries and they further argue that this partnership should be based on the Rio Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) – a principle that was developed in 1992 in the context of the Rio Earth Summit and stipulates that whilst all countries share a common responsibility to protect the environment this responsibility is differentiated according to the historical pressure that that

society has placed on the environment and the technologies and financial resources which they command. The countries of the South argued that this principle sets out the balance of universality, differentiation and responsibility that previous international agreements had defined and should be also applied to the responsibility for sustainable development. Thus at the third drafting session:

The traditional definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA), based on North-South Cooperation, should be maintained, with a reaffirmation of the fact that ODA remains the main source of international financing for development for many developing countries. It should be based on quantified and time-bound targets that are consistent with, and build upon, MDG-8, the global partnership for development, which must of necessity be re-invigorated and strengthened, and in accordance with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) (G77 & China 2015b:1)

As well as ODA they also emphasise that the ability to collect tax revenue is extremely important in generating public funds to finance development. A main issue here is the matter of tax avoidance and tax evasion, particularly by multinational companies. This was stated clearly for example by the representative of the African Group at the first drafting session:

It is vitally important to address tax evasion of transnational companies and domestic enterprises... Africa realizes that efforts for curbing illicit financial flows (IFFs) transcend national and regional boundaries. They drain foreign exchange reserves, which limit the capacity of our countries to import. They also negatively affect domestic resource mobilization by reducing the tax collection base. Additionally, they undermine the rule of law, stifle trade and worsen countries macroeconomic conditions. (African Group 2015a:2)

Since multinational companies are adept at finding ways to avoid paying taxes in developing countries by using loop holes in tax treaties and tax laws, they urgently call for the creation of an international tax body at the UN through which all countries can come together and democratically decide on how to reform the international tax system to minimize the possibilities for tax avoidance and evasion. At present there is a UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. This committee is very small and under-resourced, with just two permanent staff and only has non-governmental status.² The Southern countries call to upgrade this committee into an inter-governmental committee on tax cooperation which could then act as a norm-setting body on tax matters. In this form it would be able to act as the central forum for all countries to come together to discuss and agree on international tax issues and would be the centre point in designing a new democratic and just global tax system. For example, during the third drafting session the representative of the G77 & China said:

There needs to be agreement on the upgrading of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters and the Statistical Commission to inter-governmental entities. We have talked about these issues for a long time now, and there is a need to address them sooner rather than later (G77 & China 2015b:1).

This idea was in fact initially proposed in the 1990s by Vito Tanzi, then Director of Fiscal Affairs at the IMF. It formed one of the recommendations of the Report of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development in 2001 and has been supported in various UN reports and statements since then including most recently in the Synthesis Report of the Secretary General on the Post-2015 Agenda in 2014 (United Nations 2014). Civil Society actively pushed for it in the preparations for the Monterrey Conference and it even made its way onto the zero draft of the Doha Declaration. In Addis, as I have mentioned, it was the largest point of contention between the North and the South and was the final issue that caused the negotiations to be extended.

Along with ODA and tax, the South emphasized the importance of sustainable debt restructuring mechanisms in order to free up public money to spend on development activities. So for example in the first drafting session the representative of the G77 & China said:

Lack of sustainability of external debt can be a main obstacle to development, economic growth and poverty eradication and an impediment to human rights and achieving greater equity (G77 & China 2015d:1)

They call for the development of an international system of debt re-structuring as soon as possible. In the words of the Moroccan Ambassador, speaking on behalf of the African Group:

We need to establish an international debt resolution mechanism to guarantee, a just and equivalent treatment for creditors and debtors. In this regard, we welcome the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 68/304 "towards the establishment of a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes" ... with the purpose to elaborate and adopt, through a process of intergovernmental negotiations, a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring processes (Africa Group 2015c:2)

The South is also in support of various innovative financing mechanisms that have been discussed both before and after Monterrey. These include various global taxes, such as a currency transaction tax, the development of a global lottery, the use of SDRs to fund development, and many other initiatives that seek to find new sources of public funds for development. These are very contentious issues and the US makes sure that these ideas do not make their way into any final outcome document other than in vague references to 'innovative finance for development'.

The next part of their vision is that sovereign countries should be part of a fair and democratic international system. They often highlighted the unfairness of the present system and how it made things very difficult for developing countries. They thus called for an 'international enabling environment' for development. For example, the representative of G77 & China said in the first drafting session:

Developing countries should be supported by an enabling international environment, which includes a supportive and just economic and financial international system where the rules are fair and pro-development (G77 & China 2015c:3)

To bring this about they continue to ask for more democratic and representative global governance arrangements such that countries from the South will have an equal voice in intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, IMF and the WTO, which are today dominated by the countries from the North. While they managed to get a whole range of global governance reforms into the zero draft - including a sovereign debt restructuring body, a global health fund to bring together existing global health funds, an *ad hoc* advisory body to review the role of multilateral and regional development banks, commodity stabilization funds, increasing developing country participation in the Financial Stability Board, and implementing reforms in International Financial Institutions – not one of them made it into the final outcome document (IISD 2015).

The vision of the South regarding financing for development centres around public sector funding. They do, of course, acknowledge that the private sector has a role to play, but stress repeatedly that this is a secondary role. They argue that since companies primarily seek to make profit they cannot be relied upon to bring about positive development outcomes without external regulation and supervision. Thus throughout the negotiations they argued that the emphasis should be less on the private sector and more on states. Whilst they were keen to attract private capital to their countries their views about the best way to do this differed markedly from that of the North.

They acknowledged that foreign direct investment was important, but they also stressed that it does not necessarily bring about development outcomes and would need to be significantly changed to do so. For example in the first drafting session the representative of the African Group said:

It is equally important to highlight that achieving [development outcomes] must include a change in the mindset of private investors to ensure that their investment decision making is not based on profit only, but must incorporate sustainable development needs (African Group 2015b:2)

They also called for more regulation of transnational companies and appropriate guidelines for all forms of investment. Likewise, whilst they accepted that trade is important for development and could provide an engine for growth in developing countries they also noted that:

This will always be elusive to the G77 and China as long as a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system is not agreed upon. This should also be one of the key deliverables in the Addis Ababa Outcome Document. (G77 & China 2015c:2)

Putting all this together we can see that the vision of the global presented by the South is one in which sovereign states decide their own policies whilst being embedded in a loose international community which democratically makes a minimum number of global rules. Governments raise public funds from taxing business and citizens and use this to provide public services and carry out some degree of redistribution. A global tax body enables governments to collect taxes from transnational corporations operating in their borders, and globally-agreed debt relief mechanisms ensure that government funds are not lost to overseas creditors. Private capital is attracted, encouraged to engage in development activities and is properly regulated. Internationally there is cooperation and solidarity between the states of the North and those of the South expressed in flows of ODA. In this vision of the global efforts are made to remove structural inequalities between the North and the South in order to create a just and democratic global order.

The 'Global' of the Global North

In sharp contrast the Northern countries argued for a completely different way of conceptualizing international development and its financing. They repeatedly argued for a radical paradigm change and claimed that the post-2015 development agenda, and the way of financing it, must be something radically new. The key elements of this radical new vision of the global were a move away from a North-South conceptualization of the world towards a universal vision, the bringing together of development and climate issues, and a major new role for the private sector. To give an example of the emphasis on changing approaches, here is a quote from the EU representative at the second drafting session:

The zero-draft does not fully capture the paradigm shift towards a universal agenda that has taken place since Monterrey and that the SDGs will concretely reflect, and remains overly premised on an outdated North-South understanding of the world (EU 2015: 2)

The new vision of the North – promoted by all the Northern countries along with the EU and the OECD - is one of development being led by global capital and private investment. The emphasis is very much on the private sector. They thus stress that ODA can only form a tiny part of development finance and are generally not supportive of attempts to help developing countries increase their tax collection from multinational companies or to reduce debt burdens beyond the most extreme. Their focus is on increasing economic integration with more foreign direct investment and more trade. As the UK representative said at the first drafting session:

Working in partnership with the private sector to generate real progress is ... at the core of our collective forward agenda (UK 2015a:1)

And again by the EU in the second drafting session:

Ensuring the right form of engagement by the private sector, and incentivising its positive contribution to sustainable development, will be one of the key challenges for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda (EU 2015:3)

In order to manifest this particular agenda the focus of the North was on finding ways to facilitate global capital to do business in developing countries. In this view governments need to be responsive to the requirements of global capital and do what is necessary to attract it to their countries. For example, the US representative said in the first drafting session:

The Addis outcome document must also recognize that capital will naturally flow to countries where investors believe they can get a good rate of return and their investments will be protected. To attract and enhance inflows of productive capital for maximum development impact, countries need to create a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate, with proper contract enforcement and respect for property rights (US 2015b:1)

To this aim they emphasised three key issues: a domestic level enabling policy environment, public-private partnerships and various mechanisms to improve the risk-return ratio for companies.

In the vision of the North governments, and in particular Southern governments, should step back from leading and implementing and should instead focus on 'enabling'. The key role of governments in their vision is to provide the right policy environment that will enable global capital to do business in Southern countries. Throughout the negotiations the North repeatedly stressed the need for an 'enabling environment' at national level. Against the calls of the South for 'policy space' the North emphasized the importance of all countries having the right mix of policies and regulations that would enable capital to flow across national borders with minimum transaction costs and which would focus on guaranteeing property rights, safeguarding investments and reducing taxation and regulation. At the second drafting session the EU representative put it this way:

The policy dimension of the document should be strengthened significantly by stressing the centrality of stable and enabling environments, sound, effective and coherent policies, effective institutions and good governance. Policy coherence by all countries and at all levels will be key in moving towards poverty eradication and sustainable development (EU 2015:1).

The 'right policies' in this vision are largely policies that have been developed in the North. This in particular includes new the tax norms that were recently set out in the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) guidelines of the OECD and the OECD's recently-revised Policy Framework for Investment (PFI). In both of these cases supposedly global norms were devised by the Northern countries with the expectation that they would be implemented by all. These particular policy norms were mentioned frequently in the negotiations, with the BEPS process being mentioned when the South called to move tax negotiations to the UN. In contrast to the South's call for inclusive and democratic rule-making at the global level, the vision of the North calls for an order where global rules should be decided by a small group of Northern countries.

Along with an enabling policy environment the North stressed the importance of public-private partnerships to facilitate private sector involvement. The US representative set out how he saw the respective roles of the public and private sectors in his intervention in the first drafting session:

[Along with finance] the private sector also provides management skills, information technology and can connect producers to value-chains. In turn, the public sector supports creation of the necessary policy environment and mitigates risk (US 2015b:2)

In this vision it is the private sector that should be implementing development activities rather than Southern governments, while Southern governments should concentrate on enabling policies and risk mitigation. There is a focus on infrastructure, and in particular large scale infrastructure projects. In order to incentivize the private sector to invest in this traditionally risky area the North sought ways to 'de-risk' these projects so that their 'risk-return profile' would be attractive to investors. They proposed finding projects that would generate adequate revenue streams, for example in the form of user payments or debt servicing, and then creating a pipeline of such 'bankable' projects. They proposed that national governments would take on much of the risk of these investments through a range of new financial mechanisms.

To this end the North suggested that a good use of ODA would be to finance some of these risk-reduction mechanisms. Thus alongside general statements that ODA was no longer the main mechanism to finance development and acknowledgements that its levels were declining, the North proposed that ODA be made 'smarter' by using it to leverage private sector investments through such de-risking mechanisms. So for example at the first drafting session the representative of Switzerland said:

ODA will be nowhere near sufficient to finance the ambitious and universal Post-2015 agenda we are all striving for. Therefore, the Addis Ababa outcome will have to show how ODA can be used in a smart way to leverage other sources of financing for sustainable development (Switzerland 2015::2)

And at the second drafting session the OECD representative reiterated much the same thing:

We are also working on making ODA "smarter" by promoting its strategic use to catalyse other sources of funding, including private investment which is a critical resource for sustainable development (OECD 2015b:2)

Throughout the negotiations there was repeated emphasis on these new forms of 'blended finance' in the form of guarantees, first loss funding and various mechanisms that blend ODA with private finance. For example at the first drafting session the representative of Canada set it out like this:

Public-private blended finance, represent an essential part of the solution to the Financing for Development gaps. Blended finance will ... allow us to mobilize additional capital for development by mitigating risk (Canada 2015:1).

Similar thoughts come at the second drafting session from the EU representative:

We would ask the co-facilitators to balance the text on public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships and innovative finance including blending, guarantees, equity, and other risk-sharing instruments, so as to have a more holistic approach to leveraging funding (EU 2015:3)

In this new vision 'partnership' is not a relationship of solidarity between the governments of the North and the South, but instead a business relationship between governments and companies. Thus the 'global partnership for development' is subtly transformed to 'multi-stakeholder partnerships for development'. For example, at the second drafting session the EU representative said:

[W]e believe that the Addis outcome needs to stress the multi-stakeholder character of the global partnership, able to mobilise action by all countries and stakeholders at all levels (EU 2015:3)

And again from the US:

Multi-stakeholder partnerships and blended financing approaches... are gaining currency as the new model for support to development and should be welcomed (US 2015:2)

In this vision of private sector financed development, the role of Southern governments as providers of public services is severely diminished. And raising public funds is correspondingly less important. Only minimal public finance needs to be raised, according to this vision, in order to provide some basic kind of social protection for the very poorest in these countries. Underlying the narrative of a 'global social compact' in which 'no-one is left behind' is a fact a vision in which it is the poor who will be paying for the social protection of the poorest. This is because in the vision of the North social protection mechanisms should be funded from domestic tax revenues, with a focus on collecting taxes from citizens of their own countries. The North adamantly blocked any attempts to focus on how developing countries could stop tax avoidance by multinational companies or democratize global rule-making regarding taxation and instead focused on initiatives to build the capacity of domestic tax administrations to broaden their tax base and collect more taxes from their citizens.

So we can see that the North is trying to use the Financing for Development discussions to produce a new conceptualization of the global by re-framing the roles of state, society and market. Their vision emphasizes increasing international economic integration and stresses the primary role of global capital. In order to facilitate the flow of capital across borders governments are called to adhere to global policy norms and must essentially follow the same economic approach everywhere, which includes limited regulation and taxation and reduced state provision of public services. In their proposed world order public funding is of only secondary importance and the role of ODA, tax and debt relief are negligible. There is no language of solidarity or cooperation between North and South and instead a vision of a universal world order is presented.

Conclusion: The Global South and Alternative Visions of the Global

This analysis of the 2015 Financing for Development negotiations has shown two clear and contrasting visions of the 'global' presented by the North and the South. These visions of the global did not, of course, appear out of nowhere on the occasion of this conference. The global vision of the South has a long history and many of its elements can be discerned behind many other debates at the UN, from the discussions about the so-called New International Economic Order in the 1970s, through *inter alia* negotiations about the right to development in the 1980s, discussions about the MDGs in the late 1990s, and its declaration of a *New World Order for Living Well* in 2014. The global vision of the North, as a shared and coherent vision, has a rather more recent history, emerging in the post-Cold War order and in early twenty first century discussions about aid effectiveness. In the 2015 Financing for Development discussions we can see, for the first time, the full policy vision of each side and with it the vision of contrasting world orders. Here we see the countries of the global South presenting a vision of the global with stark disparities between North and South, while the global North presents a contrasting vision of 'an equator-less landscape of a multi-stakeholder global partnership' (Eyben & Savage 2013).

Scholars have argued that the term 'global South' emphasizes the place of the countries of the South in the global political system and theorizes existing global power relations, inequalities and hegemony in ways that enable challenge and resistance (Levander & Mignolo 2011, Mahler 2015). This paper has shown that the countries of the global South, acting together as the G77, have held such an analysis long before the coming into fashion of the term 'global South'. And based on their analysis of global power relations they have developed their own a vision of an alternative world order, an alternative 'global', and sought to bring it into being through discussions and negotiations at the UN. The global North has consistently tried to resist these attempts, most recently by creating a contrasting vision of the global which dissolves any difference between 'North' and 'South'. This is perhaps the

greatest indication that the terminology of 'global South', and the theoretical framework which underlies it, indeed has significant political and symbolic power.

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Notes

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² The Committee is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC and was originally established in 1968 as the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Tax Treaties between Developed and Developing Countries with the specific remit of creating a model double taxation treaty between developed and developing countries. In 1980 it was re-named the "Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters" and its remit and membership were expanded to include a broader range of tax issues. In 2004 it was again re-named and became the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. It currently has 25 members who are tax experts appointed by their governments meet annually in Geneva for 5 working days per year