THE SDGS IN MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES: SETTING OR SERVING

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS? EVIDENCE FROM ECUADOR

ABSTRACT

The expansion of middle-income countries in the global South is now widely acknowledged as significant for international development research and practice. But, as yet, scholars have not fully considered how middle-income countries are responding to the new global goals on international development (the Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs) outlined in Agenda 2030. Equally, insufficient attention has been paid to how – if at all – the SDGs shape domestic development policies and practices in middle income countries. We ask these questions in Ecuador, a country that recently moved from being a lower middle-income and donor dependent country to a more autonomous higher middle-income country with the capacity to promote its own national domestic development approach, Buen Vivir (in English: living well). Deploying a qualitative case study methodology and drawing primarily on in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with policy makers working in Ecuador's national government and in the capital Quito, we show that policy makers' engagement with the SDGs is selective, with an emphasis on those goals and targets which are considered of domestic importance. Both the national government and Quito's local government are currently focussing mainly on SDGs 10.2 (breaking inequalities) and 11 (inclusive cities). We demonstrate that, in practice, how policy makers understand implementation of these "priority" goals is not consistent; it depends on political preferences, where policy makers are located in the architecture of decentralised governance and the context-specific challenges they face. Evidence from Ecuador suggests that the SDGs cannot be understood as a single coherent template for development that states will simply adopt. Rather they should be analysed in the context of a rapidly changing architecture of global power, shaped by the context-specific nature of national development challenges and national political structures, including decentralisation.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Development Goals, Middle-Income Countries, Decentralisation,

Ecuador, SDGs 11 & 10.2, Quito

1. INTRODUCTION

How are middle-income countries[i] in the global South responding to the new global goals on international development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in Agenda 2030[ii]? How, if at all, do the SDGs shape domestic development policies and practices? These are particularly pertinent questions to ask now, as the euphoria of having managed to get global agreement on the content of Agenda 2030 fades and we turn to what the SDGs mean on the ground. We can expect their impact to be considerably different from the earlier round of international standard setting for development, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) because of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the global architecture of power, production, and influence, allied to the fact that the SDGs are a broader, more ambitious and less quantifiable sets of goals. The phenomenal rise of the Chinese economy and the expansion of middle income economies in the global South both suggest that the model of global governance in which globally-determined priorities for development were willingly or coercively adopted in low and middle-income countries no longer holds. How the shifts in power away from the West and the rise of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and other "developing" countries are reshaping global politics has been subject to considerable analysis (Ikenberry, 2008; Kahler, 2013); but scholars have not, as yet, fully uncovered what these shifts mean for engagement with, and integration of, the SDGs at the domestic level within middle-income countries.

This paper asks those questions in Ecuador, which serves as an example of a country which has changed recently from being a lower middle-income and donor dependent country to a more autonomous higher middle-income country. Ecuador has set out a distinctive set of policies and aspirations for national development, known as sumac kawsay in Quechua or Buen Vivir in Spanish ("living well" in English). Evidence from our case study suggests that the SDGs are not going to be integrated wholesale into national policy-making. Policy makers are

engaging selectively with those SDG goals and targets that resonate with national priorities and their views about what development consists of. Since the SDGs are not legally binding but represent a high-level policy document that comes without the tools of external enforcement (Brolan, 2016; Pogge & Sengupta, 2016), they can be interpreted and understood in quite different ways, meaning that policy makers in Ecuador are able to decide the nature of engagement with them. Moreover, they are doing so in accordance with a logic that is predominantly domestic. The SDGs, in other words, are not determining what Ecuadorian development means. They are, rather, legitimising development goals and policies that have already been decided on.

Just as importantly, responses to the SDGs in middle income countries are bound to be shaped by domestic governance structures. In the case of Ecuador, one particularly pertinent characteristic is the recent decentralization of the state. The result is that we cannot identify a single "Ecuadorian" response to the SDGs – engagement with, and interpretation of, the SDGs depend on an array of factors such as policy makers' preferences, their location in the architecture of national governance and the challenges they face. To illustrate, we show here how policy makers in the capital city, Quito, have been able to make their own strategic choices around SDG engagement, driven in part by opposition to the policies of the party in control of the national government, Alianza País. Home to 2.2 million residents or approximately 13 per cent of the country's population and 20 per cent of the country's urban population, Quito is one of the richest and most powerful cities in the country with an annual budget of USD 1.4 billion in 2016 and a staff of over 2,000 employees. Quito has, in other words, the political, financial and symbolic resources that enable it to make a distinctive response to the SDGs of its own.

The article proceeds as follows. In the first part, we discuss how recent transformations in global governance and global economic power have changed the meaning of global development initiatives, at least in middle-income countries. Thus far, most discussion of the

SDGs have focused on Agenda 2030 as a global framework for development (Gore, 2015; Horner & Hulme, 2017; Sachs, 2012); we suggest that it also makes sense to pay close attention to domestic-level responses. We then discuss the value of taking a qualitative case study approach to the SDGs and provide some background on Ecuador, our case study, and the methodological approach we have adopted, before discussing the different domestic engagements with the SDGs in Ecuador in detail. Here, we examine the substantive and discursive roles the SDGs play for policy makers in Ecuador's national government, where we focus on the selective engagement of senior staff in different institutions but particularly within the National Secretary for Planning and Development (SENPLADES), the government body formally in charge for domestic development planning, and in Quito's local government. Nationally and at city level, there is particularly strong engagement with SDG 10.2 (breaking inequalities) and SDG 11 (inclusive cities), both of which were identified as priority areas in earlier national planning rounds. But the national government and the city of Quito interpret SDGs 10.2 and 11 quite differently. We consider what these findings mean for our [iii]understanding of the SDGs in middle-income countries in the final section of the paper.

2. THE MDGs TO THE SDGS: FROM GLOBAL GOVERNANCE TO DOMESTIC POLITICS

Orthodox ideas and practices of "development" reflect the structures of global power. The end of the Cold War heralded a rare (and ultimately fleeting) moment of global consensus that was quite quickly followed by renewed fragmentation politically, economically and culturally (Koehler, 2015; Horner & Hulme, 2017). Economic shifts mean that so-called "advanced countries" are no longer confined to the West, while the liberal values associated with Western hegemony are increasingly questioned. As the West weakens, contemporary development

aspirations in the global South no longer necessarily cohere, or at least not straightforwardly, around Western ideals.

The "Millennium Moment" reflected both the authority of the US and Europe and the fact that the West was trying to exercise this authority in a significantly less coercive and more inclusive fashion (Inglehart, 2008). Less confident of its economic power, the West reverted after 1989 to shoring up its ideational and moral leadership through a looser and more persuasive set of mechanisms for rule, often referred to as "global governance". Global governance seeks to bind countries together in apparently shared collective endeavours. The underpinning ideas remain, though, resolutely pro-Western. As Payne (2007: 8) notes "the notion of global governance is a serious misnomer; indeed, it is grounded in a deceit. What presently purports to be global governance is really governance of the globe by the powerful, justified by protestations about the need to offer leadership to the inhabitants of the whole of the globe". In effect, post-Cold War global governance sought to reboot western authority, but without unpicking the inequalities of economic power or the structures of global financial and trade governance.

This fin-de-siècle approach to disciplining the global South was nonetheless somewhat different from earlier incarnations of western power. Ideas, rather than overt material power, were now recognised as important drivers of global politics and coercion was replaced with more appealing concepts such as citizenship, democracy and human rights. This shift had a significant impact on the agenda of international development. In particular, since 1989, development has gradually become associated with civil society, partnership, the promotion of human rights and the adoption of pro-democratic norms (Welzel, Inglehart, & Kligemann, 2003). This more "human" face of Western power contributed directly to the articulation of the first agenda for international development based not on the principles of economic growth but on the importance of people (Hulme, 2010; Hulme & Scott, 2010). The MDGs were established

following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 and set out eight human development focused goals (eradication of extreme poverty, universal primary education, gender equality, the reduction of child mortality, maternal health, combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other global diseases, environmental sustainability and global partnership). Of course, in practice, this more liberal vision of development was still set within a traditional "North-South aid agenda" (Fukuda-Parr 2016) that was dictated mainly by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donor country members and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Monitoring mechanisms, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and aid conditionality, helped to ensure domestic uptake of MDG goals and targets but also reproduced North-South power relationships and failed to engage with the specifities of place and different geo-political contexts (for a discussion see: Chibba, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2011; McGregor & Sumner, 2010; Stein & Horn, 2012). The MDGs succeeded in reducing tensions around what "development" meant and had some positive effects on human wellbeing. But as Hulme (2010) has shown, they fell considerably short in terms of addressing the needs and rights of the world's poor.

Fast forward fifteen years on from the Millennium Moment. In 2015, the MDGs gave way to the SDGs, which have emerged from the more consultative Agenda 2030 process. The latter is typical of the twenty first century global governance architecture and has been designed with the direct involvement of actors from the global South, via the Rio+20 conference and intensive multi-stakeholder debates within an "Open Working Group" of the UN General Assembly – initially representing 70 countries and later open to universal participation of all member states, civil society groups, businesses, and UN agency representatives (Chasek, Wagner, Leone, Lebada & Risse 2016; Fukuda-Parr, 2016). Low- and especially middle-income countries in the global South, particularly those assembled in the Group 77 plus China,

played a much more significant role in the Agenda 2030 process. A key demand by this group of countries, which was incorporated within the final Agenda 2030 document, is recognition of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDRs) as a key principle for SDG delivery. Agenda 2030 thus implies respect for national policy space to establish and implement distinctive policies for sustainable development, potentially suggesting that national autonomy can trump global commitments. As Sexsmith and McMichael (2015) argue, the SDGs assign delivery responsibilities to states, ultimately leaving patterns and practises of engagement open to state elites to decide. Additionally, the new goals are also difficult to turn into quantifiably measurable targets (Parnell, 2016) and lack legally binding accountability mechanisms (Brolan, 2016; Pogge & Sengupta, 2016). They are, consequently, more open to interpretation than their predecessors and their generic nature means that they sometimes have little to say about the detail of contemporary challenges of governance in the global South (Hulme, Savoia & Sen, 2015). Taking all this into account suggests that the SDGs should be understood as a much looser script for global development than their predecessors. They provide a very broad set of goals and targets, lack clear guidelines on implementation, and – following the principle of CBDRs – are not automatically expected to be integrated into national and local development policies at the domestic level.

At the same time, the global shifts that began after 1989 have intensified. The power transition to the East, at least in the economic domain, and the rapid expansion of middle income power are more evident than ever (Ikenberry 2008; Kahler 2013; Shambaugh 2013). Western aid donors now compete for influence with new Southern donors, mainly representing middle-income countries such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) and CIVETs (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey) (Gray & Murphy, 2013; Schulz, 2010; Scoones, Amanor, Favareto & Qi, 2016). The role of non-DAC donors is indisputable, with non-DAC "aid" and "aid-like" flows

increasing from approximately 5 per cent of global ODA in the late 1990s to around 15-20 per cent at present (UNDP 2013 cited in Mawdsley, 2017), with China playing a particularly significant role (Gray & Murphy, 2013; Mohan, 2013; Mohan & Lampart, 2013; Tan-Mullins et al, 2010; Scoones, Amanor, Favareto & Qi, 2016).

And, if the global regime for aid has changed, so too has the relative weight of middle-income countries more widely. A range of countries from all world regions have made the leap from low- to mid-income status, with an increasing number of the world's poor residing within them. According to Sumner (2013: 374), in the 1990s approximately "90% of the world's poor people (by both $1.25 and $2 international poverty lines) lived in low income countries" and "addressing global poverty was framed largely around international redistribution of aid". In contrast, by 2008 "70%-80% of the world's poor…lived in middle income countries" (ibid). This group of countries is becoming less directly dependent on aid and more willing, consequently, to understand development in ways that depart from "global" prescriptions.

Increasingly, strategies to tackle inequality and poverty at home are being designed in accordance with domestic visions of what development should mean within specific middle-income countries (Gulrajani, 2017; Mawdsley, 2017). These domestic visions are, needless to say, not homogenous. They may draw, for example, on indigenous forms of knowledge that are sometimes framed as development alternatives (Kothani et al, 2015; Radcliffe, 2015), or on ideas that have been adapted from Western economics, including variants of neoliberalism, Keynesianism, state developmentalism or post-neoliberalism (Fukuda-Parr & Shiga, 2016; Gray & Murphy, 2013). The key point, however, is that the ideational shift in global politics combined with the fact that middle-income countries are winning the space to elaborate development plans in accordance with the preferences of domestic governing elites. And the fact that they will have to rely on deploying national resources to meet development targets because of the changing fortunes of the West, triggered by, among other factors, the 2007/08

economic crisis and its aftermath (Gore, 2015; Gulrajani, 2017; Heinrich, Kobayashi & Bryant, 2016; Lancaster, 2007; Mawdsley, 2015), only increases their autonomy; during the very period in which the SDGs were being negotiated ODA fell, with a 12 per cent real drop in funds disbursed during 2014-15 (OECD, 2016). In short, it seems that international development is entering a new "age of national interests" (Gulrajani, 2017) and national ideas about what development means.

There is, as yet, an incomplete understanding of what this means for the SDGs. Certainly, the importance of domestic governance to the SDGs (as it was for the MDGs) has been recognised, though chiefly in relation to whether poor governance or lack of state capacity constitute obstacles to implementation (Joshi et al, 2015; Nilsson & Persson, 2017; Waage et al, 2015; Wild & Foresti, 2011). Less attention has been paid, overall, to the possibility that, in this new scenario, the SDGs open renewed opportunities for domestic actors to shape national debates. This approach, however, fits with the new global reality of greater independence on the part of middle-income countries and acknowledges the power of the SDGs not as a coherent agenda applicable in the same way across the global South but, as constructivist scholars of International Relations would put it, a set of ideas or global script, the meaning of which is open to interpretation - in the words of Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 891), a broad global "standard of appropriate behaviour" that domestic actors can borrow from and adapt. Seen in this way, the SDGs become ideas that shape or legitimise domestic institutional arrangements (Haas, 2015) but that, equally, are open to interpretation by states and other actors with CBDRs, meaning that their impact on the ground will differ considerably from place to place. If the SDGs are understood in this way, as norms that can be "localised" (Acharya 2004, 245), it makes sense to ask how – if at all – they are interpreted or "translated" by domestic groups (Engle Merry, 2009) and how far such translations echo pre-existing development preferences of mid-income countries, something we focus on here.

3.   METHODS AND CASE STUDY

Exploring the domestic interpretation of norms or the domestic uses of global ideas benefits from a qualitative case study approach because it enables researchers to identify the often-contested meanings that norms assume and privileges a focus on domestic actors, agency, and practices (see Engle Merry, 2009, Grugel & Peruzzotti, 2007, 2012). We have opted here to focus on the meaning of the SDGs in a single case study, Ecuador. Whilst a comparative case study approach would be helpful to identify differences between national cases, we want to explore here the similarities and differences that emerge within a single case and between national actors, who are nevertheless responding to the same set of norms (the SDGs). By restricting the study to one country case, we have been able to zoom in on details of difference between policy makers within Ecuador, adding another layer to debates about domestic governance and the SDGs, which often assume a unified "national" position [iv], mainly studied through analysis of country PRSPs, national government reports or development plans (Fukuda-Parr, 2010; Fukuda-Parr & McNeill, 2015; Vandemoorteele, 2005).

Ecuador was not selected randomly as our case. A relatively autonomous middle-income country, Ecuador has changed recently from being a lower middle-income and donor-dependent country to high middle-income status which promotes its own domestic vision of development – Buen Vivir. Ecuador is, therefore, illustrative of the growing numbers of countries with greater leverage vis-à-vis global development ideas than in the era of the MDGs. Active in G77, Ecuador also was one of the countries that pushed for the incorporation of the principle of CBDRs within Agenda 2030. Of course, we are not suggesting that all middle-income countries will behave as Ecuador does in relation to the SDGs. But there is evidence that middle-income countries, and indeed smaller states, are increasingly critical of mainstream global governance prescriptions (Cooper 2014), and that international development itself is

becoming more polycentric and diffuse (Scholte and Soderbaum (2017). Ecuador is typical of those countries no longer constrained by established ideas about development, where national elites are able to articulate independent ideas about how development should proceed.

Moreover, Ecuador is also typical of those countries in the global South where domestic governance is becoming more complex (Hulme et al, 2015), reflecting the general trend towards spatial de-concentration of power and the growing significance of governance below the state, including at city-level (Berdegue, Bebbington & Escobal, 2015; Chen, 2017; McGranahan, Schensul & Singh, 2017; van der Kamp, Lorentzen & Mattingly, 2017). Ecuador introduced legislative reforms in 2010 that deepened decentralisation and created a multiplicity of actors with the legitimacy and right to intervene in debates on national development. The capital city, Quito, in particular, has a politically and financially independent local government with its own set of priorities. Carrying out the research in Ecuador, therefore, enabled us to explore the relationship between national level debates about development and the SDGs, and, at the same time, examine how the complexity of domestic governance in a middle income country is now less constrained by pressure to conform to mainstream development agendas in the process of shaping national responses.

Qualitative fieldwork was carried out in Quito, which is both the seat of national government and of city government, in 2016. 27 semi-structured interviews were carried out with senior policy makers and civil servants in Ecuador's national government and Quito's local government, high-level representatives in international organisations and donor bodies, as well as local academics (see Box 1). Interviews were designed to open discussions around Ecuador's response to Agenda 2030 and the meaning and influence of the SDGs in shaping aspirations and practices of what development means for policy makers (see Box 2 for list questions used to guide semi-structured interviews). Following our interviews, some SENPLADES staff offered to set their views down in writing. This correspondence, along with

the interviews, were analysed independently and then compared with findings from other interviews.

Box 1: Key informants

National government
- National Secretary for Planning and Development – SENPLADES (Interviews and written correspondence with senior bureaucrats representing the deputy ministries of national planning, territorial planning, monitoring & evaluation, and development planning)
- Office of the Vice-President (Interview with former Minister of Social and Economic Development)
- Ministry of Urban Development and Housing – MIDUVI (Interviews with three senior bureaucrats of the deputy ministries of housing and public space/ habitat)
- Secretary for Technical Development Cooperation – SETECI (Interview with senior member of staff working on DAC/ non-DAC cooperation)
- Technical Secretary for Disabilities – SETEDIS (Interviews with three senior policy advisors working on disability rights)
- Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples and Nations – CODENPE (Interview with director)
- National Institute for Statistics – INEC (Interview with senior staff working on SDG integration)

Municipal government of Quito
- Development Planning Unit (Interview with director and two senior advisors)
- Territorial Planning Unit (Interview with director and two senior advisors)
- Social Inclusion Unit (Interview with two senior members of staff working on indigenous affairs and disability)

Others
- Union of South American Nations – UNASUR (Interview with bureaucrat working on regional development and Ecuador's position)
- United Nations Development Programme – UNDP (Interview with senior member of staff working on SDG integration in Ecuador)
- German Development Cooperation – GIZ (Interview with director of indigenous development programme PROINDIGENA)
- Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (Interviews with three social science academics, one of them representing a former mayor of Quito)
- Regional Autonomous University of the Andes (Interview with two social science academics)

In order to contextualise the data from interviews and written communications, and to strengthen the rigour of our findings, we triangulated interview material with additional information and data on the SDGs and domestic politics in Ecuador and elsewhere. The latter included published academic and policy research, national and local development plans, laws, policy statements, white papers, and media reports. This was complemented by analysis of preparatory documents, active participation and observation of informal discussions at the Habitat III summit, which took place in Quito in October 2016 and focused on the SDGs and their application in urban contexts in Ecuador and globally.

Box 2: Question guidelines for semi-structured interviews

- What was the position of your organisation towards the MDGs?
- How did you integrate the MDGs into national/ local development planning?
- How do you evaluate the process of MDG implementation?
- What is the position of your organisations towards the SDGs?
- Does your position towards the SDGs differ from your previous take on the MDGs? If so, how?
- How do the SDG goals and targets relate to the development approach promoted by your organisation?
- What are your development priorities? How do the SDGs relate to these priorities? What are differences/ similarities? Common sub-questions included:
    - Why do you prioritise this issue/ these issues?
    - What are interventions in these areas?
    - How do they relate to the SDGs?
    - Do you continue working on previously identified domestic development priorities after the ratification of the SDGs?
- How do you evaluate the process of integration of development priorities/ SDGs into national/ local development plans, policies and practices? Common sub-questions included:
    - What are financial/ institutional/ processual/ political strengths/ weaknesses in this process?
    - Who are the actors responsible for this process?
    - How do you evaluate collaboration between these different groups?
    - Do actors outside the government (private/ civil society/ international donors) interfere in this process? If so, how?

Most interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

---

4. ECUADOR: CHANGING DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AMID POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Ecuador was classified as upper middle-income country for the first time in 2008 (Domínguez & Caria, 2016a). Its upper middle-income status came after a long period of economic growth between 2006-2014 (4.3% a year on average), based on commodity exports. Growth enabled Ecuador to put an end to the political instability that had previously prevented the emergence of an independent or autonomous agenda for development (de la Torre, 2006; Mainwaring, 2006). Until 2006, dependent on support from the World Bank and the IMF, Ecuador tended to adopt global prescriptions as a substitute for national priorities on development. Like other countries in the Andean region, such as Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela, Ecuador's government followed donor advice and adapted a set of reforms often referred to as the neoliberal multicultural model to development (Andolina, Laurie & Radcliffe, 2009; van Cott, 2008). One set of reforms promoted reducing national government control over policy by

sharing and redistributing of responsibilities to lower tiers of government and non-state institutions such as private enterprises, donors, NGOs, and civil society groups, including organisations representing Ecuador's highly politicised indigenous communities. Meanwhile, an economic reform package was introduced by the government to devalue the currency, free price and exchange rates from government control, reduce government public spending, and encourage privatisation of core domestic industries such as mining and agriculture (ibid). In the same period, the MDGs became, almost by default, the country's chief priorities regarding human development. To oversee implementation, Ecuador established a new government department, the National Office for the Millennium Development Goals (SODEM) in 2005, with responsibility for overseeing and monitoring implementation (Naranja Bonilla, 2008). Economic crisis, however, meant that the incorporation of the MDGs into national targets made limited impact in terms of reducing extreme poverty, closing education gaps between women and men, or combating child and maternal mortality (ibid), resulting in a view within government that the wholesale transfer of global development goals into national objectives for development had very real limitations in terms of addressing national challenges.

At the same time, donor dependency, economic crisis, and slow progress in terms of social development fed into political unrest and encouraged social movements to challenge the imposition of a global development agenda. Particularly in Ecuador's capital city, Quito, popular movements representing workers, peasants, urban residents, indigenous peoples, and other dispossessed groups organised to actively contest neoliberal development agendas, which they perceived as the imposition of exogenous politico-economic interests (Andolina, Laurie & Radcliffe, 2009; van Cott, 2008). Ultimately, social protest led to the election of President Rafael Correa and Alianza País in 2000, amid promises of radical change. Elected chiefly by the poor and the dispossessed, this left-leaning government promised a "post-neoliberal"

political agenda (Grugel & Riggirozzi, 2012, forthcoming) and was committed to reasserting national control of macro-economic policies and enhanced social welfare.

Once in office, Correa's government introduced a variety of reforms that promoted a "return of the state" and aimed at establishing greater independence from non-state actors and institutions (Elwood, Bond, Martinez Novo & Radcliffe, 2016). Domestically, this meant that core programmes and interventions, such as managing indigenous affairs, which were previously outsourced to non-state institutions were either reintegrated within the state or brought to a close (see also section 4). In terms of international relations, the government set up the Commission for Public Credit Audit (CAIC), the aim of which is to reduce dependency to foreign credit and aid, especially from DAC donors. Ecuador re-negotiated its debt payments, leading to savings of USD 2.2 billion as well as USD 7 billion in interest by 2030 (Childs & Heran, 2017). It also intensified natural resource extraction and sold rights for the exploitation of natural resources to a variety of foreign stakeholders, mainly from China and Brazil (Domínguez & Caria 2016b; Gudynas 2009; Vallejo 2014). With more financial resources available, the government invested in public service provision, increasing its spending from 21 per cent GDP in 2012 to 40 per cent in 2012, thereby significantly contributing to the reduction of poverty and extreme poverty (Appe, 2017).

With greater confidence in its capacity to reduce poverty through targeted interventions and expanded coverage, the government began to question the wisdom of using global development goals to shape national policy. In the process, the MDGs gradually came to be seen not only minimalist and overly general, but also as somewhat distant from domestic needs and priorities. A senior civil servant from SENPLADES explains:

> The MDGs did not consider the national and local particularities of development in our country, including inequalities based upon territory, ethnicity, race and gender [and] the need to respect the environment and

nature, and to confront and address shifts in population concentration in cities, especially in slums. (Interview, Quito, April 2016)

Key issues that the new Ecuadorian government felt were being ignored included inequalities between different social groups, the protection of the environment and of nature, and the socio-spatially uneven development of cities. Developing a new set of policies that embraced these concerns was considered crucial both for national development and, more specifically, to satisfy Alianza Pais's electorate. The government's distinctive development agenda of Buen Vivir[v] (in English: to live well) emerged, then, in part because the MDGs were rejected as too conservative. Instead, Buen Vivir promised inclusive and equitable development based on the fundamental tenet that no one can live well if others live badly. As a corollary to the fact that Buen Vivir is a national development plan, its norms and principles are lodged in the 2008 constitution, not in an international agenda, and national and local government institutions are the chief agents of delivery, not international donors (see for example CPE Ecuador, 2008, article 38). The Constitution emphasizes redistribution (see articles 3.5, 285.2, 300), recognises specific cultural, economic, political and social rights for indigenous peoples (see, amongst others, articles 56, 57, 171) and people with disabilities (see, amongst others, articles 35, 42, 46.3, 47, 48, 49), as well as rights of nature (article 71). It also explicitly acknowledges the "right to the city" based on "the democratic management of the city, with respect to the social and environmental function of property and the city and with the full exercise of citizenship" (article 31).

Buen Vivir was accompanied by strategies to strengthen state capacity to deliver development. SENPLADES replaced SODEM in 2007, and took over its role in deciding domestic development priorities. Unlike technocrats working in previous governments who often had links with international institutions such as the IMF, SENPLADES staff tend to come from domestic academic institutions or NGOs associated with a variety of unorthodox

approaches to development, ranging from post-colonialism, heterodox economics or radical democracy (de la Torre, 2013). SENPLADES is now responsible for ensuring that the state becomes the chief enabler of domestic development (de la Torre, 2013; Radcliffe, 2012; Walsh, 2010). It does so by setting domestic development priorities through national development plans, training national and local government staff on their implementation (Radcliffe, 2012; Walsh, 2010) and promoting capacity through the decentralization of the state. The 2010 Organic Code of Territorial Organisation, Autonomy and Decentralisation (COOTAD) expressly enables actors and agencies below the state to set and implement their own locally specific development targets. Municipal governments are granted the authority to define spatial development planning criteria, local economic development strategies, citizen participation mechanisms, transport plans, local healthcare, and education and security approaches, giving them considerable influence not only over delivery but also over policy design.

Both the 2009 and 2013 Plans highlighted the need to strengthen collective or group rights for more equitable development and the importance of responding quickly to the growing challenges in urban settlements, where approximately two thirds of Ecuador's population now live. But setting out key domestic priorities did not mean that Ecuador openly turned its back on either the language of the MDGs or the MDG process. The 2013 national development plan recognises the MDGs as important principles; but equally, they were described as only "minimum goals" compared to Ecuador's more "maximalist" approach (Buen Vivir) which would enable the country to "surpass the expectations of this global body [UN]' and produce 'irreversible, rapid, profound, radical change in this country" (SENPLADES, 2013: 18). And indeed, as SENPLADES (2014) pointed out, Ecuador had achieved all MDGs, except MDG 5 on maternal mortality by 2014 and so needed to set more ambitious development goals.

SENPLADES has taken a similar approach to the SDG process, mixing respect for the global goals with the articulation of national-specific targets that are then linked back to

Agenda 2030. Officially, the position of the government in 2015, when the SDGs were announced, was that it would consider the SDGs in relation to the next development planning round, which was not due until 2017, after the Presidential elections (that led to election of Lenin Moreno, Correa's Vice-President and candidate of the governing party). As a senior staff member in UNDP, Ecuador (interview in Quito, April 2016) told us, the formal view from government was that "preparation of the next plan will be undertaken by the next political administration. It is only then that we expect that the SDGs will be officially integrated [into national planning]". But in practice Ecuador has followed the SDG process and engaged closely with it. SENPLADES even seems to have tried to upload Ecuador's own domestic priorities onto the global SDG agenda. According to the Assistant Secretary for National Planning in SENPLADES (interview in Quito, April 2016):

> [in the SDG negotiations] we especially pushed for the introduction of new concepts [right to the city; Buen Vivir] and… the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. We also promoted [environmental rights] and the inclusion of goals around migration, disability, gender, indigenous groups, etc.

Of course, this might be something of an exaggerated claim (though Ecuador's as well as other countries distinct efforts of promoting inclusive cities (SDG11) through the right to the city were acknowledged in the New Urban Agenda, outcome document of Habitat III); but it is nevertheless symbolic of much more assertive approach than earlier.

More widely, SENPLADES has opted to use the SDGs as a discursive tool to lend support to aspects of the national development strategy, whilst also pointing out that they have limitations as a guide for policy. In written correspondence with us following face-to-face interviews, SENPLADES senior staff wrote:

> The utility of the SDGs is that they represent a starting point for national planning and for the generation of new economic, social and productive policy approaches. But it is still a limited agenda, which would not allow us to achieve our more ambitious national goals and targets that are mainly framed around rights (May 2016)

and

> SENPLADES and INEC [National Institute for Statistics] are already in process of defining and prioritizing SDG goals, targets and indicators in such a way that they strengthen national planning. Our view is that Agenda 2030 should be aligned to national planning and delivered based on our established development model, visions, priorities and policies. (May 2016).

SENPLADES staff went on to explain that they saw engaging with SDG 10.2 (on group rights) and SDG 11 (on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) as particularly critical, since these were key to the goals set under Buen Vivir:

> For us, this [engaging with the SDGs] means strengthening the means of implementation for core areas, including recognition of vulnerable groups – including women, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities, (…) and the right to the city (Personal written communication from SENPLADES, May 2016)

Precisely because these are the goals that Ecuador has selected, we turn now to a discussion of how exactly policy makers have engaged with them.

5. SDG 10.2 ON GROUP INEQUALITIES: DISABILITY VERSUS ETHNICITY

SDG10 refers to the importance of reducing inequalities between and within countries. SDG 10.2 focuses in particular on empowering and promoting social, economic and political inclusion irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin or religion or on "group rights".

Buen Vivir also asserts the rights to inclusion of Ecuador's historically marginalised groups, offering an apparently easy synergy between global and national aspirations.

5.1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

The national government, first under Rafael Correa (2006-2016) and since 2017 under Lenin Moreno, has chosen to tie SDG 10.2 not to policies on ethnicity, in the mould of previous governments that adopted a neoliberal multicultural model to development (Andolina, Laurie & Radcliffe, 2009; van Cott, 2008), but in relation to people with disabilities. This can be explained in part by the tense relationship between Alianza Pais and indigenous communities and associated opposition parties as a result of the government's decision to sell mining rights over land held by indigenous communities to foreign companies, bypassing internationally agreed mechanisms on community rights to prior consultation, as well as closing down institutions and programmes targeting indigenous peoples (Becker, 2013; Elwood, Bond, Martinez Novo & Radcliffe, 2016). But the decision to focus on disability was also about using the SDGs to showcase a genuinely innovative set of policies that emerged in Ecuador long before the ratification of Agenda 2030.

The national government began to pioneer a new approach to disability in 2007, following an initiative of Lenin Moreno's, then Vice-President, who is a himself a wheelchair user. The rights of people with disabilities, along with other group rights, were enshrined in the 2008 constitution. As a former Minister of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and the Coordinating Ministry of Political Economy (MCEP) pointed out (interview in Quito, April 2016):

> Let me be completely open with you, all our work on disability was started under the direction of the former Vice-President [Lenin Moreno Garces] who himself suffers from disability. He used his

privileged position at the right moment, when the government had sufficient resources in place to introduce crucial reforms.

Shortly after being elected, the government began to identify the needs of people with disabilities so as to design new strategies of inclusion. The Manuela Espejo programme, which ran between 2009-2011, was the first serious attempt in Ecuador to understand the link between disability and social and economic exclusion. Health professionals, psychologists, social workers, the armed forces and government staff worked together to identify the needs of disabled people in relation to housing, work, income, education, and healthcare, interviewing more than 294,000 people with disabilities (interview, senior civil servant in the Technical Secretary for Disabilities (SETEDIS), Quito, April 2016). SETEDIS was then set up to mainstream a draft of policies and oversee cross-departmental co-operation. A senior civil servant in SETEDIS explained:

> We [SETEDIS] determine strategies and implementation. Then we transfer implementation responsibilities to the relevant ministries. We also send some members of our team to work directly with staff in different ministries. This allows us to optimize human resources and to generate know-how on disability within other institutions. It means that other ministries don't start from scratch and that they get help in setting up support mechanisms, something they can later manage by themselves (interview in Quito, April 2016).

Funding has been generous, increasing from 0.01 per cent of the annual budget in 2008 to 3.07 per cent in 2015 (SETEDIS, 2015). One of the flagship programmes, the Joaquin Gallegos Lara programme created in 2009, provides a USD 240 per month to a personal carer and had 20,715 beneficiaries by 2015. Housing subsidies for the disabled were also introduced in 2015 (interview in Quito, April 2016), leading to the construction of 11,000 new houses specifically for disabled people and their families. The government also set up credit schemes, coordinated

by the central government disability organisation (CONADIS), for people with disabilities who want to set up their own small businesses. Between 2009 and 2015, more than USD 9 million have been invested into this programme, with 80,281 beneficiaries. In addition, the Ministry of Health provides people with disabilities technical and health support, the Ministry of Culture and Patrimony as well as the Ministry of Education run educational programmes for people with disabilities, and MIDUVI set up infrastructure programmes around accessibility and disaster risk management.

Taken together, these policies have contributed to very considerable progress in quite a short period. Indeed, Ecuador's policies are increasingly regarded as an international best-practice case, in the global South at least (Camacho Vásconez, Figueroa, Gavilanez & Alban Morejon, 2013; Grugel and Riggirozzi 2017). In 2015, for example, the national government led the drafting of an inclusive risk management methodology for the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities across South America (interview with a member of staff at UNASUR, Quito, April 2016), and, during Habitat III in October 2016, SETEDIS and other Ecuadorian Ministries organised a series of parallel and side events on disability and the New Urban Agenda. This served in promoting Ecuador's approach as best practice example for meeting SDG 10.2 in cities. In the meantime, by showcasing the government's SDG success story around disability during Habitat III side events and in the "Ecuador Pavilion", "One World Pavilion" and the "Habitat III Exhibition" – spaces also open to the general and predominantly Ecuadorean public – the government used Habitat III to strengthen its domestic image and gain public support for interventions in this policy sector[vi].

These policies are, needless to say, not attributable to SDG 10.2; disability was already a domestic priority. But SDG 10.2 legitimizes the emphasis on disability in welfare spending and they offer the opportunity for Ecuador to use the SDG process to validate national policies

and raise Ecuador's international profile as best-practice role model in this area, whilst effectively directing attention away from those inequalities that are of less priority to national government and more contentious domestically. As we noted above, there is, in fact, much less of an enabling domestic environment in relation to other forms of group inequalities, in particular, inequalities rooted in ethnicity. In fact, under Correa, the government not only failed to act to protect the land rights of indigenous communities but took steps to dismantle indigenous institutions and programmes to silence internal dissent. The Directorate for Intercultural and Bilingual Education (DINEIB), the Secretary of Peoples, and the Coordinating Ministry of Patrimony were all closed. As a senior member of staff in the National Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CODENPE, interview in Quito, April 2016) pointed out to us: "First, they [the government] cut our funding, then they closed our institutions, and finally they stopped our programmes." The National Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CODENPE) has seen its budget shrink year on year since 2013 and is now also scheduled for closure[vii] (personal communication with senior staff member in CODENPE, April 2016). Yet the government may also be in a position to "cover" its worsening record on indigenous rights by pointing to its excellent record and SDG 10.2 success story, on disability support.

5.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES IN QUITO

The picture gets even more complicated once we consider the practices of actors operating at the sub-national level. In Quito, the municipal government views inequalities based on ethnicity as at least as much of a priority for policy as support for disabled people and sees SDG 10.2 as demanding government action on both fronts. This is mainly due to the size of indigenous communities in Quito and their capacity for rapid mobilization, which means that local politicians and municipal authorities, guided as much by aspirations to stay in office as

principle, cannot afford not to recognize their presence (Horn, 2017). As such, the municipal government has sponsored a variety of interventions targeted predominantly to peripheral poor urban neighbourhoods where most residents are of indigenous descent. These have been rolled out in response to civil society pressures which are able to influence decision making processes at the local level since local governments are less insulated, as a member of staff in Quito's municipality (interview, October 2016) explained:

> For the national government, indigenous peoples represent 4 per cent of the country. In Quito, they only represent 7 per cent but that number is different for some districts. Especially in the Northern and Southern periphery they sometimes represent 60, 70 or 80 per cent of the population. They increasingly organise around their indigenous background and mobilise for their constitutional rights. The leaders of indigenous organisations come to the municipal offices again and again, over the years, to present specific demands. After a while the municipal government simply had to respond.
>
> .

Initiatives include participatory budgeting, bilingual service provision and an acknowledgement that citizenship can be expressed through collective deliberation rather than individual votes. Indigenous cultural events, such as the annual festival of the sun (Inti Reymi), receive municipal funding and the municipal territorial planning unit began to employ a member of staff in 2016 whose task it is to identify practical ideas for integrating collective indigenous rights to land within municipal land use plans which have traditionally only recognised individual tenure. Although, as we show below, the process of privatisation of land is creating push-backs in Quito against indigenous land rights, policy makers in Quito have overall been more enthusiastic in promoting indigenous peoples' group rights and they have seen SDG 10.2 as an opportunity not just to endorse city-level policies but to distinguish themselves from the national government.

6. SDG 11 ON INCLUSIVE CITIES: RIGHT TO THE CITY VERSUS "LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND"

SDG11 addresses the challenges associated with rapid urbanisation and promotes the adoption of policies to make cities inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable. In Ecuador, these challenges are considerable. In 1950, around 40 per cent of Ecuador's 3.2 million residents lived in cities. By 2010 this has increased to 63 per cent, meaning that around nine million of Ecuador's 14.5 million residents currently live in cities (MIDUVI, 2015). Urban expansion has not been planned and 2.8 million people live in peripheral settlements that frequently lack secure tenure, basic services, and public transport links (ibid). Urban poverty, inequality and exclusion fuelled the popular uprisings of the early 2000s and the Alianza Pais government included a new emphasis on urban poverty and urban development, defined as the right to the city, within Ecuador's constitution, Ecuador used the preparatory process of Agenda 2030 and the Habitat III summit in Quito, where the implementation of SDG 11 was discussed, to gain recognition for its own approach. And indeed, the New Urban Agenda (2016, art. 11), the outcome document of Habitat III, specifically acknowledges that "some national and local governments [like Ecuador]" address SDG 11 through the "right to the city, in their legislations, political declarations and charters", thereby giving credit to Ecuador's approach.

Yet, in practice, progress towards the right to the city agenda and, hence towards SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda, is likely to prove slow. This is mainly due the conflicts associated with burgeoning cities, in Ecuador as elsewhere in the rapidly urbanising global South, where the value of urban land is increasing and conflicts proliferating over access to housing and services and where the meaning of SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda is subject to extraordinary contestation (Parnell, 2016). Trying to create "inclusive cities" inevitably means confronting vested interests; and rapid urbanization creates multiplying, and conflicting, pressures from private and civil society groups over budgets, policies and land use (Mitlin &

Satterthwaite, 2013). Decentralization plays into this highly politicized policy arena in very particular ways. In particular, the city government of Quito, which is politically opposed to the Alianza Pais national government, has used SDG11 to articulate an alternative approach to urban governance. Quito's own planning documents now frame urban development policies directly through the language of Agenda 2030 and promise a "Quito in solidarity: where no one is left behind" (Quito Municipality 2015, p. 12).

6.1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Formally, according to the Organic Code of Territorial Organisation, Autonomy and Decentralisation (COOTAD), national government authorities, in particular the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI), retain responsibilities for funding social housing and establishing the legal framework for integrated urban planning. MIDUVI has focused on extending access to affordable social housing, especially through the provision of housing subsidies, supporting the creation of more than 10,000 social housing projects and benefitting around 20,000 poor urban households (MIDUVI, 2015) – a significant achievement beyond any doubt in a short period of time, even if it is a drop in the ocean given the scale of urban needs. But setting clear guidelines to reduce uncontrolled urban expansion, land speculation and urban exclusion (for a historical review of these issues, see Moser, 2009) has proved more difficult. MIDUVI's proposals on territorial planning and land use management, the Organic Law of Spatial Planning, Use and Management of Land (also called LOOTUS law), went to Congress in 2015 with the aim of forcing city authorities to cooperate with communities and civil society organisations around land use. The proposed new law also contained provisions for local authorities to raise charges for building permissions in order to capture surplus value on transactions in the real estate sector. This money was then to be invested in expanding social housing provision. The LOOTUS tried, in other words, to establish financial tools and technical

guidelines for participatory, integrated and pro-poor urban planning. Its vision corresponded both to the domestic promises around the right to the city and, at the same time, seemed to embody the goals of SDG 11.

Yet, even before going to Congress, LOOTUS was the subject of contentious debate. As a member of staff in MIDUVI explained, LOOTUS was seen fundamentally as a form of wealth redistribution and it was unpopular with the opposition for that reason. Opposition leader Guillermo Lasso (later the losing 2017 presidential candidate for Creando Oportunidades) mobilised the private sector and property owners to resist both the tax increases and the restrictions of land speculation it contained[viii]. Facing a long battle in Congress that it might not have won, and one that was, moreover, impacting on government popularity – Correa's popularity dropped at this point from around 60 per cent to 42 per cent – the new law was abandoned to help ensure another term in office for Alianza Pais. As a former civil servant in MIDUVI explained: (Quito, April 2016):

> We really tried our best with the LOOTUS but the public pressure was too big for the President and could have lost him his office. In summer 2015, we lost the struggle with this law. This temporarily meant the end for a more holistic and inclusive urban development approach that goes beyond housing provision and redistributes profits generated from urban interventions to those most in need. To preserve his position, the President stopped the law and changed staff in the Ministry.

Political conditions shifted once again just a year later, however, when the April 2016 earthquake, severely affected Ecuador's coastal region, causing 600 deaths and destroying thousands of houses particularly in poorer urban neighbourhoods[ix]. The earthquake was an unexpected opportunity that enabled national government to push suddenly for reform and it created a political climate in which it was difficult to oppose government plans. The LOOTUS was quickly and successfully reintroduced, presented now as a response to the need for

reconstruction. Some of the new funding was also directed towards the urban poor (interview in Quito, April 2016) and the government was able to simultaneously introduce a one-off tax of 0.9 per cent on incomes above one million US dollars to provide emergency relief. Some five months on from the earthquake, Ecuador's national government found itself able to present recent legislation and urban development emergency packages as "best practice" right to the city approach to achieving SDG 11 during side events and in the "Ecuador Pavilion" at Habitat III in Quito[x].

6.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES IN QUITO

The Habitat III host city of Quito had, previously, been one of the main sites of opposition to the LOOTUS, taking advantage of the decentralisation process. The city level is formally responsible for the implementation of national government guidelines. But it also has the legal authority to adjust guidelines in ways that fit the specific urban contexts in which they operate. Controlled by the opposition, municipal authorities have used these powers to ignore the new law in favour of what they see as an alternative approach, that is nonetheless also consistent with the principles of inclusive urban development. This focuses instead on allowing land reclassification but levying tax on it. In effect, this enables land that was once designated as rural, but now within the city, to be re-designated as urban and land that was classified for residential use to become multi-purpose, making it possible for businesses to take over land that was once for housing. The new regulations increase the value of land in the city and, therefore, real estate prices. As Quito's head of land planning explained, developers will be willing to be pay the land tax (which they can pass on in the form of higher prices) but would not accept a tax on income or profit (interview April 2016). This approach, meanwhile, has been framed as "leaving no one in the city behind", in direct appropriation of the language of

Agenda 2030, thereby also laying down a political challenge to the national government. As one of the city planners told us:

Quito is offering an alternative to Correa and his government. Why should we do the same as the previous municipal government, which we have beaten in local elections? It's time for us to stand out with a different model of doing development and urban politics. We can start now doing this at the local level and later maybe we can do it at the national level.

The city government then took this critique also into Habitat III. As a senior civil servant in Quito's planning unit told us: "We introduced the SDGs in our development plan to provide a methodological example on how global goals can be implemented in Ecuadorian cities. We want to showcase our achievements during talks and events within and around the Habitat III conference site" (Interview in Quito, April 2016). In preparation for the conference, one of the tourist areas of Quito, La Mariscal, where most international Habitat III visitors stayed, was turned into an eco-neighbourhood, with a new cultural centre and an "inclusive city" campaign in bars, restaurants and public spaces, indicating that these spaces are open, tolerant and accessible to everyone, independent of age, (dis)ability, gender, sexual and or ethnic background. UNDP delegates at the conference certainly responded well to finding such a direct echo of the SDGs in city policy. One senior staff member in UNDP told us that Quito "shares our objective to .... pioneer and showcase [an] example of how SDG alignment should look like." (Interview in Quito, April 2016).

In short then, SDG 11 is being mobilised in Ecuador in distinct and somewhat contradictory ways. At the level of national government, policy makers argue that global targets on inclusive and sustainable cities align with and legitimise Buen Vivir and the right to the city approach, for which Ecuador gained acknowledgment in the New Urban Agenda. In contrast, local government authorities in Quito set out a more private sector friendly version of urban

inclusiveness, which they explicitly frame through the language of SDG11, much to the delight of UNDP.

7. CONCLUSIONS

We set out in this paper to explore how middle-income countries in the global South, in our case Ecuador, respond to the SDGs, and how – if at all – the SDGs shape domestic development policies and practices. We posed these questions in response to rapid global shifts in power and production and in a context of increasingly polycentric global governance, in a country which is witnessing both a resurgence of "national" ideas about what development consists of and a decentralisation of authority. Both processes are not untypical of middle income countries in the global South and both point in the direction of increasing autonomy vis-à-vis global development benchmarks such as the SDGs. Nevertheless, as we show here, it is possible both to confirm to the general tenor of Agenda 2030 and, at the same time, assert nationally-distinctive patterns of engagement with it because the SDGs are a relatively loose set of goals and targets, enabling governments to adapt them to domestic development agendas in ways that were previously impossible with the more precise, quantifiable and limited MDGs. There is a domestic logic, in other words, to SDG implementation that was perhaps not envisaged and is not yet captured by existing studies.

We addressed this knowledge gap by undertaking an in-depth qualitative case study. Ecuador's shift from donor dependence to development autonomy has happened in a remarkably short space of time. Prior to 2007, Ecuador was trapped in a state of economic crisis and donor dependency. By 2015, policy makers in Ecuador were strategically engaging with the SDGs and making decisions as to which of them they would focus their attention on. This rapid transformation tells us something about the political economy of development in Ecuador; but it also points to the pace of change in the global political economy since other

middle-income countries, including the BRICS, MINTs, and CIVETs, are also setting out independent and distinctive approaches to national development (Gray & Murphy, 2013; Mawdsley, 2017; Schulz, 2010; Scoones, Amanor, Favareto & Qi, 2016).

Judging from our evidence, a more reflexive engagement does not mean that the SDGs are irrelevant in middle income countries. But the SDGs are not simply taken off the shelf and implemented wholesale either. The SDGs are being mobilised selectively in Ecuador to add another layer of legitimacy to policies that were already identified as key for national development before the ratification of Agenda 2030. Some SDG goals and targets are the focus on intense government activity, whilst others are simply side-lined or put on hold. The government's discursive engagement with the language of Agenda 2030 and some SDGs (and in practice only aspects of those goals) is also serving to distract attention away from partial, incomplete or highly politicised interpretations of the SDGs themselves. Once the rhetoric is put to one side and we assess achievements, the gains from policies are quite limited and, moreover, unevenly distributed. In fact, except for early-stage success in breaking inequalities around disability (SDG 10.2) – which was the consequence of multi-sector policy reforms and funding increases introduced prior to the ratification of Agenda 2030 – Ecuador is actually struggling to deliver the targets which have been declared "priority" for development, namely reducing group inequalities for indigenous peoples (SDG 10.2) and promoting the right to the city (SDG 11).

This study also challenges the conventional assumption that national governments are inevitably the central actors in delivering Agenda 2030 (Fukuda-Parr, 2010; Fukuda-Parr & McNeill, 2015; Sexsmith and McMichael, 2015; Vandemoorteele, 2005). We show that decentralization matters – but how it matters is not straightforward. In Quito, city-level authorities place a higher value on indigenous participation in development than the national government. At the same time, city authorities are more aligned with private-sector demands,

and less willing to protect the social and economic rights of all citizens in the city to safe, decent and affordable housing. Quito seems at first sight more closely aligned discursively with SDG 11 ('inclusive cities') than the national government; yet in practice the city's urban development approach increasingly excludes the poor.

What can we take from our research more widely? While there is a need for care in generalising from one case study, our findings highlight a shift away from approaches that treat the SDGs as a coherent agenda (Gore, 2015; Horner & Hulme, 2017; Sachs, 2012) that should and can be integrated into domestic policies wholeheartedly by middle-income countries if specific conditions, such as "good governance", are fulfilled (Joshi et al, 2015; Nilsson & Persson, 2017; Waage et al, 2015; Wild & Foresti, 2011). Instead, there is a need for alternative interpretive approaches, such as those promoted by scholars who take a constructivist perspective to international relations (Haas, 2015), that capture the fluid dynamics of global governance and the important role domestic actors play in planning for development. Greater attention, in other words, to the specificities of domestic politics in relation to the SDGs is required. In this regard, a variety of factors stand out as potential starting point for future policy-relevant research on the SDGs in middle-income countries. Firstly, more attention needs to be paid to the fact that actors involved in domestic governance are heterogeneous, have agency, draw on specific and often pre-established norms and ideas that shape their understanding and policy practices around development, belong to different actor-coalitions, and operate in a generally fragmented and changing political, institutional, and structural environment. In Ecuador, for example, the political environment changed significantly in a short period of time. Before 2007, governments were more willing to engage with non-state actor groups representing donors, the private sector and different civil society groups. After Correa's election in 2007, the government promoted a "return of the state" and emphasised selective engagement with global development goals. Secondly, decentralisation matters for

development – and it is being rolled out in a number of countries in the global South. National level actors and institutions are only part of the state – other levels are also significant (Berdegue, Bebbington & Escobal, 2015; Chen 2017; McGranahan, Schensul & Singh, 2017; van der Kamp, Lorentzen & Mattingly, 2017). This is abundantly clear in the case of Quito where local government has both the resources and the responsibilities to make meaningful interventions in terms of designing and delivering domestic development initiatives. Finally, our case suggests that it is only once national and local attitudes and practices towards development are identified, that patterns of engagement with global development agendas can be fully deciphered. It is clear in Ecuador that the domestic politics of engagement with the SDGs is highly selective and that national and local governments choose to engage with those global goals and international partners that match and reinforce their own interests and practices. Indeed, it may be that international organisations, donor countries and development NGOs need to consider more strategically how to engage with local development priorities and promote an approach towards Agenda 2030 implementation that is genuinely sensitive to national and local contexts.

To be clear, then, we are not arguing here that the SDGs or the global politics of development are becoming irrelevant, as national variation of 'development' priorities become more varied. But we are saying that the global politics of development reflects only one side of a prism and its significance is changing. Domestic politics are crucial, especially in the more numerous and more confident middle-income countries in the global South, for how and why (and why not) state actors make choices, for whether they have the capacity to implement certain global goals, and for how successfully they are in implementing certain goals and targets (whilst ignoring others). As such, we call for more detailed, empirically grounded, policy-relevant and culturally sensitive research that can uncover the range of context-specific

national and local short-term and long-term challenges and opportunities that will determine

domestic engagement with and uptake of some (if not all) SDGs in middle-income countries.

REFERENCES

Acharya, A. (2004). How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and
    Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism. International Organization, 58(2), 239-275.
    https://www.jstor.org/stable/3877858

Andolina, R., Laurie, N. & Radcliffe, S. (2009). Indigenous Development in the Andes:
    Culture, Power, and Transnationalism. Durham, N.C.: Durham University Press.

Appe, S. (2017). Civil Society Organizations in a Post-Aid World: New Trends and
    Observatins from the Andean Region. Public Administration and Development, 37, 122-
    135. DOI: 10.1002/pad.1787

Becker, M. (2013). The Stormy Relations between Rafael Correa and Social Movements in
    Ecuador.   Latin   American   Perspectives,   40(3),   43-62.
    journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0094582X13479305

Berdegue, J.A., Bebbington, A. & Escobal, J. (2015). Conceptualizing Spatial Diversity in
    Latin American Rural Development: Structures, Institutions and Coalitions. World
    Development, 73, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.10.015

Brolan, C.E. (2016). A Word of Caution: Human Rights, Disability, and Implementation of the
    Post-2015   Sustainable   Development   Goals.   Laws,   5(22),   1-18.
    http://www.mdpi.com/2075-471X/5/2/22

Caria, S. & Domínguez, R. (2016). Ecuador's Buen Vivir. A New Ideology for Development,
    Latin   American   Perspectives,   43(1),   18-33.
    journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0094582X15611126

Camacho Vásconez, A., Fraga Figueroa, G., Jácome Gavilánez, F. & Albán Morejón, D. (2013). Política de atención a personas con discapacidad en el Ecuador: hacia un modelo de exportación. Línea Sur, 6, 95-110. http://www.siis.net/documentos/ficha/217938.pdf

Cardoso, F. and Faletto, E. (1979) Dependency in Latin America. Berkley, CA: University of Berkley Press.

Chasek, P.C., Wagner, L.M., Leone, F., Lebada, A.M. & Risse, N. (2016). Getting to 2030: Negotiating the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. Review of European Community and Environmental Law, 25(1), 5-14. DOI: 10.1111/reel.12149

Chen, L. (2017). Grounded Globalization: Foreign Capital and Local Bureaucrats in China's Economic Transformation. World Development, 98, 281-99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.05.001

Chibba, M. (2011). The Millennium Development Goals: Key Current Issues and Challenges. Development Policy Review, 29(1), 75-90. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7679.2011.00514.x

Childs, J. & Hearn, J. (2017). New nations: resource-based development imaginaries in Ghana and Ecuador. Third World Quarterly, 38(4), 844-861. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1176859

Cooper, A. (2014) The G20, Contested Global Governance: BRICS, Middle Powers and Small States. Caribbean Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy, 2(3), 87-109. https://journals.sta.uwi.edu/ojs/index.php/iir/article/view/495

CPE Ecuador (2008). Constitución Política del Estado de Ecuador. Quito: Asamblea Nacional de la Republica del Ecuador. http://www.asambleanacional.gov.ec/documentos/constitucion_de_bolsillo.pdf

De la Torre, C. (2006). Ethnic Movements and Citizenship in Ecuador. Latin American Research Review, 41(2), 247-59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3874679

De la Torre, C. (2013). Technocratic Populism in Ecuador. Journal of Democracy, 24(3), 33-46. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/512751

Domínguez, R. & Caria, S. (2016a). Ecuador in the Middle Income Trap. Problemas del Desarrollo, 47(187). https://probdes.iiec.unam.mx/en/revistas/v47n187/body/v47n187a4_1.php

Domínguez, R. & Caria, S. (2016b). El neo-extractivismo en el siglo XXI. Que podemos aprender del ciclo de desarrollo más reciente en América Latina. In Nada Dura Para Siempre: Neo-extractivismo tras el boom de las materias primas. Quito: Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar, p. 21-54.

Elwood, S., Bond, P., Martinez Novo, C., & Radcliffe, S. (2016). Learning from postneoliberalisms. Progress in Human Geography. journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0309132516648539

Engle Merry, S. (2009). Human rights and gender violence: Translating international law into local justice. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). International norm dynamics and political change. International Organization, 52 (4), 887-917. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2601361

Frank, A.G. (1966) The Development of Underdevelopment. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Fukuda-Parr, S. 2011. Theory and Policy in International Development: Human Development and Capability Approach and the Millennium Development Goals. International Studies Review, 13, 122-32. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2486.2010.01003.x

Fukuda-Parr, S. (2016). From the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals: shifts in purpose, concept, and politics of global agenda setting. Gender and Development, 24(1), 43-52. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2016.1145895

Fukuda-Parr, S. & McNeill, D. (2015). Post 2015: a new era of accountability? Journal of Global Ethics, 11(1), 10-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2015.1004738

Fukuda-Parr, S. & Shiga, H. (2016). Normative Framing of Development Cooperation: Japanese Bilateral Aid between DAC and Southern Donors. JICA-RI Working Paper 130, JICA Research Institute: Tokyo. https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/wp_130.html

Gore, C. (2015). The post-2015 moment: Towards sustainable development goals and a new global development paradigm. Journal of International Development, 27, 717-32. DOI: 10.1002/jid.3109

Gray, K. & Murphy, C.N. (2013). Introduction: rising powers and the future of global governance. Third World Quarterly, 34(2), 183-93. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.775778

Grugel, J. & Peruzzotti, E. (2007). Claiming rights under global governance: Children's rights in Argentina. Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organisations, 13(2), 199-216. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27800654?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Grugel, J. & Peruzzoti, E. (2012). The Domestic Politics of International Human Rights Law: Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ecuador, Chile, and Argentina. Human Rights Quarterly, 34(1), 178-198. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/466134

Grugel, J. & Riggirozzi, M. P. (2012). Post-neoliberalism in Latin America: Rebuilding and reclaiming the state after crisis. Development and Change, 43(1), 1–21. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01746.x

Grugel, J. & Riggirozzi, M.P. (2017). New directions in welfare: rights-based social policies in post-neoliberal Latin America. Third World Quarterly. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1392084

Grugel, J. & Riggirozzi, M.P. (forthcoming). Neoliberal Disruption and Neoliberalism's Afterlife in Latin America: What is Left of Post-Neoliberalism? Critical Social Policy.

Gudynas, E. (2009). Diez tesis urgentes sobre el nuevo extractivismo. Extractivismo, politica y Sociedad, 187-225. http://www.iade.org.ar/noticias/diez-tesis-urgentes-sobre-el-nuevo-extractivismo

Gulrajani, N. (2017). Bilateral Donors and the Age of National Interest: What Prospects for Challenge by Development Agencies? World Development, 96, 375-389. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.03.021

Haas, P.M. (2015). Epistemic Communities, Constructivism, and International Relations. London: Routledge.

Heinrich, T., Kobayashi, Y., & Bryant, K. A. (2016). Public opinion and foreign aid cuts in economic crises. World Development, 77, 66–79. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.08.005

Hobson, J. (2012). The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Relations Theory 1976-2010. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horn, P. (2017). Indigenous peoples, the city and inclusive urban development policies in Latin America: Lessons from Bolivia and Ecuador. Development Policy Review. DOI: 10.1111/dpr.12234

Horner, R. & Hulme. D. (2017). Converging divergence? Unpacking the new geography of 21st century global development. Global Development Institute Working Paper. Manchester: Global Development Institute. https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/58547219/Horner_and_Hulme_2017_Converging_divergence_unpacking_the_new_geography_of_global_development.pdf

Hulme D. (2010). Global Poverty: How Global Governance is Failing the Poor. London and New York: Routledge.

Hulme, D., Savoia, A. & K. Sen (2015). Governance as a Global Development Goal? Setting, Measuring and Monitoring the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Global Policy, 6(2), 85-96. DOI: 10.1111/1758-5899.12181

Hulme, D. & Scott, J. (2010). The Political Economy of the MDGs: Retrospect and Prospect or the World's Biggest Promise. New Political Economy, 15(2), 293-306. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13563461003599301

Ikenberry, G.J. (2008). The rise of China and the future of the West: can the liberal system survive? Foreign Affairs, 23-37. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2008-01-01/rise-china-and-future-west

Inglehart, R.F. (2008). Changing Values among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006. West European Politics, 31(1-2), 130-146. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402380701834747

Joshi, D.K., Barry, B.H., & Sisk, T.D. (2015). Improving Governance for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals: Scenario Forecasting the Next 50 years. World Development 70, 286-302. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.01.013

Kahler, M. (2013). Rising powers and global governance: negotiating change in a resilient status quo. International Affairs, 89(3), 711-729. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2346.12041

Koehler, G. (2015). Seven Decades of 'Development', and Now What? Journal of International Development, 27(6), 717-880. DOI: 10.1002/jid.3108

Kothani, A., Demaria, F., & Acosta, A. (2014). Buen Vivir, Degrowth and Ecological Swaraj: Alternatives to sustainable development and the Green Economy. Development, 57(3-4), 362-375. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/dev.2015.24

Lancaster, C. (2007). Foreign aid: Diplomacy, development, domestic politics. London: University of Chicago Press.

Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. (2011). Qualitative Communication Research Methods. London: Sage.

Mainwaring, S. (2006). The Crisis of Representation in the Andes. Journal of Democracy, 17(3), 13-27. https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/crisis-representation-andes

Mawdsley, E. (2015). DFID, the Private Sector and the Re-centring of an Economic Growth Agenda in International Development. Global Society, 29(3), 839-858. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2015.1031092

Mawdsley, E. (2017). Development geography I: Cooperation, competition and convergence between 'North' and 'South'. Progress in Human Geography, 41(1), 108-117. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515601776

McGranahan, G., Schensul, D. & Singh, G. (2016). Inclusive urbanisation: Can the 2030 Agenda be delivered without it? Environment and Urbanization, 28(1), 13-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247815627522

McGregor, A. & Sumner, A. (2010). Beyond Business as Usual: What Might 3-D Wellbeing Contribute to MDG Momentum? IDS Bulletin, 41(1), 104-12. http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/beyond-business-as-usual-what-might-3-d-wellbeing-contribute-to-mdg-momentum

MIDUVI (2015). Informe Nacional del Ecuador: Tercera Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre la Vivienda y el Desarrollo Urbano Sostenible Habitat III. Quito, MIDUVI. http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Report-Ecuador-spanish.pdf

Mitlin, D. & Satterthwaite, D. (2013). Urban Poverty in the Global South. Scale and Nature. London: Routledge.

Mohan, G. (2013). Beyond the enclave: towards a critical political economy of China and Africa. Development and Change, 44(6), 1255-1272. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12061

Mohan, G. & Lampert, B. (2013). Negotiating China: Reinserting African Agency into China-Africa Relations. African Affairs, 112(446), 92-110. https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article/112/446/92/10208

Moser, C.O.N. (2009). Ordinary Families, Extraordinary Lives: Assets and Poverty Reduction in Guayaquil, 1978-2004. Washington: Brookings.

Naranja Bonilla, M. (2008). Ecuador: reseña de los principales programas sociales y lecciones aprendidas, 2000-2006. Santiago de Chile: United Nations.

Nilsson, M. & Persson, A. (2017) Policy note: Lessons from environmental policy integration for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Environmental Science and Policy, 78, 36-39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2017.09.003

Norton, A. & Stuart, E. (2014) How far down the road: comments on the secretary general's synthesis Report on Post 2015. ODI Report, London: ODI.

Parnell, S. (2016). Defining a Global Urban Development Agenda. World Development, 78, 529-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.10.028

Payne, T. (2007). Living in a Less Unequal World: The making of renewed progressive global policy. Institute for Public Policy Research, London: IPPR.

Pogge, T. & Sengupta, M. (2016). Assessing the sustainable development goals from a human rights perspective. Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy, 32(2), 83-97. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2016.1198268

Quito Municipality (2015). Plan Metropolitano de Desarrollo y Ordenamiento Territorial. Quito: Quito Municipality. http://www.quito.gob.ec/documents/PMDOT.pdf

Radcliffe, S. (2012). Development for a postneoliberal era? Sumak kawsay, living well and the limits to decolonisation in Ecuador. Geoforum, 43(2), 240-249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.09.003

Radcliffe, S. (2015). Development Alternatives. Development and Change, 46, 855-874.
DOI: 10.1111/dech.12179

Sachs, J. (2012). From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals.
The Lancet, 379(9832), 2206-2211. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60685-0

Scholte, J.A. and Soderbaum, F. (2017) A Changing Global Development Agenda? Forum for
Development Studies, 44(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2017.1275843

Schulz N-S (2010). The Third Wave of Development Players. Policy Brief 60, Madrid, FRIDE.
http://fride.org/download/pb60_third_wave_eng_nov10.pdf

Scoones, I. Amanor, K., Favareto, A. & Qi, G. (2016). A New Politics of Development
Cooperation? Chinese and Brazilian Engagments in African Agriculture. World
Development 81, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.11.020

SENPLADES (2013). Good Living National Plan 2013-2017: A better world for everyone.
Quito: National   Secretariat   of   Planning   and   Development.
http://www.planificacion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/12/Buen-Vivir-
ingles-web-final-completo.pdf

SENPLADES (2014). Objetivos del Milenio. Balance Ecuador 2014. Quito: Quito: National
Secretariat of Planning and Development.

SETEDIS (2015). Rendición de Cuentas Gestión SETEDIS 2015. Quito: SETEDIS.
http://www.planificacion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2015/11/Objetivos-
del-Milenio-Balance-2014.pdf

Sexsmith, K. and McMichael, P. (2015) Formulating the SDGs: Reproducing or Reimagining
State-Centred   development?   Globalizations,   12(4),   581-596.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2015.1038096

Shambaugh, D. (2013). China Goes Global. The Partial Power. Oxford, Oxford University
Press.

Stein, A. & Horn, P. (2012). Asset Accumulation: An Alternative to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Development Policy Review, 30(6), 663-680. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7679.2012.00593.x

Sumner, A. (2013). Poverty, Politics and Aid: is a reframing of global poverty approaching? Third World Quarterly, 34(3), 357-377. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.784593

Tan-Mullins, M., Mohan, G., & Power, M. (2010). Redefining aid in the China-Africa context. Development and Change, 41(5), 857-881. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7660.2010.01662.x

UN-Habitat (2016). New Urban Agenda: Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/N1639668-English.pdf

Vallejo, I. (2014). Petroleo, desarrollo y naturaleza: aproximaciones a un scenario de ampliacion de las fronteras extractivas hacia la Amazonia suroriente en el Ecuador. Anthropologica 32, 115-137. http://www.scielo.org.pe/scielo.php?pid=S0254-92122014000100006&script=sci_arttext

Van Cott, D.L. (2008). Radical Democracy in the Andes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vandemoortele, J. (2005). Ambition is Golden: Meeting the MDGs. Development, 48(1), 5-11.

Van der Kamp, D., Lorentzen, P., & Mattingly, D. (2017). Racing to the Bottom or to the Top? Decentralization, Revenue Pressures, and Governance Reform in China. World Development, 95, 164-176. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.02.021

Waage, J., Yap, C., Bell, S., Levy, C., Mace, G., Pegram, T., Unterhalter, E. Dasandi, N., Hudson, D., Kock, R., Mayhew, S., Marx, C. & Poole, N. (2015). Governing the UN Sustainable Development Goals: interactions, infrastructures, and institutions. The Lancet, 3(5), e251-e252. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(15)70112-9

Wallerstein, I. (1993). The world system after the cold war. Journal of Peace Research, 30(1), 1—6. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022343393030001001

Walsh, C. (2010). Development as Buen Vivir: Institutional arrangements and (de)colonial entanglements. Development, 53(1), 15-21. https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2009.93

Welzel, C., Inglehart, R., & Kligemann, H. (2003). The theory of human development: A cross-cultural analysis. European Journal of Political Research, 42(3), 341-379. doi:10.1111/1475-6765.00086

Wild, L. and Foresti, M. (2011). Politics in practice. A dialogue on governance strategies and action in international development. London: ODI.

---

[i] According to the World Bank, middle-income countries are those which have per capital income of US$ 1,006 - US$ 12, 235 (see also: http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mic/overview). They make up around a third of global GNP. Divided into lower and upper middle-income countries, the numbers are growing (see also: https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2017-2018). Their voices are increasingly heard globally through international fora such as the G20, G77 and regional organisations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Mercosur. Despite high levels of economic growth, they have distinct development needs that include rapid and unregulated urbanization, migration, diversity, inequality and poverty (Gray & Murphy, 2013; Mawdsley, 2017; Scoones, Amanor, Favareto & Qi, 2017).

[ii] Agenda 2030 that sets out the new global agenda for sustainable development to be achieved by the year 2030. It contains the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that is the steps by which the over-arching aim of "leaving no one behind" in development, which is at the heart of the Agenda 2030 document, should be met. The terms "Agenda 2030" and "SDGs" are often used interchangeably, but for reasons of precision and clarity, we have generally used "SDGs" here to refer to processes of engagement with the goals and targets that were ratified with or after the Agenda 2030 document, whilst "Agenda 2030" is used to refer to the process that led to the formulation of the document.

[iii] Discussion of the relationship between the so-called advanced capitalist countries (or 'the West') broadly defined, and the 'developing' world is entirely beyond the scope of this paper. However, the key point is that Marxist and heterodox accounts of the global economic order place considerable stress on the role of the first set

of countries in conditioning and shaping growth processes in the second set of countries. See the work of Andrew Gundar Frank (1966) for an early and seminal statement of how the West 'underdeveloped' the places it colonised and Cardoso and Faletto (1979) for a detailed description of this process in Latin America. The impact of the end of the Cold War is discussed in Wallerstein (1993), from a world systems approach, and the significance of the rise of China for global order is discussed in Ikenberrry (2008). John Hobson (2012) analyses the way in which eurocentrism has shaped theories of international order, and therefore of the context of international development debates.

iv Bias towards the national state and a unified national position can also be explained by the fact that agenda setting documents on international development, such as Agenda 2030, consider national governments as main actor responsible for implementing different global goals and targets. In the context of the SDGs, only goal 11 on making 'cities inclusive, safe, and resilient' recognises, and then only to an extent, the vital role of governance below the state. Ironically, even the New Urban Agenda articulated by Habitat III in October 2016, downplays the autonomous role of city governance, emphasising instead "the leading role of national governments (…) in the definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation for sustainable urban development." (UN-Habitat, 2016, article 15b).

v See Caria and Domínguez (2016) for a more detailed conceptual background on Buen Vivir.

vi For a summary of an event on disability in the 'UN Pavilion' this topic organised by Ecuador's government see for example: http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/all/un-dspddesa-ecuador-high-level-meeting-and-forum-on-disability-inclusion-and-accessible-urban-development/

vii Since January 2017 the website of CODENPE is no longer active and according to the newspaper El Universo (19 January 2017, http://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2017/01/20/nota/6005254/aprobada-ley-economia-popular) CODENPE seems to no longer operate on its premises.

viii The June 2015 protests were covered widely in the international press. See for example: https://www.wsj.com/articles/protesters-in-ecuador-demonstrate-against-correas-policies-1435279037 or https://www.yahoo.com/news/papal-truce-over-ecuador-protesters-return-streets-024543042.html.

ix See also: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/19/world/americas/ecuador-earthquake.html?_r=0%22%22.

x For further detail on events around LOOTUS (http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/all/urban-legislation-in-latin-america-the-compared-experiences-of-brazil-colombia-and-ecuador/), reconstruction and housing (http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/all/proyecto-juntos-por-ti-construccion-de-viviendas-accesibles-para-personas-con-discapacidad-afectadas-por-el-terremoto/), and the government's overall approach

to planning (http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/all/national-planning-and-multi-level-governance-in-ecuador/).