

INTRODUCTION

Does the South challenge the Geopolitics of International Development Cooperation?

Carlos R. S. MILANI
Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Políticos
Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)
crsmilani@iesp.uerj.br

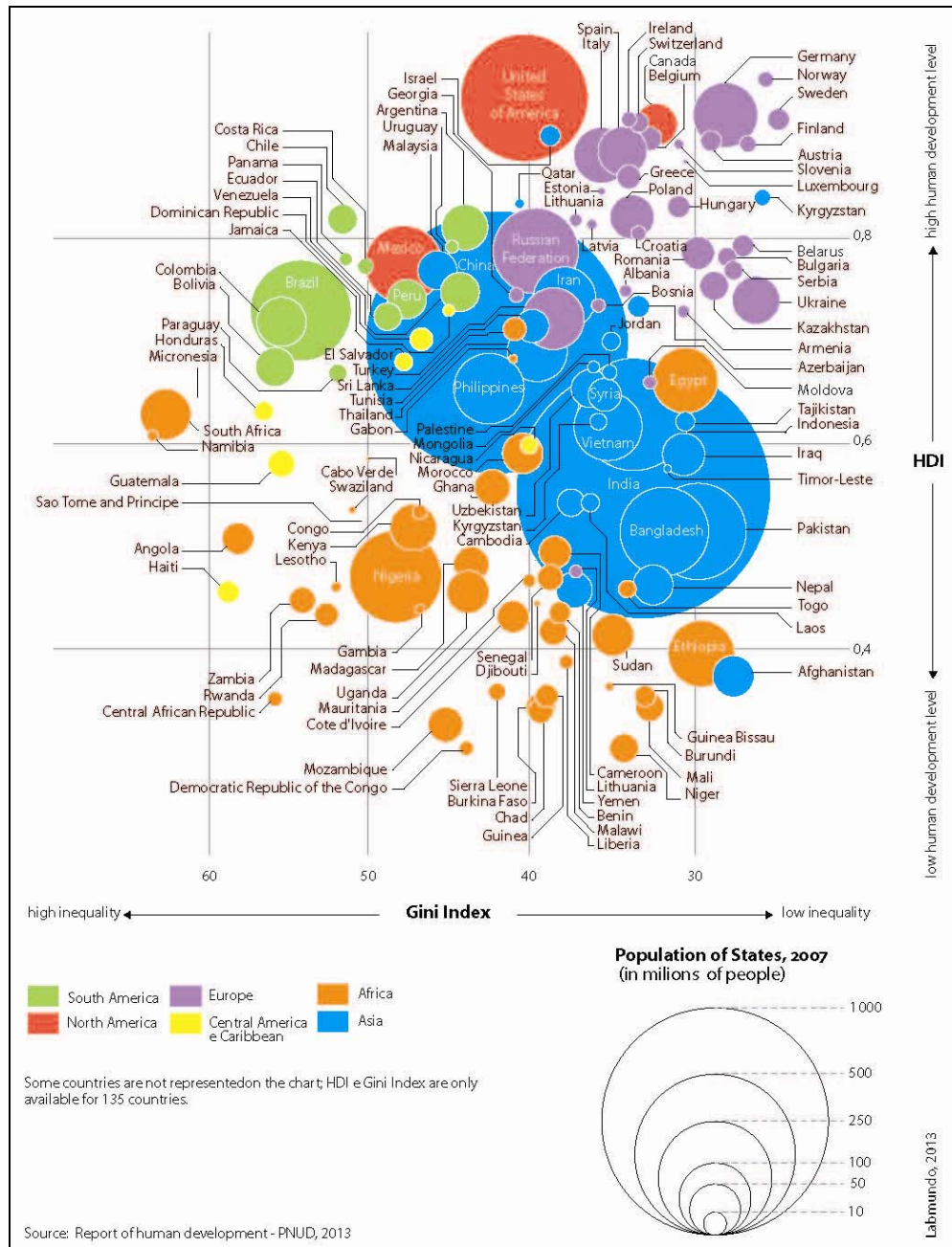
Enara ECHART MUÑOZ
Escola de Ciência Política
Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)
and
Instituto Universitario de Desarrollo y Cooperación
Universidad Complutense de Madrid (España)
enaraem@gmail.com

REFERENCIA NORMALIZADA

Milani, Carlos R. S., y Echart Muñoz, Enara (2013) “Does the South challenge the Geopolitics of International Development Cooperation?”. *Geopolítica(s). Revista de estudios sobre espacio y poder*, vol. 4, núm. 1, 35-41.

Globalization processes produce dilemmas in different economic, social, cultural, political and environmental perspectives, thus calling into question the assumptions and instruments that have supported the understanding of and the action on the reality of development. “Development” and “progress” promised by multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies have proved limited, exclusive, and sometimes perverse (Naylor, 2011; Pankaj, 2005). The “crisis of development” results from the unequal integration of individuals and classes in national society, but also from inequalities amidst nations in the international system. Moreover, this crisis stems from disappointment with what the North-South Cooperation (NSC) had promised to its beneficiaries worldwide, and also from a deep contradiction between the commitments from the North and their international practices in the actual promotion of the development of the South.

Diagram 1. Human development and inequalities, 2013



North-South development cooperation has built its main institutions during the Cold War. USA's strategic interests, the expansion of capitalism, and the need to fight against communism in a context of decolonisation have been its main drivers. That is to say that NSC has its own geopolitics and its political economy, both based on known socioeconomic asymmetries and political hierarchies (Hayter, 1971). Moreover, this mix of West-East and North-South geopolitics has produced systemic incentives for more developed countries to engage in international development cooperation (IDC), and thus establish their bilateral agencies and commit national funds to the "development" of other economies and societies (Lancaster, 2007). Its symbolic regime (superiority of the West/North, unreciprocated gift, politics of pity, new forms of imperialism) has been widely criticized, and continues to be a major source of legitimation of IDC's maintenance and reproduction both at the global and state levels (Escobar, 1994; Rist, 1996; Wallerstein, 2007).

However, IDC has never been universal either in its institutions (OECD's Development Assistance Committee could be seen as a selective club of member-states), or in its definitions of roles (those who can give aid, and those who can receive it) and rules (former metropolis aiding former colonies, export of models, tied aid, etc.). NSC institutions have not considered "beneficiary" countries as full agents of their own development. More than that, developing countries have not taken part in the definition of rules and roles when it comes to OECD, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (Milani, 2008; Pereira, 2010). Only within the United Nations General Assembly have they been able to defend their own interests and agendas (creation of CEPAL in Latin America, new trade rules within UNCTAD, the New International Economic Order, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, etc.), but the actual changes stemming from these processes have been timid and partial. As Diagram 1 shows, current differences between North and South are very clear in terms of human development and inequalities. Contrary to what many analysts may defend, the world is still geopolitically and geoeconomically divided into North and South, or if one wants to take into account stratifications within countries, one could still see a Centre and a Periphery in the world-system. The nature of dependences and the scope of asymmetries may change, across and within borders, but they always reflect a particular order of global affairs.

Therefore, history shows that NSC institutions, both hard (formal rules and organizations) and soft (practices, political culture), have reflected a particular *status quo*. One must always recall that institutions, and their discourses, norms and strategies, are the foundation of political behavior of states in the international order. Institutions define those who are able to participate in politics; what their particular rights and obligations might be; or how citizens can influence policy outcomes (Echart, 2008). Nonetheless, institutions are not aseptic rules but structures that are permeable to history, economics and power relations. The same institutional structure may produce different effects in different historical periods, which shows the

interest for comparisons (Badie & Hermet, 2001; Bara & Pennington, 2009; Dogan & Kazancigil, 1994; Hassenteufel, 2005; Mény & Surel, 2009; Schmitter, 2009).

Taking this long history into account, South-South Cooperation (SSC) has emerged as an attempt for changing the state of affairs, but also as a promise of solidarity among developing countries (Ayllón, 2009). Large countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey) but also smaller ones (Cuba, Ecuador, Uruguay) have engaged in SSC, and have begun to invest as “emerging donors”, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in several development sectors (public health, formal education and university cooperation, non-formal education, technical assistance projects, agricultural development, etc.). It is true that SSC has started with decolonisation processes: China in the fifties, Cuba, Brazil and India in the sixties, Turkey in the seventies, and so on. South-South relations are interesting processes of articulation among Global South countries beyond exclusively institutionalised forms of SSC (Cairo & Bringel, 2010). It is also true that experiences vary among developing countries, and their sorts of engagements in SSC (Alexandrov & Cooper, 2010; Narlikar, 2010; Nolte, 2010). Moreover, this agenda is not empty of strategic, political and economic interest: SSC is also a platform for soft power projection, gains in terms of multilateral support, energy resource negotiation, trade and investment deals. In the particular case of SSC in the African continent, some authors have even started to discuss what they currently call “a new scramble for Africa” (Carmody, 2011).

Therefore, it is clear that a systemic transformation that characterizes the turning into the twenty-first century (economic crises North and South, diffusion of power, the emergence of a Chinese superpower) creates incentives for developing countries, particularly the large ones, to seriously engage in international development, thus projecting their own internal contradictions into their SSC agendas. The main objective of this dossier is to discuss some features of SSC, without any intention of exhaustiveness, and with a particular focus on Brazil and Mexico. The central contribution of these papers roots in case studies, which can shed light on the reality and some of the impacts of SSC.

The two first articles debate the financial dimension of SSC. The article on “The Reduction of Asymmetries in MERCOSUR as a Way of Development Aid and South-South Cooperation: the Case of FOCEM”, by João Carlos Amoroso Botelho, assesses South-South financial transfers within MERCOSUR as a mechanism for reducing asymmetries. Elsa Sousa Kraychete and Rômulo Carvalho Cristaldo’s paper on “The National Bank of Economic and Social Development on the Brazilian Development Strategies: From the Internal Articulation to the Expansion to Latin America” reveals the trajectory of the BNDES in two distinct moments of Brazilian economic development, developmentalism and current neodevelopmentalism.

Then two papers focus on institutional processes of SSC, how countries build coalitions and eventually vote accordingly in the multilateral system. In “Mercosul and BRICS: Convergence at the General Assembly of the United Nations”, Amân-

cio Jorge de Oliveira and Janina Onuki analyze how Brazil's multilateral votes converge or not with votes coming from MERCOSUR, BRICS and nuclear powers. The fourth article, by Juan Pablo Prado Lallande and Rafael Velázquez Flores, assesses Mexico's participation in international development cooperation, also focusing on institutional building and domestic policies and politics.

In the concluding article, Rubens de Siqueira Duarte analyses Brazilian cooperation in the midst of interests and solidarity announcements. Using the case of Mozambique and the cooperation programs Brazil has been implementing in the African continent, the author argues that Brazil's SSC is also based on economic, multilateral and geopolitical interests. The two regions where SSC projects conducted by the Brazilian Development Cooperation (known as ABC) are concentrated, South America and Africa, correspond in fact to the two priority areas in Brazil's defence policy, forming the Arch of the South Atlantic, where the Blue Amazon and its oil-rich resources are geographically located.

The five articles show that developing countries share the historical legacy in terms of participation, between the years 1950 and 1970, in discussions about the center-periphery relations, non-alignment, Third World and the new international economic order. Some of them manifest a sort of geopolitical dissatisfaction with the status quo. They showcase regional and international leadership and negotiation capabilities, and all have traditional foreign services and a history of national diplomacy. As Vicky Randall (2004: 46) recalls, these are some features that help "justify studying the politics of Third World countries together as a separate group". Moreover, many developing countries and emerging powers are still both recipients and donors of development cooperation. They give greater importance to the diplomacy of south-south cooperation in their official discourses, through the setting up of institutions, development of projects, and allocation of resources (Lima, 2005).

Based on this need for academic research to deepen the analysis on SSC diverse realities, this dossier steers reflection on the roles "new powers" resume, on the ways they conceive and implement their SSC strategies. How are these development cooperation strategies linked to foreign policy agendas? Can rising powers, through their SSC strategies, step up and accept leadership, as well as collective commitment and decision-making? Do these countries challenge the cooperation for development system with innovative practices and new rules of the game? Have they learned from past mistakes made within the framework of traditional NSC strategies? Viable answers to questions of this sort require serious attention to the contexts in which the crucial political processes operate. As Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin (2006) recall, it is fundamental to collect and organize systematic political knowledge of different contexts that are compared and analysed. Rising powers and developing countries all present domestic political cultures that profile their own national interpretations of history; they have had their respective encounters with the West and colonization, and situate their experiences at the margins of

the liberal international order. This issue is but a modest contribution to the understanding of such issues.

References

- Alexandroff, Alan S. & Cooper, Andrew F. (eds.) (2010) *Rising States, Rising Institutions: challenges for global governance*. Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Ayllón, Bruno (2009) *South-South Cooperation and multilateral governance of the aid system: the implications for the Spanish aid*. FRIDE (Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior), Comment, 1-9.
- Badie, Bertrand & Hermet, Guy (2001) *La Politique Comparée*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Bara, Judith & Pennington, Mark (eds.) (2009) *Comparative Politics*. London: Sage Publications.
- Cairo Carou, Heriberto & Bringel, Breno (2010) “Articulaciones del Sur Global: afinidad cultural, internacionalismo solidario e Iberoamérica en la globalización contrahegemónica”. *Geopolítica(s)*, vol. 1, no. 1, 41-63.
- Carmody, Pdraig (2011) *The New Scramble for Africa*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Dogan, Mattei & Kazancigil, Ali (eds.) (1994) *Comparing Nations: concepts, strategies, substance*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Echart, Enara (2008) *Movimientos sociales y Relaciones Internacionales. La irrupción de un nuevo actor*. Madrid: IUDC-UCM-Los Libros de La Catarata.
- Escobar, Arturo (1994) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hassenteufel, Patrick (2005) “De la comparaison internationale à la comparaison transnationale: les déplacements de la construction d’objets comparatifs en matière de politiques publiques”. *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 55, no. 1, 113-132.
- Hayter, Teresa (1971) *Aid as Imperialism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Lancaster, Carol (2007) *Foreign Aid: diplomacy, development, domestic politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lima, Maria Regina Soares de (2005) “A política externa brasileira e os desafios da cooperação Sul-Sul”. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 48, no. 2, 24-59.
- Meny, Yves & Surel, Yves (2009) *Politique Comparée*. Paris: Montchrestien/Domat Politique.
- Milani, Carlos R. S. (2008) “Discursos y mitos de la participación social en la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo: una mirada a partir de Brasil”. *Revista Española de Desarrollo y Cooperación*, vol. 22, 161-182.

- Narlikar, Amrita (2010) *New Powers: How to Become One and How to Manage Them*. New York: Columbia.
- Naylor, Tristen (2011) “Deconstructing Development: the use of power and pity in the international development discourse”. *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 1, 177-197.
- Nolte, Detlef (2010) “How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytical Concepts and Research Topics”. *Review of International Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, 881-901.
- Pankaj, Ashok Kumar (2005) “Revisiting Foreign Aid Theories”. *International Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, 103-121.
- Pereira, João Márcio Mendes (2010) *O Banco Mundial como ator político, intelectual e financeiro 1944-2008*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira.
- Randall, Vicky (2004) “Using and Abusing the Concept of the Third World: Geopolitics and the Comparative Political Study of Development and Underdevelopment”. *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1, 41-53.
- Rist, Gilbert (1996) *Le développement, histoire d'une croyance occidentale*. Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. (2009) “The nature and future of comparative politics”. *European Political Science Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 33-61.
- Tilly, Charles & Goodin, Robert E. (eds.) (2006) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel (2007) *O Universalismo Europeu, a retórica do poder*. São Paulo: Boitempo.