

South-South Cooperation: Resistance or Continuity?

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Abstract

Alongside the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, the resultant restructuring of the traditional cooperation scheme was challenged by alternative mechanisms. These new relations offered new possibilities to previously relegated actors, enhancing however certain inequalities and reproducing certain logics of domination. This was shown in the new geopolitics of development posed by emerging countries, and the role of global player emulated by Brazil since 2003. To this end, this paper examines Brazil's foreign policy, paying attention to its South-South Cooperation with Angola. This analysis is aimed at opening the theoretical debate about whether or not these new mechanisms are tools of resistance to liberal hegemony.

Introduction

After the Second World War, the pursuit to legitimise the establishment of a new world order led to the emergence of mechanisms aimed at eliminating structural differences between countries. Notably, the strengthening of the idea of development as a cognitive, discursive and political construction gave rise to a vertical mechanism of assistance between donor/developed/rich countries on the one side and receivers/undeveloped/poor countries on the other, where the latter followed the path laid by the former to reach development.

With the advent of the 21st century, the complexity of political, economic, social and financial processes led to a multi-polarisation of international relations hand in hand with the expansion of neoliberal globalisation. The growth of inequalities arising both at a political and economic level facilitated the emergence of relationships outside traditional institutions. In the architecture of international cooperation, the internal contradictions of the development discourse marked certain limits to the prevailing institutions, against which new ideas raised the need for alternative mechanisms of cooperation.

Thus, South-South (SSC), Triangular (TC) and Decentralised Cooperation (DC) expressed a qualitative interest in a broader and horizontal cooperation, which

aimed to leave aside the contradictions of the traditional system. As a consequence, a growing optimism arose from the academies of the Global South, increasing the number of works analysing the emergence of those processes as a path to redistribute international power. The strengthening of “Southern” actors, the consolidation of a Global South identity and the emergence of mechanisms of SSC as an overcoming antithesis of the north-south cooperation effectively led to a qualitative expansion of traditional cooperation. However, these new structures also reproduced certain relations of verticality and inequality. This was shown in the new geopolitics of development posed by emerging countries.

On this basis, the challenge has become to unravel the current south-south relations models, understanding their mechanisms on the gear of the international system, as a break to the hegemonic and traditional donor-recipient binomial. To this end, I will integrate decolonial and poststructuralist theories in order to analyse Brazil's foreign policy, paying special attention to its promotion of SSC policies in Lusophone countries of Africa, specifically Angola. This analysis, while not exhaustive, is aimed at opening the theoretical debate about whether or not these new participation mechanisms are tools of resistance to (neo)liberal hegemony.

The construction of hierarchies within the international cooperation scheme

Over the past decades, inside the discipline of International Relations there has been a rejuvenation from a set of critical perspectives assembled behind the discussion about produced by non-European epistemologies,¹ pursuing this way to repress the construction of alternative institutional structures to handle political, social and economic mechanism of power.

The formation and expansion of these narratives in the institutional international arena served the strengthening of a binarisation of international relations, hierarchised around categories of countries according to their level of development or underdevelopment, charting a unique path to reach this condition—traced, of course, by the former. The foundation in 1960 of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the establishment of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) inside it aimed to monitor and evaluate development policies for member countries, analysing and delivering recommendations for assistance programs to each land. The DAC was thereby shaped into a legitimation mechanism for the formulation of policies imposed by the previous colonial powers to their ex-colonies, in the

¹ Santiago Castro Gomez, *La poscolonialidad explicada a los niños* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad del Cauca, 2005), 26-27.

context of post-World War II political decolonisation. Social sciences were therefore crystallised as a strong legitimising mechanism for these policies in the African, Asian and Latin American States.

Moreover, the political, social and economic life of the recipients became the target of an unlimited set of programs and interventions evaluated and scientifically calculated by the sciences developed for this purpose.² These initiatives were ratified thereafter by many United Nations summits, creating a system of international cooperation through which it would subsequently come to settle the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). But soon, the redirection of funds for development programs from many middle-income countries to low-income countries determined by the MDG started to face a sharp criticism from the countries hit hardest.

Nevertheless, as a consequence of the neoliberal crisis in Latin America, a series of processes have emerged that transcended the paradigm of modernity in two different senses. From the epistemological perspective, on the one hand, it has led to a decrease in the mastery of modern science, prompting an opening inside Social Sciences towards alternative forms of knowledge. From the socio-political perspective, on the other hand, the emergence of new milestones in contemporary social movements has allowed historically invisible sectors of the society to access to the circles of power.³ Meanwhile, the above-referred marginalisation of alternative forms of construction of power and knowledge also prompted a set of new processes of identity construction, encompassed by the idea of the Global South. This new multidimensional identity made reference to a phenomenon of creation and delimitation against the rules imposed by the Global North,⁴ not only denouncing the presence of unequal and inequitable institutional structures, but also seeking to build alternative mechanisms of international relations, based on a shared and diverse structural reality, and not on the promise of moving towards a linear evolutionary path.⁵ It was defined thus as a concept that started from the negativity in opposition to modern and colonial construction mechanisms of power; but above all, it had its foundations in the positive recognition of the subaltern constructions of power based on its creative skills to build a new world order.

² Arturo Escobar, "Power and Visibility: Development and the Invention and Management of the Third World", *Cultural Anthropology*, 3 (1988), 4: 429-430.

³ Boaventura Sousa Santos quoted in Arturo Escobar, "El 'postdesarrollo' como concepto y práctica social", *Políticas de economía, ambiente y sociedad en tiempos de globalización*, Daniel Mato (ed.), Emeshe Juhász-Mininberg (Caracas: Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 2005), 17-31.

⁴ Siba Grovogui, "A Revolution Nonetheless: The Global South in International Relations", *The Global South*, 5 (2012), 1: 175-190.

⁵ Mónica Hirtsch, *Pasado y presente de la cooperación norte - sur para el desarrollo* (Buenos Aires: Documentos de Trabajo sobre Cooperación Sur-Sur, 2009), 121-122.

This deconstructive theorisation enabled, in turn, a revision of the official readings about international cooperation, making it possible to denounce the presence of a legitimising development discourse inside the official readings. It enabled us from a political perspective to acknowledge how the international arena had limited the state's possible paths, but it also showed from an epistemological point of view how academia had been limited to suitable epistemologies, creating a concept of development that legitimised the expansion of unequal and vertical cooperation instruments and mechanisms.

As a result, Global South countries postulated the foundation of new mechanisms of cooperation. Through these, they tried to alter the principles on which the development aid industry had settled as a vehicle for promoting a development model. This new counter-hegemonic political challenge thus became a propitious space to foster the articulation of joint actions between the members of the South. It looked forward to promote horizontal, equitable, consensual mechanisms of mutual benefit, respecting independence and national sovereignty. Thereby it sought to achieve greater bargaining power and to promote self-reliance and preservation of diversity and cultural identity, denouncing in turn its eternal marginalisation.⁶

Unravelling the liberal discourse of an unambiguous development path

If the contributions of decolonial theorists enable us to acknowledge the presence of legitimating narratives around the concept of development, the ones of poststructuralist theorists open the door to understand “the ways in which Asia, Africa and Latin America became defined as ‘underdeveloped’ and therefore in need of development”.⁷ To answer the question, we have to inquire how the established legal structures enabled the construction and reproduction of the current international relations.

Now as I previously expressed, the modelling of the narrative of development was possible not only through the establishment of a system of international organisations linked to an international common legal body that ensured its reproduction, but also through its epistemological legitimation. The social and economic life of “underdeveloped” countries became the target of unavoidable intervention by technical specialists that were meant to ensure their transformation into “developed” countries, guaranteeing by doing so their voluntary monitoring. Equally important, however, was the production and circulation of legitimating discourses.

⁶ Bruno Ayllón, *La cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular: ¿Subversión o adaptación de la cooperación internacional?* (Quito, IAEN, 2013), 9-12.

⁷ Escobar, “El ‘postdesarrollo’ como concepto y práctica social”, 18.

Moreover, as Foucault expressed, power is everywhere: diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and regimes of truth.⁸ This theorisation provides an opportunity for understanding how these discursive legitimations, formal institutions and coercive laws hide behind rights and duties the establishment of a normal social behaviour. The mechanisms of international socialisation promote, this way, the disciplining of states and supranational institutions. In this sense, development policies have always been linked to the requirement of good-governance, whereby international organisations generate “performance techniques to assess, reward, or punish the behaviors of governments with regard to fields that were previously considered to fall within their sovereign jurisdiction”.⁹ But of course, this good-governance conception has only meant to be dictated and justified from the “developed” countries, where Northern dominated institutions have had the right to define it and dictate the path towards it, while non-Northern States have been forced to take responsibility for its never perfect implementation.¹⁰

Furthermore, the production and circulation of this development discourse was carried out through a double mechanism of professionalization (generation, diffusion and validation of knowledge) and institutionalisation (by using the knowledge produced to generate an institutional framework).¹¹ Through the establishment of this international network, discourses and techniques were produced and put into operation for exercising power within the international arena. But to complete the puzzle, the Foucaultian conception of a micro-physical power broadens our understanding of how it is also the same subject who, in his actions, reproduces these relationships of domination, normalising and monitoring himself in his interest to defend his rights and duties.

Further, the expansion of values held by the development discourse enabled the normalisation of a political and institutional behaviour through a network of partnerships that included intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, government authorities, sub-national agencies, and the civil society. Moreover, its molecular form of power enabled the configuration of a scale of development-underdevelopment, whereby different tasks were allocated to governments and societies according to their place on this scale. In this regard, international socialisation not only served the interest of creating and implementing institutions, but formed a sort of international government, which

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2008), 33-34.

⁹ Laura Zanotti, “Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime: The UN Debate on Democratization and Good Governance”, *Alternatives* 30 (2005), 467.

¹⁰ Jonathan Joseph, “Governmentality of What? Populations, States and International Organisations”, *Global Society* 23 (2009), 4, 420.

¹¹ Escobar, “Power and Visibility”.

aimed to induce supranational institutions, governments and populations to behave in a certain way.¹²

Following this line, Michael Merlingen mentions four distinct socialisation mechanisms¹³ or policies that could actually be quite useful in order to analyse the development scheme. The first one mentioned by the author is teaching, where socialisees act in accordance with the expectations of the socialiser because they think it is the right thing to do. This situation can be observed through the hegemonic crisis of the Brazilian agroexport model in 1930. This background gave rise to the embracing of national-developmental ideas, the central axis of which remained on the transformation of the state for the modernisation of the national industry, along with a triangulation between foreign capital, national private initiative and state control of commodities. However, these (later-called) dependency theories engendered in the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), still relied on a teleological path to reach (economic) development based on the European experience, and were therefore very closely linked to the contextual needs of developed countries.

The second mechanism, intermediation, refers to socialisation as a cooperative process in which no participant claims a monopoly on correct interpretations and everything is based on establishing consensus. The structuration in 1945 of the United Nations' General Assembly claimed this ideal on the one hand, while on the other hand the Security Council's five permanent members had (and still have) the right to veto any resolution. This is closely related to Merlingen's third mechanism, social influence, where socialisees choose to act in accordance with the expectations of the socialiser to gain certain non-material benefits. For example, Brazil's entrance to the Second World War helped to stop the pressures coming from the U.S. government towards all of the Latin American dictatorships, which also led the postwar new world order to recognise Brazil as a regional leader.

And finally, through material induction, intergovernmental organisations use material incentives to induct states into its ways of behaviour, leading them to act according to opportunities or threats that alter their political relations. This is probably the most visible example of north-south cooperation, where political and economic cooperation has always been tied to several conditions.

In brief, this institutionalisation perpetuated the traditional hegemonic forms of power, through mechanisms that promoted hierarchical and linear relationships

¹² Michael Merlingen, "Governmentality: Towards a Foucauldian Framework for the Study of IGOs", *Cooperation and Conflict* 38 (2003), 4: 363-364

¹³ Ibid.

between states. The development discourse gave legitimacy to the establishment of common international standards to qualify, measure and prioritise states, correcting all possible deviations. Hence, development became

the grand strategy through which the transformation of the not-yet-too-rational Latin American/Third World subjectivity [was] to be achieved. (...) Thus the effect of the introduction of development has to be seen not only in terms of its social and economic impact, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in relation to the cultural meanings and practices they upset or modify.¹⁴

But of course, resistance is co-extensive with power, namely as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance.¹⁵ According to this logic, resisting the constructions would require not only a creative process paying attention to alternative forms of development but also a deconstruction of the existing epistemic constructions.

The woken giant: Lula's Brazil

The ideological shift in Latin American politics during the first years of the twenty-first century, with the rise to power of “new left” governments, was embraced by most of the leaders of the region as the “Twenty First Century Socialism”. These new political currents were not isolated cases, but were strongly mutually linked, acquiring a marked inter- and transnational dimension.

It was within this process that the union leader Luis Inacio Lula da Silva won the presidency of the Brazilian Republic in 2003. Now, while the main objective during his government was to deepen social policies against worsening living conditions of Brazilian popular classes, Lula maintained a conservative economic policy, continuing the liberal hegemonic cycle inaugurated by his predecessor. This way, the governmental rhetoric raised the advantages of economic stability to achieve sustainable growth, while emphasizing the benefits that this represented for popular sectors through the democratisation of the access to resources and the opening of channels for upward mobility. This promoted greater adherence to the competitive order by the hand of the state, allowing the sociocultural inclusion of the middle strata and the absorption of popular leaders.¹⁶

¹⁴ Escobar, “Power and Visibility”, 438.

¹⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 33-34.

¹⁶ Brasilio Sallum Jr., “La especificidad del gobierno de Lula. Hegemonía liberal, desarrollismo y populismo”, *Nueva Sociedad* 217 (2008), 156-167.

From the perspective of productivity, the government took advantage of the international boom in commodity prices and boosted its global insertion as a major supplier of agrifood settling the country's growth over the surplus in the trade balance. With this macroeconomic stability, confidence in the international market led to a sharp increase in foreign direct investment, transforming the country into the first receiver at regional level and the fourth in the world. Now, from the point of view of development, the Growth Acceleration Plan 2007 gave a major role to public investment through the legal concept of 'partnership' as a coordinating mechanism between the public and private sectors. The intention was to restore the productivity of state-owned companies hand in hand with private companies, improving their competitiveness within the country and abroad. Consequently, investments in infrastructure doubled between 2003 and 2010 encouraging greater productivity and reducing regional and social inequalities.¹⁷

Moreover, it was precisely this economic policy which allowed the formulation of a series of social policies that, in addition to generating a redistribution of wealth, gave access to the economic circles to large contingents of the population. Thus, from the social point of view it was intended to address poor equitable distribution of the benefits of growth from the previous decade through the implementation of a set of universal programs to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. These policies also included a large increase in budget expenditure devoted to education, where the investment in Social Sciences' research programmes was essential to promote critical mass to encourage Brazil's own deconstruction of development structures.

All these factors enabled the country to start earning greater international relevance, challenging the northern institutional structures within the state framework from a subaltern and resistant southern identity. Its regional leadership, the diversification of its trade through the promotion of bilateral relations, the formation of trading blocs with countries from the Global South, and its role as a promoter of South-South Cooperation mechanisms, led it to exert an increasing role both in Latin America and globally. In addition to that, its push into ancient trade alliances such as MERCOSUR, and its fundamental role as a member of new political / economic conformations intended to serve as a counterbalance to the institutions of the global north in a multipolar world – as BRICS, IBSA and UNASUR – led Brazil to exert an unprecedented power of influence. Its challenge was therefore to encourage transformations in the international system, and at the same time, to open up spaces to alternative political subjects.

¹⁷ Carlos Eduardo Santos Pinho, "O nacional-desenvolvimentismo e o novodesenvolvimentismo no Brasil: Expansão interna, externa e o discurso social-democrata", *Achegas* 45 (2012), 18.

The global player's workhorse: Brazilian South-South Cooperation

And so, contrary to models of minimum state which had advocated international financial institutions and developed powers over the previous decades, Lula's actions led Brazil to gain credibility on the international scene within the good-government structure, cultivating a well-founded reputation in pacifism, international law and responsibility in fulfilling its obligations. These factors were chased from a combative discursive character showing an explicit will to change the relations between developing countries and traditional powers. In this sense, the government focused on the diversification of the recipients of Brazilian foreign policy, promoting a change in the geography of trade and the formation of coalitions among emerging countries.¹⁸

From the perception that the orthodox economic policies of the previous period had been deeply harmful to the societies in a world arranged around asymmetrical rules that favored wealthy countries, South-South Cooperation was rescued as part of a promising future scenario. Based on this, the Brazilian goal became the pursuit of greater autonomy, prompting in turn a multipolar international system and preserving or increasing an independence that would guarantee growth and development. This rhetoric was essential in south-south relations, positioning Brazil as one of the leaders of the Global South in order to challenge the rules of global governance. Brazilian foreign policy ran as a producer and disseminator of an alternative model of cooperation for development, intended to lead the reduction of asymmetries in the international system, and allowing a change of status in the countries of the South from receivers to suppliers. Moreover, this construction sought to strengthen the character of horizontal unconditional cooperation, not only differentiating South-South cooperation from traditional, but also postulating it as an effective source, emphasising the ties of solidarity among developing countries.¹⁹

As a consequence, their first step in this direction was to demonstrate a deep commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), emphasising that they could only be guaranteed through the eighth objective: the formation of a global alliance. These proposals were adopted hand in hand with the seeking of political alliances, strategic investments and the transfer of knowledge in a variety of basic sectors that were not limited to the political and the economic areas. Following this line, throughout Lula's administration, numerous

¹⁸ Bruno Ayllón, "Contribuciones de Brasil al desarrollo internacional: coaliciones emergentes y cooperación Sur-Sur", *CIDOB d'afers internacionals* 97-98 (2012), 190-192.

¹⁹ Adriana Erthal Abdenur and João Marcos Rampini, "A cooperação brasileira para o desenvolvimento com Angola e Moçambique: uma visão comparada", *Política externa brasileira, cooperação sul-sul e negociações internacionais*, Haroldo Ramanzini Júnior and Luis Fernando Ayerbe (eds.) (Sao Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2005), 89.

cooperation initiatives were carried out under the coordination of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, focused on increasing national capacities with a social and economic impact.

These activities had as their target Africa (48% of the initiatives in 36 beneficiary countries), Latin America and the Caribbean (41%) and Asia and the Middle East (11%); and were carried out in the areas where Brazilian institutions had developed technical expertise. Besides, the Brazilian action was also supported by actions within the framework of TC initiatives with OECD countries and multilateral organisations. But above all, the implementation and deepening of South-South Cooperation was raised as the Brazilian workhorse, opening its experiences and knowledge to other developing countries. In this sense, the axis of Brazilian foreign action was based on its claim as a regional leader and a global player, hoping that this could in turn be translated into an opening of new markets (as well as new opportunities for the Brazilian private sector).

In this sense, the growing importance of the PALOP (the interstate organisation between African Countries of Portuguese Official Language), within the background of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPSC), was the first step in its expansion towards the rest of Africa. Its strategic nature served as a guiding framework for the priorities of the Brazilian action in SSC, leading these countries to receive 74% of Brazilian technical, scientific and technological cooperation in Africa between 2005 and 2009. This way, the PALOP became the main beneficiaries of Brazilian cooperation in Africa, with Angola one of the most favored (4% of the total).

A model of South-South Cooperation as resistance against traditional hierarchies?

Once the jewels of the Portuguese Empire on the two continents where it had spread its colonial expansion, Angola and Brazil maintained bilateral relations throughout their whole history based on this common colonial and lusophone identity, becoming a fundamental pillar for the construction of the CPSC. In addition, since 2003 this common identity was enhanced through their common peripheral identification as members of the Global South. In this regard, supported by Brazilian international power and Angolan institutional restructuring after a 40-years civil war, the leaders of both countries opted for a redefinition of their bilateral and multilateral relations backed by the options opened by new cooperation mechanisms.

This deepening of their relations provoked an unprecedented increase of their bilateral cooperation agreements, negotiations and actions in multilateral forums, leading in turn to a sharp increase of their projects over the period

2003-2010. As a result, the consolidation of a broad set of bilateral and multilateral agreements was carried out. Among the first, it is important to highlight the technical cooperation protocols on public and local administration, environment, agriculture and livestock, oil, government finances; as well as the cooperation programs on environmental education and culture and the projects for sustainable rural development. From a multilateral point of view, the most important initiatives in which the two countries interacted were the ones related to the PALOP: the Brazil-Africa Politics, Cooperation and Trade Forum 2003; the Africa-South America Summits 2006 and 2009; and the Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security, Famine Fighting and Rural Development 2010.

This broad range of bi- and multilateral agreements were reached thanks to the interest shown by the governments of both countries, expressed through Lula's official visits to Angola in 2003 and 2007, and Santos' official visit to Brazil in 2010. The declared objective of these meetings was always the will to expand and diversify political dialogue, demonstrating a strong commitment to deepen cooperation between both countries.

In commercial terms, these agreements led to an exponential increase in relations between the two countries multiplying by six their trading relations between 2002 and 2008. Already in 2007, annual Angolan exports to Brazil reached 460 million dollars, becoming the third African country with more exports to the South American country and the fourth largest importer of its products in Africa. The trade between the two countries resulted in US \$ 1.47 billion in 2009, whereby US \$ 1.30 billion were Brazilian exports. On the other hand, after Lula's trip to Angola in 2007, the South American country established a policy of credit lines that led to the signing of seven financial agreements registered in the areas of R & D, health, education, housing and energy. Three years later, the Angolan president's trip to Brazil allowed the increase of these lines of credit from 2 to 10 billion dollars. This growing exchange between two historical partners was seen as a clear example to follow in the field of bilateral relations of SSC, challenging the vertical relations of traditional cooperation and proposing instead an alternative path to cooperate in terms of equality.

However, it is interesting to notice how the trade flows between Brazil and Angola were marked during the period by a strong asymmetry of the trade balance favorable to the first one, whose action was characterised by its exporter status of manufactured products (71.3 % of the balance sheet total), and an importer status of commodities (71.3%, mainly oil and natural gas).²⁰ This Brazilian surplus remained unchanged all over this period, with the exception of 2008, when imports of Angolan oil into Brazil (and the sustained growth of

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

international commodity prices) reversed the balance without altering its status as an exporter of manufactured products and a commodities importer.

South-South Cooperation, resistance with continuities or continuity with resistances?

Brazil is assuming its greatness, its condition of a country that, throughout life has been a recipient, and is now a donor. We want to help others to get developed.

Lula da Silva, weekly program, 'Breakfast with the President'
(July 2010)

Beyond the readings made by the governments and intellectuals committed to the cause of the SSC, it is essential to examine the presence of continuities of North-South cooperation within these new mechanisms. From Lula's arrival to power, Brazilian official rhetoric was critical of the lucrative mechanisms and interests of traditional cooperation, positioning itself as a *partner of the South* through the reinforcement of a 'horizontal/of-mutual-interest/without-hierarchies' system of cooperation. Socialisation was this way guaranteed by a theoretically egalitarian and cooperative process, where none of the participants claimed a monopoly and everything was based on consensus (*intermediation*). This combative rhetoric committed to alternative mechanisms of cooperation was shared by all emerging countries (SSC leaders), and in this way institutionalised within the multilateral arena through several international forums.

Nevertheless, the resulting dialectical positioning between a traditional, hierarchical and continuist cooperation of colonial ties, and an emancipatory, horizontal and resistant cooperation; led to the formulation of a misleading debate that hid the presence of certain continuities legitimated by this rhetoric. As expressed, Brazil sought in the period 2003-2010 to differentiate its proposals on international cooperation against traditional mechanisms, showing a deep commitment to the MDGs (*teaching*) as a path towards a necessary reform of traditional cooperation. Through its political priorities, Lula established a broad set of actions aimed at pushing for the renewal of multiple international institutions (mostly the UN and IMF), heading for an international balance of power where Brazil claimed a role of regional leader and global player (*social influence*). This way, Lula's administration pursued the creation of a symbolic capital that would allow Brazil to be perceived as a partner concerned with the welfare of the societies of the Global South States, thus facilitating not only its international insertion, but also its access to new markets and the internationalisation of Brazilian companies (*material induction*). This symbolic capital was in turn supported by historical, social and cultural ties, which

explains why Brazilian's SSC was focused on its relations within the South American region and the PALOP.

Thus, the official Brazilian discourse had its correlation in conceptual terms, in the sense that while the OECD countries considered Official Development Assistance to all flows that had 25% concessionality (which means that only a quarter of the funds should be nonrefundable), the Brazilian Cooperation Agency interpreted that in Brazilian SSC, the flows had to be destined in 100% without concessionality (total nonreimbursable). Therefore, credits (even those granted through official financial institutions) could not be characterised as such. This posed problems around the dichotomy between a narrow budget and a large variety of bi and multilateral projects to be carried out. This was achieved through two channels: (a) the formulation of low-cost projects; and (b) the search for cooperating partners (TC).

In this sense, while technical cooperation was manifested as an effective and inexpensive instrument, the search for partners confronted the government with new contradictions. On the one hand, the articulation of the country with Global North countries jeopardised its identity as a cooperating country of the South. But on the other hand, this TC allowed the association with a traditional donor (responsible for the financial aid), yielding to Brazil the contribution with human and technical capital. Finally, one of the biggest shortcomings of Brazilian SSC was administrative decentralisation. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency was created in 1987 as coordinator of the reception of official development aid flows. This meant that it lacked the stable regulatory framework needed to coordinate the policy formulation of a cooperating country, and the creation of ad-hoc processes were always necessary. This situation contributed strongly to the presence of large gaps in the scope of private activity.²¹

In relation to the latter, the path taken by the official discourse regarding the action of private capital was to remain silent, discretely promoting the internationalisation of Brazilian multinational companies through foreign policy. So, since the private sector was not part of the Brazilian State, its actions were not tied to the principles of the SSC, unleashing its own interests. Thus, through the expansion of their internationalisation opportunities, Brazilian companies sought to consolidate their presence in new foreign markets, reproducing the traditional multinationals' practices within the traditional mechanisms of cooperation.

²¹ Carlos Milani y Rubens Duarte, "Cooperação para o desenvolvimento e cooperação sul-sul: A perspectiva do Brasil", *Política externa brasileira*, Ramanzini Júnior and Fernando Ayerbe (eds.): 65-71.

As a result, Brazilian SSC discourse has contributed to the restriction of an already present lecture in traditional cooperation mechanisms: the idea that the state was the only recognisable actor responsible for the decision-making process concerning cooperation policies. Against this perspective, a strong deconstructive critic of SSC should analyse the multiplicity of actors trying with all the means at its disposal to influence the foreign policies decision making process. A decolonial theorisation should head towards a reading where the national interest should no longer be seen as a single area defined by a homogeneous state, but as a result of a complex set of interactions between the interests of multiple actors that converge in the formulation of foreign policies.²² This theoretical widening might be a way to start deconstructing the still hierarchical and linear state-centered concept of development. The understanding reached through this multidimensionality of the phenomenon enables us to analyse the multiplicity of logics involved in SSC, warning over the necessity to deepen the discussion on its study away from the Manichean rhetorical conceptions between SSC and traditional cooperation.

Conclusions

It is possible to confirm that the diversification of actors in the Global South and the emergence of mechanisms of South-South cooperation have effectively led to a qualitative expansion of traditional cooperation in multidimensional terms. Hand in hand with the official rhetoric of countries in the Global South, the resulting processes have certainly transformed traditional cooperation and widened it towards different actors. Nevertheless, there have also remained serious continuities, reproducing the previous relationships of domination. Against this, dealing with the still state-centred lecture of international relations and its teleological development path should be one of the priorities of SSC theorists in order to overcome its limits. Thus, the acknowledgment of national interest understood as a result of a complex set of interactions between the interests of multiple actors that come together in the formulation of foreign policies is the first step to epistemologically deconstruct traditional cooperation mechanisms in particular, and international relations in general. To this end, the integration of the two theoretical perspectives analysed could be useful, leading to the acknowledgement of legitimating narratives hand in hand with the reproduction of the current power relations within the international arena.

This situation has been reflected in the geopolitics of development raised by Brazil in its role as a global player. In this sense, while promoting new fundamental projects, the enlargement process of Brazilian cooperation in Africa

²² Michele Dolcetti, “La panacea agroenergética de Brasil. Promoción de agrocombustibles y Cooperación Sur-Sur”, *Instituto Universitario de Desarrollo y Cooperación IUDC-UCM* 24 (2013), 45-46.

also resulted in the increase of the Brazilian private sector, linked to its lucrative interests. This situation created huge contradictions among the conception and objectives of South-South Cooperation and the Brazilian goals of international integration. In this sense, despite focusing on a wider conception of development based on a common identity and intended to transcend the teleological and vertical lecture of traditional mechanisms, this rhetoric may have helped to open the scheme to legitimate new mechanisms of economic subordination within the Global South. Added to that, the recent institutional blow suffered by the government of Dilma Rousseff and the accession to power of most conservative political sectors have questioned the fragility of the Brazilian institutional system, changing as well the focus of its foreign policy. The continuity of the policies for Brazilian cooperation in Africa is, therefore, a puzzle to be solved.