What do we talk when we talk about South-South Cooperation?

The construction of a concept from empirical basis

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Abstract

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Thirty two years from the Buenos Aires Declaration, South-South Cooperation (SSC) has acquired an increasingly protagonist role in the debates on International Cooperation. Given this scenario, SSC presents itself as a tool of solidarity that could facilitate the construction of capacities in developing countries, relaxing the traditional North-South Cooperation (NSC) model and allowing the appropriation of reforms by recipient countries.

This paper points out that these conceptualizations present some weaknesses to better understand the distinctive nature of SSC and its potential to improve the effectiveness of international cooperation. While the political definitions of SSC may have some value, it still remains necessary to reach a higher level in their conceptualization. To attain this objective, the research works on two fields. The first one is the construction of the SSC concept in relation with the NSC ones. The second one is the inductive elaboration of SSC incorporating elements from the comparison of emerging donors’ experiences in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Resumen

¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de Cooperación Sur-Sur? La construcción del concepto desde bases empíricas

A treinta y dos años de la Declaración de Buenos Aires, la Cooperación Sur-Sur (CSS) ha adquirido un protagonismo creciente en los debates sobre cooperación internacional al desarrollo. Dado este escenario, la CSS se presenta como una herramienta de solidaridad que podría facilitar la construcción de capacidades en los países en desarrollo, flexibilizando el modelo de la Cooperación Norte-Sur (CNS) y permitiendo una apropiación de las reformas por parte de los países receptores.

Este trabajo plantea que dichas conceptualizaciones presentan limitaciones para entender la naturaleza distintiva de la CSS y su potencial para mejorar la eficacia de la cooperación internacional. Más allá del valor que tienen las definiciones políticas, es necesario alcanzar un mayor rigor empírico en su conceptualización. Esta tarea tiene dos aspectos claramente diferenciables: el primero es la construcción del concepto de CSS en relación al de CNS; ello es, comparar y analizar las variables que entran en la definición de uno y otro. El segundo aspecto, mientras tanto, se refiere a una elaboración inductiva de la CSS a partir de las experiencias comparadas de actores participantes que han calificado su relación de ese modo en América Latina, Asia y África.
What do we talk when we talk about South-South Cooperation? 
The construction of a concept from empirical basis

Miguel Lengyel & Bernabé Malacalza

(FLACSO Argentina)

Thirty two years since the Declaration of Buenos Aires (1979), South-South Cooperation (SSC) has come to occupy again a prominent place in debates on international development cooperation. This resurgence can be explained by the growing importance of a group of countries that, historically had been recipients of aid, but now assume the role of emerging donors. Such is the case of China, India, South Korea, in Asia; Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela in Latin America; or South Africa in Africa.

Similarly, this trend has drawn the attention of academics, politicians and consultants who have dealt with the qualitative differences in this form by using adjectives such as developmental, supportive, flexible, adaptable, horizontal and humanist to qualify it. Thus, in some cases, these characterizations have even identified SSC as a dynamic with a nature, objectives and instruments better (and that should be considered an alternative) to those used by the "traditional" North-South Cooperation (NSC).

However, the random use of the term SSC to indicate a wide range of phenomena associated with relations among Southern countries often involves a slight concern to define and delimit its conceptual scope, stimulating a connotative vagueness and making it impossible to generate theoretical knowledge on its dynamics. In fact, the study of the nature of SSC and its potential for effective international cooperation still faces the major challenge of abandoning the parochialism and fragmentation of approaches made so far, which would help to achieve a more rigorous conceptualization and move towards a consensus on how to post, systematize and compare the data from the aid distributed by "emerging donors".

This article aims to put forward an analytical challenge in the academic research of SSC: the need to reach a comprehensive and precise concept about what SSC is and what SSC is not. Beyond this challenge, the questions that this paper seeks to answer are: what do we talk when we talk about SSC? Is SSC a new phenomenon completely different from the NSC model? Which are the main characteristics of Southern aid flows? The hypothesis supported here is that a SSC concept is a useful tool to better understand and compare Southern and Northern aid flows. As was pointed out by Sanahuja (2010:19), "we do not need a different analytical framework to interpret development cooperation. Despite the differences between NSC and SSC, both can be explained by the same theory, both can be compared and conceptualized".

While the political definitions of SSC may have some value, it still remains necessary to reach a higher level in their conceptualization. To attain this objective, the research works on two fields. The first one is the construction of the SSC concept in relation with the NSC ones. The second one is the inductive elaboration of SSC incorporating
elements from the comparison of emerging donors’ experiences in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The approach is basically done in three parts: the first section is focused on the conceptual evolution of SSC and the comparison between SSC and NSS models. The second one, refers to the empirical basis of SSC and aims to identify the properties and indicators of the matrix of data to collect information. This section also analyzes the modalities, types of transfers, scopes, profiles and approaches that SSC assumes in the practice. The sample of cases listed includes some of the greatest Southern donors: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela and Cuba in Latin America, China, South Korea and India in Asia-Pacific and South Africa in Africa. Finally, some questions and conclusions could be drawn from this empirical description of SSC, with the aim of contributing to evolving academic debates on this issue.

I. The conceptual framework of South-South Cooperation

According to Sartori (2003) “to define means, first of all, to delimit, to fit confines. An undefined concept is a concept without limits, and does not define when it should be applied and not, what it should be included and what it should be excluded”. So the simplest way of defining a concept is, according to the author, to define it in relation to its opponent. What is beauty? It is the opposite of ugly. What is bad? It is the opposite of good. Following the same scheme, we can pose similar questions to our issue. What is SSC? Is it the opposite of NSC? Do they share some attributes?

While the conventional wisdom suggests that SSC is the opposite of NSC, the existing empirical data that explains the quality of Southern aid flows has not led to this conception. In our view, both NSC and SSC are not exactly the same thing, but they are not completely different. As a starting point, it should be said that both modalities share some attributes and differ in the others. Mainly, NSC and SSC are two faces of a same coin: the International Development Cooperation. Or in other words, both are genuine transfers of resources and capacities from a country that offers cooperation programs to a partner country that receives them.

Taking into account this reference, it would be an error to consider SSC as a substitutive mechanism of the traditional NSC. Overall, SSC is neither better nor worse than NSC, but a different kind of cooperation (Ayllón Pino, 2009b: 2). So the comparison may be focused on the specificity of each type of cooperation and may identify their distinctive features. As it is posed in the Chapter I.1, the specialized literature has highlighted some differences between NSC and SSC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I.1. Differences between NSC and SSC</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>(1) Geopolitical contexts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(4) Donors</strong></td>
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<td>North-South Cooperation: DAC Donors</td>
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</table>

1 According to Duverger, the comparison supposes the presence, at the same time, of differences and similarities; so we cannot compare neither the same two things nor two things completely different. The comparison requires certain analogy among compared things and the main challenge is to determine the grade of such analogy. In this sense, Sartori (1991:35) points out that the compared things (NSC and SSC in our case) must show shared attributes (similarities) and specific attributes (differences).
### Emerging Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(5) Main Composition</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Technical Assistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6) Aid Flows</td>
<td>U$S 103.000 millions 0.3% of GDP (average by donor)</td>
<td>U$S 12.600 millions 0.07% of GDP (average by donor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Political Agenda</td>
<td>Maintenance of the International Order</td>
<td>Reform of the International Order and the World Economic System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

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### I.a. The different geopolitical contexts of emergence

First, from their different conceptions, SSC and NSC are both consequences of the Cold War's strategic board-game. The importance of development cooperation between North and South was recognized in late 1940s, after the Second World War, when the U.S. launched the famous Marshall Plan to assist European countries in rebuilding their war-torn economies. Later, this plan's success drew the Soviet Union in to backing the Molotov Plan to financially support the socialist countries and thus, a competition in the field of foreign aid began between the two blocs. This struggle between the superpowers was the geopolitical context of the emergence of NSC. The intensification of East-West competition determined the mobilization of resources and cooperation programs of the superpowers to their strategic allies. In an international context of tight bipolarity, NSC emerges as a tool for foreign policy used to support allies and with the ultimate goal of maintaining the existing balance of power.

As it happens with NSC, it is not possible to understand the logic of SSC without reference to the geopolitical context of its emergence. This is a process of the emergence of Southern consciousness and its manifestation in international relations since the Bandung Conference (1955), where solidarity among developing countries becomes a tool and a goal of the so-called "Third World". That was the starting point of a political dialogue among developing countries, which highlighted the need for articulation to reduce the asymmetries in the international system (Ayllón Pino, 2009). Then, that political-ideological imperative resulted in initiatives such as the creation in 1961, of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77) in 1964. This international context is different from that which sheltered the first initiatives of NSC. In the period of détente, the struggle for supremacy that characterized the period of tight bipolarity, is transformed into a loose bipolarity where revisionist attitudes arise towards each superpower in their respective blocks. One of the phenomenon that promoted this scenario was the large-scale process of decolonization in Asia and Africa together with the massive influx of these new independent states as members of the United Nations General Assembly.

### I.b. The different operative definitions

NSC has a background of theoretical debates about its definition. Since 1961, the discussion was prompted by developed countries under the OECD/DAC. There, the first defining elements of the so-called concept of Official Development Aid (ODA) were established.

According to the definition of 1969 DAC/OECD, ODA is “flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant

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2 Specialists of the Special Unit for SSC of UNDP have posed that SSC was born in 1954, where Thailand propelled the first initiative of development cooperation among developing countries (SEGIB, 2008:10).
element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount)” (Führer, 1994:24).

Developed countries members of OECD / DAC adhered to the concessional character of ODA and the minimum grant element of 25% which corresponds to transfers made in cash, goods or services that do not require repayment. From that, the nature of ODA was consolidated as a "donation", which can take two conventional forms of transfer: concessional loans or grants. Thus, the ODA became the main tool for collecting data and measuring North-South flows.

Unlike NSC, the context of discussions on a definition of SSC has been almost exclusively the United Nations system. The first contribution was made during the First Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (Geneva, 1964). There, under the leadership of the G77, the concepts of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC) in the field of trade and finance and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) were introduced. Then the actual technical discussion started with the creation, in 1974, of the Special Unit for SCC of UNDP and finally took shape in 1978 in the Plan of Action of Buenos Aires (PABA). Since then, the concept of TCDC was a pillar of the SSC language and went on to define all the activities of transfer of knowledge and experience among developing countries (SEGIB, 2008:15).

However, the conceptual boundary is one of the most debated and controversial aspects of SSC, without any of the definitions satisfying completely. A possible formulation has been provided by the Special Unit of SCC of UNDP establishing that it is any “process in which two or more developing countries acquire individual and collective capacities through cooperative exchanges of knowledge, resources and technological know how” (SEGIB, 2008:16). More recently, efforts to achieve consensus on the concept of SSC have been channeled through the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It has been stated that the definition of ODA excludes other forms of financing for development that can be covered in a South-South relationship and thus, they rather prefer to speak of something broader. Finally, these concerns have been presented also in the High-level United Nations Conference (Nairobi, December 2009) held in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Conference on TCDC. In that opportunity, it was reaffirmed that SSC should not be seen as ODA, as it is based on a partnership between equals (paragraph 18 of the Final Declaration). Nevertheless, although it is understood that SSC is a broader concept than that of ODA, an agreement on its scope is still pending. In this sense, the absence of an international agreement about the operative concept of SSC is a major obstacle to the systematization of information on Southern flows.

II. The empirical basis of South-South Cooperation

The construction of a concept supposes the definition of its properties (connotation) and, on the other hand, the specification of its scope or set of events to which that concept applies (denotation). These decisions are the ones that determine how useful (or not) a concept might be. Therefore, a useful definition is one that is precise and clear. First, it should avoid vagueness, that is when a concept has no specific purpose, but is general and free in application. And, second, it should not fall into ambiguity, that is when there are no clearly defined properties. In short, the utility should be measured by its explanatory power of the empirical reality.

More specifically, in the field of development cooperation, the decision about the properties and scope of a definition will also have consequences for the measurement of the magnitude of the volumes contributed by donors. Thus, if the classical definition of ODA was used, significant volumes would be excluded of the final count, as most of the
shares of SSC do not have a grant element of 25%; while if it is adopted a more comprehensive and inclusive concept, the volume of flows considered as SSC will be higher. In other words, the conclusion is that there is a gap between the empirical level of SSC, which assumes variants and non-traditional forms, and the field promoted by the classic definition of ODA, which remains obsolete to interpret the complexity of the phenomenon (Lengyel and Malacalza, 2009). In that sense, as long as the reality of SSC exceeds the provision of resources to the least developed countries on concessional terms to integrate other elements and forms of cooperation, it is necessary to adopt a broader definition to interpret the current flows of SSC, than that provided as ODA.

This hypothesis is supported by some examples. Thus, as shown in Table II.1, we can mention the case of China and the Government-Sponsored Investments (GSI) as an example of a flow that does not fit the concept of ODA, but is an action of SSC.

Table II.1. The case of Chinese Government-Sponsored Investments (GSI)

In practice, China's SSC actions translate into major projects, spending large amounts of resources and involving a high number of beneficiaries. However, according to Lum et. al. (2009), from a total estimated volume of US$ 25 billion a year (2007), its SSC flow only has a 2% of grant component. That is, if we applied the OECD/DAC measurement, China would have a small portion of ODA. Also, if you consider that 29% of the total contribution is Government-Sponsored Investments (GSIs), the count yields even lower figures (Lum et.al, 2009).

Although these are investments rather than a traditional aid package, the GSI can be accounted for as cooperation instead of being regarded as foreign direct investment (FDI). This distinction can be made due to the special nature and motivations that guide those investments, because: (i) they are secured by official bilateral agreements very favorable to recipient countries, (ii) they do not impose real financial risks for Chinese companies, (iii) they do not generate an appropriation of the results from China and (iv) a great amount of resources are deployed that have an impact on vital areas of development of the host country (Lum et al, 2009:2).

According to sources based on official Chinese government statistics, China's annual FDI amounted to US$ 21 billion (2006-2007). Having a portion of that flow as aid, the total volume of Chinese cooperation would increase to equal the contribution levels of Australia, Belgium and Denmark. This disparity between official aid component effectively declared in statistics and the estimated volume that includes GSIs, poses the need to resort to a more flexible definition of ODA in order to allow a broader scope of the concept. Some analysts have tried to assess the impact of the actions of China's cooperation on a global basis for a broader definition of ODA and expanding it to include also the GSI (Lum et. al., 2009).

Like China, Venezuela has promoted a series of Agreements of Energy Supply (AES) as shown in Table II.2. Their characteristic is that, while not framed in the traditional concept of ODA, they have a significant impact on the development of the signatory countries.

Table II.2. The case of Venezuela and the Agreements of Energy Supply (AES)

The energy sector is a symbolic axis of cooperation because of its close connection with the construction of regional integration processes as well as the fact that such projects need a huge amount of initial investment and, in order to achieve their continuity, they require a long period of amortization where the offeror and the partner must share costs and strengthen technical cooperation, among other types, to prevail (SEGIB, 2008:17).

In the last decade, Latin America has been perhaps, the region where Agreements of Energy Supply (AES) have been most actively promoted. Although not an exclusive focus of this region, as Arab countries have resorted to this type of relationship, it is worth highlighting that most important energy cooperation projects were born as platforms for the promotion of strategic partnership between hydrocarbons public companies in Latin American countries.

In this area of cooperation, Petroamérica stands out, a Venezuelan initiative that takes the form of three components: Petrocaribe, Petrosur and Petroandina. The form of these AES is based on
loans which, even though cannot be classified as ODA, provide concessional payment terms for developing countries and lower interest rates than the international market. Under these mechanisms, Venezuela has provided stable oil supplies financed on concessional terms to over 22 countries, it has also allowed the financing of development projects and secured the purchase of goods and services of certain Venezuelan companies (SEGIB, 2009:17).

The particular characteristics of the AES, which aims to address the asymmetries in access to energy resources, are proof of an empirical reality that should not be overlooked when developing operational definitions of SSC. Even though AES cannot be treated as traditional concessional loans nor have a minimum subsidized component, they constitute significant contributions to the economies of partner countries, deploy a high amount of resources, have a positive impact on vital areas of development and involved other complementary forms of cooperation and technical assistance in their implementation.

The Venezuelan and Chinese cases account for an empirical reality: SSC takes non-traditional ways. Therefore, it should be noted that SSC is a broader and deeper concept than that of ODA. It includes not only financial flows, such as concessional loans and grants, but also the government-sponsored investment for infrastructure development (GSI), agreements of energy supply on favorable terms to recipient countries (AES), in addition to TCDC or technical cooperation coming from the transfer of knowledge, experience, technology and capabilities. That is, SSC has technical, financial and economic components that make it a concept with a broader scope.

In line with this, a SSC definition closer to what actually happens in the practical reality means expanding the concept of ODA. In this regard, and following studies by CDF/ECOSOC (2008) and SEGIB (2008, 2009, 2010), a broad definition of SSC includes:

All cooperative action promoted by governments of Southern countries or multilateral/regional institutions involving these governments, that involve the transfer of financial resources (refundable and non-refundable) and/or genuine skills to a partner country in order to promote economic and social development.

In defining the extent or type of actions included in SSC there are other financial flows that are left out. In particular, those flows that do not represent a genuine transfer of resources to the economies of countries receiving SSC, should not be considered as SSC. Among the excluded flows we find, for example, military assistance, grants and loans to the private sector, foreign direct investment, financial flows between agencies of the state itself, etc.

**II.a. The composition of South-South Cooperation in practical cases**

"Concept formation" conventionally refers to two aspects of a concept: (a) the cases, events or phenomena to be defined (the extension or denotation) (b) the attributes or properties that define them (the intension or connotation). This notion of an empirical concept provides us a useful tool to define indicators and to collect information of SSC practices.

This paper analyzes the composition of SSC in practical cases by producing a matrix of empirical data from the actions, activities and cooperation programs of Southern donors. The first step is to select the cases. In this sense, we have identified nine (9) Southern donors as typical cases of the recent trends of SSC flows and approach: Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina y Chile in South America, Cuba in Central America and the Caribbean, China, South Korea and India in Asia and South Africa in Africa.3

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3 Some Southern donors have not been included in our analysis. For instance, Mexico and Colombia are important donors in Latin America and have been also excluded by DCF/ECOSOC reports. However, these donors might be taken into account by future researches.
The lack of information systems and reports on SSC flows are main constraints to attain the paper's objectives. However, the government official reports collected by ECOSOC (2008) and SEGIB (2008-2010) provide us a useful data about recent trends in SSC flows. The Table I shows a rough scale of Southern donors according to their aid flows and aid as percentage of GDP. As we can see, there is a first group of \textit{big donors} that includes China, Venezuela, India and South Korea; a second group of \textit{medium donors} formed by Brazil and South Africa, and, finally, a third group of \textit{small donors} such as Argentina and Chile.

\textbf{Table I. Current Southern Aid Flows (2008-2009)}

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|l|}
\hline
Southern Donor & SSC per year (U$S millions) & SSC as a percentage of GDP & Recent trends in flows \\
\hline
Venezuela & 2500 (PetroCaribe, 2006) & 1,53\% of GDP & Exponential increase since 2004 \\
\hline
China & 25000 (Lum et.al, 2009) / 2000 (ECOSOC, 2008) & 0,35\% / 0,08\% of GDP & Exponential increase in the last decade (U$S 450 millions per year) \\
\hline
South Africa & 475 (Rowlands, 2008) & 0,18\% of GDP & Exponential increase since 2001 \\
\hline
India & 1000 (ECOSOC, 2008) & 0,11\% of GDP & Exponential increase since 2002 (Reconstruction of Afghanistan) \\
\hline
South Korea (1) & 803.8 (2008) & 0,09\% of GDP & Increase and instability \\
\hline
Brazil & 356 (ECOSOC, 2008) & 0,04\% of GDP & Exponential increase \\
\hline
Chile & 3.8 (ECOSOC, 2008) & 0,003\% of GDP & Increase between 2000 and 2008 (260\%) \\
\hline
Argentina & 10 (ECOSOC,2008) & 0,0025 / 0,0050\% of GDP & Moderate increase since 2006 \\
\hline
Cuba (2) & N/D & N/D & N/D \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Source: Own elaboration based on ECOSOC (2008) and SEGIB reports statistics.

(1) The assistance to North Korea is U$S 558 million per year

The second step is to identify the properties or attributes of the SSC concept and, then, the indicators that will be used to measure the empirical behavior of each property. According to the SSC definition posed by this paper, five (5) properties have been detected to analyze the composition of SSC in practical cases: (a) types of SSC modalities, (b) types of SSC transfers, (c) scope, (d) profile and (e) approach.

1. Types of SSC Modalities

This paper distinguishes five (5) modalities that define SSC. This classification is similar to that proposed by SEGIB (2007:57; 2008).

- \textit{Bilateral South-South:} is a government-to-government cooperation among developing countries.
- \textit{Triangular North-South-South:} cooperation between a developed country that serves as financial supporter and two developing countries (a second donor and a recipient country).
- \textit{Triangular South-South-South:} is produced by three developing countries (a Southern financial supporter, a Southern second donor and a recipient country).
- \textit{Triangular Multilateral-South-South:} cooperation between a multilateral organization which serves as financial supporter and two developing countries (a Southern second donor and a recipient country).
Regional South-South: cooperation produced by a regional organization formed by developing countries.

Table II. SSC Modalities (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern donor</th>
<th>Modalities (in order of frequency)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Triangular North-South-South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Regional South-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Triangular South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Regional South-South, Triangular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) South-South-South South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Triangular South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1) Triangular North-South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Bilateral South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Regional South-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Regional South-South South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Triangular South-South-South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Triangular North-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Triangular South-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Regional South-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Triangular North-South South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Regional South-South South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Triangular South-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<td>4) Triangular North-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1) Regional South-South</td>
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<td>2) Bilateral South-South South</td>
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<td>3) Triangular South-South South</td>
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<td>4) Triangular North-South South</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1) Bilateral South-South</td>
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<td>2) Regional South-South South</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) Triangular South-South South</td>
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</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on official documents (vid. Bibliography)

(1) In the case of Chile, North-South-South Cooperation reaches 58.7% of the budget for Technical Cooperation, while Bilateral South-South is 41.4% of the budget.

As we can observe the Bilateral South-South is the most frequent modality, apart from the cases of Chile\(^4\) and South Africa\(^5\), where SSC takes the form of a triangular relation or a regional-oriented version respectively. In other words, we can say that SSC is essentially a bilateral transference of knowledge, capacities and resources which prioritizes government-to-government relations.

Regarding to the frequency order, the second modality is Regional South-South. Particularly in the cases of South Africa, Brazil, China, Cuba, India and Venezuela, where this form fulfills an important task. In contrast, the cases of Chile and South Korea are examples where this modality occupies a second place. Finally, the South-South-South-South relation is leaded by South Korea, Brazil, China, India, Venezuela and South Africa, which propel numerous projects that explores triangulation among Southern countries.

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\(^4\) Chile holds important agreements to promote Triangular Cooperation with Japan and Germany, which are the main partners and financial supporters of Chilean SSC.

\(^5\) South Africa assigns a huge amount of its SCC towards regional south-south mechanism of cooperation such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), African Renaissance Fund, IBSA, South African Development Community, Southern African Customs Union (SACU), African Union (AU).
2. Types of SSC transfers

Although SSC includes traditional ODA's actions such as grants and concessional loans, the list of actions posted as SSC is broader. Some of the current flows of South-South development relations often do not fit the OECD’s parameters but should be counted as SSC. As the following list reflects, SSC can adopt the form of different kinds of technical, economic or financial transfers such as:

- **Technical assistance**: transfersences of knowledges, experiences and individual and collective capacities.
- **Concessional loans**: These are loans that are extended on terms substantially more generous than market loans. The concessionality is achieved either through interest rates below those available on the market or by grace periods, or a combination of these.
- **Grants**: transfers made in cash, goods or services for which no repayment is required.
- **Government Sponsored Investments (GSI)**: Although they often do not fit the OECD’s narrow definition of development assistance, many of China’s economic activities in developing countries are supported by its government and provide benefits to recipient countries that otherwise would not be available. Furthermore, many Chinese economic investments abroad can be counted as aid rather than foreign direct investment (FDI) because they are secured by official bilateral agreements, do not impose real financial risks upon the Chinese companies involved, or do not result in Chinese ownership of foreign assets.
- **Agreement of Energy Supply (AES)**: loans which, even though cannot be classified as ODA, provide concessional payment terms for developing countries and lower interest rates than the international market. Under these mechanisms, Venezuela has provided stable oil supplies financed on concessional terms to over 22 countries.
- **Multilateral Contributions**: transfers made by developing countries to multilateral organizations that provides SSC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern donor</th>
<th>Main type of SSC action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>GSI y Concessional Loans (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Multilateral Contributions and grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>AES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table III. Types of SSC Transfers by donors (2008)**

Source: Own elaboration based on ECOSOC (2008) and SEGIB reports statistics.

(1) In the case of China, GSIs reaches an amount of 53% and Concessional Loans an amount of 42% of total cooperation transfers. Grants and Technical Assistance add to a 5% of the total.

According to the empirical evidence, almost all Latin American donors have propelled technical assistance projects. However, other types of transfers arise as global trends such as the cases of GSI and AES. These are the major tools of economic development cooperation in China and Venezuela, respectively. Finally, the table is also useful to highlight the insignificance of grants and concessional loans as types of SSC transfers.
Apart from the case of South Korea, where grants are the most important type of cooperation, almost all Southern donors prefer other types of collaboration.

3. Scope

The indicators of geographical distribution of SSC flows allow obtaining evidence about the scope of SSC supply and the funding criteria in practice. From the SSC donors' perspective, we can establish a classification on the distribution by continent or region. Thus, with different intensities, SSC donors can be divided in countries with a regional scope orientation (Argentina, Chile, Cuba, India, South Africa and Venezuela), on the one hand, and countries with an extra-regional scope orientation (Brazil, China and South Korea), on the other. However, this distinction should not leave aside the fact that all SSC donors spend much of their SSC funds on their neighboring countries.

From another perspective, the donors can be sub-divided between those countries that favor Africa (Brazil, China, South Korea and South Africa), those that prioritize Central America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Cuba, China and Venezuela) and those who allocate resources to other regions (Chile in the Andes Region in South America, South Korea in Middle East and East Asia, and India in South Asia.)

Also, considering the scope of SSC on the main recipients/partners, we find that Cuba and Venezuela, two of the analyzed donor countries, have a dual role in the flow of SSC, given that they are also the main partner countries to Chile and Venezuela, and Cuba and China, respectively.

Also worth mentioning Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti and East Timor. Each of these countries are currently engaged in a process of state reconstruction and post-conflict, and it has been set not only as a strategic objective for "traditional donors", but also for some SSC donor countries. The largest proportion of SSC actions that these countries receive come from South Korea (Iraq), India (Afghanistan) and Brazil (Haiti and East Timor). In that sense, it can be inferred that much of the current flows of SSC are driven by geopolitical considerations.

Finally, as regards the distribution of flows, Table III shows that the common feature of these is the concentration in a specific geographical area. In different proportions, each donor country has chosen a destination for their contributions. As noted, Argentina, India, Chile, Cuba and South Africa target much of their actions to neighboring countries, while China and South Korea focused their actions on potential areas for energy and natural resources exploitation such as Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Moreover, a particular orientation comes from Brazil, which has focused mainly on Portuguese-speaking countries from Africa, and Venezuela, whose actions are focused on the member countries of the Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas (ALBA).

Table IV. SSC scope by donors (2006, 2007 and 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern donor</th>
<th>SSC Distribution per continent/region</th>
<th>SSC Distribution per recipient</th>
<th>Distribution of flows (C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

6 The Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América or Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (ALBA-TCP) is a platform for the integration of Latin American countries propelled by Venezuela and focused on the fight against poverty and social exclusion. This mechanism was created in December 2004 as a consequence of an agreement between Venezuela and Cuba but nowadays it also includes Antigua y Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and S. Vicente y Granadinas as members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Concentration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Argentina   | Central America and Caribbean (57.12%)  
               South America (37.58%)  
               Eastern Europe (2.05%)  
               North Africa (1.81%) | 1) El Salvador  
               2) Ecuador  
               3) Bolivia  
               4) Paraguay  
               5) Costa Rica  
               6) Haiti  
               Concentrated (Central America and Caribbean and neighbors countries) |
| Brazil      | Africa (52%)  
               Latin America and Caribbean (34.6%)  
               Asia (10%) | 1) Haiti  
               2) Cape Verde  
               3) East Timor  
               4) Guinea Bissau  
               Concentrated (Africa: Portuguese-speaking countries) |
| Chile       | Andean Region (64%)  
               Central America (23%) | 1) Cuba  
               2) Nicaragua  
               3) Bolivia  
               4) Dominica  
               Concentrated |
| China       | Africa (44%)  
               Latin America (36%)  
               South East Asia (20%) | 1) Venezuela  
               2) Angola  
               3) Brazil  
               4) Congo  
               5) Philippines  
               6) Sudan  
               Concentrated (Africa and Latin America Latina) |
| South Korea | Middle East and North Africa  
               (US$134 million, 2006)  
               East Asia and Oceania (104)  
               Central Asia and South Asia (91)  
               Africa (38)  
               Latin America and Caribbean (24) | 1) Irak  
               2) Sri Lanka  
               3) Bangladesh  
               4) Indonesia  
               5) China  
               6) Vietnam  
               Concentrated (Middle East and East Asia) |
| Cuba        | Central America and Caribbean  
               South America  
               Africa | 1) Venezuela  
               2) Panama  
               3) Guatemala  
               Concentrated (Caribbean) |
| India       | Asia (85%)  
               Africa | 1) Bhutan  
               2) Afghanistan  
               3) Nepal  
               4) Bangladesh  
               5) Myanmar  
               Concentrated (Asia) |
| South Africa | Africa | 1) Democratic Republic of Congo  
               2) Burundi  
               3) Sudan  
               4) Liberia  
               5) Ivory Coast  
               Concentrated (Africa) |
| Venezuela   | Central America and Caribbean  
               South America | 1) Cuba  
               2) Nicaragua  
               3) Bolivia  
               4) Dominica  
               5) Honduras  
               Concentrated (Members of Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas -ALBA) |

**Source:** Own elaboration based on ECOSOC 2008, SEGIB (2008, 2009 and 2010) reports.

**4. Profile**
It is a fact that countries that provide SSC in those areas in which they have abilities or comparative advantages. That is, somehow the supply of SSC is concentrated in areas or sectors where donor countries specialize and where recipient countries have a need. So, even though in some cases, the supply appears to be diversified in various thematique areas, it is possible to obtain a profile of SSC for each donor. Although, in practice, the criteria by which cooperative actions are targeted to one or another sector varies and it may often happen that the same action may appear to be assigned to two different sectors belonging to the two main thematique areas, the overall distribution of activities by priority sectors allows an approximation to the type of profile of each donor country may have.

In Table IV, the identification of profiles of SSC was made based on the classification of sectors prepared by DAC/OECD and adopted by SEGIB (2008). There are three sectoral dimensions of cooperation:

(i) **Social**: mainly, but not limited to, education and health;

(ii) **Economic**: highlighting infrastructure and economic services and activities linked to productive sectors;

(iii) **Other**: heterogeneous dimension that includes areas such as government and civil society, human rights, gender, disaster prevention, environment, etc.

The evidence gathered by the matrix shows that there is a first group of countries, which includes Cuba, South Korea and Chile, that maintain a profile strongly oriented to the social sector, highlighting activities in the education, health, sports and childhood areas. A second group has adopted an economic profile of SSC: China, Venezuela and to a lesser extent, India and Brazil, they spend a large amount of actions to the field of economic infrastructure. South Africa and Argentina have added to their cooperating profile a great amount of actions in specific fields such as human rights, in the case of Argentina, or the governance and conflict prevention and resolution, in the South African case. Finally, from all the countries analyzed the one that has the most undefined profile is Brazil, as it has allocated actions evenly in the economic, social and other sectors.

As a preliminary conclusion it can be said that much of the SSC actions are targeted to the social field, and that it is the main sectoral dimension of SSC. However, the SSC donors that spend more volumes, as the cases of China, Venezuela and India, cover a vast sector of strategic importance for recipient countries: investments in infrastructure, in energy, telecommunications, transportation, roads, etc.

**Table V. SSC Profile by donors (2006-2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern donor</th>
<th>Main Thematic Areas</th>
<th>Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argentina</strong></td>
<td>Economy (41%) (Agriculture) Others (41%) (Human rights and Administration) Social (20%) (Education).</td>
<td>Others and Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td>Agriculture, Health (HIV/SIDA), Water, Education, Administration, Meteorology, Energy, Environment y Biofuels.</td>
<td>Economic, Social and Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chile</strong></td>
<td>Education, Health, Housing, Justice, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) International Relations and Foreign Trade Genre Policies, State Modernization, Natural Resources and Environment.</td>
<td>Social and Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td>Infrastructure, Agriculture, Health, Development of Natural Resources and Education.</td>
<td>Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Social Infrastructure (37%), Economic Infrastructure (23%), Education, Health y Population (23%), Production (7%) (1)</td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Health, Education and Sports</td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Rural Development, Education, Health and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Economic y Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Governance, Conflict Prevention and resolution, Education and Administration.</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Energy Infrastructure, telecommunications and aeronautics</td>
<td>Economic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on ECOSOC (2008) and SEGIB reports statistics.
Notes: (1) South Korea supports Millennium Development Goals (MDG) such Education, Health Administration and Technology.

5. Approach

How is SSC conceived? What temporal engagement does it assume? Does the recipient/partner country exert effective authority over the results of cooperation? Does the donor demand certain conditionalities? What are the main recipients of the SSC donors? The set of answers to these questions respond to a specific approach to SSC. One approach is, thus, a set of qualitative properties adopted by SSC in a particular donor country.

Now, it is possible to establish different types of approaches by identifying similarities and differences presented by the cases here analyzed. According to what emerges from Table V, SSC takes some common features: (i) the recipient countries exercise effective leadership over the results of cooperation, as can be seen in the fourth column, (ii) the request for cooperation stems often from the recipient, (iii) it often takes an intergovernmental character (with the exception of South Africa7), and (iv) it demands conditionalities on recipient countries. It is, therefore, a form of cooperation between states, whose genesis is held by a request from the host country and where the donor promotes an appropriation of results by the recipient, but that is not free of conditionalities in the broad sense.

A narrow definition of "conditionality" is the one adopted by DCF/ECOSOC (2008:21-22) that distinguishes between policy conditionalities and procedural conditionalities. Where the former refers to situations in which the commencement of cooperative actions is conditioned to the adaptation of the host country to a certain type of public policy; while the second, refers to specific issues regarding the legal terms of an agreement, the financial conditions, the management of funds, the purchase of materials and the forms of implementation.

As demonstrated by the report, the policy conditionality is absent in SSC, since donor countries do not condition their cooperation to the adoption of a particular plan or policy country, and they understand that SSC is respectful of the principle of non-intervention in States' internal affairs. In contrast, the procedural conditionality usually precedes SSC agreements or the start of activities, for example, taking the form of a commitment by the recipient in the purchase of materials or hiring labor from the donor country.

It is worth noting that in this study "conditionality" is meant in a broad sense, all forms of conditioning the disbursement of funds, the signing of an agreement or initiation of cooperative action to meet certain objectives and/or procedures by the host country. Along these lines, in addition to policy conditionality and procedural conditionality (in which government procurement are included), the empirical evidence allows us to state

7 South Africa assigns most of its SSC transfers to NGOs. This preference is explained by the fact that South Africa's main recipients are countries with State fragility or civil conflicts in which there is not a counterpart to exchange.
that Southern relations also apply \textit{political conditionality of the donor} (not necessarily exposed to the public) that comes from the use of SSC as an instrument of foreign policy. It is therefore, a tacit conditionality related to the donor's foreign policy, in many cases, it may take the form of an appeal for international support of a particular case, the support to a peacekeeping mission or simply a fulfillment of a particular diplomatic issue by the host/recipient country.

As illustrated in Table V, from the three types of conditions referred to herein \textit{policy conditionalities}, \textit{procedural conditionalities} and \textit{political conditionalities of the donor}, SSC requires often a combination of the second and third. This translates, in some cases, to cooperation actions that require the recipient country complying to certain requirements for public procurement as well as certain political and diplomatic settlement to become effective. However, it should be mentioned that SSC has the characteristic of not imposing \textit{policy conditionality}, unlike what happens in NSC.

Finally, regarding the temporal engagement, Table V shows that the partnership commitments of donor countries are varied. Argentina, Brazil, Chile and India hold a short-term engagement approach for the duration of a project, while China, South Korea, South Africa, Venezuela, and in particular cases, Brazil and India, they prefer a medium-term time or multi-annual engagement.

\textbf{Table VI. SSC Approach by donors}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern donors</th>
<th>Origin of the request for cooperation ((demand-driven / supply-driven))</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Conditionalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>By project</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) Multilateral Organizations 3) NGOs</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>By project / Multi-annual (7)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) Multilateral Organizations 3) NGOs</td>
<td>Political (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>By project</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) NGOs 3) Multilateral Organizations</td>
<td>Political and Procedural (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Supply-driven</td>
<td>Multi-annual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) Multilateral Organizations 3) NGOs</td>
<td>Political and Procedural (Public Procurements) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>Multi-annual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) NGOs 3) Multilateral Organizations</td>
<td>Procedural (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) NGOs 3) Multilateral Organizations</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>By project / Multi-annual (8)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Governments 2) NGOs 3) Multilateral Organizations</td>
<td>Procedural (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
<td>Multi-annual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1) Multilateral Organizations 2) NGOs</td>
<td>Procedural (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Il.2. Mapping out South-South Cooperation

Data collected by the matrix allows a series of analysis on the empirical level of SSC. This description is, clearly, a list of common properties and features that the different donors of SSC have, taken from the cases here analyzed.

While this is a multiple case study and not the entire range of SSC donors, it is possible to establish, from the analysis of properties (Modalities, Types of Transfers, Scope, and Approach Profile), a general mapping of SSC. This brings us closer, ultimately, to a descriptive definition of the fields of "what is" and "what is not " SSC.

Table VII. SSC Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Current Major Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modalities</strong></td>
<td>Bilateral / Government-to-Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of transfers</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Others: Chinese GSI and Venezuelan AES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Regional scope and neighbors countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Extra-regional scope: Brazil, China, India and South Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profile</strong></td>
<td>Social (Education, Health, Sports and Childhood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Economic Infrastructure: China, Venezuela, India and Brazil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>Demand-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No policy conditionalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political conditionalities and Procedural conditionalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on information collected by the matrix of data.

III. Towards a Research Agenda on South-South Cooperation

As can be seen from the comparison of regional experiences in Africa, Asia and Latin America, SSC is a varied and diverse phenomenon that is in constant evolution and that operates under different formats and motivations from those of the classic North-South
Cooperation (NSC). SSC is governed by its own principles, so it follows that it should be understood on its own terms and not as a sub-category of international cooperation.

However, the emerging study of SSC still needs to face the challenge of promoting a theoretical production of Southern academics oriented to reviewing concepts and traditional paradigms that have been the basis for understanding international cooperation. As it is a phenomenon different from NSC, setting the SSC definition cannot be reduced to a purely theoretical and methodological activity; a political discussion where a particular model of SSC is chosen and where the limits of its use in the public discourse are laid down, must take place. In this sense, it would be wrong to argue that China, Venezuela and Brazil carry out expansionist policies, while South Korea does SSC. On the contrary, as each country’s cooperation agenda supposes a sovereign choice with its own conception, so SSC is a modality that assumes varying sizes/formats and geometries.

The challenge of understanding the rationale of SSC poses some open questions that require a deeper debate. First, what is the right space to hold an open discussion about the SSC? Here, it is necessary to distinguish between the efforts to institutionalize the Southern debate in the UN and, particularly, in the Special Unit for SSC United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), from those instances of dialogue sponsored by the major economies of the G-8 through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD). Regarding the latter, it has been stressed that the process of Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) includes a technical agenda for implementation of principles (ownership, harmonization, alignment and accountability) generally recognized and accepted as necessary, but at the moment it has not been the result of a discussion of broad and representative Southern voices such as it exists in the United Nations system.

Second, should NSC categories be applied to SSC or should entirely new categories be created? Is it a phenomenon that can be conceptualized today or should it be allowed to develop a bit more in practice and then theorize? As a starting point, it is worth highlighting that it is a difficulty implementing NSC paradigms to SSC, as the traditional N-S interpretation categories face a different reality in evolution. The challenge here is complex because it requires new concepts and theoretical and methodological tools to interpret, measure and compare the phenomenon.

Third, do we need more conceptual rigor in SSC? Here one can differentiate between those who chose a minimal and closed definition (SSC is only technical cooperation or SSC is similar to the concept of Official Development Assistance of OECD, applied to the collaboration of a Middle Income Country to a Low Income Country) and those who see SSC as "a broad framework for collaboration" (political, economic, scientific, technological, etc.). In this paper, SSC has been understood as a tool that involves technical, economic and financial transfers.

Without falling into the narrowing of the concept that would lead to vagueness, we consider that the starting point for interpreting a diverse and evolving reality as that of SSC is to recognize the need for an intentionally broader definition that responds to the opportunities of Southern countries to share knowledge and experiences, exchange technologies, promote mutual capacity building, institutional and regulatory cooperation, as well as national and collective self-reliance. As noted, there is a single leitmotif of SSC: it pursues national interests, humanitarian, trade and investment, strategic and even of domestic pressure. However, one cannot ignore that SSC was originally created as a comprehensive mechanism of solidarity between developing countries and has, therefore, a cooperative philosophy based on the creation, adaptation and transfer of knowledge and experience for human development.
Having posed these questions, the conclusion that needs to be stressed is that, beyond the fragmentation and lack of consensus around the theorization and conceptualization of this modality, SSC will continue to evolve and be defined through political debate and practice.

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