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## South–South cooperation and the rise of the Global South

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### ABSTRACT

In this introductory article we examine the recent resurgence of South–South cooperation, which has moved once again onto the centre stage of world politics and economics, leading to a renewed interest in its historic promise to transform world order. We provide an overview of contemporary debates surrounding this resurgence, noting in particular the division between those who are optimistic with regard to the potential of Southern economic development and the project of liberation from Northern domination, and the more pessimistic critics, who see this very success of the South as being subsumed within the existing global capitalist development paradigm.

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Countries...which, for reasons of their own, are opposed to the status quo, would be quick to discover the weaknesses of the existing institutional order and to anticipate the creation of institutions better adapted to their interests. Such groups are pushing that which is falling and holding onto that which, under its own steam, is moving their way. It may seem as if they had originated the process of social change, while actually they were merely its beneficiaries, and may even be perverting the trend to make it serve their own aims. (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*)<sup>1</sup>

Development is a concept that attempts to encompass a vast complexity of processes of social transformation. It conveys meanings of great promise and hope to billions of human beings concerning human betterment, and refers to a long-term historical project of the liberation of peoples and nations from the vestiges of colonialism, poverty, oppression and underdevelopment. South–South cooperation (SSC) has been a key organising concept and a set of practices in pursuit of these historical changes through a vision of mutual benefit and solidarity among the disadvantaged of the world system. It conveys the hope that development may be achieved by the poor themselves through their mutual assistance to one another, and the whole world order transformed to reflect their mutual interests *vis-à-vis* the dominant global North.

It has now been 60 years since the historic Bandung Conference of 1955, rightly regarded as a milestone in the formation of SSC as a global political movement. SSC as a movement intended to challenge the Northern-dominated political and economic system and, from

the 1950s to the present, has been through a series of starts and stops, surges and retreats. As expressed at the Asian–African Conference held in Bandung in 1955, the newly decolonised countries of the global South emphasised economic and cultural cooperation, human rights and the promotion of world peace.<sup>2</sup> This emergent movement of Third World solidarity thereby sought to challenge the vertical relations between colony and metropole that were serving to inhibit relations between countries of the global South. The ‘Bandung Spirit’ henceforth came to encapsulate policies of non-interference and non-alignment, with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) further developing this solidarity to challenge the deepening global inequality while lessening the Third World’s economic and political dependence on the global North.<sup>3</sup> While Bandung and the NAM embodied the political dimensions of an emergent SSC, the Group of 77, named after the number of countries present at the founding of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), called for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The NIEO was to be achieved through tackling structural unequal exchange through ‘a just and equitable relationship’ between the goods exported by developing countries and the goods imported,<sup>4</sup> with an emphasis on sovereignty over natural resources and the right to nationalise key industries.<sup>5</sup> These demands were rooted in the failure of the emerging postwar international order to tackle the legacies of colonialism and to provide adequate space for postcolonial states to establish their own national approaches to development.<sup>6</sup>

For a time calls for the NIEO were successful in provoking a considerable degree of debate in the global North, producing a vast literature debating the various pros and cons of the NIEO proposals.<sup>7</sup> By the 1980s, however, the Third World debt crisis and the rise of neoliberalism had served to eclipse the NIEO project. The retreat of Third World solidarity was given no clearer indication than at the 1992 UNCTAD summit in Cartagena, when UNCTAD dropped its demands for the adjustment of the international patent system to the developmental needs of the global South, and adopted a statement expressing the belief that the adoption of adequate and effective International Patent Protections and related efforts in the World Intellectual Property Organization and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) would facilitate technological transfers to developing countries.<sup>8</sup> Henceforth, UNCTAD became increasingly eclipsed by GATT, and its successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO). Thus, while UNCTAD had previously acted as a counter-hegemonic organisation resisting the dominance of the Bretton Woods institutions, the restructuring of the organisation gave it a less confrontational role in North–South dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

There is a widespread sense today, however, that the time is ripe for moving SSC once again onto the centre stage of world politics and economics, and a renewed interest in its historic promise to transform world order. The recent economic and diplomatic achievements of several key countries of the global South, and especially of China and the BRICS group more broadly, has given impetus to increasing debate and consideration of the potentialities (and pitfalls) of a new phase of challenge or construction of alternatives to the hegemonic and neo-colonial politics of the global North. There has been a historically significant global shift in production and manufacturing from global North to global South, altering the economic geography of the world. The tendency over the past several decades to greatly intensify the globalisation of production, trade and financial flows was advocated primarily as a systemic solution to underlying structural problems of Northern capital in the global political economy, including growth, productivity and profitability. But these same globalising tendencies have also enhanced the historical potential of economic growth and industrialisation in the

global South, and the possibilities for renewed SSC to loosen the strictures imposed during the colonial era and transcend the boundaries of postwar political and economic geography.

The (hyper)globalisation policies of the pre-2008 global financial and economic crisis era, which was also the historic high water mark of the ideology of 'neoliberal economic globalisation', reflected a deeply embedded faith in linear material progress, through innovation and the application of modern science and technology, with the presumed capacity to create unlimited increases in production and consumption. However, this optimistic paradigm of globalised economic development for all has both created, and left yet unresolved numerous severe distributional, socio-political and increasingly ecological and climate change problems and crises that accompany this paradigm of global developmental economic expansionism. In the present era of 'multiple crises',<sup>10</sup> and the overarching context of global climate change and intensifying ecological stress, the debate over 'development' in the global South and the nature and direction of SSC assumes a different character. Elites and citizens alike, the world over, now struggle to manage the tension between global capital expansion, global market competition, competing legal and political orders, and the protection of the rights and welfare of people and the environment. The dawning era of the Anthropocene heralds many profound realisations concerning the future of development on a planetary scale.<sup>11</sup> The comprehensiveness of the interventions of humanity upon the web of life, the truly global extent of impacts of our specific historical forms of social, economic and political organisation, now compel deep philosophical reflection on the meaning of development and the search for alternative ways of life and human relations with nature.

## The debate

In this context debate over the 'decline of the West' and the 'rise of the rest',<sup>12</sup> and accompanying debate over the historic role of 'rising powers', take on new meaning. Positions by academics and activists currently range from a refusal to act as uncritical 'cheerleaders' for the new transnationalist capitalism of the South,<sup>13</sup> which is denounced as a reproduction of existing capitalist developmental practices of the dominant global North, to those who indeed 'cheer' loudly for the continued economic and political successes of the global South, and its potential to transform world order.<sup>14</sup> The field is polarised: between those who hold a (conventional) hope in the potential of Southern economic development and the project of liberation from Northern domination, reflecting a kind of contemporary neo-Third Worldism, and those radical critics who see this very success of the South as being far too profoundly subsumed within the existing global capitalist development paradigm, which, however, is currently heading for a possible global environmental catastrophe if not dramatically challenged and altered.<sup>15</sup>

Much controversy currently surrounds the question of whether elites of the global South and 'rising powers' genuinely have the intention to challenge the dominant structures of global capitalist development, or seek to support and reproduce these structures, while altering their global position in the system and enhancing their influence within the existing structures. Some may see a third option (reflecting the quotation from Karl Polanyi above), wherein the present trajectory of increasing economic growth, industrialisation and financial capacity by many countries across the global South will be a step or a stage on the path to an eventual restructuring of global power relations and the reform of global governance institutions and of the norms and rules of the global economy. There may be signs of this

strategy following the wake of the global financial and economic crisis, and also of effective Northern counter-strategies, including co-optation of the global South into (cosmetically?) reformed institutions of global governance.<sup>16</sup> The direction here is one towards the consolidation of a global elite consensus on development, providing a kind of 'fictional unity' around the idea of a globalised and 'open' world economy. This possibility raises again the question of whether there is genuine substance to a Southern 'challenge' *vis-à-vis* the dominant global North and its prevailing practices of development, or only superficiality, the recourse of governing elites to mere rhetorical and symbolic solidarity.

The terrain of this debate reflects the fact that, while the new SSC has continued the NIEO's calls for a fairer global trading system, such demands are taking place within a radically transformed global context. Indeed, it can be argued that the age of the Listian 'late development' path has given way to an era in which engagement with global value chains is the only route to anything resembling 'national development'.<sup>17</sup> For example, far from rejecting the principles of global free trade, developing countries see themselves as having little choice but to seek membership of the WTO, since to do otherwise would be to risk marginalisation. At the same time, however, the WTO places significant constraints on the policy options of developing countries.<sup>18</sup> As such, a feature of the new SSC is that of seeking the reform of the WTO. At the 2003 WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, the Group of 20 developing nations demanded concessions on agricultural and governance issues. Indeed, it was the failure of the developed countries to meet these demands that played an important role in the collapse of the negotiations of the Doha Round.<sup>19</sup> The India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) grouping has similarly criticised the protectionist policies of the G8 and emphasised the need to push ahead with the Doha developmental round. Again, and in contrast to the Third World solidarity of the past, the argument put forward has been that liberalisation has not gone far enough, and that a world without the WTO or other multilateral institutions would only reinforce the North's capacity to extract concessions from the weaker states in the South.<sup>20</sup> However, questions can be raised as to how far these countries are pursuing genuinely progressive aims. For example, it has been argued that, while mobilising a discourse of social justice and the politics of the North–South divide, Brazil has acted as a key advocate of free market globalisation, a stance that has been driven by the rise of its highly competitive export-oriented agribusiness sector rather than by genuine solidarity with developing countries.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the IBSA countries more broadly do not represent the interests of net food importers. The latter are largely least developed countries with little interest in the reduction of agricultural subsidies in Europe and the USA that keep prices low. More broadly the majority of developing countries are sub-Saharan African, South Asian and Latin American nations that have not felt represented by their increasingly vocal 'regional leaders'.<sup>22</sup>

Similar tensions between SSC and the 'national interest' have been noted in the case of the BRICS grouping. The BRICS grouping has, like IBSA, sought to address several of the issues originally raised by the NIEO, such as the reform of the international financial institutions (IFIs) to give the rising powers more influence in their operations. A key demand of BRICS has, for example, been the reform of IMF governance to increase the quota allotted to developing countries and to end the arrangement whereby the leadership positions of the IMF and World Bank are limited to Europeans and Americans, respectively. This cause was given added legitimacy in 2012 when the BRICS countries bolstered the IMF by contributing to the organisation's \$430 billion bailout. India, Russia and Brazil all contributed \$10 billion each, South Africa contributed \$2 billion, and China a massive \$43 billion, creating a total

BRICS contribution of \$75 billion.<sup>23</sup> Progress in reform was slow, however. Following the G20 Agreement on Quotas and Governance reached in October 2010, the IMF Board of Governors drew up a reform package that involved a doubling of quotas, with a shift of more than 6% of quota shares from over-represented to under-represented member countries. China was to become the third largest member country in the IMF, with Brazil, India and Russia to become among the 10 largest shareholders in the Fund.

The reform would also move two of the 24 IMF directorships from European to developing countries. However, US Congressional resistance, particularly amongst conservative Republican politicians, served to block the approval of the reform package, despite the fact that the reforms would leave intact America's unique veto power within the IMF and would not require the supply of any new capital by the US.<sup>24</sup> Though the reform package was finally ratified by Congress in December 2015, this episode created added incentives for the BRICS to pursue alternative currency swap arrangements, as has been seen in the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA).

In the early days of analysis of BRICs academic observers were sceptical of the utility of BRICs as an analytical category, instead highlighting the heterogeneity of the grouping.<sup>25</sup> The fact that BRICs became a political reality with its first summit in 2009 seemed at first to confound such scepticism. However, the group has subsequently proved to be divided in terms of its key demands on the reform of global governance. BRICS (now including South Africa) have all, for example, stated their opposition to the European monopoly over the IMF leadership position. However, following the departure of Dominic Strauss Kahn, China and Brazil ultimately supported the preferred candidate of the USA, Christine Lagarde. China's support for Lagarde was based upon its hope of appointing a Chinese candidate to the IMF's number two position. Brazil, on the other hand, was similarly seeking the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Both countries thus did not wish to jeopardise their chances by opposing the preferred choice of the USA. Furthermore, rivalry between Mexico and Brazil and the candidate's identification with neoliberal orthodoxy also prevented the latter from opting for the sole Latin American candidate.<sup>26</sup>

Similar divisions emerged over the leadership of the World Bank. When the position of successor to Robert Zoellick as president came up for election in 2012, Brazil nominated progressive Columbian economist Jose Antonio Campo, and South Africa supported the neo-liberal Nigerian finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. China, India and Russia, on the other hand, reportedly supported the US-preferred candidate of Jim Yong Kim, a figure who was unlikely to facilitate reform at the Bank.<sup>27</sup> BRICS summits have similarly called for a greater role for emerging powers within the UN system. As a grouping, however, BRICS has fallen short of calling for permanent seats for emerging powers in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Given the inclusion of permanent Security Council members China and Russia within the BRICS, this differs from the more cooperative approach of IBSA towards UNSC reform.<sup>28</sup> The BRICS countries have even failed to support each other's candidacies for permanent seats in the UNSC. China has been non-committal about India's bid for permanent membership, whereas Russia has been lukewarm towards any kind of expansion of the UNSC.

Given the continued inequities of the contemporary system of global economic governance and the slowness of IFI reform, the BRICS are beginning to take matters into their own hands and establish their own mechanisms for facilitating SSC. At the July 2014 Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, the launch of the New Development Bank was announced. The Bank was to have start-up capital of \$50 billion, which would eventually be increased to \$100

billion. Media reports suggest that investments would be focused on infrastructure, energy and telecommunications, namely the kinds of aid that traditional donors left behind when they shifted towards social sector spending.<sup>29</sup> At the same time the establishment of a Contingency Reserve Arrangement was announced. As the Durban Summit declaration stated, 'the establishment of a self-managed contingent reserve arrangement would have a positive precautionary effect, help BRICS countries forestall short-term liquidity pressures, provide mutual support and further strengthen financial stability'.<sup>30</sup> The CRA would require that the central bank of each member would keep the fund's reserves as part of its own reserves. At a moment of crisis the fund thus could begin to operate, acting as a cushion.<sup>31</sup> Again questions can be raised as to how far the CRA provides an alternative to the IMF. Much like the Chiang Mai Initiative upon which it appears to be based, the CRA may in fact serve to bolster rather than reduce the stature of the IMF. As Bond argues in his contribution to this special issue, if a country needs more than 30% of its borrowing quota, it must first go to the IMF for a structural adjustment loan and meet certain conditions before it is able to access more from the CRA.

It is also significant that the lending of both the NDB and the CRA will be in US dollars rather than the currencies of the BRICS countries themselves. This is noteworthy since the dollar's dominance has served as a considerable point of vulnerability for the rising powers. In contrast to the USA, the BRICS countries are all characterised by high levels of public debt that are denominated in foreign currencies, and thereby possess a significantly greater degree of vulnerability to external shocks. The USA, on the other hand, with its foreign liabilities denominated in its own currency, is much less affected by exchange rate fluctuations. Furthermore, in the context of the declining value of the dollar since the early 2000s, the USA has seen an increase in the value of its assets held overseas, while the value of its liabilities has remained unaffected.<sup>32</sup> For the rising powers, however, this dollar devaluation has led to considerable losses. For example, China's export-led growth has enabled the accumulation of massive foreign exchange reserves, reaching an unprecedented US\$3.14 trillion by April 2013.<sup>33</sup> \$1.29 trillion of these reserves were invested in US treasury bonds, making China the largest holder of US debt.<sup>34</sup> As a result, China has become massively exposed to the risks of substantial depreciation of the US dollar.<sup>35</sup> In this context, in 2011, Hu Jintao expressed his displeasure with the US Federal Reserve's quantitative easing programme, arguing that 'the monetary policy of the United States has a major impact on global liquidity and capital flows and therefore, the liquidity of the US dollar should be kept at a reasonable and stable level'.<sup>36</sup> In addition to calling for alternatives to the US dollar as an international reserve currency, China was successful in December 2015 in having the renminbi included in the basket of currencies that make up the IMF's Special Drawing Rights. However, this success can be seen as symbolic rather than as having practical impact, and as noted, the NDB and the CRA, far from challenging the 'exorbitant privilege' of the USA, have appeared to strengthen it.

Beyond explicit attempts at reforming the institutions of global governance, the emerging powers have in recent years also become significant bilateral donors,<sup>38</sup> in addition, they have established South-South regional trade agreements such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP).<sup>39</sup> Even though emerging donors remain themselves recipients of aid and struggle to effectively address domestic poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, deprivation, inequalities and socio-political injustices,<sup>40</sup> their aid is significant enough that it is no longer possible to



understand the international aid architecture simply in terms of North–South dynamics. Key questions remain, however, as to whether emerging donors should be understood in terms of a mutually beneficial form of SSC or whether this is simply a manifestation of the pursuit of their ‘national interest’.<sup>41</sup> For some, emerging donor aid programmes are celebrated for their departure from the neoliberal norms of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee and as providing a mutually beneficial form of developmental assistance as an alternative to the dominant aid paradigm.<sup>42</sup> Others have conversely criticised rising powers such as China as ‘rogue donors’ and as using aid to obtain rights for the extraction of resources.<sup>43</sup> However, while the ideologies deployed may be different from those of the West, both use political rhetoric to conceal their own interests.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, as with the interventions of rising powers in other fields of SSC, there remain key questions as to whether emerging donors are capable of challenging the dominant conditionality-driven aid architecture, and whether a new aid paradigm can be established that moves beyond the pursuit of the national interest and focuses on the developmental needs of recipients.

As such, the global activism of rising powers and their practices of SSC should not be understood as an unproblematic unitary force but as constituted by complex and often contradictory national prerogatives and interests. Within individual countries as well it is necessary to go beyond the state-centrism of existing approaches to examine how challenges to global governance and emerging forms of SSC are rooted in specific state–society configurations.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the strategies pursued by rising powers are often subject to contestation from below. Whatever may be the view or judgement concerning the intentions and actions of reigning governments of the global South, it can neither be denied nor ignored that ‘resistance from below’ is manifesting itself increasingly and globally. Myriad forms of often militant social contestation to the practices of global capitalist developmentalism have arisen among labour, peasants, youth, NGOs and social movements, civil society and indigenous peoples across the global South, sometimes also bridging with social forces in the global North in common cause. These popular struggles are very much at the centre of global politics, though sometimes less visible than state-to-state relations. Most of these movements are social responses to the domestic and globally organised appropriation of land and resources towards the ends of capital accumulation and economic growth models. In some instances these social contestations are confined within peaceful norms of civic order and legal recourse to justice and arbitration, and in others they transgress these norms and take on insurrectionary or even revolutionary character. Such widespread contemporary popular protest and social contestation to development practices across the global South cannot simply be swept under the analytical carpet, but rather must be carefully and systematically recognised and studied in order to explore how real alternatives and challenges to the prevailing global status quo are unfolding through the actions of these movements. This challenge ‘from below’ is perhaps equally or even more historically important in the present era than the actions of governments *vis-à-vis* each other. In many parts of the world today the elite-led pursuit of the dream of unlimited economic expansionism has produced a severe clash with the people occupying the spaces upon which these ‘acts of development’ are to be imposed. Thus the question of ‘development for whom’ arises again with acute historical urgency.

As has been argued, therefore, the most radical critics of the new ‘rising powers’ decry practices in which there is a perceived pattern of the re-subordination of much of the population and natural resources of the global South, or the ‘periphery’, both to the continued



power of the global North and simultaneously to the growing power of new actors from the global South itself. This critique of 'Southern neo-colonialism' and 'sub-imperialism' contrasts with past and present hopes for 'collective self-reliance'; an emergent 'South–South collective development paradigm' and 'horizontal transnationalism' via South–South economic cooperation. Certainly there is now a plethora of new initiatives and realignments that seek to organise South–South economic and financial cooperation. The momentum of these numerous South–South initiatives has, for example in the African context, also spurred new efforts for enhanced 'North–South' cooperation, such as via the recent US and EU summits with African states (following the precedent of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation – FOCAC).

The rise of myriad regional and global economic realignments, especially those started after the onset of the global financial and economic crisis, may thus indicate a structural break or disjuncture in the global political economy, and the beginning of far reaching global structural changes in the future. Projects and patterns of enhancing regional-scale hegemonic influence now being actively pursued by several expanding Southern economies (the BRICS being a primary example of this tendency) are very much a part of the puzzle, but all these efforts coexist within a larger complex pattern of global economic transnationalism which transcends any particular regional area geography. Whether and where new 'spheres of influence' may be under construction by significant expansionist Southern powers is a serious historical question of the present era, and one which has great importance for the future of world order.

As such, the aim of this special issue is to address the questions raised in this introduction: what is the impact of the rising powers on global development patterns and to what extent does the developmental assistance offered by rising powers challenge existing neoliberal practices? Can the increased engagement of rising powers with the rest of the developing world properly be referred to as a form of positive sum SSC? Or are we seeing the emergence of new forms of unequal relations, subordination and dependency? What kind of theoretical approaches and conceptual tools do we need to best answer such questions? To what extent do new groupings such as BRICS present a real alternative to the geopolitical and geo-economic dominance of the West and of the neoliberal economic globalisation paradigm? What are the elements, if any, of continuity between contemporary SSC and previous forms of Third Worldism and solidarity? What possible alternatives exist within contemporary forms of SSC? More broadly, the special issue will address whether there is (and how we should measure) a 'global centre-shift' taking place, ie from global North to global South. Are the former peripheries of the world system becoming the new centres of the world system? Does this also reflect a historic hegemonic transition in the structure of world economic and political power? What are the implications of a parallel tendency towards increasing 'rivalry' between 'rising powers' themselves, and between them and the West? To what extent are some areas of the global periphery (the least developed countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example) being re-subordinated to both the old and rising centres?

## Overview of the papers

The collection of papers in this special issue addresses different aspects of the questions outlined above through cases studies of various instances of SSC. Given the highly contested nature of the issues involved, it is perhaps not surprising that the contributors largely fail to find agreement on many of these questions. While none of the contributors denies the

resurgence in SSC itself (although see Kagarlitsky's interview for a critical perspective on the notion of the 'global South'), there do exist at times quite sharp disagreements on the degree to which SSC possesses emancipatory potential. This division of opinions adheres closely to broader divisions over whether the phenomenon of the rising powers is deemed indicative of a shift in the locus of economic and political power to the global South, or whether it simply denotes the co-optation of a select number of key states into the Western-centred neoliberal world order.

Deepak Nayyar, for example, provides a detailed overview of the increasing importance of the rising powers within the global economy. For the developing world as a whole Nayyar notes that, in terms of their share in industrial production and the export of manufactures, there has been a significant degree of catch-up industrialisation since the 1950s, a process that has intensified since the 1970s. However, this catch-up has been characterised by broad unevenness across the developing world, with much of the gains limited to Asia, Latin America staying roughly constant and Africa falling even further behind. China and India have seen the greatest gains, followed by the rest of what Nayyar terms the 'Next 14' (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Egypt and South Africa), followed in turn by the rest of the developing world. Even within the BRICS grouping there are considerable inequalities, with Brazil, India and South Africa all running sizeable trade deficits with China. A near-colonial pattern of trade exists within the developing world, involving the export of primary commodities to China and the import of manufactured goods from China, a pattern that can hardly be viewed as conducive to industrialisation, let alone indicative of a partnership for development. The rise of China and India as manufacturing powers therefore poses a threat to the future of manufacturing-based industrialisation elsewhere in the developing world, thereby potentially deepening the international division of labour between China and India and regions specialising in primary commodity production and natural resource extraction. As such, Nayyar argues that BRICS will only have a positive impact on other developing countries if they serve to improve terms of trade, provide appropriate technologies and create new sources of finance for development.

However, Nayyar argues that the collapse of primary commodity prices in mid-2014, which seemed to have underpinned much of the progress made in the developing world, problematises the degree to which this is likely to happen. In terms of their impact on global governance BRICS may have more success in influencing the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. Yet Nayyar confirms the analysis set out above that the BRICS have failed to coordinate their actions, and that their relationship with each other is characterised more by rivalry, economic or political, and less by unity. Nayyar therefore argues that the spirit of solidarity among developing countries should be preserved and nurtured, and that the approach of BRICS must be to facilitate cooperation among themselves and solidarity with others through consultation and inclusion.

In his contribution Fantu Cheru seeks to challenge views that relations between African countries and rising powers are necessarily a form of renewed colonialism, arguing that such views disregard African agency and fail to examine how that agency can transform emerging bilateral relationships into 'win-win' relationships. Cheru shows how this has been the case with regard to the Ethiopian developmental state's successful harnessing of relations with emerging donors and the production of its own national policy space. This is shown through an analysis of trade, investment and aid relations with China and India. Ethiopia's relations

with China, for example, show that there are multiple institutional channels through which the Ethiopian state has been able to shape its external relations. These include reciprocal visits by the countries' leaders, the establishment of a Joint Ethiopia–China Commission, and various other mechanisms such as party-to-party relations, underlining the ideological affinity between the Chinese Communist Party and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Although Ethiopia has a large trade deficit with China, Cheru argues that it has also gained through widespread Chinese investment. Contrary to popular myth, such investment is not centred around land grabbing, but is focused on manufacturing, construction and real estate. Transfer of skills and experience also takes place through Chinese involvement in special economic zones. Furthermore, Chinese companies are also heavily involved in power generation projects, road building and telecommunications, often as contractors on Western-financed projects. With regard to India cooperation is enshrined in bilateral agreements, reciprocal visits of heads of state and a Joint Trade Committee. Again, Ethiopia has a trade deficit with India, but there exist a wide range of aid and technical assistance programmes focused on capacity building. While there have been criticisms from civil society over Indian land grabs, the Ethiopian government has responded with increased scrutiny of the activities of large investors in agriculture. Cheru concludes that, by being pragmatic, the Ethiopian government has been able to craft its own development roadmap to transform the economy through a meshing of selected development experiences from East Asia with 'soft neoliberalism' from the West under the guidance of a strong developmental state.

Patrick Bond adopts a more critical view of the implications of the rising powers for global development. Drawing on Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of imperialism as opening up non-capitalist areas to exploitation, he sees new institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Contingency Research Arrangement as forms of sub-imperialist finance. In this sense these institutions do little to provide an alternative to the prevailing world system of sovereign debt, but instead serve as mechanisms for redirecting the world's surplus capital. Needless to say, such arrangements do not bode well in terms of African developmental prospects. Indeed, Bond warns of the possibility of future debt repayment crises as a result of the end of the boom in commodity prices, thus challenging the hype surrounding 'Africa Rising'. Although such financial mechanisms can be seen in part as a reflection of the BRICS' growing frustration with the pace of IMF reform, as noted above, both the NDB and CRA serve to shore up the dominant role of the dollar in the world economy. The fact that the BRICS chose not to support the more progressive Bank of the South suggests that they are collaborating actively with imperialist expansion for the advancement of their own regional hegemonic influence strategies. This can clearly be seen through an analysis of the role of South Africa's rising investment throughout the African continent and the mobilisation of military force to protect its investments in conflict areas such as in the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus South Africa's role can be seen as one of supporting the BRICS' sub-imperialist expansion on the African continent. As Bond concludes, therefore, a progressive challenge to the contemporary neoliberal world order is not likely to come from groupings such as the BRICS but through the building of a bottom-up, counter-hegemonic network and then movement against both imperialism and BRICS sub-imperialism.

Thomas Muhr offers a contrasting perspective in arguing that frequent dismissal of claims of SSC as mere 'rhetoric' are disingenuous. As the term 'BRICS' itself suggests, discourse production is about constructing collective identities, which is in turn an essential prerequisite

for transformative political action. Muhr offers an altogether more optimistic assessment of the emancipatory potential of SSC. Correcting what is seen as a bias in the Anglophone literature, Muhr argues that the progressive potential of SSC can be seen particularly in Latin America, as pursued by, among others, Venezuela and Cuba, in the form of ALBA-TCP. Through the pursuit of solidarity and complementarity, these emergent forms of SSC are seen as possessing the potential to liberate the periphery from unequal exchange for mutual benefit both within the region and beyond. Muhr criticises the dichotomy deployed in the existing literature between 'national interests' and solidarity. The heterogeneity of the global South does mean that, inevitably, one side of the relationship reaps greater monetary gains through trade. Yet, through SSC arrangements, the other party can reap more intangible benefits such as experience, knowledge and cultural exchange, capacity building, diplomatic solidarity, human rights promotion, and the visibility and recognition of the South. Thus a distinction should be drawn between dependency and dependence, with the former pointing towards a form of neo-colonial exploitation and absence of actor autonomy, and the latter more properly viewed as an unavoidable consequence of the unevenness of the global South. SSC thus looks set to create a system of asymmetric interdependence, as part of a project of counter-dependency. This can be seen as something quite different from the dependency that has characterised North–South relations. The progressive dimensions of SSC are thus ensured by the role of non-traditional actors, namely transnational organised society. These include popular movements such as the Landless People's Movement in Brazil. As such, SSC can be seen as a pre-requisite for non-capitalist, environmentally and socially sustainable development.

Using a case study of South Korea's programme of overseas development assistance (ODA) to Africa, Soyeun Kim and Kevin Gray challenge the dichotomised debate over whether the engagement of emerging powers with the developing world can be seen as emancipatory or as a resurgent form of neo-colonialism. While the structural contradictions faced by the South Korean political economy and capital's need for profitable investment opportunities can explain in the first instance the recent emphasis placed by Seoul on developmental assistance to Africa, Seoul's ODA programme in reality reflects a broader range of objectives that cannot simply be reduced to 'the needs of capital'. The multiplicity of objectives underpinning Seoul's ODA programme are analysed through a consideration of the logic of capital and the logic of territory, and their dialectical relationship. Indeed, overlain with economic objectives are the broader geopolitical aims of the South Korean state, including the gaining of political influence within the UN voting system and the promotion of soft power through 'global branding'. This geopolitical dynamic was particularly apparent in the early years of Seoul's Africa diplomacy, during which it had pursued a limited and narrowly defined policy aimed at securing formal support from African nations for South Korea's entry into the UN.

Since the mid-2000s Seoul's African diplomacy has seen some drastic changes, yet legacies of earlier approaches are still apparent, as can be seen in the disbursement of aid to support Ban Ki-Moon's campaign for the position of UN Secretary General, Seoul's broader soft power strategy through the propagation of the 'Korean model of development', and the pursuit of national prestige through membership of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Such contradictions between economic and political objectives have served to undermine the coherence of Seoul's ODA to Africa. Bureaucratic divisions have inhibited reforms of the country's aid architecture, thus undermining aid effectiveness, and the use of ODA for broader geopolitical objectives has led to the spreading of aid thinly across a

relatively large number of recipient countries. Even from an economic interest perspective this undermines the degree to which aid can facilitate the profit-making activities of South Korean corporations. The specificities of individual aid programmes should thus be understood as complex and subject to multiple economic and political influences and contradictions. Kim and Gray thereby counter the assumption that all South-to-South capital investment is being driven by profit maximisation and argue that the political–diplomatic logic can be influential in rising powers’ SSC strategies.

James H Mittelman focuses on the implications of the rising powers for the existing structures of global governance, through an analysis of the IMF, the G7 and the G20 and, in particular, of the informal networks of authority that bind them together. This is achieved, first, by examining the contemporary continuities and discontinuities in global governance. In terms of continuities Mittelman argues that, despite relational adjustments between actors and in the structures of global governance, global neoliberalism has proved remarkably pliable. Although institutional changes are taking place in the form of new group forums, such as the G20, this has done little to shift decision making away from the dominant power, the USA. Even though the emergence of the G20 following the global financial crisis has ostensibly given rising powers a seat at the global table, big and powerful actors, and the USA in particular, are still pre-eminently influential. Indeed, the emergence of the G20 itself can be seen to reflect a US/Northern co-optation response to the rising powers. Although the IMF has modified its thinking in certain respects, the overarching framework of neoliberalism still remains dominant. While the rising powers have offered to developing countries alternatives to IMF funding, the IMF has seen a resurgence in its prominence and purpose after the global financial crisis. It has made gestures towards giving more voice to market powers, despite the fact that US congress showed considerable resistance to ratifying the quota reforms. The IMF has also become more open to working with civil society organisations and has worked closely with the G20, although, as Mittelman argues, it still lacks genuinely new ideas outside the dominant neoliberal paradigm. Mittelman thereby emphasises verticality in existing global governance arrangements, arguing that the relationship between the ‘controllers’ of global governance and the ‘controllees’ remains largely unaltered. The lead power and its allies in the G7 are the main drivers of the G20 and the IMF, and indeed use these entities as ‘delivery pipelines’. Thus global repositioning maintains hierarchical modes of collective action and forms of policy coordination that legitimise controls by a concert of powers, with the USA as their principal controller.

Rickard Lalander and Markus Kröger examine the question of ethno-territorial rights and the extent to which they are protected by progressive constitutions in Latin America in the context of the global commodity boom-induced resources rush. In recent times a growing number of Latin American rural groups achieved extended ethno-territorial rights, and large territories saw increased protection by progressive constitutions. These constitutions were the outcomes of extended cycles of national and transnational contentious politics, social movement struggle and collective SSC. Kröger and Lalander argue, however, that in reality these progressive governments have been dependent on the export revenues for the provision of social welfare, and that ethnic territorial rights have been subordinated to broader economic development policies. The constitutions did not in themselves guarantee that local populations would be able to gain autonomy or local land control. In reality the ability of local populations to defend their rights has depended upon who the extractive agent is. Populations were able to secure *de facto* ethno-territorial rights if the extraction was being

carried out by the private sector, rather than if it was the state. Under conditions of private sector extractivism, populations could request intervention from the progressive state. Here, the constitutions are useful for movements in conflict with private corporations. However, they also provide the opportunity for these states to claim that they operate in accordance with legal norms. Furthermore, Kröger and Lalander show that the *de facto* results of securing ethno-territorial rights are outcomes of social movement-level direct action and contentious agency-spreading on a continental scale, while the *de jure* outcomes suggest that the expansion of these rights is also a 'top-level' official policy cooperation project enshrined in progressive constitutionalism.

Using a case study of Brazil, Maria Guadalupe Moog Rodrigues raises the question of why civil society has failed to form transnational activist networks that seek to affect the IBSA bloc's policies in a coordinated way. This failure is particularly surprising, given that the bloc already has formalised spaces for networking among government officials, business interests and academics. The reasons for this failure are manifold. Existing transnational advocacy networks have tended to target global institutions and processes dominated by the West along a North–South axis, despite a perceived weakening of the Bretton Woods institutions. This is even the case with clear instances of South–South transnational activism such as the World Social Forum. Although some advances have been made with regard to indigenous and human rights, these compare poorly to the impact that activism has had on the World Bank or the UN apparatus. With regard to IBSA activists have largely failed to identify opportunities within multilateral global and regional institutional frameworks that could be targeted in efforts to influence the bloc's position in global affairs. IBSA's focus on financial schemes, rather than on cooperative initiatives on social and environmental issues, hinders prospects for civil society participation.

Furthermore, institutions such as the IBSA Fund have been overshadowed by the more economic, strategic and ideologically significant BRICS New Development Bank, where two key member states, China and Russia, are much more resistant to civil society participation. There are also clear difficulties in framing activism along shared values and a common discourse, notwithstanding advances in communications technologies. Brazilian activists note that global rights campaigns and transnational solidarity initiatives raise little interest among the Brazilian public, while the Brazilian government's own desire to challenge Western imperialism often problematises the government's human rights advocacy abroad. There is a vast diversity of priorities in terms of advocacy across the three IBSA countries, with an absence of a common language in a literal sense and in terms of cultural differences and misconceptions.

Finally, there is the question of resources. While Brazil's political, economic and cultural opening to the world has provided increased opportunities for advocacy at various scales, its rise as a middle-income power has led to a diversion of funds towards countries considered to be in greater need. At the same time competition for resources and access to policy arenas has greatly increased, with INGOs establishing local offices in Brazil and competing for resources and political relevance domestically, despite being bound to their international agendas. Activists talk of a resulting weakening of domestic advocacy networks. Also, while left-leaning governments have brought forth new opportunities for social movements to influence the policy-making process, this may also lead to a reluctance of movements to engage in activism that may challenge the government. For example, Brazilian unions have been mainly supportive of the developmental agendas of both the IBSA and the BRICS blocs.



Furthermore, the revolving door between the state bureaucracy and Brazilian activists has led to a vacuum of leadership among advocacy organisations.

In his article Eduardo Gudynas raises a broader question of the substantive meaning of the concept of 'development' and its implications for understanding SSC. As Gudynas argues, even when SSC is presented as an alternative to the traditional developmental programmes of industrialised countries, it remains based on key modernist notions of progress and economic growth. This includes both South America's neo-developmentalism under the auspices of progressivist governments as well as China's state-led development. However, as Gudynas argues, neo-developmentalism has tended to focus on exports, investment and consumerism in the context of the global commodity boom. China's approach similarly shares with Western development an emphasis on growth and industrialisation. As a result, SSC has tended mainly to involve coordination on projects and financing, without discussion of the substantive content of development.

The problem is that debates over development have typically taken place either with regard to the instrumental arrangements within a specific 'variety of development' (Type 1) or indeed on the relative merits of different varieties of development, such as the neo-Keynesian approach or the neoliberal approach (Type 2). As Gudynas argues, however, there is a need for a Type 3 debate over alternatives to the Western modernist varieties of development. Such an alternative, Gudynas argues, can be seen in the concept of *Buen Vivir*, which focuses on quality of life and an expanded notion of the community to include nature and the delinking of progress from growth. In this sense the resurgence of SSC based on extractivism can be seen not as a new alternative form of cooperation but as a major social and environmental threat.

As an experienced practitioner, Branislav Gosovic provides an overview of the rise, decline and resurgence of SSC. As Gosovic argues, the emergence of such institutions as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and UNCTAD was met with resistance from the North, especially following the rise of conservative forces in the USA and the UK. Gosovic sees the rise of China and its growing presence and engagement with the global South as being a key catalyst of the resurgence of SSC. Furthermore, the rise of left-wing governments in Latin America amid widespread discontent with neoliberalism is seen as central to such instances of SSC as ALBA-TCP and the hemispheric Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

In contrast to the SSC of the past, however, globalisation has contributed to the growth of China, Brazil and India, which has led them to acquire the capacity for greater and more sustained economic cooperation with developing countries. In this sense Gosovic presents a positive view of China's ties with developing countries, helping the latter to loosen their reliance and dependence on former metropolises and on the global North more broadly. Again, in contrast to the past, this has not been uniformly opposed by the North, which is seeking growing opportunities for 'triangular cooperation'. Nonetheless, as Gosovic argues, there are several necessary conditions for the continued development of SSC. These include: the need for a new conceptual framework with which to understand SSC in light of contemporary conditions and the evolving context; the need to address suspicions and doubts within developing countries concerning the 'big players of the South', namely those countries with the capacity to spearhead a long-term strategy of cooperation; the need for national commitment and institutions as a means of overcoming the lack of consistency in governments' SSC efforts and a general lack of public interest; the need for adequate financing



and for institutional support at the international level; and finally the need for leaders with a global vision and commitment to SSC; for an annual global SSC report; for support from within the UN system and from other international organisations. More specifically Gosovic calls for more effective 'marketing' of SSC, the establishment of a 'South–South Commission' and a UN organisation dedicated to dealing with SSC.

This collection of papers concludes with an interview with Boris Kagarlitsky. In it Kagarlitsky discusses the significance of contemporary ideas surrounding South–South relations, the continuities and discontinuities between the 'global South' and previous notions of the 'Third World' and whether such changes in the world economy over the past half a century can be understood as a form of hegemonic transition. Kagarlitsky also addresses the role of the various social forces and movements of the global South within these emerging South–South relations. Finally, he addresses the question of the role of the Russian Federation in the world system following the global crisis.

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## Notes

1. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.
2. Appadorai, "India Quarterly," 232.
3. Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 13–14.
4. UNGA, "Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order."
5. Biel, *The New Imperialism*, 124.
6. Murphy, *Global Institutions*, 108.
7. See Cox, "Ideologies and the New International Economic Order."
8. Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World*, 151.
9. Williams, *International Economic Organizations and the Third World*, 79.
10. Gills, "Going South."
11. Gills, "Global Development in the Anthropocene."
12. Amsden, *The Rise of 'the Rest'*; and Nayyar, *Catch Up*.
13. Robinson, "The Transnational State and the BRICS"; and Bond and Garcia, *BRICS*.
14. Bello, "The BRICS"; Desai, "The Brics are building a Challenge"; and Pieterse, "Global Rebalancing."
15. Leal-Arcas, "The BRICS and Climate Change."
16. Vanaik, "Capitalist Globalisation"; and Taylor, "BRICS and Capitalist Hegemony."
17. Whittaker et al., "Compressed Development."
18. Wade, "What Strategies are Viable?"
19. Harris, "Emerging Third World Powers."
20. Taylor, "The South will rise Again?"
21. Hopewell, "New Protagonists in Global Economic Governance."
22. Flesmes, "India–Brazil–South Africa (IBSA)," 410.
23. "BRICS pledges \$75bn to IMF's Bailout Fund."
24. Harding, "US fails to approve IMF Reforms."
25. Armijo, "The BRICS Countries."
26. Laïdi, "BRICS," 625.
27. Bond, "Why Jim Kim should consider Resigning."
28. Stephen, "Rising Regional Powers," 306–307.
29. Watson et al., "What next for the Brics Bank?"
30. See "eThekwin Declaration," <http://brics5.co.za/about-brics/summit-declaration/fifth-summit/>, accessed November 5, 2015.
31. Stuenkel, "Institutionalizing South–South Cooperation," 14.
32. Antoniades, "Recasting the Power Politics of Debt," 226.
33. Rabinovitch, "China's Forex Reserves reach \$3.4tn."
34. US Treasury, "Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities."
35. Thompson, *China and the Mortgaging of America*, 130.
36. Spillius, "Hu Jintao criticises US Monetary Policy."
37. Sharan, "The Chinese Interest in Special Drawing Rights."
38. Mawdsley, *From Recipients to Donors*.
39. Muhr, *Counter-globalization and Socialism*.
40. Quadir, "Rising Donors."
41. Six, "The Rise of Postcolonial States."
42. Hook, "Foreign Aid in a Transformed World"; Sörensen, *Challenging the Aid Paradigm*; and Davies et al., "How China delivers Development Assistance."
43. Naím, "Rogue Donors."
44. Tan-mullins et al., "Redefining 'Aid' in the China–Africa Context."
45. Gray and Murphy, *Rising Powers*.

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