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Sumário

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Access to Food as a Human Right: Brazil, WFP and South-South Cooperation

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Brazil's engagement with international development cooperation (IDC) as a provider is not new; its first experiences date back to the 1960's. However, Brazil's governmental funding and interest in IDC have grown since the 1988 Constitution, which marks the period of national re-democratization of State-society relations. Even if in the nineties Brazil also had some experiences as a provider of IDC, it was during President Lula's administration, after 2003, that both government and civil society organisations have placed a stronger political emphasis and financial resources on South-South cooperation, having mobilised civil servants, several ministries, federal agencies, and subnational entities in the conception and implementation of technical cooperation projects. As part and parcel of this engagement, Brazil's government has also set up a sustainable partnership with the World Food Program with the attempt to disseminate and transfer public policy norms, practices and procedures in the field of the global fight against hunger. Since 2003 Brazil's government has endeavoured to place hunger as one of the worst violations against human rights, thus building a strong coalition with WFP in defending the access to food and nutritional security by poorer populations in Brazil, in Latin America, in Africa and many other developing regions in the world.

Brazil's governmental action in this field is mainly related to policy transfer and policy diffusion in various fields such as local food purchase programs, school nutrition projects, as well as small farming and agriculture development activities. Even if the amounts related to Brazil's cooperation programmes should not be compared to what OECD-DAC countries have been doing in humanitarian aid and agriculture cooperation, Brazil's contribution can be analysed at least from two other perspectives: (i) agents and practices; (ii) norms and the symbolic regime.

1. Agents and practices

Delivering technical cooperation through civil servants from ministries and public agencies is one of Brazil's IDC main characteristics. Indeed, particularly since the 1988 Constitution and through the re-democratization years, civil servants and technical consultants have developed expertise in education, health, agriculture, culture, and public management, and have also gained suitable knowledge and first-hand experience on the actual functioning of the domestic politics and the complex interplay among interest groups. Civil servants are the main agents of implementation of Brazilian IDC; they tend to be less expensive than national and international market professionals, and come from several institutions, ministries, and public agencies such as FIOCRUZ (public health) or EMBRAPA (agriculture). Their participation in Brazilian IDC has so far contributed to hindering the increase of an "aid industry" in Brazil. As a result, many civil society organizations end up being excluded from IDC projects and programmes. There

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are exceptions such as Viva Rio, *Associação Alfabetização Solidária* (ALFASOL), *Missão Criança*, which are examples of NGOs currently being involved in the Brazilian Cooperation Agency's educational and humanitarian cooperation projects. By the way, it is relevant to highlight that several Brazilian NGOs dealing with rights (human rights, women's rights, right to development, right to a safe environment, etc.) criticize the Brazilian government for what they label as a "participation deficit", a subject that still needs more attention from academic social science research and advocacy policy networks.

2. Norms and the symbolic regime

The Brazilian government, particularly between 2003 and 2015, defended that the access to food is a human right. Nonetheless, in the deployment of its IDC projects, the government avoided terminology, criteria and norms related to OECD's DAC and North-South Cooperation. Words such as aid, practices such as political conditionality (human rights, democracy, etc.), relationships such as donor/recipient, among others, were absent from the official diplomatic discourse and the Brazilian IDC narratives. A critical approach toward traditional aid, as well as the country's own capacities to promote its development without much dependency on North-South cooperation, have fostered the emergence of Brazil's IDC based on horizontality, non-conditionality and the demand-driven principle. In official documents produced by ABC and IPEA, for instance, horizontality implies a lack of hierarchical relationships between Brazil and its partner country, in terms of decision-making and project implementation; non-conditionality means that the Brazilian government respect other sovereign developing nations, and does not impose any political conditionality related to democracy or human rights attached to its IDC programmes; the demand-driven approach is rooted in the idea that developing countries are those who formulate and organize their demands in view of cooperating with Brazil, without any interference coming from Brasilia.

Of course all this diplomatic rhetoric needs to be contrasted with empirical research, which is just emerging within Brazilian and international academic and independent work. Moreover, particularly during Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff's mandates, Brazil's foreign policy has been investing in the construction of a symbolic regime that is also strongly rooted in South-South solidarity. Brazil is not a member of OECD, and favours debates and proposals on IDC under the umbrella of United Nations ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum, which is acknowledged by Brazilian foreign policy as a legitimate and universal multilateral institution or exchange and negotiation.

Besides, Brazil's refusal to apply the norm of political conditionality is another key aspect of Brazilian development cooperation in Haiti (and elsewhere). Brazil's government emphasizes State-to-State cooperation, respect for sovereignty, and a decision making process driven by the demands of the partner country as fundamental norms in its development cooperation programmes. Those who believe that donor countries can promote, and impose, their values (including liberal democracy) through their foreign aid policies generally criticize Brazil's refutation of the political conditionality norm. The same applies to those who think that beneficiary countries can actually change their domestic politics thanks to the donors' application of the conditionality clause.

Referring to Sciences-Po Professor Bertrand Badie's last book, *Le Temps des Humiliés*, one can even say that the use of conditionality is revealing of a "politics of humiliation" that serves to reinforce the hierarchical relationship between the "donor" and the "receptor". The term "political conditionality" appears in various ways in the literature on development cooperation, but gained prominence from the 1980s and 1990s, though its first application it was during the period of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s. Specialized literature is still today very divided on this issue: it lacks empirical evidence on reasons why or in which cases donor countries apply the political conditionality clause; there is no evidence either on the causal nexus between its application and domestic political improvement in beneficiary countries. In the case of Brazil, the government prefers the emphasis on sovereignty and national ownership to the promotion of human rights and democracy without taking the reality of local contexts into account.

All this being said, one should not forget that Brazil's official IDC programmes also provoke public debate within academic circles and civil society organisations on their private-public contradictions or even on the way Brazil may end up "exporting" its own domestic ten-

sions in the field of agriculture development. Brazil promotes small scale farming and food security in its IDC activities, but it is also an agribusiness champion. In some cases IDC activities may also reveal conflicts of interests between peasants or small family agriculture, on one side, and large industrial agriculture, on the other. One example of such a conflict may be the Pro-Savana project developed in Mozambique by the Brazilian and the Japanese governments. With an aim to foster open evaluations and continuous monitoring of Brazil's present and future engagement with the World Food Programme and other bilateral and multilateral development agencies, these contradictions should also be at the heart of national and international public debates

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