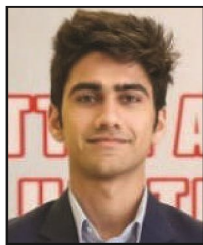
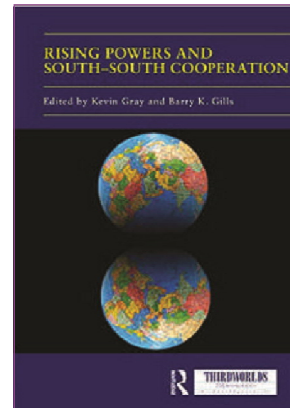


Book Review

Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation

Edited by Kevin Gray and Barry K Gills.
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SSC has the potential to be more effective and productive at the operational level owing to its ideals of heterogeneity and demand-driven nature.

While the votaries of South-South Cooperation (SSC) substantiate the spirit of their cooperation in terms of solidarity and horizontality, the book under review looks at the idea through the lens of 'power'. Hence "*Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation*" finds a unique place within the literature concerning SSC. The book raises various questions focusing on the impact of emerging countries on global development patterns. Are we witnessing a 'global centre-shift' from North to South? If yes, then how best to measure the impact of these emerging countries? What are the implications of a parallel tendency towards increasing competition between the emerging countries vis-a-vis the North? What are the theoretical approaches and conceptual tools required to answer these questions? To what extent are some of the global peripheries being re-subordinated to the emerging centres? The book provides the reader with a collection of papers, reflecting upon these questions, arguing from both sides of the fence, about the pros and cons of SSC all observed through the perspective of 'power'.

Deepak Nayyar, in his chapter, discusses the resurgence of SSC post the fall of the New International Economic Order in UNCTAD due to reinforcement of intellectual property rights, is owed to the process of globalisation. He mentions that China and India have been the primary beneficiaries of globalisation. Nayyar argues that the rise of the BRICS is itself uneven with all Southern countries including India,

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Brazil and South Africa running sizeable trade deficits with China and the rise of China cannot be synonymous with the rise of the South. However, Branislav Gosovic's paper in the book, from a practitioner's perspective, argues that China's relationship with its developing partners is recognised as a positive one with the former helping the latter to loosen their dependence on Northern metropolises. Initially, the formation of institutions such as UN Economic Commission for Latin America was met with conservative backlash from the North. However today, Gosovic explains, the opposition from the North is not uniform given the push for Triangular Cooperation as a move to get a piece of the pie within SSC.

Kevin Gray and Barry Gills, in their chapter, describe the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announcement of its 2010 reform package as giving an increased stake to the BRICS countries, in lieu of their \$75 billion contribution to \$430 billion bailout, hailing it as a victory to the South. However, even with their enhanced position in the IMF, assert the authors, no effective change in the global development finance architecture has been executed, thereby signalling a lack of solidarity within the South. The consequent establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and its Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA) are landmarks in the story of SSC. But, Patrick Bond argues on the contrary that they are the very tools to consolidate the dominance of the West in the development processes of the rest of the world instead of being instruments of turning the financial hegemony of the West on its head. He gives a two-fold substantiation pointing out the fact wherein if a country

needs to draw more than 30 per cent of its quota from the CRA, it must first seek a loan from the IMF which comes with structural adjustment conditionalities. He also emphasises on the use of the US dollar (USD) leading to the exposure of all other countries to Exchange Rate Volatility of the USD except the United States, making the developing countries especially vulnerable as they stand on the margins (or periphery, as Prebisch would say) of the world economy.

The papers of Nayyar and Bond converge on calling this kind of economics as imperialist. Nayyar says that the Chinese model of development is a predatory one. The pattern of export of primary goods to China and its import of finished products reflects a neo-colonialist pattern of trade which is hardly conducive to industrialisation, let alone indicative of a partnership for development. Bond further fuels the imperialist claim drawing from the works of Rosa Luxemburg that the financial flows from emerging countries exhibit a sub-imperialist nature. He throws light onto how the creation of the NDB resulted in the subsequent irrelevance of the Bank of the South and the increasing South African investments in Africa complemented by military patrols for their protection replicate an imperialistic nature.

However, it is only logical to understand that making Bank of the South, a bank for the BRICS countries, would consolidate too much of its stake and influence within the Latin American and Caribbean Countries while BRICS being a grouping that cuts across continents. Similarly, it makes sense to back an investment with military support in order to ensure the sustainability of the

project especially in regions such as Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo which have been marked by protracted conflicts, low capacity of the national armed forces and a war economy that thrives on destruction rather than development. Such nuances are overlooked in the contributing papers of the book.

Further, the majority of the book, in a relentless fashion, writes off the will of the rest of the developing and least developed countries against the emerging countries, providing a lopsided reflection on SSC. However, Fantu Cheru in his paper argues the case for the agency of the African nations by citing the case of Ethiopia which navigates its development objectives through the conditionalities of the West and the debt diplomacy of Chinese government. This is done by giving away contracts of Western financed projects to Chinese companies while utilising India's capacity building programmes in order to consolidate the sustainability of the mega infrastructure projects in their country.

The claims against the solidarity of the South and the imperialistic nature of trade and cooperation among the Southern countries are met with a hindrance in a paper by Thomas Muhr. He articulates his ten theses argument and rallies a case for SSC, highlighting aspects which can easily be ignored in any analysis. Muhr emphasises that SSC has an emancipatory potential that has been marginalised in Anglophone literature. Unequal gains within SSC are inevitable and not a reason to withdraw from it. There are intangible gains like knowledge exchange, capacity building, and diplomatic solidarity instead of monetary benefits which are also

important and intrinsic to southern exchanges.

The global development architecture is incomplete without factoring in South-South bilateral flows. The traditional strings that have been associated with the Official Development Assistance (ODA) emerge in Soyeun Kim and Gray's paper over South Korea's ODA to Africa. They argue that Seoul's ODA is torn between short term political objectives such as a seeking influence in the UN voting system, case in point for the appointment of Ban Ki Moon as the Secretary General and the larger, broader soft power strategy objectives such as the implementation of the 'Korean Development Model', pursuit of national prestige through the membership of the OECD/DAC and 'global branding'. The papers assert that a wide arrays of objectives make the spread of aid very thin over a number of recipients compromising its effectiveness to Africa. Caught in bureaucratic traffic, the authors argue that Seoul is unable to streamline its objectives behind ODA.

James Mittleman, in his contributing paper, talks about repositioning in global governance through a horizontal and vertical shift in pliable neoliberalism by analysing IMF, G7 and G20 and in particular the informal networks of authority that bind them together. Markus Kroger and Rickard Lalander in their paper ask the question as to whether constitutions matter in the context of ethno-territorial rights and the resource extraction boom in Latin America. Maria Guadalupe and Moog Rodrigues present a view from Brazil on the prospect of transnational advocacy from the India Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Bloc asking the question as to why civil societies have

failed to form transnational networks that seek to effect policies in a coordinated way. Eduardo Gudynas through his paper raises the conceptual question on what is meant by development and its implications for understanding of SSC. He argues that the notional spectrum of development itself has been bound by the two models and types: the Latin American progressivist model of neo-developmentalism or the Chinese state-led development. He details out two types of models of development - neoliberal Western model (type1) or the Keynesian model (type2). However, Gudynas calls for a 'type 3' as an alternative which can be achieved through the concept of *Buen Vivir* which focuses on the quality of life and an expanded nature of community and the delinking of progress from growth.

The book as a whole is a compilation of analytical perspectives concerning SSC and the emerging economies of the world. However, the majority of the arguments in the book have been made from one of two perspectives, a macro level politico-economic/constitutional lens or the global financial architecture lens. A glance at the research questions would suggest that they view SSC from an eagle eye perspective in the two aforementioned contexts. The debates constructed in the book and largely along the narratives around SSC focus on it from the policy making level. In other words, the collection of essays approach SSC in a top-down manner. One should note that, on the contrary, inter-state and inter-regional conferences like Bandung (1955) and Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978) established principles and norms which consider all Southern countries lying on a horizontal platform. This is not to

deny, however, that inter-state and inter-regional agreements emerging at a macro level were also captured in the book. They considered features such as constitutional validity, financial hegemony and global governance etc.

However, SSC and ideally development cooperation at large deserves to be analysed more closely. SSC is emerging at a new level which can be understood by tracking the changes in quality of lives at the grassroots of an economy. SSC has the potential to be more effective and productive at the operational level owing to its ideals of heterogeneity and demand-driven nature. Such initiatives involve people-to-people interactions which build strong linkages across populations. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Colombo Plan or Special Commonwealth Assistance to Africa Programme (SCAAP) and Barefoot College inter alia are some of the capacity building initiatives that not only instil important technical knowledge and skills in people but also prepare its beneficiaries for catalysing the development process of their countries in a sustainable fashion. As Chaturvedi (2016) points out that over the years the expertise (of such programmes) has greatly contributed to an observable incremental improvement in vital development sectors in partner economies. Such capacity building initiatives in SSC emerge from mutually beneficial modes of cooperation. They empower citizens to take ownership of their country's own development trajectories. The book, however, discusses forms of development cooperation wherein certain lending decisions resulted in indebtedness and alleged that it was because the receivers of infrastructure assistance were incapable of

sustainably operating on the investments made and in repaying their debts. One must remember that SSC support is not decided by the provider rather it is demand-driven. However, there may have been instances wherein the demand may not have been well-informed. Furthermore, the principle of 'mutual benefit' and the multi-modality approaches in most Southern engagements ensure capacity building and knowledge exchanges along with infrastructure development and investment-laden projects. Thus the plurality of SSC can best be appreciated when understood through a variety of perspectives, than that just of power.

Moreover, the governance of aid flows through the OECD/DAC channel is largely a function of macroeconomic fundamentals which are controlled at the policy level. However, the impact of SSC is qualitative in nature and cannot always be inferred through monetarist measures. It is therefore logical that the assessment of a qualitative impact must happen through qualitative tools. As Chakrabarti (2018) points out, there exists an institutional heterogeneity in development cooperation. The three institutions identified are of the DAC (Pre and Post) Paris Declaration and SSC. The institution of SSC is characterised by relations of trust between actors as opposed to authority or bargaining and coordination through ideology rather than commands or contracts among other

qualities which make it a suitable model to be applied across macro and micro levels against the OECD/DAC regime, which has been asserted at the policy level but is completely absent from the grassroots.

The book argues that the South suffers a fate where short-term national interest is traded off for long term solidarity by its members. As Waltz (1959) theorised that international relations are characterised by anarchy between states and the hard 'materialistic' power is the only factor which overcomes this anarchy. The North, therefore, has been able to assert its conditions and terms through a policy of divide and rule even in the post-colonial world. However, SSC's inherent qualities cannot be viewed through such a 'power-centric' lens as its true strength lies in connecting and consolidating grassroots across continents in a cooperative rather than competitive manner.

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