

Ramifications of the internationalisation of Brazilian public policy instruments for the rural sector

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International organisations and agencies from Western countries are no longer the only ones formulating development standards and international best practices. The proliferation of movements for exporting and importing social, economic and policy management models means it is now more relevant than ever to consider the relationships between countries of the global South. Most recent studies have focused on the drivers and strategies of emerging countries to promote South–South cooperation, while analysis of the impact of such initiatives is still scarce. In her recent book, Milhorance (2019) analyses the content of, processes involved in and consequences of the internationalisation of Brazilian rural public policies since the early 2000s.

Brazil has gained broad international recognition in the early 21st century for its experiences in the modernisation of agriculture and the implementation of social policies. The broader context of Milhorance's book is the global financial and food crisis experienced since 2007. Brazilian policymakers have seized the opportunity created by material and symbolic changes in the international system to promote their own development models, driven by a revised South–South cooperation approach. The strengthening of bonds between Latin American and African countries has materialised as the main vehicle for these strategic interests.

In this context, the country has become an informal ambassador for part of the global South and has garnered the attention of Western leaders and international organisations. Given the uncertainties regarding the impact of the political and economic crises now facing Brazil, it is pressing to attain a more precise understanding of the patterns and consequences of this recent process. Therefore, based on extensive field research—including over 280 interviews—conducted in Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa, Malawi, France and Italy, the author analyses the effects of the internationalisation of Brazilian political solutions on multilateral organisations and on national and local political systems in host countries, focusing especially on the case of Mozambique.

One of the first elements addressed in the book is the strengthening of Brazil's 'soft power', based on the appreciation of its experience in development. However, the unifying aspect of this concept covers a breadth of policies and experiences promoted by different actors and often with conflicting goals. This highlights the need to look beyond conventional notions of international power, diving into networks of actors at multiple levels and considering the historical and political distinctions of South–South relations. The author shows how such networks can link international arenas for the translation and reinvention of political models.

The book also examines the influence of Brazilian instruments in the formulation of new international norms within the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa—CPLP), thanks to the mobilisation of legitimacy resources in a context of criticism of both these organisations and the solutions being offered in the fight against poverty. However, despite the South–South paradigm's ambition to develop international relations, its influence has proved more prominent in the multilateral system than in bilateral relations between countries of the South.

Initiatives in Mozambique are also examined, such as the Tripartite Cooperation Programme for the Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah (ProSavana), the investments of the mining company Vale, the More Food International programme, the Mozambican School Feeding Programme, and the Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) programme, in addition to initiatives promoting transnational coordination between civil society organisations. The intention was to provide a clear picture of the international projection of Brazilian development solutions and their translation by stakeholders at national and local levels.

Results show the participation of Brazilian organisations in an incremental consolidation of instruments aligned with the priorities and objectives of political and administrative elites in Mozambique, as well as the translation of programmatic objectives and the modes of operation of these instruments. At the local level, the reception and implementation of these models differs according to the territory considered and the institutions involved. This ensures, for example, the strengthening of school feeding initiatives at the local level, despite the lack of institutionalisation of and political support for this instrument in the Mozambican national scenario.

In the book's conclusion, the author provides a summary of theoretical and empirical contributions and discusses the fragility of debates that seek to assess the reproducibility of Brazilian rural development trajectories, as these do not take into consideration the socio-political dimension of these processes. In addition, she examines the economic and political crisis facing Brazil and how this context can affect Brazil's international positioning. Finally, she presents some of the lessons learned from this recent process of internationalisation and promotion of South–South cooperation.

Reference:

Milhorance, Carolina. 2019. *New Geographies of Global Policy-Making: South-South Networks and Rural Development Strategies*. New York: Routledge.