



(1)

Independent and cutting-edge analysis on Turkey and its neighborhood

Search for...



## BOOK REVIEW: RISING POWERS AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

A- A A+

**R**ising Powers and South-South Cooperation consists of 12 essays by political science and international relations scholars who explore different aspects of the SCC and the Global South. The volume situates the author's stance in the wider context of the Cooperation and provides a comparative and comprehensive analysis when read in conjunction with the cases of other countries. Instead of handling the Cooperation as a monolithic unitary block, the chapters analyze the Cooperation by country, region, and sub-region.

Rather than much-discussed issues like trade and economic ties, the central concern of the essays in this volume is to demonstrate different dimensions of the SSC. The volume shifts in focus from the North-South axis to the South-South axis. Furthermore, the volume shows us different "Souths." Internal heterogeneity is emphasized in the geographic Souths wherein different voices and identities are represented. In the first part, the editors indicate that their activism has complex and contradictory aspects towards their own national interests, goals, and expertise. For this reason, different spheres of influence and struggles of Southern countries are examined at political, economic, and social levels.

Bearing in mind the challenges and inconsistencies of the Cooperation, the scholars prompt the readers to question the modus operandi of the Cooperation, in addition to its stability, the conception of an international system and the readiness for the Southern "fictional" unity vis-a-vis the North's (un)challenged supremacy. As the dominance of the US and the US-led liberal order diminishes, questions surrounding the role of the South in the international arena becomes more and more pertinent. In chapter two, Nayyar argues that the rise of the South has led to a discernible shift in the balance of power in the world economy. However, due to the structural, material, and ideological divergences, the author argues that the South must form a new, strong and unique institutional architecture in order to strengthen their partnerships.

The majority of the articles in this volume are mainly concerned with African countries. The nineteenth century's "Scramble for Africa" continues today, as demand remains for its natural resources. In Chapter 3, Cheru examines the growing influence of BRICS, particularly with that of India and China in reshaping the African region. Moreover, the author questions how these two giant economies affect Ethiopia's developmental path through trade, investment and aid channels. Ethiopia's strengthening relations with China and India reflect the growing complexity of a transnational economic and political network. Given the rapid growth of Ethiopia and its lack of important resources such as oil, the country's leaders and their decision-making bear particular importance. Cheru points out that Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's attempts to make Ethiopia a developmental state in the post-liberation period resulted in success. The author also provides different theoretical approaches and perspectives by looking at Africa's development partners and their policies, specifically in development aid in the light of the new imperialism and aid as imperialism debates.

In chapter six, Gray and Kim delve deeper into Africa's developmental path and provide different perspectives and approaches to the concept of aid as a tool of imperialism. The authors argue that aid provided to Africa by rising powers is heavily characterized by the donor country's domestic developmental concerns and interests. One of the examples used in the article is South Korean foreign aid to Africa. Since the late 1990s, the most important element of the relationship between South Korea and Africa is Korean development assistance provided to the continent and growing foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as trade and investment cooperation. Such soft power tools promote the international reputation of the country as a credible global actor, not to mention its national products. The authors claim that South Korean capitalism was in crisis and its economic expansion could not be limited to the

confines of the nation-state. Hence, Korea has ventured into Africa to establish new markets for its manufactured goods and to exploit the natural resources of the continent. However, these alone do not explain why Korea has intensively engaged in aid politics; the propagation of Korean soft power, prestige in international platforms and the internationalization of her capital since the 1990s are other key factors that drive Seoul to increase its engagement with Africa. Thus, the Korean Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) can be seen as a combination of capitalist and territorial and strategic logics.

---

*“The South must form a new, strong and unique institutional architecture in order to strengthen their partnerships.”*

---

In chapter four, Bond examines BRICS countries' sub-imperialist strategies and their regional insertion through a Marxist lens. He especially focuses on banking in BRICS countries by reminding the readers of Marini's theory of sub-imperialism[1] which argues that in a superior-subordinate relationship, disorder and conflict are inevitable if the relationship is not managed well. Marini argues that there are not only great imperialist powers in the world, but also sub-imperialist countries which receive support from these powers. Bond additionally argues that the BRICS Development Bank and other development banks could be an important alternative to the new global banking system that is emerging today. However, this argument falls flat because of the structural and procedural hurdles faced by these banks and their practices. Contrary to expectations, the BRICS countries are looking for new markets and resources to place their practices in a neoliberal and imperialist discourse which reinforces capital accumulation, resource extraction, and market expansion. For instance, South Africa, a sub-imperialist state, finances its own projects in Africa through its own development bank. Yet, there is growing popular unrest in the BRICS countries with respect to exploitation, extraction activities, ecological destruction, and neoliberal practices.

Chapters eight and nine examine the role of civil society in Latin America and the India, Brazil and South Africa bloc (IBSA), respectively. The destruction of the environment and natural resources has a greater impact on the living standards of developing countries, especially in economies that are mainly dependent on mining such as Chile, Brazil, and Argentina. Extractivism, which refers to the dependence on raw material exports as the driving force of development, may cause a collision between the protection of safeguarded areas and recognition of constitutional rights. Counter-movements have been growing against such extractivist activities, to extend ethno-territorial rights and protect vulnerable lands. This trend is the product of multiple cycles of protests and social movements at local, national, and transnational levels. Like Rodrigues, the authors emphasize that there is urgent need for civil society and grassroots movements in the global South because they both have a huge impact on foreign relations and the decision-making processes of governments. Through civil society pressure on governments, illegal activities such as breaking commitments to international agreements can be publicized and states held accountable.

In Chapter nine, Rodrigues elaborates on the much-understudied issue of the role of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) in domestic, regional and international politics. The author who examines the role, involvement and participation of activists in the making of foreign policy of IBSA countries, argues that TANs are of vital importance transnationally, regionally and domestically. Needless to say, globalization, neoliberal reforms, and the proliferation of communication channels enable TANs to take an activist position both at the state level and international level. That being said, the author questions whether local and national civil society groups can actually influence state behavior and foreign policy across the IBSA bloc since civil society failed to form TANs. The author elaborates on the reasons for this failure by conducting interviews with activists from advocacy organizations. Their propositions revolve around the lack of respect for human rights, accountability, transparency and open accounting, and how financial arrangements like funds established for poverty reduction and human rights harm the operation of activist groups.

In Chapter ten, Gudynas examines development in the SSC. Rather than adopting an orthodox approach, he evaluates heterodox development models since the heterogeneity and plurality of development are not fully grasped in the Cooperation. Although Southern countries have different development strategies and paths, the author argues that they do not bring a different approach to the concept of development as they still focus on Western-based conceptualizations. As supported by Muhr in Chapter five and Rodrigues in Chapter nine, the subordination of the Global South to the Global North stems mainly from the changing nature of networks both at a global and regional level, as well as the Eurocentric foundations of international relations theories and production of knowledge. Gudynas further argues that there is no debate over the content of “development” and that pre-political data is taken for granted. The author breaks down the debate on development into three main groups.

*“There are not only great imperialist powers in the world, but also sub-imperialist countries which receive support from these powers.”*

The first type refers to the controversies on instrumental arrangements on development within a specific variety of development. The second refers to disputes among different varieties of development. The third type offers a fresh perspective and refers to alternative ways of understanding development. Buen Vivir, meaning wellbeing, presents a fresh perspective for development implementations as an alternative to the neoliberal ones. As a result of depleted natural resources, the worsening lifestyle of the indigenous people and climate change, Buen Vivir is a more inclusive development approach that embraces nature, plants, animals and the Earth. It emphasizes the importance of consuming less and developing a more sensitive approach economically, socially and environmentally, since wellbeing is not solely about the human race, but also about our approach to the environment. This paradigm offers a new vision and platform for rethinking and practicing the protection of nature, natural resources and indigenous people's rights, so that communal well-being, reciprocity, solidarity, and harmony can be achieved. In Ecuador and Bolivia, for example, inclusive development concept has been incorporated into the constitution. The author indicates that networks, social movements, and civil society organizations have been involved with the restructuring process and encourages the SSC to look for alternatives to mainstream development understanding.

In chapter eleven, Gosovic states that the demands and efforts of developing countries have largely been neglected, and the SSC's role as a valuable international development cooperation partner has been ignored by platforms such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Two important developments have changed this situation: the rise of China and the rise of the leftist governments in Latin America. The author asserts that the SSC does not stand as a strong structure against the North, and notes that a more concrete platform needs to be determined for the SSC. Gosovic lists the necessary steps in order to bolster South-South Cooperation's reputation and importance in the international arena. The author underlines the importance of producing annual reports, establishing a committed institutional setting, and connecting with trans-governmental and transnational networks in order to improve the Cooperation's reputation and promote better understanding of it. However, the most urgent issue, norm determination and its diffusion, which forms the very base of the Cooperation still remains. Upon addressing these, the author offers some policy recommendations to reinforce cooperation.

The last chapter is an interview with Russian historian and sociologist Boris Kagarlitsky, in which the Global South and World Wars are focused on. Kagarlitsky argues that although it was enough to define the SSC and other rising powers as the “Global South” about 30 years ago, these definitions are insufficient in the present time. The reasons behind this is twofold: first, a new periphery has appeared as a result of the de-integration process and secondly, key non-state actors in promoting cooperation at the SSC level have emerged. Moreover, the Kagarlitsky claims that terminologies such as “emerging power” and “rising powers” are flawed, and emphasizes that referring to countries with rich histories such as Russia and China as emerging-rising powers betrays the arrogance of some western scholars. For Kagarlitsky, these countries are “returning powers.” He also argues that no power ascends and that Western countries, having lost their dominant position, are also in decline but in a different trajectory.

Overall, this book makes a strong contribution to our knowledge on the SSC and generates a number of theories on the Cooperation's dynamics. While much of the discussion focuses on economic relations, the role of civil society, a much-understudied issue, is also examined. However, the volume chapters focus too much on specific Latin American and African countries and the presence of other rising powers in Africa. Other relatively less studied countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Turkey, Colombia, and the United Arab Emirates are ignored. Additionally, issues such as the rising powers' pursuit of security for their overseas interests and Chinese military engagement with the Southern countries are largely disregarded. Lastly, it would have been beneficial to readers if editors provided a conceptual framework on the terminology surrounding the SSC, rising powers, emerging powers, and the Global South as it would help readers situate such terminology in the changing international order.

[1] Ruy Mauro Marini, “Brazilian interdependence and imperialist integration”, *Monthly Review*, Vol.17, No. 7 (1965).

#### CONTRIBUTOR

Özge Taylan



Özge Taylan is a Research Assistant in the Department of International Relations at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University in Ankara, Turkey.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR (/ARTICLE/942/FROM-THE-DESK-OF-THE-EDITOR)



TPQ's Winter issue examines global trade dynamics—from US-China tensions to the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to US tariff threats towards the EU. Chief among the issues generating a high degree of economic uncertainty is the US-China trade conflict and the magnitude of the emerging global fallout. Major changes are already afoot—namely a shift...

[Read More... \(/article/942/from-the-desk-of-the-editor\)](#)

## STAY CONNECTED



(<https://www.facebook.com/turkishpolicy>) (<https://twitter.com/turkishpolicy>) (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/turkish-policy-quarterly>)

## SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTER



## TWEETS

Tweets by [@TurkishPolicy](#)



A book review of *Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation* by Özge Taylan is now available on our website: [turkishpolicy.com/blog/30/book-r...](https://turkishpolicy.com/blog/30/book-r...)

**Book Review: Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation - Turkish Policy Quarterly**  
Book Review: Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation  
[turkishpolicy.com](https://turkishpolicy.com)

11h



Happy #EarthDay! To celebrate, take time to read our TPQ article by Prince Albert II of Monaco where he talks about protecting our oceans [turkishpolicy.com/article/916/th...](https://turkishpolicy.com/article/916/th...)

**The Ocean: A New Idea for our World - Turkish Policy Quarterly**  
The ocean is our life source: Our environment, our economy, and even our health depend on it. Over half of the  
[turkishpolicy.com](https://turkishpolicy.com)

Apr 22, 2019

[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)

## FACEBOOK



## BLOG

---



What Remains from Turkish Soft Power in the Caucasus? (/blog/31/what-remains-from-turkish-soft-power-in-the-caucasus) Bayram Balcı (/author/824/bayram-balci)

(/blog/31/what-remains-from-turkish-soft-power-in-the-caucasus)



Book Review: Rising Powers and South-South Cooperation (/blog/30/book-review-rising-powers-and-south-south-cooperation) Özge Taylan (/author/823/ozge-taylan)

(/blog/30/book-review-rising-powers-and-south-south-cooperation)



Pakistan Receives Warning From Iran not to Join Saudi Proxy War (/blog/29/pakistan-receives-warning-from-iran-not-to-join-saudi-proxy-war) Michael Tanchum (/author/557/michael-tanchum)

(/blog/29/pakistan-receives-warning-from-iran-not-to-join-saudi-proxy-war)



No New Names (/blog/27/no-new-names) Margot Wallström (/author/768/margot-wallstrom)

(/blog/27/no-new-names)



The Clash of Turkish and Armenian Narratives (/blog/24/the-clash-of-turkish-and-armenian-narratives) Nareg Seferian (/author/757/nareg-seferian)

(/blog/24/the-clash-of-turkish-and-armenian-narratives)

## PARTNERS

---



**Address:** Asmalı Mescit Mh. Oteller Sk. No:8 Kat:2 Beyoğlu/İstanbul

**Phone:** +90 212 621 4442 / +90 212 621 9258

**Fax:** +90 212 531 8718

**E-mail:** info@turkishpolicy.com

Copyright © 2002 - 2019. All Rights Reserved