

RESEARCH ARTICLE

BRICS, the southern model, and the evolving landscape of development assistance: Toward a new taxonomy

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Summary

In recent years, there has been an explosion of categories and labels to account for the expansion of forms of cooperation beyond the membership of the Development Assistance Committee. Such hype has led to the construction of the so-called southern model as the archetype of development cooperation coming from non-Development Assistance Committee countries that are somehow committed to the principles of the South–South cooperation. The present article challenges the idea of a southern model by providing an analysis of drivers, tools, and modality of development assistance.

KEYWORDS

aid architecture, BRICS, emerging donors, South–South cooperation, taxonomy

1 | INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the North–South divide was a trope of the literature on development assistance and aid (Corbridge, 1986; Esteves & Assunção, 2014). Much more than a straightforward geographical partition, the North–South divide encompassed a chain of interconnected socioeconomic and political claims that sustained a global landscape of normalized hierarchies with a quasi-ontological status (Ballard, 2013; Dogra, 2012).

Despite its name, the North encompassed all economically developed countries (Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand), which, from their own self-defined perspective, were altruistic sources of material assistance, good ideas, and universal knowledge (Kapoor, 2008; Kothari, 2005). And the South (all African countries, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East) was a “disciplinary subject” (Mawdsley, 2017: 108) marked by enduring vulnerability, poverty, needs, and perhaps, political instability.

Over the years, the line between “aid recipients” and “donors” has become blurrier and blurrier (Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Brazil,

Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) have taken the lead in a widespread pluralization of development assistance. This process has involved a number of other countries such that the old categories—for example, North and South, recipients and donors, and new and traditional donors—seem obsolete and unable to capture the present and the future of development cooperation.

Recently, significant efforts have been made to improve categories to capture development assistance (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014; Manning, 2006; Waltz & Ramachandran, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Scholars have examined the complex and increasing heterogeneity of the international aid landscape, leading to a proliferation of classification systems and country categories. Often, the North–South divide has been a central explanatory tool to account for the expansion of forms of cooperation beyond the membership of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This has led to the construction of the so-called southern model as the archetype of development cooperation coming from non-DAC countries. The idea that there is such a thing like a homogenous southern model is far from being widely accepted and taken for granted (e.g., Scoones, Amanor, Favareto, & Qi, 2016; Sidaway, 2012). And reality is far more complex than

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simplified characterization. However, in the literature on the architecture of development assistance, the rhetorical power of the idea of a homogenous south remains popular across scholars (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014: 1863, 1864; Eyben & Savage, 2013; Mawdsley, 2017; Semrau & Thiele, 2017) and practitioners (e.g., Conference of Southern Providers 2013; G77, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015; UNDCF, 2013; UNDP 2009, 2013; UNOSSC, 2016: 14; 2017).

In this context, the present article aims to contribute to ongoing debates on the changing landscapes of development assistance by focusing on the donors from the south. Within this context, BRICS countries are generally recognized as leaders of the southern model (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014; Manning, 2006; Waltz & Ramachandran, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). For this reason, the present paper investigates Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa in parallel to other countries that are clustered under the key heading of South–South cooperation (SSC). Several contributions have already stressed the difference between DAC and BRICS (among others, see Dreher, Fuchs, & Nunnenkamp, 2013; Gray & Gills, 2016; Li & Carey, 2014; Xing & Augustin, 2016; Shaw, 2016).¹ Similarly, the literature about how BRICS countries differ from one another is vibrant (e.g., Bond & Garcia, 2015; Gu, Chen, & Haibin, 2016; Xiaoyun & Carey, 2016). Together with other countries from the south and the north, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa have been also objected of different kinds of comparative analysis (e.g., Thakur, 2014; White, 2013). Yet comparative assessments between BRICS countries and other developing countries have often clustered around their practices in specific geographical areas or policy agendas. This paper aims to contribute to such a discussion by offering a comprehensive analysis of BRICS's development assistance vis-à-vis other donors usually grouped under the "southern model" label. In so doing, we shall proceed as follows. First, we provide an overview of how donor analyses have evolved in their discussion of the North–South divide. Second, we clarify our methodology. Third, we assess countries in the sample through the lenses of drivers, tools, and modality of development assistance. Finally, we demonstrate that the southern model fails to provide a fully descriptive picture of the changing landscape of development assistance.

2 | THE NEW AID ARCHITECTURE: DECONSTRUCTING THE DEBATE

This section aims to account for the variety of articulation and rearticulation of the North–South divide over the past 20 years. For a long time, the North–South narrative pictured a world of two groups, where resources and knowledge flowed in one direction: from the north (the donor) to the south (the recipient). This imaginary divide omitted the counterflows of people, resources, and ideas from the

developing to the developed countries and between developing countries (Silvey & Rankin, 2011).

A process leading to some differentiation within the group of developing countries started to take place when the sharp division between rich and poor countries began to blunt. The last two decades have seen a number of countries from the south achieve double-digit growth rates, rise to middle-income status, and create distinctive models of development assistance (Sumner, 2016). Simultaneously, unprecedented pluralism in development financing, aid, models of development, and partnerships has contributed to strengthening the widespread belief of a "rise of the south" in the aid landscape (Chin & Qadir, 2012; Mawdsley, Savage, & Kim, 2013;).

Pluralism in development financing, aid, models of development, and partnerships also has contributed to disseminating the belief in a challenge to the traditional order of development assistance throughout the community of development pundits and scholars. People started reframing old categories to capture the new landscape of development assistance, and attention shifted to the (re)generation of SSC. When coined at the historic Bandung Conference of 1955, the SSC brand was used as an expression of solidarity, complementarity, and lack of hierarchy among developing countries (Abdenur & Fonseca, 2013).

In this context, the "emerging donors" category gained prominence in academic and policy discourses. Despite much hype for the idea that some countries from the Global South were starting to play an important role in providing development assistance, the emerging donors category epitomized a relatively misleading discourse. Southern providers were neither new donors nor emerging actors, as they had been engaged in various forms of assistance for decades (Manning, 2006: 372; Mawdsley, 2012).

Against this oversimplifying discourse, experts have started challenging the emerging donors category by comparing and contrasting different forms of development assistance. Academic literature (e.g., Manning, 2006; Kim & Lightfoot, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011) and policymakers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. [OECD]) have accepted the divide between DAC and non-DAC as a way to describe some providers of development assistance, or as a way to refine the evocative, but imprecise, distinction between traditional and emerging donors (Manning, 2006).²

The non-DAC label works essentially *ex negativo*. However, by starting with the practices and conceptual tools developed and streamlined by DAC donors, scholars who apply this category to the study of development assistance tend to hide the internal fractures, differences, and complexities of donors outside the OECD DAC. In response to this perspective, several experts have started stressing internal differences (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014; Manning, 2006; Waltz

¹Semrau and Thiele (2017) argue that non-DAC donors are not as different from DAC donors regarding their aid motives as one might suspect. Within the DAC itself, scholars have noticed significant differences between long-standing members and those that joined the forum more recently (Doucouliagos & Manning, 2009).

²Specifically, in the literature, the DAC label applies to countries that are members of OECD DAC. DAC is "a bilateral forum for providers of development cooperation" (OECD, 2016: 1). According to the OECD (2016), qua members of the DAC, countries pledge to implement DAC recommendations, guidelines, and reference documents in formulating national development co-operation policies. They also agree to submit a regular peer review of their development cooperation. Moreover, members of the DAC should submit official development assistance statistics and information describing their aid efforts and policies annually (2016).

& Ramachandran, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). Notably, mainly based on institutional membership, Manning isolates three groups (2006): non-DAC OECD members, Arab donors, and non-OECD donors. On the same ground, Kragelund (2008) uses a similar taxonomy: European Union (EU) and OECD, OECD but not EU, EU but not OECD, and neither EU nor OECD.

Given the range of internal differences, the group of so-called non-OECD donors is relatively variegated and disperse. Among the non-OECD donors, Manning includes countries such as China, India, Venezuela, Brazil, Russia, Chile, and South Africa. Zimmermann and Smith elaborate the non-OECD category further. Under the umbrella label "South-South development cooperation", they include middle-income countries and emerging economies that provide financial support and technical assistance to other countries from the Global South. This category includes countries such as Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, and Venezuela.

Waltz and Ramachandran (2011) identify a distinct southern model of development assistance. The southern model encompasses countries such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and Venezuela that distance themselves from the DAC normative principles and motivate their development assistance with discourses of mutual benefit, solidarity, horizontality, and noninterference in domestic affairs.

Within the southern model, De Renzio and Seifert (2014) identify two subgroups. They isolate a first wave of countries (China, India, and Brazil) that have been active in SSC for a longer period and with an explicit rejection of DAC-related principles (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014). De Renzio and Seifert group as the second wave a number of relatively diverse countries (Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela). De Renzio and Seifert argue that countries belonging to the second wave engage in the practices of DAC countries while engaging in justificatory elements of the narrative of SSC.

Against this backdrop, despite being official aid donors since the 1960s and 1970s and having contributed substantially to international aid flows (Manning, 2006; Mawdsley, 2012), Arab donors—Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—have rarely appeared in the literature on development assistance.

In parallel to taxonomies of development assistance, different expressions have been coined to give a sense of growing economies. The acronym BRICS stands for an association of five major emerging national economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). MINT refers to the economies of Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey. Whether BRICS and MINT countries have some commonalities in their approach to development assistance is an object of disagreement among scholars (Kragelund, 2008, 2011; Robledo, 2015).

Hence, in the literature on development assistance, the North-South divide has been articulated and rearticulated a number of times. A myriad of new subjectivities shed light on the porosity of the too simplistic and reified division between actors with crossflows, intertwining interests, and analogous justificatory practices.

3 | METHODOLOGY

Two perspectives guide our analysis. On the one side, we review existing scholarship on the landscape of development assistance. On the other side, we take the perspective of donor countries to identify their public narrative. In this vein, a public narrative is the way donor countries present themselves to other donor countries, receiving countries, international organizations, and their citizens.

To construct our taxonomy, therefore, we have conducted a document analysis that considers four kinds of sources. In order to capture the existing landscape of development assistance, we have reviewed country-focused literature on development assistance and existing taxonomies of development assistance. Rather than critically assess the literature, our choice has been that of comprehensively review and collect all available sources of evidence. The choice to approach the literature in this way is justified by the ambition to offer an analysis that collect and homogenize different analyses. This analytical approach allows for a comprehensive study of development assistance followed by a large number of countries that scholars have group under the southern model. Such strategy has informed our selection of the relevant categories and subcategories. Our categories include drivers, tools, and modality. By reviewing the literature, we have identified four kinds of driver: foreign policy, economics, cultural, and altruistic. In the same way, we have singled out eight tools: grants, loans, export credits, food aid, debt relief, capacity building, training and scholarship, and medical aid. Modality includes donor label, recipient status, tied aid, and nonconditionality. The composition of existing taxonomies have informed the construction our sample. We have brought together all countries that have been included in taxonomies of development assistance over the past years. Our sample includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela, and Cuba.

The study of public narratives has required textual examinations of other sources of evidence. First, we have carried a qualitative textual examinations of websites. Websites help to study the self-construction process followed by donors (a list can be found in Appendix A). Second, we have carried a qualitative textual examinations of 37 assessment reports drafted between 2011 and 2015 (a list can be found in Appendix B). The choice to analyze these documents is justified by the importance of reports for the standing of donors against the global community, media, and the electorate. Drafting assessment reports requires both economic and human resources. The distribution of topics and the analytical accuracy provide evidence of the image that a certain donor aims to display. Unfortunately, many countries do not draft assessment reports regularly. Some of them publish multiannual reports. Sometimes, countries may lack human and economic resources. Often, they prefer not displaying this kind of information. For this reason, the list of reports do not cover the entire time span for all countries in the sample.

Third, we have carried a qualitative textual examinations of 12 official declarations delivered at international and regional fora between 2011 and 2015 (a list can be found in Appendix C). We have focused

on declarations that are the results of fora such as BRICS meetings, Caricom, Conference of Southern Providers, G77, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Southern African Development, and United Nations Special Unit on South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC). The choice to analyze these official declarations is justified by the importance of this fora for the standing of donors in their regional area of influence, and more broadly, vis-à-vis other donors from the Global South. Qualitative textual analysis of speeches and official declarations allow for a study of the self-construction process followed by donors and recipients. In these occasions, words are pondered, strategically employed, and negotiated between donors and recipients, in order to convey a specific image of commonality and solidarity.

In doing so, we do not seek to identify the substantive interest (if any) that donors try to pursue through development cooperation. Instead, the goal is to see how countries want to be recognized by receiving countries and other counterparts in the development community. For this reason, the analysis focuses on several rhetorical and formal tools that donor countries deploy to describe and justify development assistance. However, we have to acknowledge some limitations. Public speeches, official declarations, and assessment reports can be particularly misleading when applied to the study of drivers. Countries tend to offer an altruistic, cooperative, and unselfish public images of their drivers. For this reason, where possible, we have relied on existing academic literature.

To sum up, our research began with an extensive review of the literature in the field. Once we have identified the sample and the relevant categories, we conducted qualitative textual examination of websites. For all countries in the sample, we have focused on ministries of foreign affairs, cooperation agencies, and the case of Cuba and China, on governmental press. Then, where available, we carried a qualitative textual examinations of assessment reports in the official languages or, where possible, in the official English translation. Finally, we approached official declarations and public speeches to triangulate reports and website.

So in order to describe the landscape of development assistance, the literature identifies three macro areas: drivers, tools, and modality. To define each of these macro areas, existing taxonomies of development assistance (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014; Manning, 2006; Waltz & Ramachandran, 2011; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011) apply a number of different indicators. In this section, we introduce these indicators systematically.

3.1 | Drivers

This category aims to capture the motives of development assistance. A lot has been written on what motivates development assistance (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Hook, 1993; Lancaster, 2007; McGillivray, 2003; Morgenthau, 1962; Riddell, 2007; Van der Veen, 2011).

Notwithstanding important differences in countries context, ideologies, and practices, it is possible to identify four main drivers of development assistance in the literature: foreign policy, economic, cultural, and altruistic. An important caveat is that such drivers are

neither comprehensive nor integrated enough to capture the complex interrelation and contradiction existing among them. In fact, they can be both complementary and/or competitive within the same country's aid pattern. However, for the purpose of this discussion, the analytical approach based on four drivers serves as an interpretative framework to frame the genealogies of different development cooperation arrangements, despite the complex and multidimensional interplay existing within them.

A primary function of foreign aid is linked to foreign-policy purposes, which include political, strategic and security considerations (Hook, 1993; Morgenthau, 1962). For instance, Alesina and Dollar (2000) found that, on average, countries whose votes in the United Nations aligned with the votes of major donors received more aid. Moreover, development assistance can be used to stabilize countries and regions where military operations are not adequate in tackling fragility and ensuring a lasting way to restore statehood (Klingebiel, 2014).

From a political-economy perspective, development assistance can be understood as a support mechanism for the donor country's trade and commercial interests. Lancaster (2007) and Van der Veen (2011) have demonstrated that commercial foreign assistance contributes to expanding export markets, providing access to natural resources or promoting foreign investments with the main goal of bringing economic benefits to donor countries. Historically, this has occurred through the tying of aid to the purchases of goods and services from the donor country, more indirectly, through subsidizing export-credit schemes, or through informal pressure on recipients to purchase from donor-country companies (Riddell, 2007).

Another driver is associated with cultural ties. Lancaster (2007) contends that the status of recipient countries as former colonies is a major factor in determining aid flows. Countries with colonial ties are more inclined to offer foreign assistance to strengthen the relationships with their allies or increase the sphere of influence.

Development assistance can also be conceptualized from a purely developmental perspective. From this viewpoint, aid is given on altruistic grounds. It seeks to enhance the development needs of poor countries, or it is instrumental to humanitarian relief (Klingebiel, 2014; Robledo, 2015).

3.2 | Tools³

The literature on development assistance makes a fundamental distinction between financial cooperation and technical cooperation. Financial cooperation aims to support partner countries in the financing of key development areas, and it can be either concessional or non-concessional. We acknowledge that this kind of categorization might be too simplistic, especially recognizing the emergence of new and hybrid tools. However, such categorization follows other taxonomies in the field. In doing so, we keep the focus on forms of

³Scholars such as Manning (2006) and Kragelund (2011) use tools and modalities interchangeably. As we shall say below, for us, modality means the normative presuppositions on which tools are deployed.

development assistance that are entirely supported by public resources, and, for the present analysis, this assumption excludes blended finance.

Concessional aid refers to grants, subsidized loans, or zero-interest loans, whereas nonconcessional aid includes loans that carry market or near-market terms (Mallet & Sumner, 2013). Most donors use loans in their foreign-aid portfolio. Loans might vary in terms of concessionality or repayment period.

Financial cooperation may involve instruments such as goods in kind (food aid), export credits, and debt relief. Export credits can support state and private companies in the donor countries through their investments in recipient countries. This may be done with the goal to stimulate business and trade. Export credits also can be offered to governments and businesses in the recipient country to foster productivity and trade by facilitating the purchase of goods and services on concessional terms (Mawdsley, 2013).

Debt forgiveness has accounted for a large share of aid financing. Several donors in the international community have used debt relief to cancel, reduce, or reschedule the repayment rates, helping countries return to creditworthiness.

Technical cooperation has a long history in development cooperation and continues to play an important role. Usually, technical cooperation includes technical assistance, training and educational grants aimed at helping individuals, or strengthening the organizational capacity of the recipient country (Klingebiel, 2014).

Specifically, technical cooperation comprises practical assistance—such as cooperative exchange of knowledge, technical know-how, and expertise—to recipient countries. Technical cooperation can be used to build local capacities, to promote aid for trade capacities, and to support specific development-cooperation projects such as infrastructure plans and the implementation of social-protection programs. Official support for education (such as scholarships and training) is another well-established cooperation area (Chisholm & Khamsi, 2009; King, 2011). Scholarships can have several benefits for donors, such as promoting soft power and spreading a positive image of the country in their foreign relations. Volunteering is another instrument of development assistance. It includes provisions of doctors, nurses and medical personnel.

3.3 | Modality

In the literature on the landscape of development assistance, the public recognition of the donor label, the affirmation of a present or past recipient status, the tying of aid, and nonconditionality are indicators of the normative conditions upon which tolls may be arrayed. We group these indicators under the “modality” category.

Often, to enjoy freedom of maneuver in relation to an established donor community, some countries explicitly reject the donor label. In the same vein, several development actors invoke their past, or present, role as recipients to emphasize commonalities and mutual accountability and to distance themselves from their western donors. Being a recipient also substantiates a credible justificatory platform

to set win-win cooperation on shared experiences and establish horizontal forms of development assistance (Eyben, 2013; Mawdsley, 2017).⁴

In the literature, it is commonplace to consider tying as a relevant indicator to detect the normative grounding of development assistance. It is said that tied aid may increase the costs of a development project, burden recipients with additional bureaucratic costs, and close recipient markets to the international communities. Political nonconditionality has been seen as a qualifying feature of the southern model (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014; Waltz & Ramachandran, 2011: 17). Sometimes nonconditionality stands for political noninterference and has broadly positive connotations (De Renzio & Seifert, 2014). Sometimes it stands for tacit support to despotic and corrupt governments (Collier, 2007; Hitchins, 2008; Human Right Watch, 2007; Tull, 2006). However, evidence for these concerns is far from being uncontroversial (Bräutigam, 2015; Paulo & Reisen, 2010; Woods, 2008).

4 | DOES A SOUTHERN MODEL EXIST?

We recognize that the development-assistance philosophy and practices of each country can be changing and that our analysis cannot reflect these changes. The present analysis describes the state of play as of 2015 with the ambition to clarify existing categories and spur debates about their historical genealogy.⁵

4.1 | Drivers

Countries with the resources and capacity to provide aid beyond their regional sphere are only a few: Brazil, Russia, India, China, Turkey, and certain Arab countries, all of which are operating in Africa (IPEA, 2013; GRC, 2014; MID, 2014; UAE, 2015; TIKA, 2016; MEA, 2015, 2016).

In their reports and in joint official declarations, all countries in the sample emphasize win-win cooperation and common development with recipients' countries (DGCM, 2013; ABC, 2013; AGCID, 2015; KLN, 2015; KFAED, 2015; Miller & Prapha, 2013; RBV, 2013; BRICS, 2014; AMEXCID, 2016; TIKA, 2016; UAE, 2016), but experts have unveiled a series of underlying drivers that distinguish one country from another. Many countries in the sample also stress cultural proximity, both to pursue regional objectives (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey, and Venezuela) and to extend their area of influence beyond the regional sphere (Brazil). Russia emphasizes close political and economic links between the country and Post-soviet states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2014). Often, behind the appeal to cultural proximity, there are other geopolitical interests. Scholars emphasize that Brazilian development assistance aims at consolidating the country's role as the leader of South America while increasing its leverage in international organizations (Cabral & Weinstock, 2010; De Renzio, 2014;

⁴These arguments echo the principles of South-South cooperation as stated in the 1978 Buenos Aires conference.

⁵For a historical overview, see Gosovic (2016), Muhr (2016), and Bry (2017).

ODI, 2010; Suyama, Waisbich, & Leite, 2016). However, a shift from political and diplomatic gains to stronger commercial interests has recently occurred under Rousseff's administration, with a close nexus between cooperation, trade, and investment (Suyama et al., 2016). For Russia, the appeal to cultural ties comes together with deep diplomatic and commercial interests (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2014). Specifically, Russia's aid policy aims to strengthen the country's reputation and position in specific regions (ex-Soviet allies) and to contain external threats that might affect Russian interests abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2014). These diplomatic motives are coupled with an interest in promoting access to international markets for its own goods and services (De Cordier, 2016). Alike, South Africa's development assistance is infused with both political and security interests (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). "The vision of the African Renaissance," a document says, "and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) is a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, conflict-free, developmental African continent." On these grounds, South Africa has been actively engaged in promoting regional integration, security, and stability as an absolute priority for its own development as well as the development of the continent (Grobelaar, 2016; SADC, 2015).

The rhetoric of cultural proximity is prominent among Spanish-speaking Latin American development actors. In this way, they promote the discourse of solidarity and friendship with neighbors as the priority of their assistance (Santander & Alonso, 2017). At the same time, for countries such as Chile and Argentina, reports show that development assistance in the region has also been utilized as a foreign-policy tool to promote self-reaffirmation, regional integration, and for Argentina, opposition to foreign intervention. Moreover, Venezuela, Cuba, and Colombia use aid as an instrument to improve their international image as providers of public goods such as energy (Venezuela), security (Colombia), and public health (Cuba). Notably, Cuba has been providing medical personnel as an influential tool of health diplomacy and soft power for many decades (Huish & Kirk, 2007). In this context, scholars argue that Mexico's development assistance is a foreign-policy instrument used to promote diplomatic relations in Central America and to earn a position of relevance in international organizations (Prado Lallande, 2015).

Arab donors are among the oldest and most generous providers in the international community. Their aid is strongly motivated by social solidarity and religious ties. It remains concentrated regionally, mainly flowing to other Arab states (Waltz & Ramachandran, 2011). Several authors (Apodaca, 2017; Neumayer, 2003; Villanger, 2007) observe that Arab aid has been used as a foreign policy tool to build strategic alliances and reward allies in military conflicts.

For the other donors in the sample, the justification of development assistance through cultural proximity is not so prominent. Indian drivers are both economic and political. Although India used to invest most of its development assistance in its regional neighbors (Buthan, Nepal, Afghanistan), it has now broader its focus to other regions (Chaturvedi & Mulakala, 2016). The motivation is twofold: On the one hand, energy security interests drive the choice of Africa and

South Asia as privileged recipient (Large, 2014; Mawdsley & Mccann, 2011); on the other hand, India sees development assistance as a proxy to gain global recognition and emerge as player in international decision making (Large, 2014; Chaturvedi, Chenoy, Chopra, Joshi, & Lagdhyan, 2014,). Besides these drivers, trade and economic cooperation represent important aspects of India's cooperation strategy, which is very supportive of Indian businesses abroad (Chenoy & Joshi, 2016). The priority of Chinese development cooperation has shifted from mainly ideological considerations to a more practical focus (Osei & Mubiru, 2010; Corkin, Burke, & Davies, 2008; Gu et al., 2016; Taylor, 2017; Yu, 2017). The opening of new export markets and profitable investments is seen as the central aims of Chinese aid (Dreher & Fuchs, 2015). Political motivations also play a role, as China seems to utilize aid to realize its "One-China policy" to advantage countries that do not recognize Taiwan (Bräutigam, 2009) and countries whose votes align with China in the United Nations General Assembly (Dreher, Fuchs, Parks, Strange, & Tierney, 2017; Strüver, 2016).

Turkey perceives cooperation as a means of promoting security and policy interests and to promote a positive image in the global community (Hausmann & Lundsgaarde, 2015; TIKA, 2015, 2016). Specifically, as the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs says, "Turkey firmly believes that it is a collective and shared responsibility to help the LDCs, not just because it is a moral and ethical imperative, but also because global peace and security is directly linked with global sustainable development." Turkey's key recipient countries have close ethno-cultural connection to the country (Hausmann & Lundsgaarde, 2015). Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia use their aid to achieve foreign-policy goals, pointing mainly to political motivations such as sovereignty, stability, and security with strong emphasis on regionalism (Chaturvedi, Fues, & Sidiropoulos, 2012) and on the SSC self-construction (Miller & Prapha, 2013).

4.2 | Tools

The analysis of official documents and public statements shows that all countries in the sample claim to provide technical cooperation in several sectors. As Table 1 shows, BRICS countries provide development assistance in different sectors.

Brazil focuses on Latin America and Portuguese-speaking countries. Its development assistance consists of aid for agriculture, education, and health, mainly via technical cooperation and cofinanced projects and scholarships (ABC, 2013; Institute for Applied Economic Research, 2013). Brazil also provides some debt relief, with large amounts going to emergency assistance (Institute for Applied Economic Research, 2013: 161). Russia provides debt relief, food supply, capacity building, concessional loans, scholarships, and grants (Larionova, Rakhmangulov, & Berenson, 2016). As the Russian Federation (2014) states in its program for development assistance, priorities consist of "allocation of targeted grants (...); provision of concessional loans (...); provision of technical assistance(...); provision of debt relief (...); provision of tariff preferences (...)." India

TABLE 1 Aid by sector

Donor	Sector priorities
Brazil	Social programs, agriculture, health, biofuels, digital inclusion, humanitarian aid, capacity building
Russia	Health, energy, education, humanitarian aid
India	Infrastructure, rural development, education, health, capacity building
China	Infrastructure, industry, energy, agriculture, climate change, higher education
South Africa	Peace keeping, post-conflict reconstruction, infrastructure, capacity building
Argentina	Agriculture, food security, maternal and child health, human rights, education
Chile	Regional integration, trade, decentralization, State reform, environment, natural resources, production, higher education
Colombia	Security, refugees and displaced people, farming, social minorities, urban mobility
Indonesia	Infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, community development, disaster management
Malaysia	Infrastructure, health, education and agriculture programs
Kuwait	Infrastructure, communication, energy, agriculture, industry, water, waste management
Saudi Arabia	Infrastructure, communication, energy, agriculture, water
United Arab Emirates	Infrastructure, communication, energy and water
Mexico	Public management, technical cooperation, education, agriculture, energy, environment, housing, regional development
Thailand	Infrastructure, health, education, agriculture programs
Turkey	Security, refugees, health, education, industry, infrastructure, agriculture, water and sanitation, humanitarian aid
Venezuela	Energy, health, education, housing, water, humanitarian aid
Cuba	Health, education

provides concessional loans and technical support, which largely go to its neighbors—Bhutan and Nepal (Ministry of External Affairs, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014). Recently, through the provision of lines of credit to recipient countries, India is increasingly looking to Africa in providing scholarships, aid for infrastructure, rural development, and capacity building (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014: 126–28). Available evidence shows that China provides aid grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, technical assistance, capacity building, scholarships, debt relief, and medical aid.⁶

South Africa provides both technical cooperation and financial assistance. South Africa has provided loans and other kinds of financial assistance (2016: 23). However, it prioritizes technical cooperation on

the African continent, and instruments to keep stability and peace in the region (Grobbelaar, 2016). As the Annual Report 2015–2016 says, “South Africa continued its role in promoting socio-economic development in Africa through provision of aid in the form of material and technical assistance to the following three countries most affected by Ebola – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – during the period under review” (2016: 48).

Among other countries in our spectrum of analysis, there are important differences. Countries such as Cuba and Venezuela have long-standing technical-cooperation programs with partner countries. Cuba has sent medical personnel to African and Latin American countries since the Cuban Revolution (Huish & Kirk, 2007). Venezuela prioritizes cultural and technical exchanges with countries that share the same ideological platform (2013: 41). Argentina recognizes technical cooperation and exchange of expertise as the pivotal element of its approach to SSC (Direccion General de Cooperacion Internacional, 2013: 7). Colombia provides capacity-building projects in areas such as public security and humanitarian law: the portfolio of projects include technical and scientific commissions, cultural commissions, committees on education between the country, and recipients in Central and Latin America (2013), with the ambition to extend the projects to Africa and East Asia (2013: 1). Mexico also offers technical and scientific cooperation. For years, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project has been the main modality for cooperation in Central America. Over the years, Mexico has provided forms of mixed credits to finance infrastructures in Central America (AMEXCID, 2012, 2015, 2016; see also Kragelund, 2008). Chile also offers scholarships and technical-cooperation programs. The main focus is on the transfer of knowledge and capacity in public-policy areas such as social development and poverty alleviation (AGCID, 2013, 2015; Gutiérrez et al., 2017).

A large part of Turkish development assistance goes to humanitarian projects. Turkey also provides scholarships, capacity-building projects, and concessional loans (TIKA, 2016). Technical cooperation is also a key instrument of Asian donors. Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme is the landmark of Malaysia's development assistance. This program provides training in areas such as agriculture, education, good governance, health services, ICT, investment promotion, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. Indonesia offers scholarships and capacity-building projects in areas such as family planning, information, natural resources, social services, public works, and agriculture. Indonesia has promoted technical cooperation among developing countries through the Indonesian Technical Cooperation Programs since 1981. Thailand provides scholarships and capacity-building projects in areas such as fisheries and agriculture. It also offers concessional loans for the construction of infrastructures in the sub-Mekong area (Miller & Prapha, 2013; Wajjwalku et al., 2014).

Arab countries provide development assistance with different tools. They offer, food aid as well as technical assistance, concessional loans, and grants (Kragelund, 2008; Saidi & Wolf, 2011) in areas such as transportation, communication, infrastructure development and energy. The 2015 report on UAE Foreign Aid shows that UAE has funded mainly bilateral assistance to governments and direct project

⁶AidData and Braumtigam (2015) provide evidence about the Chinese projects in Africa.

implementation (2015: 10) in a variety of sectors (Commodity Aid, General Program Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, Transport, Agriculture; Energy Generation and Supply, Infrastructure Development, Health, Education, Government and Civil Society, Religious and Social Charitable Assistance, Water and Sanitation, Social Services, Industry, Biosphere, Mineral Resources and Mining, Tourism, Reproductive Health, and Communication). In 2015, the Kuwait fund reports development assistance through loans, grants and technical assistance (2015: 11). As the report says, “the number of projects financed by the Fund during the current fiscal year reached 29 projects with a total loan commitment of about KD 242.3 million covering, transport, energy, water and sewerage & agriculture, Industry in addition to social” (2015: 14). Moreover, as it continues, during the fiscal year 2014/2015, the Fund extended “technical assistance and grants with a total value of about KD 4.355 million (2015: 14).

4.3 | Modality

In our analysis, modality encompasses those aspects that may affect the deployment of a certain tool. The public display of a country's past or present recipient status and the recognition of one's donor status can be seen as proxies to understand the extent to which countries justify their development assistance on horizontality and mutual understanding. Meanwhile, indicators such as tied aid and nonconditionality help to capture the normative grounding of a country's approach to development assistance.

4.4 | Recipient status

Since 2008, and in the period considered (2011–2015), with the exceptions of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, all countries in the sample have been recipients of official development assistance and other bilateral transactions, which are not necessarily concessional in character (OECD, 2017). If we look at Russia, between 1990 and 2013, official development assistance represented between 0.05 and 1.07% of gross national income (Larionova et al., 2014: 8). Despite its external development assistance intensifying in the past decade and loan repayments offsetting grant transfers, China remains a recipient of aid (Chin, 2013: 580). Net development assistance to Thailand amounted to US\$351.2 million in 2014. Meanwhile, Thailand disbursed over US\$500 million in official development assistance between 2006 and 2014 (OECD, 2017). Between 2000 and 2010, Malaysia obtained US\$144 million annually (Wajjwalku et al., 2014: 42), and the country disbursed a yearly average of thirty million ring-gits between 2001 and 2005 (Wajjwalku et al., 2014: 148). The recognition of a country's recipient status is not evident in the reports analyzed. However, in fora such as G77, CARICOM, SADC, many countries in the sample (Argentina, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Africa, and Thailand) self-constructed themselves as recipient countries, or (at least) as part of a larger community of recipient countries. From our qualitative textual analysis, there is no evidence that, despite being recipient of official

development assistance, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey recognize themselves as recipient countries vis-à-vis other recipient countries.

4.5 | Donor label

The publication of an assessment report of a country's international cooperation should be a strong-enough evidence to support the claim that one recognizes itself (and vis-à-vis other donors) as a donor. However, certain countries in the sample recognize this status more explicitly than others. For instance, Venezuela and Cuba are reluctant to use the donor label. China recognizes the status as a donor but tries to stress horizontality. The second Africa policy paper says, “China has always sincerely supported Africa's development. It never interferes in African countries’ internal affairs, never imposes its will on them, and attaches no political strings when providing aid to Africa. China will never repeat the past colonial way in its cooperation with Africa and never pursue development at the cost of Africa's natural and ecological environment or long-term interests’ (PRC, 2015).

Conversely, even horizontality is often used as a justificatory axis, countries such as Brazil and India recognize themselves as providers of development assistance and prominent actors in the field of development cooperation both at the regional and at the global level. Meanwhile, the self-recognition of Russia as a donor is historically rooted in the time when the USSR used aid and aid dependency as a channel for political leverage (De Collier, 2016).

Our analysis shows that many countries recognize their leadership mainly at the regional level. South Africa stresses its central regional role. In the same way, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, and Thailand recognize their status as providers of development assistance within their main area of influence. Turkey and the Arab countries also recognize themselves as donors, but they try to avoid a regionalist narrative. TIKA Annual Reports emphasize the global spectrum of Turkish development assistance. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and UAE are comfortable with the donor label as a way to describe their development assistance in the region and beyond.

4.6 | Tied aid

Public documents do not explicitly tell us whether aid is tied or untied. However, by combining existing literature with a study of development-assistance allocation, it is plausible to argue that some of the countries in the sample provide tied aid.

Whereas aid from Arab countries is mostly untied (Kragelund, 2008; Manning, 2006; Neumayer, 2003), Russia has tied its development assistance to the purchase of goods in the country (Larionova et al., 2016: 79). In one of the documents analyzed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2014) says that Russia “makes target contributions for the implementation of international programs using the capacities of international organizations, and provision of other assistance bearing in mind that the Russian Federation reserves the right to exercise its own discretion in making decisions with regard to the choice of the recipient State, the nature of assistance, the dispatch

of Russian experts to provide technical assistance (trilateral assistance), as well as the procurement of non-primary goods and services". China's aid is also frequently tied to the purchasing of Chinese goods and services (Corkin, 2013; Zimmermann & Smith, 2011). In other cases, tied aid may favor Chinese companies or African natural resources back Chinese loans (Sun, 2014; Zheng, 2016).

For Brazil India and South Africa, evidence is scattered. Chilean aid is provided in the form of contributions to multilateral organizations, and there is no strong evidence to support the claim that bilateral cooperation is tied (Gutierrez & Jaimovich, 2014). For Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela, there is no strong evidence that development assistance is tied.

According to Kragelund (2008), the selection of sectors combined with the criteria for selection of partner countries suggests that Mexico and Turkey provide grants, loans, and mixed credits as forms of tied aid. Thailand follows two different patterns. TICA provides untied aid and is project based. The Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency provides tied aid: specifically, for each project, at least 50% of the total value of goods and service have to originate from Thailand.

4.7 | Nonconditionality

Our analysis shows that many countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Africa, Venezuela, and Thailand) in the sample frame their development cooperation mainly under the heading of SSC. Despite being associated with SSC, Chile maintains democracy as one of the pillars of its 2030 Development Agenda (AGCID, 2015). Other countries in the sample but Chile do not explicit link their development assistance to achievement of certain political conditions in the recipient countries (Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Russia, South Africa, Venezuela, Thailand, UAE). In our spectrum of analysis, China is notoriously vocal in defending its policy of noninterference. A 2011 report says that "China upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respects recipient countries' right to independently select their own path and model of development and believes that every country should explore a development path suitable to its actual conditions. China never uses foreign aid as a means to interfere in recipient countries' internal affairs or seek political privileges for itself (PRC, 2011). In the same vein, Russian aid does not come with conditions of democratization and governance reforms (De Cordier, 2016).

5 | CONCLUSION

This article has compared drivers, tools, and modality of donors generally grouped under the heading of the so-called southern model.

As widely anticipated in the literature, there are commonalities across such countries. For instance, all countries in the sample apply the principle of political nonconditionality, and they are, or have been, recipients. There is a widespread propensity to use aid as a foreign-

policy tool to further strategic priorities. At the same time, the majority of donors provide forms of technical assistance, such as capacity-building programs and scholarships. Nevertheless, these commonalities do not seem enough to justify the appeal to a southern model of development assistance. The appeal to the identity of the south remains frequent in official declarations at regional and international fora (Conference of Southern Providers, 2014; BRICS, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015; CARICOM, 2014; G77, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015; Windhoek Declaration, 2012), but also across several websites in the sample. It seems plausible to say that donors appeal to an imaginary south in order to foster solidarity across donors as well as between donors and recipients. The idea of a homogenous south fosters rhetorical emphasis on the difference with donors from an equally idealized north and on the search for affinity and sympathy of recipient countries. In this paper, we have not investigated the internal differences within the North, but this does not mean to argue that even the construction of a homogenous north is an abstraction from the reality of development assistance.

Yet a review of the literature and our textual qualitative analysis of websites, assessment reports and official declarations corroborate the idea that something like a southern model of development assistance is a sweeping generalization. Even if some countries in the sample, especially in joint declarations after regional and international fora, employ the southern model label in order to emphasize a spirit of solidarity and commonality, significant differences remain present. In the same way, our analysis has shown that countries that scholars and policymakers group under the BRICS label have different approaches to development assistance. BRICS is a label that Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa proactively use to show synergy and common intents. However, despite several proclamations, the BRICS way to international development is more rhetorical than practical. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa share the ideals of political noninterference and win-win cooperation. However, their approaches to development assistance differ in their volumes, drivers, tools, and modality.

Brazilian development assistance has been linked with cultural proximity and the national interest to gain a position of power at the international level. Now, Brazil is critically expanding its development cooperation in Africa with a variegated array of tools. Russia has strong diplomatic interests in ex-soviet areas and provides mainly food aid, capacity building, and grants. Russia is not uncomfortable with the donor label, and there is no frequent appeal to a past or present recipient status. South Africa remains mainly a regional power with security and stability concerns. China and India, unlike Brazil, Russia, and South Africa, have been vocal in their opposition to the DAC model. For a long time, India has been a regional country mainly devoted to technical cooperation. Recently, the volume of its development assistance has expanded with the provision of loans to African countries (Ministry of External Affairs, 2015). China (2011) has a variegated platform of instruments, from grants to scholarships and loans. Its interests are global, with projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. However, China remains reluctant to emphasize its donor status.

Besides Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, other countries in the sample tend to display some lines of continuity. Even if

their assistance is now at different stages of development, Spanish-speaking Latin American countries (Argentina, Chile, and Colombia) are moved by cultural affinity with neighboring countries, and often this narrative serves to defend hegemonic positions in the region. Moreover, development assistance comes mainly in the form of capacity-building projects, and it is untied. Indonesia and Malaysia also share important features. These countries emphasize the value of SSC and have long-standing regional capacity-building projects. Arab countries, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have been providers of loans and grants for a very long time. Besides geopolitical interest in the Arab region, their development assistance is grounded mainly in solidarity and altruistic arguments, which target other Islamic countries in Africa and in the Middle East.

Our analysis shows that some countries, such as Mexico, Thailand, and Turkey, exceeds geographical partition. Available evidence and scholarly literature show that these countries provide forms of tied aid. These countries provide development assistance in the form of both concessional loans and capacity-building projects. They tend to conform to the DAC model, but their interests are largely regional. Within this context, Thailand is keen to recognize its present and past recipient status. The same cannot be said for Mexico and Turkey, at least in the period considered. Cuba and Venezuela have different, but long-standing, programs of development assistance. Both countries are reluctant to recognize their donor status. Moreover, Cuba and Venezuela have bilateral capacity-building programs; their interest is not regional, and they tend to be isolated at the international level.

So, as Table 2 shows, the southern model is actually the sum of a number of different ways to approach development assistance.

Overall, our analysis has added evidence to widespread skepticism toward all-to-easy ways of conceptualizing the Southern model, and some other subcategories. This paper, therefore, gives a pluralistic and fine-toothed account of development assistance that may clash with much of the rhetoric at the surface of SSC.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Both authors take equal responsibility for all aspects of the text. A draft of this paper was presented at the conference 'The Symposium on International Development Aid in the BRICS'. We would like to thank the participants at that event as well as Andrew M. Fischer for his comments on an earlier version of this paper. For insightful reports, we wish to thank two anonymous reviewers and the Public Administration and Development editorial team.

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How to cite this article: Lauria V, Fumagalli C. BRICS, the southern model, and the evolving landscape of development assistance: Toward a new taxonomy. *Public Admin Dev.* 2019;1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.1851>

APPENDIX A

LIST OF PAGES CONSULTED

ARGENTINA

Cooperacion Argentina:

1. <http://cooperacionarg.gob.ar/es/la-cooperacion-argentina-en-el-mundo>

BRAZIL

Abc

2. <http://www.abc.gov.br/training/default.aspx>

CHILE

Agcid

3. <https://www.agci.cl/index.php/que-es-la-cooperacion/sur-sur>

CHINA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Exim Bank

4. http://english.eximbank.gov.cn/tm/en-TCN/index_617.html

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COLOMBIA

Cancilleria

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Agencia Presidencial de Cooperacion

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CUBA

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INDONESIA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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KUWAIT

Kuwait Fund:

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MALAYSIA

International cooperation and development division

18. <http://mtcp.kln.gov.my/>

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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MEXICO

Amexcid

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22. <https://www.gob.mx/amexcid/acciones-y-programas/cuantificacion-de-la-cooperacion-mexicana>

23. <https://www.gob.mx/amexcid/acciones-y-programas/cooperacion-de-mexico-con-centroamerica>

RUSSIA

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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SAUDI ARABIA

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SOUTH AFRICA

Department of International Relations and Cooperation

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VENEZUELA

Ministerio del Poder Popular para Relaciones Exteriores

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THAILAND

Thailand Cooperation Agency

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UAE

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APPENDIX B**LIST OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS****ARGENTINA**

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APPENDIX C

OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS

1. BRICS. 2010. Moscow declaration of BRIC ministers of agriculture and agrarian development.
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