

Políticas y líneas de acción [PLA]

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Indicar un título breve y directo para el del documento. Máximo: 75 caracteres con espacios	
Sharing Human Rights Policies through South-South Cooperation	
Resumen de los datos biográficos más relevantes del/la autor/a. Máximo: 150 caracteres con espacios	
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CINCO PALABRAS CLAVE	3. POLICY TRANSFER
1. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION	4. GLOBAL SOUTH
2. HUMAN RIGHTS	5. BRAZIL
1. PRESENTACIÓN	
<p>The practice of South-South Cooperation for the purpose of policy transfer has achieved great political interest and priority in recent years. However, some public policies have had greater success than others in getting transferred across countries of the geopolitical South. In this framework, this is a comparative study of five South-South cooperation initiatives where Brazil tried to share (or transfer) its human rights policy experiences with other developing countries. The study was centered on one specific case: the failed cooperation attempt between Brazil and Guinea Bissau in the field of Human Rights Education. The idea was to better understand the variables that work as either barriers or as enablers to the sharing of human rights policies in a context of cooperation between governments of the South.</p> <p>Five cases were compared where Brazil has cooperated with Haiti, Cuba, El Salvador and Guinea Bissau. Topics of cooperation included the promotion of the rights of people with disability (Haiti), of the LGBT population (Cuba), of children and adolescents (El Salvador), as well as the promotion of policies for human rights education and to assure the right to a birth certificate (Guinea Bissau).</p> <p>Data collection involved interviews with 22 actors across the five countries, who were government officials, staff members of international organizations, consultants, and scholars. Project documents and administrative records were also analyzed. Attention was paid to the specific context of each case study, particularly to the characteristics of the policy being transferred, to the role played by international organizations and by international human rights norms.</p> <p>The study started out with the hypothesis that the characteristics of the policy being transferred matters and that does not necessarily have to do with the policy's impact or success. In particular, the study worked with the hypothesis that simple policies (simple in terms of implementation) may get more easily transferred between countries than complex policies.</p>	

2. ANÁLISIS POLÍTICO

It should be noted that international development cooperation is not only about policy transfer. This practice is also not present in every initiative of South-South cooperation. In Brazil, the exercise of policy transfer as a method of South-South cooperation ended up being the result of the choice of technical cooperation over other kinds of cooperation, such as financial or in infrastructure. It was also the result of a Brazilian preference for the involvement of civil servants and government officials in cooperation projects, instead of working exclusively with independent consultants or hiring private organizations, like in the case of the development cooperation policies of many countries of the North. Considering the Brazilian “way” of doing South-South cooperation, this research tried to analyze, in detail, the practice of Brazilian South-South cooperation on human rights as attempts to carry out policy transfer.

This Brazilian “way” was welcomed by the recent international euphoria around South-South cooperation, specially as a result of a combination of factors: i) the fierce criticisms to traditional North-South cooperation; ii) the new international role played by emerging economies; iii) the world enthusiasm around Brazil, especially when the country was under the leadership of Lula, combining economic growth with the reduction of poverty and inequality. The Brazilian approach to South-South cooperation, which is centered on the practice of policy transfer, was also supported by the international celebration of so-called “best practices”.

When comparing different South-South cooperation initiatives on human rights, this study was able to shed light on the wealth and on the limitations that can be identified in this Brazilian – and also international – way of doing South-South cooperation by means of the transfer of best practices.

When looking for enablers and barriers to South-South cooperation, this research identified that, when it involves the transfer of policies, some variables seem relevant in the process of making sure that projects will have an impact. Different from what one would expect, the existence of an international human rights treaty and the participation of other international actors is not decisive for the success of a cooperation project. In some cases, international organizations played an important role in animating and motivating countries, making sure that they would not demobilize when faced with implementation difficulties. However, depending on how those international partners intervene, they may end up being a barrier to South-South cooperation (i.e. Cuba) or a source of competition to South-South cooperation (i.e. Guinea Bissau, Human Rights Education).

Moreover, contrary to the initial hypothesis, empirical evidence indicated that the secret to policy transfer does not lie in policies of easy implementation and operation. Examples like the cooperation with Guinea Bissau for the right to birth registration and the cooperation with El Salvador represent cases where complex policies that demand the mobilization and coordination of various actors can also be transferred in the framework of South-South cooperation.

But this conclusion does not mean that one should abandon the idea that policy content might influence the occurrence or not of policy transfer. Case studies revealed two important features of Brazilian human rights policies: inter-sector coordination and social participation.

3. PROPUESTAS

Interestingly, it was observed that in cases where the policy included inter-sector coordination but there were no mechanisms of social participation – Guinea Bissau for birth registration and El Salvador – there was greater success in the policy transfer process. However, in cases where both features were present, transfer did not occur (Haiti) or the cooperation project did not even start (Cuba and Guinea Bissau on human rights education). Considering the idea that policymakers will adopt foreign models and norms to meet their interests, participatory policies may, at first sight, be seen as mechanisms that instead of leading to power gains actually mean power sharing, opening government structures to more dialogue with civil society and greater accountability. Inter-sector coordination, in turn, gives policymakers the possibility of gathering several government institutions and civil society organizations in order to coordinate their work towards meeting the policymaker's policy goals.

However, that does not mean that it would be impossible to have participatory policies shared and transferred among countries of the South. Like in the process of adoption and implementation of international human rights norms, there is room for the persuasion of domestic actors, who may be convinced of the value of social participation and who may eventually find interest in those practices.

Brazil may make the conscious political choice of continuing to insist in the sharing of its participatory policies and mechanisms, which are not only present in the field of human rights. This can be even incorporated into the official discourse about Brazil's policy for South-South cooperation (which would demand a public recognition that social participation mechanisms have been crucial to the success of many of the country's public policies). If that road is taken, however, it is important that those working on future projects start out from this awareness that participatory policies are not easily welcomed policy models and that strong persuasion efforts will be necessary. Otherwise, there is a great chance that cooperation initiatives involving the sharing of participatory experiences may not take off.

This study offers a call to debate not only to Brazil but also to other countries of the South that have been involved in promoting South-South cooperation. It seems important that, when sharing their policies internationally, countries be aware of how policy features may act in empowering or disempowering domestic agents in the country to which the policy will be transferred. While one is traditionally trained to look for the results a policy has achieved in country A, this study suggests that the success of a policy transfer process also depends on whether this policy fulfils the political interests of domestic actors in country B, so that they will take full ownership of the policy model being transferred.

If South-South cooperation aims at bringing change and social justice to countries of the South, it will only do so if embraced by the local actors that will be responsible for making domestic change possible.