

Original article

International cooperation: an essential component of international relations

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Abstract

The spread of industrialization and modernization in all societies has made the expansion and institutionalization of international cooperation one of the remarkable aspects in international relations since World War II. Governments, whether greatly or slightly expressive in international forums, became part of an intricate network of institutions that disseminates standards of conduct and technical procedures through different societies, consolidating cooperation as part of the countries' long-term foreign policy. Ultimately, cooperation is the channel through which a nation keeps connected with prevalent economic and social patterns and with major trends taking place in the fields of science and knowledge, as well as with their applications and benefits. The growing advance of cooperation mechanisms means new opportunities and new problems which, in their turn, begin to demand the construction of more coherent and compatible international cooperation systems, whether in their practices, or in their institutions. This trend is confronted with other problems of a structural nature, the dilemma between the interests for short-term and long-term benefits and the need for more integrated approaches, given the increasing inability to cope with complex social and political phenomena based on the archaic logic of specialization.

Keywords

international cooperation; globalization; international agenda; foreign policy; Brazil

Cooperation and changes in the international order

The spread of industrialization and modernity to dozens of countries that have integrated into a truly global society has made the expansion of international cooperation as an institutionalized practice by governments a remarkable aspect of international relations since World War II. Whether they are rich and powerful societies or poor nations with little expression in international forums, their governments became part of an intricate network of institutions dedicated to the practice of what is generically called "international cooperation". In this process, the term "international cooperation" has extended to all areas from trade and finance to security, environment, education and health issues. International cooperation does not only mean mutual aid among governments and institutions from different countries, although this may happen often. International cooperation is a wider notion. It means working together. It means that governments and institutions

do not make individual decisions and take individual action. International cooperation means governments and institutions developing common standards and creating programs that take into account benefits and also problems that can potentially be extended to more than one society and even to all the international community.

Behind this phenomenon is the fact that an increasing number of issues, which until recently were treated by governments as national matters, have acquired more direct and immediate dimensions and implications for other nations. In a more current sense, "globalization" was incorporated into the vocabulary of international politics, reflecting this ongoing transformation in the international environment. Thus, the traditional concept of sovereignty has gradually been revised and reinterpreted. The concept of porous borders and interdependent societies, especially in the economic field, has produced a vast literature since late 1980s.¹ Although the term had a strongly economic

connotation and, more particularly, a financial one, referring to the “markets” which were more and more integrated, globalization was a much broader process involving all dimensions of human relationships. Not only did the news of events start being transmitted in real time, but also interests, opportunities and problems related to these events have also been globalized by the agility offered by transport and communications. Disease outbreaks are no longer merely humely worrying news coming through international correspondents and have become a real possibility of dissemination and contamination in societies located in all continents. For this reason, policy-makers of nations now include the international dimension as an important factor, regardless of their level of wealth and power, thus incorporating international cooperation into their every day concerns.

Cooperation on the international agenda

The advancement of international integration has brought changes to the broadest international policy level having the diplomatic agenda of leaders and governors systematically include the many aspects of international cooperation as a regular concern. Throughout nearly four decades, during the cold war, the analysis often mentioned the existence of an international agenda divided into two levels - *high politics* and *low politics*. While *high politics* referred to the issues directly related to strategic security, the term *low politics* was used to refer to other issues like trade and development, education and other topics which are not directly associated to concerns about the strategic security of countries, especially major world powers. Important changes in international relations, however, have made this form of organization of the international agenda gradually lose its meaning.

Indeed, since the 1980s, when the cold war ended, these expressions have virtually ceased to be found in texts on analysis of international relations. To a large extent, this was the result of the increasing importance of issues related to *low politics* that began to get more and more attention from the statesmen as well as the public in general. In the 1950s the concerns in the international arena were strongly focused on the cold war and on the fear of nuclear confrontation, however, for several reasons, the perception that a military confrontation between the Soviet bloc and the capitalist West could actually happen was becoming virtually an abandoned idea or simply considered highly unlikely.² It can be said that even with the emergence of terrorism as a priority issue on the agenda of major world powers, the importance of the *low politics* issues continued its upward trend in international forums.

A plausible explanation for this phenomenon lies in the fact that, structurally, international relations have undergone transformations that went well beyond the gain or loss of relative importance by the United States and emerging economies of Europe and Asia; moreover, beyond the breakdown of the Soviet bloc. There were important changes in the conditions of the international sphere and in how international affairs were understood and conducted.³ In the phenomenon generally named “globalization”, the world became more integrated and the state, as player in the international scene, has lost a lot of space to other players, which by many ways, have become able to influence significantly the international field. In this environment, many of the “national interests” have become strongly associated with the interests of other nations and the international situation as a whole. The financial crisis that began in the second half of 2008 is just the most visible part of this process and reveals the existence of networks that connect individuals, corporations and institutions with great dynamism. These networks, which include corporations and institutions, apply huge amounts of resources and include formal and informal connections with the capacity to significantly influence the perception and feeling of public opinion. A similar argument can be constructed in relation to health. The recent threats of widespread dissemination of avian influenza and H1N1 (commonly known as swine flu) were real and a pandemic of tragic dimensions was probably not seen on account of the many preventive measures taken by governments and of the coordination with international agencies that promote public health.

Altogether, these conditions have considerably changed the scenario of international relations both in creating new opportunities and in the sense that these conditions have generated problems never faced before. This is an important factor to understand not only why “international cooperation” has become a remarkable aspect in international relations in the recent decades, but also to grasp certain fundamental characteristics assumed by this cooperation.

The creation of a cooperation practice in international relations

Both *low politics* issues and topics associated to *high politics* present favorable elements which coexist with unfavorable factors regarding cooperation. After all, obviously, the *low politics* issues are by nature more accessible and more suitable to build international cooperation programs. Negotiations and cooperative actions in terms of trade, education and other themes to promote social conditions

tend to occur in an environment of less stress and a lot more prone to cooperation in comparison to the negotiations and discussions involving investments in defense systems and purchase and sale of armaments. Usually the issues involving security aspects are notably sensitive and tend to create a trading environment that can be well characterized as a “zero sum game” that is, whether by investments in defense systems or initiatives of strategic alliances, the inevitable result is the change in relative power and strategic capability. In other words, someone is winning over someone who is losing. On the other hand, the typical *low politics* issues tend to offer an environment of multiple alternatives and possibilities of gains to the players involved. In a trade agreement, although not in the same proportion, in principle all the signatories win.

Another important aspect is the fact that in *high politics* issues, players tend to be mainly represented by government authorities and institutions that are familiar with the international area. In general, in these matters, the very dissemination of information is relatively restricted to government levels. On economic issues and many other dimensions of *low politics*, in its turn, the process tends to be much more open and dynamic. In addition, in the agreements focused on the issues of *low politics*, both the interests at stake and those involved tend to be much more varied and diffuse, even if the official representatives of governments are leading negotiations. The fact is that if in the affairs of *high politics* negotiations happen primarily between state players who understand and act according to norms and standards of conduct in force in inter-state relations, in *low politics*, while opening up for other players and for a wide range of interests, it inevitably strengthens the anarchic character of the international field. National laws and restrictions imposed on research and professional practice for religious or cultural reasons do not prevent other societies from advancing and getting benefits from not enforcing similar restrictions. In other words, the anarchic nature of the field on issues related to *high politics* translates as suspicion, while in the case of issues related to *low politics*, this anarchic character enhances competition. It is within this ambiguous and mostly paradoxical environment that cooperation has been developing.

The fact is that at the current stage of international politics, all nations must build a policy of international cooperation. The phenomenon generally referred to as “globalization” essentially means that the political, economic and social situation has become deeply integrated with international reality. Thus, the stability of institutions and policies aimed at economic development and at promoting a better quality of living is increasingly dependent on good cooperation

with the international area. The anarchic nature of the international area remains a fact - like human nature itself - which is paradoxical; this same international area also has many elements of cooperative coexistence, even likely to be formally institutionalized in an environment that values the competition.⁴

The recent financial crisis has shown dramatically that this reality is present even in the most industrialized nations. In the case of developing countries, for a long time, this perception remained associated with strongly ideological biased views. Recently, however, especially since the end of the cold war and the emergence of new industrialized countries in Asia, this ideological bias weakened revealing the need to associate national industrialization and social development policies with strategies to build networks of international cooperation. The choice of strategies in the construction of these networks can vary greatly from one country to another, just as circumstances and singularities of political, economic and social conditions of each country. However, the importance of connecting development strategies and international field dynamics remains essential and, in essence, independent of the characteristics of individual nations.

Economies in an accelerated industrialization process, among which China stands out, began to eagerly seek partnerships with developing nations that could secure markets for their production, and especially to ensure the supply of raw materials and other essential supplies for their economic growth and the inevitable increase in consumption. This phenomenon was experienced largely throughout Europe and the United States in a different time, first by the colonial system and then by the creation of a truly global economy under the leadership of the United States and Europe. Food and raw materials such as oil have always been coveted, and, especially, required strategically by societies who, throughout history, have advanced economically and technologically. In Brazil, the relative abundance of natural resources in some way reduced the need to seek partnerships for this purpose, but this doesn't make it less important to participate actively in international cooperation programs both in multilaterally as with specific countries and regions.

International cooperation: the long-term aspect of foreign policy

Nowadays societies are integrated into the conditions of the international scope in many ways and development promotion policies interact with these conditions from all sides. Trade, finance, education, health, job creation, science

and technology and environment are essential items on the international agenda and are aspects of development that cannot ignore the fact that in these areas the connection to the international scope is a basic conditioning factor. The case of scientific and technological development is illustrative: as nations advance on the scale of scientific and technological development, they also advance integration with other societies.⁵ Recently, as already mentioned, several epidemics with huge dissemination potential worldwide have threatened populations and required coordinated action by governments and institutions in terms of resources and measures of combat and control.

In this scenario it can be understood why international cooperation is the long-term aspect of foreign policies. International cooperation programs allow the establishment of practices and institutions that provide consistency, stability and security in the countries' foreign relations. Moreover, it is worth noting that in contemporary international relations the role played by non-governmental agencies is growing and it is through these cooperation programs that the spaces are created so that non-state players and sub-national agencies may engage in the countries' foreign relations. States, municipalities and even groups representing segments of societies to some extent develop initiatives, actions and even political cooperation with agents of the international field.⁶

A few principles and concepts

Contrary to the most popular understanding, the term *international cooperation* should not be construed as an alternative or as an antonym of the term *international conflict*. In fact, conflicts are present in human relationships, no matter in what form these relationships are expressed when there is the phenomenon of coexistence of individuals and groups. Psychology shows that even within the family, conflictive relations coexist simultaneously with the many ways in which feelings of affection, solidarity and identity are shared. Statistics show that violence against women and children, in most cases, involves members of the family, regardless of the level of education or social class. Similarly, conflicts take place in the neighborhood and also at the workplace. Even between two or more people who decide to establish a commercial activity conflict arises naturally. Initially there is strong consensus on the overall objective of the business, but how the business should be run, responsibility sharing, and especially profit sharing are usually reasons for disputes. The fact that there is conflict, however, does not mean the company should be dissolved and that the members

have become enemies, it is necessary to understand that conflict is an inherent aspect of life in society. On the other hand, Arthur Stein argues that "the bargain (i.e., cooperation) can occur tacitly even between enemies in the middle of a war."⁷ Thus, in the social area, whatever the extent is, this is not different. That is, personal interests, choices and conflicting visions are present among individuals, societies and governments, however, at the same time, they coexist with perceptions and feelings related to mutual aid, a common future and shared identity and experiences.⁸

Thus, the terms conflict and cooperation should not be understood as indications of opposite conditions and exclusion. Instead, we must consider that the natural condition is that the existence of cooperation indicates that there may be conflicting points, real or potential, but that the parties are willing to hear arguments regarding the interests of others and to seek negotiated solutions and, to the extent possible, considered satisfactory to all parties. In other words, the words "international cooperation" in its generic form indicate only that two or more nations do not resolve issues nor act individually and independently. In this sense, more appropriately, the term "international cooperation" should be understood as opposed to "unilateralism" and not "conflict".

In the international relations jargon, when cooperative action takes up a regular and organized format, it is said that there is the establishment of international regimes.⁹ Economic history offers an illustrative example of the significance of international cooperation to initiate the formation of international regimes in the monetary, financial and trading areas. When the economic crisis settled after the New York crash of 1929, the governments of major economies sought their own solutions separately. The understanding at the time was that each government should behave as a sovereign body solely responsible for the society formally represented, regardless of other countries or world economy. In fact, at the time, "world economy" was seen as an abstraction, there was no perception that economies as a whole, formed a system. As a result, the early years of the crisis were marked by the widespread practice of unilateral policies that became known as *beggar-thy-neighbor policies*, which could also be known as *save yourself policies*. Indeed, the Smoot-Hawley Act enacted by the United States government in 1930 did not intend to ruin the economy of other countries, but was an attempt to save or at least mitigate the effects of the crisis on the U.S. economy through the imposition of heavy surcharges on imports. The same can be said of government initiatives by the British or the French. The imposition of surcharges on imports or currency devaluations did not mean to ruin

anyone, but only to mitigate the effects of the crisis in their own economies.

The results of these initiatives adopted unilaterally were systematically translated into the deterioration of income and employment not only in the countries that suffered exportation restrictions on their products, but also in the country that adopted them. The economic data from this period are widely known. Between 1930 and 1932 international trade was reduced by almost 70% and the credit sources virtually disappeared causing bankruptcies and rising unemployment rates in major economies.¹⁰ The failure of these initiatives taken by governments separately as an exercise of their sovereignty showed that problems transcended national borders and that the only alternative was international cooperation, since the economic activity of countries had become part of a global system. In other words, the crisis clearly showed that isolated measures, even when dealing with the world's largest economy, were useless and that only agreed actions among the economic authorities of major countries could have a significant effect on the difficulties at the time.

This experience led to the creation of a complex network of economic cooperation which includes many institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization and, perhaps most importantly, new practices and a new awareness regarding international coexistence. Today, before the outbreak of the recent international financial crisis, the first reaction of governments was to seek understanding in the international level. Several meetings between government and economic authorities and various measures to contain the crisis were taken individually and as a group on cooperative grounds. The meetings of the G-20 were only the most visible events, but many other gatherings and events were held in several levels.¹¹ A substantially different reaction from what occurred in the early 1930s.

Thus, cooperation and practice in international relations is not the result of altruistic feelings, although such feelings may exist and are even necessary in many circumstances. Theoretically, Inis Claude offers a more general explanation arguing that international organizations, which reflect the international cooperation in its institutionalized form, arise when four conditions are met: 1) the existence of stable States, 2) the existence of significant interaction between the States, 3) the emergence of issues arising directly from this interaction, 4) the spread of the perception that the questions arising from the interaction require specific supranational arrangements.¹² Inis Claude's reflections referred to the establishment of international

organizations – the UN in particular - but can be fully extended to the issue of international cooperation in general as international organizations are the institutionalized form of cooperation. That is, the implicit idea in Inis Claude's argument is that coexisting creates a new reality, different from the sum of individual realities. Coexisting generates new elements and the more interaction becomes significant, the more difficult it becomes for the nations involved to only take into account the limits of their own sovereignty and manage both the problems and opportunities offered by this new reality. Thus a increasing number of opportunities and problems will tend to be connected with the foreign area and the interests of other nations. Moreover, as this interaction deepens and the treatment of the problems becomes more and more "cooperative", the demand grows for the institutionalization of such cooperation in the form of an organization capable of setting standards and conduct guidelines. Since the impacts of interaction affect units differently, the assumption is that there are continually differences and disputes to be settled, but there is also a willingness to reseat them in a cooperative way.

Still in theory, it should be added that cooperation initiatives can be taken for the purpose of promoting, creating or increasing interaction, or to improve the quality of interaction. As is true in business, where companies formulate strategies to generate business activities, nations can also deliberately create or enhance interaction with other countries. In business these initiatives are generally identified with the term *marketing* which can be translated as "building markets." That is, the company examines the business environment and, identifying potential markets, it invests in developing products and services that associated to an advertisement strategy and to the dissemination of knowledge will satisfy a demand which, in fact, the company helped create. Similarly, in the case of international relations, nations can take initiatives of cooperation in order to initiate or increase the interaction with nations and regions. In the case of nations, the objectives of such initiatives can be economic, political and social, unlike *marketing* by the companies which is generally restricted to profits in business.

Cooperation in a historical perspective

Still discussing terminology, note that in the first decades following the Second World War the expressions *international cooperation* and *international technical cooperation* are presented as relatively distinct in literature. While the former expressed the most general sense of the search for associations between countries with specific purposes, the

concept of technical cooperation was primarily associated with international aid provided by rich countries and most technologically advanced - directly or through multilateral agencies - to the poorest countries. Presenting the issue of international cooperation, David Lumsdaine begins his book by asking "how can the international system be changed to make this world a better place? Can this world be changed?"¹³ Indeed, the moral content of international cooperation, understood as "teaching to fish" was present in government initiatives such as "Point IV" launched by President Harry Truman and gained huge momentum with the creation of the *United States Agency for International Development* (USAID). Likewise, especially in the United States, this moral perspective of international relations was present in private entity initiatives such as the Carnegie Foundation, which sponsored the construction of the headquarters for the League of Nations, or the Rockefeller Foundation, which adopted the motto "Well being throughout the world" and sponsored the construction of laboratories and extensive training programs in the field of agriculture and public health in many poor countries.¹⁴

The evolution of the international area over the second half of the twentieth century produced a substantially different reality changing the understanding of international cooperation. Dozens of countries have started integrating, together with the United States, the list of the industrialized world, as various nations, generally designated as "underdeveloped" in the 1950s, implemented advanced industries and modernized their societies. W.W. Rostow, in the book that caused an enormous impact in the end of that decade, was deeply concerned with the East-West struggle, a basically political and strategic dispute but also eminently ideological.¹⁵ Thus, development aid was also intended to attract countries and regions to one's sphere of influence. In the beginning of the following decade, when John Kennedy took office as president of the United States, he established as one of his government's goals to promote an "Alliance for Progress," a way for the USA - through technical cooperation and financial help for Latin-American countries - to promote a "peaceful revolution" that would allow them to advance in modernization. In those circumstances there were, therefore, good social and political reasons to give the term "technical cooperation" the moral content of "teaching to fish". Only a few countries had the basic educational and job opportunities commensurate with the accelerated process of urbanization and patterns that could be generically referred to as modernity.

Brazil and international technical cooperation

You could say that Brazil has an outstanding history of cooperation. There are noteworthy examples such as the establishment of the aviation technology center in Sao Jose dos Campos (SP) shortly after the end of World War II, which was fundamental for the development of the aviation industry in Brazil. The creation of the Aviation Technological Center (CTA) and the Institute of Aviation Technology (ITA) were essentially the results of a successful program of cooperation led by the Brazilian Air Force. Through this program partnerships were established with leading U.S. institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from where the first dean was brought, Professor Richard Smith, who at the time headed the Department of Aeronautics at the MIT. Other important cooperation programs were implemented in the immediate post-war and helped build laboratories and shape institutions such as the National Research Council (CNPq) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes/MEC). These initiatives were essential for the consolidation of the Brazilian university system.¹⁶

It is important to note that even before World War II, Brazil had benefited greatly from international cooperation, which helped bring from other countries not only resources but especially leading experts who helped build institutions like the University of São Paulo, Luiz de Queiroz School of Agriculture, the Federal University of Viçosa, as well as several research institutions such as the Biological Institute, the Butantan Institute and the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation.¹⁷

From the perspective of the institutionalization of international cooperation in the implementation of a "national system of technical cooperation," the first initiative - taken in the early 1950s - was the creation of the National Technical Assistance Committee (CNAT), which was formed by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries that developed programs for international technical cooperation. The main task of this Commission was to coordinate the action of Brazilian institutions that sought the cooperation of agencies associated with governments and international organizations which promoted programs of technology transfer and cooperation for the establishment of technical capacity in developing countries. Over time various reforms and changes were made both in the form and the structure of the institutional cooperation mechanisms Brazilian government.

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) was established in 1987 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was the

result of the merger of the Sub-Secretariat for International Economic and Technical Cooperation (Subin) and the Division of Technical Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While Subin was linked to the Ministry of Planning and in charge of leading the technical implementation of the Brazilian programs of cooperation, the Division of Technical Cooperation of the Foreign Ministry was in charge of the political leadership of these programs. In two decades of activities ABC lived through important changes in the international order, previously mentioned, and also significant changes in the political, social and economic profile of Brazil, which in many ways, also altered the country's position in the international scenario.¹⁸ In fact, the understanding itself of international cooperation and its role in the international relations of Brazil has changed in every possible way. From a country which essentially received cooperation in recent decades, Brazil has become as active an active agent, providing cooperation. Other developing countries also made significant progress in modernizing their industry and institutional resources giving rise to the development of the South-South cooperation, i.e. among the southern hemisphere. In this scenario, countries such as Brazil became the agents with the dual function of receiving and promoting international cooperation. In many cases serving as an intermediary agent, facilitating cooperation between multilateral agencies, donor countries and recipient countries.

In this process, the UN conference in Buenos Aires in 1978 can be considered a milestone, which produced the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which officially brought to the international forum the concept of horizontal cooperation, that is, cooperation among developing countries. Thus, the changes in the institutional organization of the cooperation area, among which stands out the creation of the ABC in 1987, reflects these changes both in the Brazilian profile as an agent of cooperation as in the international order where nations such as Brazil started playing new roles in the scenario of international technical cooperation. Given these developments, the understanding that has prevailed is that the South-South cooperation should not be understood as a competition or alternative to traditional cooperation, but as a related element and, in most cases, a complement to the traditional cooperation with industrialized countries and multilateral agencies. The fact is that this line reflects the great expansion of cooperation as an inherent aspect of international relations today.

It should be noted that throughout this process, many Brazilian institutions played a prominent role in the advancement of technical cooperation activities. Among

these institutions are universities, laboratories and research centers associated to state governments and institutions such as the Brazilian Agriculture and Livestock Research Company (Embrapa), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) and the National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship (Senai), which, with time, gained reputation as key players in the scientific, technological and educational scene in Brazil. Some of these institutions have already been the subject of deeper studies which narrate in greater detail not only their historical courses but also their rich contribution as agents in the process by which programs to promote health, education and many aspects of scientific and technological development in Brazil were put into practice and gained broader features due to their involvement in the many forms of international cooperation.¹⁹

International cooperation in perspective

From what was briefly exposed one can conclude that international technical cooperation, or simply international cooperation, not only experienced great changes over time, following changes in the scenario of international relations, but also established itself as a key component in the countries' foreign policy. To a large extent, it was this cooperation that allowed the construction of a globalized world of relationships where shared knowledge and the use of shared and compatible standards in the many technical activities play a central role. While serving as an instrument capable of creating conduct standards and technical procedures spread through different societies across continents and regions, cooperation will be consolidated as part of a long-term foreign policy of countries. Moreover, while cultural peculiarities still exist and continue to be valued, certain basic social benefits related to life quality could hardly be acquired without the harmonization of domestic standards and the international context such as the availability of high quality food, health services and access to knowledge and information. Even in security issues, in many respects, cooperation plays an important role especially in terms of building surveillance and tracking systems and the education of specialists in many disciplines required by the armed forces and defense organizations involved in the protection of individuals and societies.

In this scenario, international cooperation emerges today as a crucial aspect. Ultimately, it is the channel through which a nation keeps connected to economic and social standards prevailing in the world and to the major trends underway in science and knowledge, as well as their applications to benefit societies. On the other hand, the advance of cooperation mechanisms means new opportunities and new problems

which, in their turn, begin to demand from societies to build more coherent and compatible systems in their production practices and its political and social institutions.

In fact, not only the markets for products, services and financial resources of a country open by means of cooperation, but also - and perhaps most important - cooperation enables the exchange of people, experiences and knowledge. It is through this interaction that the expression of different cultures and traditions present in political institutions and social councils make themselves understood to each other, causing the international environment to be a more friendly and more potentially prone to living in harmony and peace. Thus, nations that participate more actively in international cooperation programs, besides benefiting from the opportunities offered by the exchange of knowledge and information, also have in the cooperation a moderating factor in the hard bargain for interests in the international area²⁰.

Overall there is no great difficulty in accepting the understanding of the centrality of cooperation in foreign policies. The point is that this understanding often faces difficult problems to be met. Following, for the purposes of reflection, two of these structural issues will be discussed, which are obviously not new, but are important enough to be remembered.

The dilemma between short-term interests and long-term benefits

In the world of politics one of the most difficult matters to deal with is the traditional unresolved situation between short-term interests and demands and long-term benefits. This question is as old as political studies. Individuals in authority, whether in leadership positions in public agencies or in head positions in private organizations are constantly pressured by the immediate demands. Politically, the logic of the exercise of power usually makes investments that will yield benefits in the long run - that is, that only appear only after the end of the agent's term of office - tend to be viewed with indifference by governments for obvious reasons: they will have little influence on the prestige and popularity necessary for any consecutive term or to help in the election of a successor. Short-term demands such as internal division crises, party pressures or noisy diplomatic agreements tend to gain priority over projects whose effects, however beneficial they may be, become apparent only in the long term. In the business world, the problem appears most dramatically in revenue growth that could result in profits that could easily turn into personal gain.

By nature, the most significant part of cooperation is constituted by long-term programs both in their implementation and expected benefits. Education and training, science and technology or health and sanitation are typically issues addressed by international cooperation programs. Programs in these areas usually require years before the first results become visible, although the disbursements required are immediate. If these topics are added to the humanitarian aid initiatives, the predominantly long-term character of the international technical cooperation programs becomes even more evident. From a political logic point of view, cooperation programs usually are usually pressured by the short-term demands. Clearly, this issue is not only restricted to giving priority to long-term projects which systematically concur. There are many immediate issues and there are circumstances that need to be resolved as an emergency even if they are not dramatic cases of natural disasters and epidemics; it is necessary for long-term programs to be simultaneously implemented.

Mature nations have faced this issue through the consolidation of institutions that have more stable head positions and budgets that depend less on circumstantial political injunctions. In these countries, the replacement of political head positions (usually by means of regular elections) do not significantly affect the conduct and execution of long-term programs because the budget allocation as well as the filling of head positions in important institutions do not depend directly on the election of rulers. Moreover, in these societies there are already normative and control mechanisms that systematically monitor performance and how these institutions are administered²¹.

In a way, albeit in a still incipient manner, it is possible to say that this course of action has been taken in Brazil. The existence of an institution such as the ABC should be seen as a promising factor because firstly, it shows that international cooperation constitutes an area of permanent and consolidated action of the Brazilian state, rather than just a set of actions or initiatives of governments that, circumstantially, fill head positions in the political institutions of the country. In addition, the institutions of society and of the Brazilian state, which are complexly distributed in the three levels - federal, state and municipal - enable several cooperation initiatives to be taken within the broad spectrum of possibilities offered by international cooperation, raising the need for an agency that can coordinate the actions that arise from these different instances. The Brazilian federative organization allows cooperation opportunities to be more easily used by units of the Federation and also by entities such as SENAI and Fiocruz

or the Institute for Technological Research in S. Paulo (IPT) that, in addition to the federal level, counts on support from other levels²². Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no difficulties in taking advantage of the potential offered by international technical cooperation, since there is a difficult relationship between the world of politics and the programs which, by nature, produce predominantly long-term results.

A challenge: recover a more integrated view of international cooperation

Like every social and political phenomena, cooperation should be seen as a process that integrates all aspects of relations among societies in the international level: strategic security, wealth generation, access to the material benefits of modernity, environmental health, public social safety, etc. That is, the implementation of cooperation programs in trade has an impact on security issues, as arrangements to protect environmental conditions inevitably involve changes in trade flows and wealth generation. After all, as practical cooperation progressed, there was a growing process of specialization, that is, specialized agencies in specific fields of cooperation have emerged or associated with national governments, either as members of the United Nations system or other organizations international. In this process it is worth noting that the emergence of numerous non-governmental organizations followed the same pattern of development, aimed at promoting specific aspects of international cooperation.

A more integrated approach for cooperation is important because it reflects more appropriately the nature of international relations that is essentially interdisciplinary and multifaceted. The promotion of environmentally desirable conditions cannot ignore the economic and social demands for progress and for the generation of jobs, which are equally legitimate. Similarly, the stability and security of societies don't depend solely on the power resources and enforcement capacity of governments, but depend largely on the ability of the institutions to meet education, health and opportunities demands in the various social segments that make up these societies. The fact is that the cooperation activities' progress also caused fragmentation into specialized agencies of cooperation that have spread to ministries, government agencies and international organizations. The difficulty is that the creation process of specialized cooperation agencies corresponded to the creation of specialized bureaucracies as well, a fact that, although natural, makes it very difficult to implement programs that require more integrated and multidisciplinary approaches.

In this environment, the emergence of conflicts and disputes between bureaucracies for priorities, rights of preference, and especially for resources is not uncommon. Thus, an important issue to be addressed is the integration of the activities of international cooperation which may mean better use of technical and human resources. The nature of many questions requires visions that integrate different fields of human activity. A notable example is the case of the environment that embraced the concept of "sustainable development" to replace the more simplistic notion of "preservation." Moreover, faced with a reality made of limited resources, the elimination of double efforts and the search for the greater reach of programs by means of integrated action appears to be much more consistent with the current problems in the sphere of economic and social development.

Final considerations

International technical cooperation has among its basic objectives the complex task of promoting the equalization of life conditions through education and modernization of production systems by having them respect international standards. It is a task that requires hard work and great sensitivity as it should take into account the sociological and cultural foundations of the nations involved and also the many adaptation difficulties in society. In other words, inevitably the cooperation process results in social and economic transformations that produce very profound effects which also cause significant effects in the political sphere. Education levels are expected to increase and expand, covering substantial portions of the population and the battle of interests should become even more complex. In this scenario, the adaptation process of political and social institutions is generally slower and far more disturbing than the modernization of the productive system.

In principle all interests - old and emerging - should be regarded as legitimate, problems arise when those interests should be confronted with each other and especially when the interests must be confronted with the often scarce resources to promote them. Although it is very common to say that a certain initiative is "interesting for the country", in most cases this relationship is far from clear and rarely unanimous. A typical modern society is composed of many interest groups: importers, exporters, industry, agriculture, financial agents, trade unions, environmentalists, public service bureaucracy, etc. The interests of each segment may be coincidental, indifferent or even colliding with the interests of other segments. Democratic societies are characterized by

the existence of more than one political party that presumably represent the diversity of interests. In this sphere, however, foreign cooperation generally tends to generate sensitivity and distrust. With the exception of humanitarian aid in the dramatic circumstances of a natural disaster, the benefits of cooperation with other societies do not always emerge clearly. The most common concerns relate to the goals regarding domestic order and reducing unemployment, improving life conditions of the poorest or strengthening economy, whose link with international cooperation is not always clear. Indeed, goals like these are shared by all segments and by the main organized political groups, but that does not mean everyone should be in accordance with any measures proposed or implemented by governments in order to achieve these goals. Neither the costs nor the benefits fall evenly on all segments.

In addition, each society lives with problems and unique needs and every nation that offers cooperation has skills, capabilities and institutions that are specifically theirs. It should also be considered that the circumstances of each moment favor cooperation in certain areas. In the 1960s, little was mentioned about the environment or alternative energy sources; today, however, these issues have become an object of great interest for all nations, whether rich or poor. In this scenario, in many ways, Brazil is in a relatively privileged position not only because its institutions have accumulated over time considerable cooperation experience, but also because to a large extent, the international agenda seems very favorable to the technical capacity profile built by Brazilian society.

Notes

1. Virtually every important author in the studies of international relations produced some written work in which the concept of globalization (in France the term is "worldization") has a relatively central role in the analysis.
2. In the 50s, influential authors such as ARNOLD TOYNBEE and REINHOLD NIEBUHR gave lectures on pacifism and the risks humanity was facing with the perspective of an atomic war. C.P. SNOW in his book *The two cultures* (1960), the result of a lecture at Cambridge and Harvard universities, discussed the anguish of lack of communication between scientific culture, based on math and humanity, based on literature and focused on the knowledge of human nature. This dichotomy showed that the science of nature was capable of producing a correct and efficient way of putting together an atomic bomb, but the correct knowledge to sign the memos wisely and sensibly remained (until today) an inconclusive task.
3. "Cooperation is a product of choice and circumstances. Nations choose to cooperate when it's interesting for them" concludes ARTHUR A. STEIN in his book *Why Nations Cooperate. Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1990, p. 207).
4. Nothing seems more suggestive than the title of HEDLEY BULL's main book (*The Anarchical Society*) in which the author discusses this paradoxical character of the international medium where the anarchical nature coexists with forms of order which originate from the need of what many authors call today "governability" or international "governance".
5. If the registry of patents is considered as an indicator of technological dynamism, it can be observed traditionally that the most developed economies are those that register the most patents and also those who most acquire patents from other countries. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) publishes statistics periodically about this, showing that the industrialized nations respond for over ¾ of the registration and commerce involving industrial patents.
6. The term *paradiplomacy* is used to designate foreign actions developed by sub-national agents. Some countries have policies and institutions structured to give support to paradiplomacy, such as Canada (See *Federalism and International Relations. The Role of Subnational Units*. Hans J. Michelmann & Panayotis Soldatos, eds. Oxford University Press, 1990)
7. Arthur A. Stein, op. Cit. p. 172.
8. In the sphere of thought, KARL POPPER argued that the free debate of ideas is essential for science, especially for the social sciences in which dogmatism does not lead to utopias, as a few theories affirmed, but to totalitarianism and repression (J. Horgan. *Scientific American*, NOV/1992, p. 20-1).
9. The expression "international regime" indicates that in a certain Field of international relations (trade, security, environment. etc.) there are behavior patterns and sometimes even norms and formally established institutions that rule the action of the States and other players involved. See S. D. KRASNER, *International regimes*, Cornell University Press, 1983.
10. About the economic policy during the 30s see C.P. KINDLEBERGER. *The World in depression, 1929-1939*. Penguin Books, 1972.
11. G-20 is how the group created in 1999 and formed by 19 greatest economies in the world plus the European Union is called. It is not institutionalized by a formal agreement but the efficiency revealed especially in this financial crises of 2008 illustrates well a mode of international cooperation in our days.
12. This understanding is presented in INIS L. CLAUDE JR. *Swords into Plowshares. The problems and Progress of International Organization*. Random House, N.Y. 1963 (2nd Ed.)
13. DAVID H. LUMSDAINE offers a panoramic view of the international cooperation programs developed by the successive governments of the United States after the Second World War with several objective such as fighting poverty, eradicating endemic diseases, extending education opportunities, building economic infrastructure, etc. (*Moral Vision in International Politics. The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989*). Princeton University Press, 1993)
14. SIMON SCHWARTZMAN in his book *Um Espaço para a Ciência. A Formação da Comunidade Científica no Brasil (MCT/CEE/CNPq, Brasília, 2001)* discusses the important role of the Rockefeller Foundation in the creation of scientific institutions in Brazil. The

author shows that between 1930 and 1935 this foundation gave US\$1,219,000 to education and research in the area of public health and that in 1956-60 this budget reached the impressive number of US\$3,633,000 distributed to several scientific areas, including social sciences. (p.247).

15. W.W. ROSTOW. *The Stages of Economic Growth*. Cambridge University Press, 1959. It is interesting to notice that this book had the following subtitle: "A non-communist manifesto", making it clear that it was an alternative to Marx's fatalist view regarding capitalism.

16. See SIMON SCHWARTZMAN, *Um Espaço para a Ciência*, op.cit.

17. SIMON SCHWARTZMAN in the book *Um Espaço para a Ciência* (op.cit.) discusses the appearance and development of these institutions that form the core of the scientific community in Brazil. Especially regarding the CTA/ITA, the author says "besides their own activities of research and teaching, the CTA offered conditions for Embraer to be created..." (p.266).

18. Some of the data are available at the ABC/Ministry of International relations webpage and in the report by ambassador Luiz Henrique Pereira da Fonseca, head of ABC until 2008. In the report the ambassador analysis the work of the agency in two decades. The report is part of a collection of documents presented at the seminar called "Cooperação Técnica n Política Externa – Realizações e Desafios" organized by ABC together with Alexandre Gusmão Foundation – Funag at Itamaraty in Oct 4, 2007. This collection also comprises reports on experiences in other important cooperation agencies, among which Embrapa, Fiocruz and Senai.

19. Check the webpages of these entities to obtain information and reference on the actions developed.

20. Since the 17th century the "soft trade" theory is mentioned, that is, trade softens relations among different peoples, making them more peaceful while interacting and developing bonds of mutual interest and understanding. Among the authors remembered in this tradition there are Montesquieu and Kant. See ALBERT O. HIRSCHMAN, *Economics as a Moral Science*.

21. These mechanisms are generally referred to in English as "accountability" and are related to the Parliament and to the mechanisms that spread information to public opinion. The existence of these mechanisms is essential not only to reduce corruption risks misuse of the resources, but certainly more importantly, to have the entities linked to the promotion of objectives like scientific research, public health or the improvement of environmental conditions not alter their goals. In many developing countries there are such mechanisms but they are usually diluted by the ineffectiveness of the judiciary.

22. A very illustrative case is IPT's which, in the end of the 70s, developed with the government of the State of São Paulo a huge inter-lab program with the the National Bureau of Standards of the US Department of Commerce. This program allowed the installation of a lab capacity and the integration of the IPT in the international network for the certification of products and industrial standards quality. Recently, Fiocruz has been developing a broad cooperation program with the government of developing countries, especially Africa.