

The impact of the BRIC-IBSA emergency to the political economy of knowledge production in the Global South.

Cláudio Costa Pinheiro¹

¹The Social Sciences & History School, Getúlio Vargas Foundation, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

pinheiro.claudio@gmail.com

In recent years, there has been much of thrill concerning the emergency of peripheral countries in the global political scenario. Within this picture, the BRIC-IBSA countries are at the spot. A great deal of the concern behind this, regards expectations about the real change that this movement can represent to the world politics. Would the raise of India, China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa mean the development of a new grammar of power – re-striking balances at the global level? Or would it just be a fresher vocabulary reproducing and reifying old cleavages of inequality and dominance that has characterized the global arena thus far? Would this eventual change be spreadable to other regions of the Global South, like Africa?

Admittedly the usual expectation is that South-South cooperation comes through issues like trade, industry, energy sources and supply, agriculture or economics, topics ultimately related to poverty relief and sustained development. Actually, movements of emergency of peripheral States have been paralleled by an important wave of debates over the question of intellectual capacity in the South. Essentially, these debates argue that the edification of peripheral countries scholarly constitution – universities, research centers and fundamentally the education of the intelligentsia – is profoundly indebted to European models of scholarship, research agendas and theoretical frameworks. As a consequence, South academies are structurally characterized by a rather colonized scientific culture, where issues like dependency, autonomy and freedom are, ultimate expressions of an epistemological ascendancy over their intellectual architecture of Higher education (e.g. F. Alatas, C. Ake, Diouf-Mandani, P. Altbach etc).

Conversely, the last decades shows several initiatives to reverse this tendency. Brazilian State has been visibly active, on attempts to situate itself in a context of more horizontally collaborative programmes with the valorization of the South-South perspective – the very improvement of the IBSA and BRIC fori is aligned to that.

This paper focus on the Brazilian initiatives towards Africa, with a look to the IBSA framework, and outlining a comparative picture of the Brazilian politics of academic cooperation on Higher Education towards the North-South and South-South agendas. Finally, the paper aims at suggesting initiatives to improve the BRIC-IBSA cooperation towards Africa and search for to develop renewed theoretical approaches that take into consideration the idiosyncrasies of the South countries and collaborate to decolonize the agenda of international relations theory.

