Abstract

The PhD project investigates shifts in international development cooperation that are caused by the emergence of “rising powers” on the international scene – such as, for instance, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). In the policy field of international development cooperation, these countries are categorized as “new development partners” since they have increased their cooperation programs significantly during the last two decades. The new actors distinguish themselves from the established donors of development cooperation – the members of the OECD – by classifying their technical assistance as “South-South cooperation” (SSC) and by claiming that they continue to be part of the “Global South”, i.e. that they represent the developing countries vis-à-vis the “Global North” (that is, the industrialized countries). According to the new development partners, SSC is different from its Northern counterpart since it is conducted between equal partners in a horizontal and solidary manner. The emergence of the new players has generated a discussion on whether the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) will continue to be the central institution for international development cooperation, or whether emerging powers will become more significant.

This project examines the characteristics of South-South cooperation as a cooperation modality and analyzes the differences between SSC and the existing North-South cooperation (NSC). The main focus lays on the alleged horizontal character of SSC. Since there is a lack of research concepts and empirical data when it comes to SSC practices, this project investigates a case study. Brazil is chosen as a prominent provider of South-South cooperation and the country’s interaction with one of its most important Southern partners, Mozambique, is analyzed. As a premise, an asymmetrical relationship – in terms of economic and political power – between Brazil and Mozambique is assumed. The project asks (a) whether it is possible to carry out horizontal cooperation in this asymmetrical context and (b) whether it is possible to identify characteristics of SSC that distinguish it from North-South cooperation. A framework of how to conceptualize asymmetries in inter-state relations is developed and a methodology for investigating the (a)symmetrical character of Brazilian-Mozambican interaction is provided before presenting the empirical case study. The South-South Development cooperation between the two countries is conceptualized as a policy process with different stages of interaction and is analyzed with regard to specific “Southern” characteristics and the asymmetries of its power structures.