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The 2030 international order and the future of global development

A ordem internacional de 2030 e o futuro do desenvolvimento global

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Abstract

Order and the future of humanity are intertwined with aspirations and achievements related to 17 global goals charted in boxes regarding multiple issue-areas of global politics. The so called 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had changed the narrative of global development putting into motion some transformations in the multiple existing dimensions of our global reality, but also letting some questions behind. The main objective of this article is to characterize the 2030 international order from a Global South stance, presenting the state of the art on the debate regarding the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Methodologically, it draws from a hybrid approach on historical international relations, qualitative content analysis (QCA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The main argument is that a new international order called the *2030 international order* seems to be under construction. The idea is to produce a text of reference to discuss the design of international order in the 21st Century; the theoretical and conceptual disputes on multiple themes associated with the 17 SDGs; and looking through the architectural foundations of SDG global politics, such as territorialization, financing, indicators, interactions and synergies and, acceleration actions.

Resumo

A ordem e o futuro da humanidade estão entrelaçados com aspirações e realizações relacionadas a 17 objetivos globais apresentados em caixas, referentes a várias áreas temáticas da política global. A chamada Agenda 2030 dos Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS) alterou as narrativas sobre desenvolvimento global, colocando em movimento algumas transformações nas múltiplas dimensões existentes de nossa realidade global, mas também abandonando algumas questões para trás. O principal objetivo deste artigo é caracterizar a ordem internacional 2030 a partir de uma visão do Sul Global, apresentando o estado da arte no debate sobre a Agenda 2030 e os ODS. Metodologicamente, parte de uma abordagem híbrida sobre relações internacionais históricas, análise qualitativa de conteúdo (QCA) e análise crítica do discurso (CDA). O argumento principal é que uma nova ordem internacional chamada ordem internacional 2030 parece estar em construção. A ideia é produzir um texto de referência para discutir o desenho da ordem internacional no século 21; as disputas teóricas e

conceituais sobre vários temas associados aos 17 ODS; e examinar os fundamentos arquitetônicos da política global dos ODS, como territorialização, financiamento, indicadores, interações e sinergias e ações de aceleração.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; Global Politics; Global Development; 2030 Agenda.

Palavras-chave: Objetivos do Desenvolvimento Sustentável; Política Global; Desenvolvimento Global; Agenda 2030.

Introduction

The future of development as a global aspiration is closely related to the success or failure of the undertaking 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – a set of 17 global goals charted in boxes regarding multiple issue-areas of global politics. The narrative of mission accomplished would be wrote not only by reaching all the goals established, but also by putting into motion the necessary transformations in the multiple existing dimensions of our global reality.

The main objective of this article is to characterize the 2030 international order from a Global South stance, looking to their conceptual constitutive elements such as historical forces, regime of temporality and institutional design. It also serves the purpose of presenting the state of the art on the debate regarding the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. In fact, a Global South contribution to the debate on the SDG, particularly from a Brazilian standpoint, is more than required to overcome gaps of a Westernized International Relations (IR) while analyzing the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. As noted by Nakamura et al. (2019), “European nations dominate SDGs research, with North America and the Asia & Pacific region contributing less, but roughly similar output. Africa, the Arab States, and Latin America are, by contrast, small participants even though SDGs are key concerns in these regions.”

Order and future of humanity are intertwined by mankind behaviour pressing all acceptable planetary boundaries related to survival conditions for the next generations. The main argument of this text is that a new international order called the *2030 international order* seems to be under construction. Unlike previous orders edified as a result of great conflicts, this new one has its *raison d’être* the future of humanity, which is at a stage of worrying emergency due to the impacts of unbalanced and unsustainable human actions in the functioning of the different dimensions of the planet ecosystems.

Methodologically, it draws from a hybrid approach on historical international relations, qualitative content analysis (QCA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). By critically evaluating the main documents and papers written on the SDG and the 2030 Agenda, it’s possible to focus on the interdependence of variables, the correlations between processes and structures, the roll of time and temporality and the power of narratives. Furthermore, it allows to capture patterns related to the making of order in international relations, to the functioning of a global politics of the SDG, as well as to the use of concepts for understanding the design of IR from a Global South spot.

This article is divided into three parts. The first one discusses the design of a 2030 international order, its constituent elements and main concepts that shape and animate its dynamics of functioning.

The second one seeks to understand how international theories are being accessed to explain the multiple themes associated with the 17 SDGs. The third part presents the architectural foundations of SDG discussions in global politics, trying to explain the correlations of the central dynamic of territorialising the SDGs and the access of means of implementation, use of indicators, interactions flowing from synergies and, acceleration actions designed by international community.

The 2030 International Order

The concept of order is a benchmark for International Relations (IR) scholars and analysts. It has been seen from different perspectives – realist (Kissinger 2014), liberal (Ikenberry 2020), societal (Hurrell 2007) and constructivist (Acharya 2016) – as an organizing concept capable of shading some light on great dynamics (public health, trade, climate, human rights, financing, population) that encompass at the same time a systemic-state-individual level of analysis and a multidimensional scope of global-national-local understanding of world politics.

It seems that we are facing the emergence of a new international order that took shape gradually in time having as a turning point the year of since 2015 by the establishment of a global agenda with intended and unintended consequences at daily life from regions to national, subnational and border locations. This new international relations frame, which could be defined as the *2030 international order*, appears as a construct for organizing and defining the actions and projects of international organizations, states, institutions and individuals in a horizon of expectations anchored in global objectives and spaces of local experiences clearly based on goals to be reached and indicators to monitor progress.

Moreover, the 2030 international order has a specific regime of temporality that connects all the diplomatic and political efforts from the past to the present as well as the negotiations of the 2015 “Transformations” as a turning point to connect past achievements and future possibilities related to development, populations and sustainability (UN 2015). Nevertheless, this specific regime of temporality created a time paradox: while the general feeling of global leaders and decision-makers is of low emergency perspectives and detachment because the horizon of expectations has been projected on the future (“It seems we have much time until 2030”), after 5 years of feeble results, the international community realized that there was not enough time to the monumental challenge related to the accomplishment of the 17 objects and 165 targets.

As an analytical category, the 2030 international order could be deconstructed in multiple levels of emanations and tensions. A dialogic dynamic of convergences and divergences between an array of elements are constantly building this international order – which continue not being properly explored by IR scholars. The connections between global governance and local arrangements have been a path to understand both the hidden political intentionalities into each of the 17 SDGs and the complexities into synergies and interactions across multiple issues and areas of expertise. The conceptual weaknesses open possibilities to scholars to dive deep into the research of language

and slogans (such as “no one left behind”) and the *no place* of some populations and vulnerable groups. Moreover, the 2030 international order is made of silences and voids regarding gender, race and sexualities, which is a scientific invitation to eclecticism in evaluating connections between conventional (economics, security, law, norms and power politics) and unconventional agendas (cosmologies, designs, creativity, art and cultures).

The 2030 international order is constituted by global dilemmas with local impacts. All the global dilemmas in IR – security (safety-freedom), environmental (growth-degrowth) or health (people lives-jobs) has profound impacts on local communities. That is why the 2030 Agenda set of goals, targets and indicators should be addressed in IR both as an analytical category and a road map to be followed¹. For instance, the intellectual enterprise to understand the implementation of goals related to poverty alleviation (SDG 1), access to health and education of quality (SDG 3-4), gender equality (SDG 5) or even peace through violence reduction (SDG 16) could be seen – in different degrees and depending on the level of engagement – as a venture to solve local problems.

Additionally, local impacts resulting from global dilemmas highlight some not so evident interactions between the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda contents. To illustrate, one example is the (almost invisible) roll of indigenous peoples and local communities (river and forest populations and quilombolas) in the conservation of biodiversity and mitigation of climate change, as well as how those local populations are suffering with global trends of land grabbing, illegal mining, deforestation (logging) and burning and all kinds of predatory actions against the environment.

To understand some underlying meanings of this 2030 international order it is necessary to capture four crucial concepts governing its dynamics, such as planetary boundaries, development, synergies, and resilience. The 2030 international order is based on a scientific belief of existing planetary boundaries that constraint the collective actions of global society towards the environment. The planetary boundaries framework defines a “safe operating space for humanity based on the intrinsic biophysical processes that regulate the stability of the Earth System (ES).” It is rationalized by this idea of how to contain human actions inside those limits and the potential dangers related to a substantial and persistent transgression of those limits (Steffen2015). The debate on planetary boundaries sprung in an assessment of the “modular building-blocks” transformations related to SDG synergies that should have investments and regulatory changes prioritized, as well as orienting multilevel and multiple actions through a logic of partnerships: (1) education, gender and inequality; (2) health, well-being and demography; (3) energy decarbonization and sustainable industry; (4) sustainable food, land, water and oceans; (5) sustainable cities and communities; and (6) digital revolution for sustainable development (Sachs et al, 2019).²

One of the main driving forces pushing the limits of the planet is results from the conceptions and practices of development adopted by mankind in the last centuries. The concept of development

1 As a concept, the SDGs serve the purpose of simplifying a context / reality in which sustainable development is discussed in a broad view focusing on a plurality of ideas and approaches beyond the environmental dimension. As a road map, the SDGs works as a guide for agents' actions and choices as well as by shaping their social roles and identities.

2 For more info on the 9 planetary boundaries framework see: <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

evolved in international studies theoretically from the debate on modernization to development in a first wave of studies on the 1950 and 1960. Then it was concentrated on poverty alleviation and a green revolution (1970) and then on International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (1980). While the international agenda was evolving to include issues on biodiversity, pollution, and ozone layer depletion, the concept of development was enhanced during the 1990s, specially through. The global debates of the Rio 92 Conference and the implementation of the 21 Agenda. Finally, the concept of sustainable development for the 21st Century was redesigned under the umbrella of the Rio+20 and the Post-2015 agenda aiming to balance economic, environmental, and social dimensions of development (Ziai 2016; Downing et al 2020).

It could be said that the 2030 international order has opened the horizons of possibilities in thinking conceptions of development differently, specially by realizing on the multiple interactions between different issue-areas such as health, water, food, energy, work, poverty, inequalities etc. That is why *synergies* became a defining concept of this order. Synergies mean associated and transversal actions that establish cohesion and organicity between two or more SDGs and serve to visualize with greater precision the challenges to achieve the 2030 Agenda, as well as the niches of cooperation between different actors/agents into the system (Galvão 2019). For instance, there are strong synergies when discussing the unequal conditions (SDG 10) of migrant women (SDG 5) to access health sexual and reproductive rights (SDG 3) and to a deepening understanding of peace and justice (SDG 16) in a context of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemics. Or outlining the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda at local realities, cities peripheries (SDG 11) from the perspective of workers (SDG 8) living in conditions of poverty (SDG 1) and food insecurity (SDG 2) and water and sanitation scarcity (SDG 6).

To resist and survive in such subnormal living conditions requires degrees of *resilience*, or the ability to endure under adverse conditions, to preserve their identities ties with the environment and to persist over undesired change. From a Brazilian perspective, resilience does not only concern to infrastructure issues, it covers also historical aspects. A colonialist past and enduring practices connected to conservatism and authoritarianism can weaken democracy ability to trigger a more participatory governance model and the power of federalism as a cultural pillar to formulate a *modus operandi* where cities or subnational entities go central to SDG implementation.

In order to prevent public policies to perpetuate at the national level conditions of privileges and inequalities (gender, race and class) that emanates from an Westernized IR one should think about territorialisation as a more complex concept referring to the set of positive and concerted interventions, dialogued between different agents and according to local political, economic, social and cultural dynamics. Territorialisation makes the case of a real global IR by translating the ideas of localization/tropicalization³ both on the adaptation in the Global South of the global goals and translations in terms of public policies and social activism towards the SDG achievement (Galvão 2019).

³ Localization is the process of necessary adaptations and adjustments so that global goals and indicators could be implemented, applied, and calculated for each of the municipalities. Tropicalization would be an allusion to the localization process carried out during the implementation of the MDGs in countries geographically located in the tropics.

The quest to understand SDG: theories and debates

There has been no specific theorizing – until now – on SDG and the 2030 agenda implementation. Nonetheless, international relations theoretical perspectives are contributing to understand the normative and institutional framework constituted around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

International relations theories have been used to deal with specific topics related to the 2030 Agenda. The SDG 1 and SDG 2 addressing eradicating poverty and fighting hunger as a by-product of the capitalist world system (Wallerstein 2002) and part of an international regime (Lima 2019). The SDG 3 is been captured as part of an effort to bust global health both as part of health diplomacy and the development of a specific framework for international health cooperation. (Katz et al 2011; McIness & Lee, 2012; Buss 2014). The SDG 4 is framed in the context of globalization (Ferreira 2006) and from a global citizenship education perspective (Davies et al 2018). The SDG 5 as part of the women, peace and security agenda, women's empowerment movements and global development (Giannini 2019). Also, as part of a debate on gender equality and inclusive education (CIN 2017) as well as part of a historic struggle for human rights, particularly for the rights of women and girls and sexual and reproductive rights (Josiwiczi 2020).

The SDG 6 and SDG 7 connect water and energy as strategic elements of international politics and major factors of the environment global governance framework. (Gupta 2013, Galvão & Monteiro 2019; Jiménez 2020). Energy and water are been analysed both as a strategic input to public policies and a basic human right (Brown et al 2016; Pereira Ribeiro et al 2020; Löfquist 2020;). The SDG 8 highlights decent work as an element of the international political economy and dignity as a principle idea on the human rights agenda (Frey 2016; Galheraet al 2020). The SDG 9 deals with Inclusive and sustainable industrialization as part of the international political economy and an international regime of technological innovation that also seeks to look at the human element. (Chang 2004; Sen & Klikberg 2010). The SDG 10 shades light on reduction of inequalities and the correlations between inequalities, poverty reduction and perspectives on development (Sen 2010; Piketty 2014).

The SDG 11 is an interesting reference to study cities as subnational agents of the IR as well as places for struggles for rights, equity, and the promotion of sustainability (Lefevbre 2011; Chant & McIlwaine 2015; Zoomers et al 2017). The SDGs 13, 14 and 15 (attached to climate, oceans, and forests) are strongly associated to climate change debates and framed by the notions of regime and governance. They are also explained by the conceptions of Earth Systems Governance (ESG) and as part of an Anthropocene equation that draw attention to the risks of an impending catastrophe affecting biodiversity protection of forests and oceans (Gaffney & Steffen 2017; Pereira & Viola 2019).

The SDG 16 encompass discussions about the quality and means of achieving peace, justice and effective institutions as a framework for both strategic studies and security studies, as well as studies for peace (Webel & Galtung, 2007; Wallenstein & Joshi, 2018; Ferreira, Maschietto & Kuhlmann 2019). Finally, the SDG 17 allows reflections on how to face international partnerships, development cooperation, complex interdependence and governance as important milestones for framing the dynamics of collaboration and coordination intrinsic to international negotiations and

the construction of a specific institutional framework linking the High Level Panel, ECOSOC, States, OI, OING and organized civil society in pursuit of global objectives and goals. (Keohane & Ovodenko 2012; Hochstetler & Inoue 2019; Orsini 2019)

While the task of explaining IR through the global goals is attached to the use of theories, the quest to understand the global politics of SDGs goes beyond, reaching a myriad of debates – which directly and indirectly are paving the way to new theoretical approaches from an SDG starting point. Some recent studies shade light on different features of SDGs studies. It is possible to categorize those debates in two tiers with some layers of preoccupations. Tier (1) concerns the appropriation of SDGs to discuss (explaining) some specific topic of global politics and international current affairs. Tier 2 concerns the most relevant outlines and reflections (understanding) about the 2030 Agenda implementation worldwide.

The debates on tier 1 (TD1) engulfs a myriad of topics and approaches on the SDG, discussing interactions, causes, consequences and correlations regarding one or more SDGs in this time frame of a post 2015 global agenda. A first layer of discussion on TD1 focus on structural-process dynamics: the idea of a paradigm changing (Gore 2015) or a paradigm transition between MDG and SDG (Fukuda-Parr 2016); a conceptual understanding of the SDGs (Caballero 2019), the crucial question of financing (Sachs 2015; Mawdsley 2018); the pitfalls of measurement (Fukuda-Parr; Mcneill 2019); the need to think about the interdependence between objectives and goals (Le blanc 2015); the challenges of the SDGs social dimensions facing a (ultra) liberal order guiding development worldwide (McCloskey 2016); the origins of the SDGs on the Global South (Fukuda-Parr & Muchhala 2020); global governance strategies through goals setting both on aspirational and concrete dimensions (Bierman & Kim 2020); and a critical discursive approach on SDGs as “persuasive rhetoric” and a “redeployment of technocratic developmental methods” – not a paradigm shift, falling in given voice to unrepresentative population groups (Carant 2017).

A second layer of TD1 presents more specific thematic interpretations on the 2030 Agenda. The linkage between water, energy, and food (nexus approach) in the light of the SDGs as a bridge to understand the synergies existing in the 2030 Agenda. (Weitz; Nilsson; Davis 2014; Pereira Ribeiro et al 2020); policy implications from the connectivity between human health and environmental conservation and the use of SDGs to help setting and measuring targets to respect the “world’s safe operating boundaries” while aiming to build more equal societies (De Paula 2018); SDGs capability to fight poverty, tackle inequalities (Chancel et al 2017) and improve people’s life quality, promoting “access, gender, opportunity and outcomes” (Winkel 2015); and the SDGs as a launching pad to a more robust human rights agenda (Freistein & Mahler 2016; Pogg & Sengupta 2016; Koehler 2017).

Likewise, in this second layer of TD1, discussions could be found on the roll of Global Funds as a political independent template for backing multi-stakeholders interventions (research and projects) that should be performance oriented and accountable (Sachs & Schmidt-Traub 2017); a look to the future through “effective interventions to strengthen governance and implement pro-poor development policies will result in much greater advances on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals” (Joshi; Hughes; Sisk, 2015); the potential of science, technology and innovation (STI) to generate

inclusive development (Gupta & Vegelin 2016) and to enable and accelerate the transition towards the SDGs by “mission-oriented innovation policies” (Miedzinski, Mazzucato, Ekins 2019). Also, discussions on challenges to align national public policies and SDG targets (Jannuzzi & Carlo 2018); the relevance and impact of National Voluntary Reports (NVR) and accountability mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the 2030 Agenda (Sarwar & Nicolai 2018); potentialities and limits for private sector participation in the Agenda 2030 concerning both corporate awareness for development and active partnership for development (Soares & Inoue 2020).

The architecture foundations of SDG’s global politics

The debates on tier 2 (TD2) would amalgamate discussions in global politics to understand past, present, and future of the 2030 international order. Under the auspices of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) the architecture foundations of SDG framework have five pillars: financing, territorialization, measurement, interactions, and acceleration.

Financing – accessing means of implementation

Financing is one of the most crucial structure of this architecture built to make the international order 2030 functioning properly. The finance pillar of the architecture for implementation is constituted of a) global norms; b) policy platforms; c) instruments of cooperation; d) projects to support action; and e) emergency fund to fight specific crisis.

The finance pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-F) is regulated by global norms regarding the environment-economic-social nexus of sustainable development of the 2030 international order. The Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAA), the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) are part of this multi-stakeholder financing global engineering to induce regular participation on review and political follow ups.

The SDG-F depends on policy platforms oriented to “discuss trends and progress in international development cooperation,” to think on finance priority issue-areas such as “mobilization, debt, illicit finance and the empowerment of women,” as well as to look forward on “recommendations and normative guidance” (A75/93/20).

Moreover, the SDG-F has instruments of cooperation such as concessional and non-concessional financing ODA, particularly to LDCs; South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation; development banks and multilateral development banks (MDBs) with capabilities “to raise resources” for SDGs implementation in different countries (FSDR 2020). Furthermore, the SDG-F assembled projects to support action to tackle “stark inequalities in income and access to finance, high indebtedness, vulnerabilities in the financial system and a dysfunctional multilateral trading system.” The main idea is to draw a robust financing response through “a global stimulus package of unprecedented proportion to revitalize the global economy and enable a sustainable and resilient recovery” (A75/93/20).

Finally, the SDG-F framework is shaping *ad hoc* experiments in global funding. For instance, the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was designed for the immediate socio-economic response and recovery in middle- and lower-income countries. The Fund was elaborated based on this principle-idea of a Global Solidarity facilitating resources to be raised to tackle short and longer-run priorities. All the short-term preoccupations are related to SDG achievement, such as to control the spread of the virus and improve public health infrastructure, support macroeconomic stability, and avoid a “disastrous humanitarian crisis.” In the longer term, the SDGs keep be a framework to guide the recovery (SDGR2020).

Territorialisation – translating global goals to local priorities

Territorialisation is another vital structure of the architecture established to maintain the 2030 international order. It could be understood as a process of construction (as soon as it demands participation) and of interaction with the multiple dimensions of a local reality in the sense of producing results driven not by ideologies or political party platforms, but by social demands (Antunes, Gontijo & Galvão 2020). In fact, both decision-makers and scholars should understand the existing of multiple ‘designs for territorialization’ emerging from a “world of many worlds,” a pluriverse composed of political practices that interconnect human beings and nature and show heterogeneities and singularities of bodies, places, thoughts, emotions, and actions (Cadena & Blaser 2018).

The territorialising pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-T) is broadly and more flexible than SDG-F, engulfing a number of social technologies and political devices for locating the SDGs, such as alignment with plans, programs and public policies; dissemination of ideas, values and norms related to the Agenda 2030; construction of collaborative communication platforms; alignment of institutional documents (mission and planning) with the logic of the 17 SDGs; publications and training courses; parliamentary actions.⁴

The SDG-T is a dependent path to cities behaviour as central agents in the process of implementing targets from global goals. The city encapsulates all the challenges presented in the 2030 Agenda, being a unique universe to studying and understanding localization experiences of transformations to build “cities of the future” – smart, sustainable, equal, health and safe. At the same time urban spaces connect to rural areas, forests, oceans and are biome related, meaning that all the cities dynamics has different kinds of impacts at surroundings or more distant ecosystems.

The SDG-T hinge on a political and technical effort to make necessary adaptations of what was globally agreed with the national reality. For instance, when comparing Global-Brazilian SDG 5 commitments, there was a concern – built much on social movements manifestations – to expand

4 Some new initiatives are trying to connect political action and territorial designs under the auspicious of national and local Parliamentary Fronts of the SDG (<http://bsb2030.com.br/>), as well as municipality platforms such as *ODS Barueri*, a civil society movement that integrates all society actors in support of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, being a tool for social participation in public policies, strengthening partnerships, disseminating good practices and encouraging collaborative actions that contribute with local sustainable development (<https://odsbarueri.org/>).

the scope of the goals to face this much more complex and fragmented Brazilian reality. Particularly, by making a clear-cut of “intersections with race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, territoriality, culture, religion and nationality, especially for rural girls and women, forest, water and urban peripheries.” (Cadernos 2019; Antunes, Gontijo & Galvão 2020)

The SDG-T is based on intervening processes powerful enough in influencing the results of the 2030 Agenda localization at specific territories: 1) Ideational aggiornamento (ideas, ideologies, beliefs) can profoundly affected public policies in different areas of development; 2) Changing political waves would stress and focus on more progressist or conservative approaches and solutions to local demands; 3) Strategic culture based on intersectionality (a horizontal and holistic look through class, gender, race and sexualities) are more capable of reach local complexities than a more traditional line of thought based on hierarchies.

Indicators—measuring steps to adjust the path

In order to assess if the international community are following the steps needed to accomplish the 2030 Agenda, it was necessary to develop a system of measurement based on indicators (SDG-I) capable to link the global and local levels. Indicators works as a guide to countries discussions of their current priorities based on available and robust data (SDGR2020).

The SDG-I is based on a logic of *dashboards*, aiming to highlight which SDGs require attention in each country, creating priority zones for early action. Additionally, it is based on trend analysis to determine the level of deviation from reaching the objective from an expected path. Using historic data, it allows to estimate how fast a country has been progressing towards an SDG and determine whether into the future this pace will be sufficient to achieve the SDG by 2030 (SDGR 2020, p. 68–70).

The SDG-I was designed with a four-arrow classification system denoting trends on the implementation of a particular SDG. This system was adopted for different regional and national reports, what permits the international community to know what is occurring all over the world. For instance, the Latin American SDG index and the Brazilian Light Report on the SDG (SDGLR 2020) uses a similar set of codes to visualize the pace of each SDG by using performance bands or thresholds identified with the colours alluding to a traffic light (green, yellow, orange, and red). The aim is to demonstrate if the SDG target is: a) decreasing (the country is going in the wrong direction), stagnating (the country is not advancing or advancing below the rate expected), c) moderately improving (the country are advancing but not yet at expected rate), d) on track (the country are maintaining their performance in achieving the targets on that SDG) (CODS 2020, 17-19).

The SDG-I into the Brazilian experience could be seen both at government and society levels. Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) was responsible to adapt the SDG according to the Brazilian reality, avoiding any “reduction in the magnitude and scope of the global agenda” and maintaining a certain degree of “objectivity, through quantitative dimensioning, when the information available so allow.” The justification for the adaptation is quite evident: “the characteristics and

specificities of Brazil often do not see themselves adequately represented in global agreements.” The answer is to make adjusts at the indicators to observe “regional inequalities” and “inequalities of gender, race, ethnicity, generation, economic conditions, among others” (Metas 2018).

Synergic interactions – making the agenda inseparable

The SDG synergic interactions (SDG-Si) would vary from *stopping* (the most negative interaction) to *inseparable* (the strongest form of positive interaction). For example, to “substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy matrix” (SDG 7.2) by building dams and hydropower plants at Amazon – brutally impacting on local indigenous and river populations – is uncoherent with “Strengthen resilience and the ability to adapt to risks related to climate and natural disasters in all countries” (SDG 13.1). On the other side, “end hunger and guarantee access for all people, particularly the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including children, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food throughout the year” (SDG 2.1) is inseparable from the goal of “Eradicate poverty in all its forms, everywhere” (SDG 1) (ICS 2017).

The SDG-Si middle ground would be a *neutral* position where “one objective does not significantly interact with another or where interactions are deemed to be neither positive nor negative” (ICS 2017). For instance, “double the overall rate of improvement in energy efficiency” (SDG 7.3) is coherent with “substantially reduce the proportion of young people without jobs, education or training” (SDG 8.6).

The SDG-Si would have other layers of connections, from more positive effects over SDG implementation, “creating conditions that lead to the achievement of another objective (*reinforcing*) and when the pursuit of one objective enables the achievement of another objective (*enabling*); to more negative one – when the pursuit of one objective sets a condition or a constraint on the achievement of another (*constraining*) or the pursuit of one objective counteracts another objective (*counteracting*) (ICS 2017).

Acceleration – catching up with the dream

To catch up with the dream of *leave no one behind*, the international community designed Acceleration Actions on SDG implementation (SDG-AA) to deal with this inner tension between real capabilities of nations and cities to materialize targets and the almost utopian aspirations of some global goals. SDG-AA are initiatives voluntarily undertaken to accelerate the global goals implementation by governments and any other non-state actors - individually or in partnership. Any new action or action that builds on existing efforts (scaling up, new phase, etc.) related to the achievement of one or more of the 17 SDGs or addressing the interlinked nature of the 2030 Agenda could be considered as an SDG-AA (A/RES/74/4, 2019).

The SDG-AA is based on a central belief that good progress is not good enough, and that we must accelerate the promises made to a new generation of girls and women, boys, and men to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25 “sparked

the accelerated action needed to achieve sexual and reproductive rights and choices for all.” A “march forward” is necessary to accelerate actions of transformations, but only if some predicaments would be respected such as the “right to choose” what happens with “one’s own body and fertility.” The SDG-AA is a fundamental piece of a global political machine to induce a positive impetus for “governments and all other relevant partners.” The Final Report on ICPD 25 pinpointed five issues to accelerate progress across all the themes that are very relevant for the SDG framework acceleration: gender equality, youth leadership, political and community leadership, innovation and data, and partnerships (Nairobi 2019).

The SDG-AA is linked to the pledge of the 2030 Agenda aims to *leave no one behind* which means that goals and targets must be pursued for and achieved by all nations, peoples, and segments of society. Consequently, the more vulnerable the population groups are, the most prioritised they should have their needs firstly met (Briefing 2016). To this promise become feasible both political leaders and businessman ought to “decouple human well-being from environmental degradation through circularity that promotes reuse and recycling of materials” (Sachs et al 2019). Both circularity and decoupling were guidelines for multiple stakeholders “to frame actionable strategies to achieve the SDGs and thereby make our societies more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable” (SDGR2020).

Nonetheless, a kind of syndrome was exposed: on the one hand, vulnerabilities often “overlap to amplify multiple disadvantages,” generating a kind of “drag effect” preventing some SDGs to be achieved. On the other hand, without data it becomes almost impossible to target the groups that have been historically deprived and kept at the margins and surviving in bubbles of exclusion in a global society of hyper consumerism and increase gap between the rich and the poor (Bhatkal, Samman & Stuart, 2015; WIR 2018).

Conclusion

To catch up with the dream to have significant transformations under the 2030 Agenda, people need more than just acceleration actions. The international order is constituted by social constructions in terms of conventions and habitus that hangs on structures and process connecting global conceptions with local aspirations. This *glocal* institutional articulations are totally linked with knowledge production dynamics all over the world.

It’s on the fringe of this North and South global divide that we could find room to defy the cognitive empire (Santos 2019) opening space to thinking on a myriad of analytical options that a pluriverse could provide to us (Escobar 2019). That bring us to understand how international theories are being accessed to explain the multiple themes associated with the 17 SDGs. In this sense, so many other questions arise: are the classical theories and conventional approaches suitable to explain the themes in the SDG boxes? How to avoid a linear and enclosed reading of a specific SDG on behalf of a more holistic approach on the interactions between SDGs? How does one use theories and concepts to deal with existing synergies and interactions between objectives, goals, and indicators?

The quest to understand the SDGs demands a critical assessment of the 2030 Agenda, but it is a clever way to fulfil the claim of worlding IR field by providing geocultural identified concepts. In this case, Brazilian and Latin American intellectuals should have their ideas taking in account to explain the translations and adaptations of signs and languages of the Agenda 2030 in Global South localities. In fact, as a river course not navigated (explained and problematized) by IR scholars, the 2030 Agenda and the SDG constitutes themselves as an excellent raw material to be evaluated and discussed. Specifically, the debates on the SDG has this potential to bring about silenced themes such as gender, race, and sexualities, as well as unconventional approaches such as art, culture, creativity, and emotions. The possible intersections between those dimensions should be more investigated in the next years from the inside and outside IR fields of study as well as efforts to draw practical answers to the concerns and challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda around the world.

Moreover, in order to make the 17 SDGs to communicate both with each other and with issue-areas not specifically charted by the Agenda 2030, the multiple stakeholders working through a SDG lens/frame have to be able to understand this indivisible character and then unleash policy formulation and actions based on the flow of interactions resulting from the synergies between SDGs. Beyond to emulate a ranking or index already made, we should be able to understand the peculiarities of SDG-Si on the Global South and formulate our own charter of connections.

An integrated effort to make all political, environmental, social, and economic responses to local needs is part of this process of translating global goals to local. This SDGs territorialising task will be more successful if the governance measurement institutes would be strengthened. Measuring the steps depends on having the most reliable indicators to allow the international community to adjust its path towards a more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable international order. The SDG-T and the SDG-I intersect to ensure coordination, monitoring and comparability of countries' progress towards achieving the SDGs. Nonetheless, without accessing the necessary means of implementation – from official development assistance (ODA) and new modalities of international development cooperation – the prospective of SDGs achievement is compromised. Consequently, the endeavour to create resilient places/spaces prepared to absorb impacts and recover from natural or induced stresses, preserving both institutional functionality, cultural identities and diversity of populations will be endangered. To avoid the risk that the central pledge of the 2030 international order to leave no one behind to “quickly become an empty promise” in the realm of political rhetoric, glocal governance should aim the most synergic SDGs that has effects in the so-called “overlapping inequalities.”

Finally, if there is a question that remains to be answered is that: are we ready to *accelerate the promise* made by the 2030 Agenda? Considering that the majority of Brazilians prefer democracy other than a dictatorship under military rule (Data Folha 2020), one of the strongest justifications of our engagement into the 2030 international order is precisely to strengthen the democratic bases that constitute the Brazilian social fabric through a wide and qualified debate (based on empirical evidence and scientific advances) on the consolidation of a range of human rights fundamental to the functioning of a more just and egalitarian society.

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