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Beyond core-periphery relationships in the EC cooperation

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ABSTRACT

In the current trend of geopolitical, societal and institutional changes which are occurring in most world economies, the EU development cooperation policies may be confronted with a need to critically revise their very definition.

This paper proposes an overview of the cooperation initiatives which have recently been undertaken by the EU. Besides accounting for their evolution an effort is made to sharp the understanding of their underlying fundamentals, as far as the future issues of cooperative development are concerned. One major finding is that an increase of complexity in cooperation programs is occurring as manifested in a widening of the scopes of the initiatives, an increase in the number of eligible actors and a more diversified structure of relationships;

A few major aspects likely to play an important role in the future cooperation initiatives are identified, concerning: a) a re-definition of the EU-ACP cooperation developmental issues,, b) the contrasting trends of decentralization and globalization, c) a refinement in our ways of thinking about and approaching the definition of cooperative actions.

Key Words: cooperative actions, EU development cooperation, interdependencies, partnership, agents' cognitive abilities

1. INTRODUCTION

As a number of socioeconomic, technological and institutional changes are sweeping over the EU, not least the current process of EU enlargement, international cooperation policies amongst the member states are likely to be significantly affected.

To investigate some aspects of the transformations which are occurring or may be expected, an examination of the evolution that EU cooperation underwent since the launching of its early programs in the sixties is carried out. This endeavour, in fact, may prove to be a useful exercise for analysing:

- the advances made by the EU cooperation programs as the EU unification progressed and the institutional setting of cooperation modified;
- the leverage that cooperation initiatives can provide as far as issues of sustainable socio-economic development are concerned for both EU and non EU states.

The history of EU cooperation policy, covers a relatively short time span, but has been marked by some major events, commonly referred to as Conventions.

The earlier were the Yaoundé Conventions of 1963 and 1969 between the EU and African and Malagasy states¹. They represented a first attempt by the EU to manage the transition from a colonial to neo colonial relationship, by establishing a set of formalized inter-regional relationship. These were substantially expanded in the early 1970s' by the accession of Britain in the EU and the pushing demands by the existing and potential "associates" for a redefinition of the terms of the relationship.

This paved the way to the most significant and extensive events represented by the Lomé Convention which developed over more than fifteen years. It was a very elaborate regime defining rules, regulations and arrangements concerning trade and aid relations. The Convention was first signed in 1975 and was renewed 3 times. Lomé IV was signed in 1989 and revised in 1995. The number of countries also progressively increased, from 9 to 15 to 46 to the 71 states, involving countries from the Caribbean and Pacific coasts (the ACP states). As Lomé IV came into an end in 2000 a far-reaching recasting of the institutionalized relationship was undertaken with the creation of a new Partnership Agreement between the same groups of states.

In the Cotonou Convention, in June 2000, the representatives of over 80 states put their seal on an agreement designed to govern development co-operation between the EU and ACP countries for the next 20 years. It marks the beginning of a new era in the relations between the North and the South of the World (see Brown 2002) .

Our analysis will take as a background the evolution in the EU-ACP relationships and seeks to sharp the understanding of their underlying fundamentals, as far as the future issues of cooperative development are concerned.

¹ The Yaoundé Agreements established the EU as a key player in determining the nature of relations between Europe and the former colonial territories of Africa. The new relationship of "association" bore many of the hallmarks of the new international norms, recognition of formal independence and equality with the ex-colonies.

In this direction, in the first part of the paper we put forward few arguments which will serve as a guide for our analysis. In Section 2 we hint at some major conceptual questions involved in defining cooperative situations. A kind of framework is outlined and some general notions to be used in the analysis of the EU-ACP relationships are identified.

Studies on international developmental cooperation for the European countries are extensive and a number of approaches have been proposed for its interpretation. In the second part of the paper (Section 3) we will recall the main approaches which have been developed in the literature and review their contribution in the light of the key notions suggested in Section 2. From the overview, a kind of blurred picture is exposed, in which the acknowledged unsatisfactory outcome of most EU-ACP programs of the past, has to confront with a range of new issues which are raised by changes in both the geopolitical, i.e. the EU enlargement, and institutional contexts, i.e. the new possibilities for cooperation recently introduced at sub national level (the so called decentralised cooperation), and the determinations enacted on a global scale by world institutions (i.e. the recommendations of the WTO).

Finally, in the last part of the paper an attempt is made to focus on a number of questions which may be challenging in the future EU international developmental cooperation policies and thinking. Building on the acknowledged need of a modern view of cooperation in the XXI century, we argue that three points may deserve prior attention: a) the notion of development and its implication as far as capacity development for socioeconomic weaker countries is concerned, b) the changing societal background and the resulting institutional impact which may be produced on the forms of cooperation between states and sub-national states at both the international and sub-national levels and c) the importance of agents' ability to share a common view on both the goals and kind of partnership required in cooperation.

2. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATIVE ACTION

2.1 Introductory remarks

In human organizations cooperative activities are not just out there to be discovered, implemented and given institutional legitimization. They are built up in a co-evolutionary process in which social actions are supported by cognitive awareness, underlying

individual, collective and institutional behaviours which inscribe in and are shaped by an evolving environment..

Central to this view is a notion of *homo sapiens*, whose behaviour is guided by a set of learning strategies and environmental constraints (Bowles and Gintis, 2002, Gintis, 2002). These latter refer to a quite heterogeneous mix, i.e., language, traditions, cultural capital, conventional wisdom, cognitive strategy, which comes into play whenever we act in a complex world .

In this view, there are two fundamental streams of ideas:

- the first, which we can call bottom up view, cooperation is a particular form of interaction, which ‘occurs when two or more agents are brought together into a dynamic relationship through a set of reciprocal actions’ (Ferber, 1999, p. 59). More specifically, an agent is a social (cognitive) agent, whose actions are goal-oriented and based on an internally explicit representational attitude towards the world. For example, if as in Ferber (1999, p.17) we distinguish agents according to their representational ability of the world (i.e. reactive vs cognitive) and their type of behaviour (i.e. reflexive vs goal oriented) different kind of agent can be defined, i.e. intelligent, drive-based, module-based and tropistic agents ². As a result, of the variability in the agency profile, different cooperative situations are likely to emerge from the interactions between individual agents. As a general prerequisite for cooperation a situation of conflict avoidance or conflict resolution should exist, as incompatibility between interfering goals is a major barrier to cooperation;
- the second, which we can call top down view, cooperation is a form of systemic relationships, which has been established for a group of individuals having different roles, given a certain set of norms and rules governing the functioning of the system. This suggests a top-down view of cooperation and stems from a systemic approach of society and human organization³. For the systemic view, therefore, cooperation is a

² More precisely:

a) intelligent agents. are agents who are intelligent (rational) and have goals motivating their actions,
b) drive-based agents are agents whose behaviour is pushed by internal needs (or by goals defined by a designer),
c) module-based agents are agents who are able to answer to questions and accomplish task, without being aware of that,
d) tropistic agents are agents who only respond to stimuli coming from the environment.

³ When looking at the main drives of cooperation, literature provides us with three major perspectives of analysis (Bowles and Gintis, 2002, Maynard Smith and Szathmary, 1995):

- the first views individuals as social animals. Cooperation results from a basic desire of helping a relative in order to propagate one's own genes (kin selected altruism). Individuals therefore would manifest an intrinsic attitude to socialize, through mechanisms such as altruism and reciprocity;

situation resulting from the interplay of actors' interactions, given the existing set of system relationships (i.e. norms, institutional rules, customs) and/or the action of an external event, i.e. a policy prescription, which can constrain, foster or favour the realization of cooperative situations.

Neither the bottom up nor the top down view alone has proven to be successful in providing adequate answers to cooperation. It is increasingly acknowledged that both are involved and need to be integrated in a common approach to cooperation.

Some authors have pointed out that besides recognizing that cooperation emerges from intelligent interacting agents, we have to admit that agents are social (see Castelfranchi, 1998, Conte 2000). In particular, sociality means that agents share a common world, characterized by interferences among the agents' actions and goals.

Interferences, on their turn, are context dependent as they depend on the environment in which they take place. But this latter is not simply a passive playground underlying the organizational structure, i.e. the system of dependence relationships, which bounds the agents' capabilities. It can itself be viewed as an agent, belonging to an higher systemic level, embodying a group of individual agents interacting at a lower level.

To which extent this collective agent is likely to be endowed with intelligence, which kind of intelligence will he/she possess and how his/her various forms of intelligence may, on their turn, affect individual agents' intelligence are a few research questions which are raised in several fields of social analysis (see Castelfranchi, 1998, Conte, 2000).

Literature suggests three major perspectives which can be helpful, as far as the possibilities to articulate the social potentialities of human interactions are concerned:

- the first concerns the tension between what is to be considered as good for an individual and a group. Cooperation between self-interested reciprocating individuals is associated with mutual benefits to be gained by grouping. Synergetic effects are involved, which

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- the second views individuals as self-interested. Cooperation, then, is primarily associated with mutual benefits to be gained by grouping. Synergetic effects are involved, which depend on both the type of strategy individuals are likely to undertake (i.e. that of the prisoner's dilemma) and the stability of the adopted strategy;
 - the last perspective views individuals as bounded actors in a society, which imposes norms and collective rules on them. Cooperation is made possible by means of a kind of social contract, which punishes who will defect.

In real world situations, none of the above views is likely to be predominant, but all may come into play although in different ways or at different times in the evolution of the system as the configuration of the cultural landscape is also changing. In addition, the increasing pace of innovation and spreading of new information technologies in all sectors of cities as well as in society (Janelle and Hodge eds., 2000), make it possible to establish new forms of interactions which can trigger, favour or amplify the possibility to realize cooperative actions.

depend on both the type of strategy individuals are likely to undertake (i.e. that of the prisoner's dilemma) and the stability of the adopted strategy (Axelrod, 1997);

- the second builds upon a notion of *homo socialis* and relates to the idea of *social capital* which is created because of the web of relationships established by heterogeneous agents interacting in a certain *milieu*. This yields a systemic component which endows the milieu of a mix of resources which can be successfully spent to sustain its developmental path and management performance(Pierce, Lovrich and Moon, 2002);
- the second and more recent view recognizes that a human being is an *homo sapiens* (see Bowles and Gintis, 2002). His behaviour depends on a *conceptual blending* (Hutchins, 1998) between his own cognitive abilities and the intangible asset of system endowments marking his *cultural environment*, i.e. language, norms, traditions, customs, know-how, collective practices. Besides playing a role in constraining or favouring the deployment of agents' relationships, cultural environment is thus an essential component of their milieu which co-evolves with the other socio-economic, environmental, institutional components of any human organization (Gabora, 1997).

Of course, the development of an integrated approach to cooperation would require a broader research project capable of articulating both the contents of the questions we are addressing, i.e. the type of cooperative situations we are interested in, and the epistemological framework we consider for their analysis, i.e. the way we approach those situations⁴.

As a first step in this direction, in the following we will outline a kind of conceptual framework which will also serve as reference for the analysis of the EU-ACP relationships in Section 3.

2.2 A framework of cooperative situations

In structuring a framework of cooperative situations the articulation between the two levels on which cooperation is rooted, i.e. the individual, cooperation emerges as a result of the

⁴ For example, some questions to be addressed are the following (Occelli, 2002:

- is cooperation to be considered embedded in the intentional posture of the agent, thus resulting in his/her commitment to some higher-level system goals, which drive any social activity?
- is cooperation to be viewed as the outcome of some secondary feedback effects resulting from agent's interactions, which would affect the functioning of the system while being no intention driven? (Castelfranchi, 2001)?
- to which extent can cooperation be thought as being driven by some anticipatory concern about the future state of the system?

behaviour of individual interacting agents, and the collective, i.e. cooperative actions depend on the set of systemic relationships impinging on individuals' behaviours, is a major aspect.

In particular, we suggest that two main dimensions should underlie the framework:

- an internal dimension, which refers to the individual cognitive ability and concerns the kind of attitude agents have towards the world (Castelfranchi, 1998a; Ferber, 1999).

Two extreme situations can be identified:

- that in which agents have a limited cognitive ability of the external world, i.e. they only take into account their own view and can simply react to stimuli from the environment and /or comply with the others' behaviours in a reactive way;
 - that in which agents have a more complex cognitive ability, i.e. they take into account also the other's agent point-of-view, and can influence their external world, affecting both their environment, the behaviours of other agents and the other's agents views;
- an external dimension which accounts for the structure of dependences (the system of relationships) and defines agents' roles within their organizational context. It also gives the general set of socioeconomic, spatial, cultural and institutional conditions which endow and/or constrain agents' aims, resources and tasks (see Caldas and Coelho, 2000). Also for this dimension, we can identify two extreme cases:
 - a simple dependence in which only the role of certain agents prevails (it is recognized as predominant) in the systemic relationships;
 - inter-dependence in which the different roles of the various agents are accounted-for in the system relationships (i.e. their complementarities are acknowledged).

These two dimensions allow us to identify an ideal space within which a whole range of cooperative situations can be accommodated, ranging from simpler ones, those characterized by simple dependence, to more complex ones, those characterized by inter-dependence. To sharpen our argument, it may be worth considering as an example the taxonomy of cooperative situations developed by Schaeffer and Loveridge (2002). Although the taxonomy refers to a specific type of cooperation, i.e. the public-private cooperation, it is particularly exemplary, because it is based on a set of possible definitional keys for defining cooperation which turn out to be pertinent also for our discussion. These definitional keys are related to:

- the purpose , i.e. what are the aims of the agents in participating to cooperation ? ;
- the expected outcome, i.e. what are the benefits and costs of the cooperation for the participating agents ? . How are they shared and/or supported ?;
- the agreement between agents, i.e. what kind of arrangements are defined for the agents to commit themselves to cooperation ?;
- the duration, i.e. what is the temporal deployment of the cooperative situation? Do agent learn about cooperation as the agreement progresses in time ? ;
- the agents' decision-making process, i.e. how and to which extents agents are willing to to participate to the cooperation initiative, to define common goals, to commit themselves to the cooperation purposes.

The four ideal types of cooperation which have been identified according to these keys are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Types of cooperation (adapted from Schaeffer and Loveridge, 2002, p.184)

	Leader-follower	Buyer / Seller	Joint-Venture	Partnership
Pur pose	Specific	Specific	Specific	Broad, open ended
Outcome	Individual rewards and correlated limited risks	Market conditioned individual rewards and negotiated risks	Shared correlated rewards and unevenly distributed but depending on agreement conditions risks	Shared rewards and unevenly distributed but strongly correlated risks
Agreement	Depends on the leader	Depends on complexity of transaction	Yes	Yes
Duration	Limited	Limited but depending on the purpose	Depends on complexity of the project	Open ended
Decision-making	Independent / conditional	Negotiated, competitive	Coordinated	Joint, egalitarian

Given its conceptual underpinnings, we can observe that the taxonomy outlined in Tab.1 looks at cooperation adopting a substantially external (systemic) point of view.

Only the decision making criteria more clearly reflects the internal (individual) view. To address agents' decision-making, in fact, means to recognize that the achievement of a cooperative situation depends on agents' cognitive abilities. In other words, agent's

representational (i.e. the agents' beliefs) and conative (i.e. agents' tendencies for action) functions are essential components for establishing a cooperative situation. These, in fact, not only provide the substantial contents of the purpose of cooperation (i.e. the reasons why to cooperate) but also give sense to the individual agents for their involvement thus contributing to reinforce their commitment and eventually favour the likely positive effects which are expected.

These remarks are particularly meaningful for the 'partnership type' whose general notion has gained increasing attention also in the literature on international development cooperation where it has been highlighted as an encompassing feature of the most recent relationships between the EC and ACP states⁵.

In this context, it has already been clearly underlined that the ways objectives of partnership are perceived (in particular by southern states), will influence its success and effectiveness (Mohiddin, 1998).

To go a step further in our discussion, it may be worth wondering how the four types of cooperative situations refer to the internal (agents' attitude towards the world) and external (roles of the agent) dimensions of the framework we introduced earlier.

Fig.1 shows the graphical result of this exercise. What the figure suggests is that the different types may correspond to steps of an ideal trajectory which moves:

- from relatively simple cooperative situations, in which agents possess a relatively limited cognitive ability and their relationships are prevailing uni-directional, such as those represented by the leader/follower, buyer seller types,
- to relatively more complex ones, where agents' cognitive abilities are more elaborate and their relationships more interdependent and articulated, such as those exemplified by the joint venture and partnership types. As far partnership in international cooperation is concerned, in particular, some authors (Hauck and Land, 2000) have emphasized the higher order form of this relationship. Its saliency depends on the

⁵ The meaning of "partnership" among sovereign states has long been a subject of some perplexity, given the number of widely different international partnerships in operation (Lister 1988, Raffer 2002). Nevertheless, the usage of this terminology is virtually universal today, having flourished, for example in the EU's lexicon, ever since it replaced "Association" to designate EU relations with developing countries.

At present "partnership" can be applied to almost any inter-state relations. The dissemination of the contemporary discourse of interstate "partnership" is a part of the process of globalisation.

Adjectives such as "uneven", "unequal" or "asymmetrical" can be added to "partnership" to indicate its often unbalanced nature in practice. Raffer (see 2001) talks for instance about an "Orwellian model of partnership" where the stronger party makes all the decisions and the weaker one is largely a historical burden. (Raffer 2001)

specific intertwining of characteristics pertaining to both the internal and external dimensions, i.e. long term shared responsibility, common visions, reciprocal obligations, mutuality of balance and power and equality of decision-making. Trust is a further element which has been highlighted for the building social capital and promoting economic development. (Fukuyama 1995).

A final remark about the ideal trajectory of the cooperative situations of Fig.1, is that cooperation cannot be understood as a static state of affairs, i.e. the one shot achievement of interacting agents, but as an evolutionary situation, in which also the various forces which may drive or constrain its realization belong to an evolving socioeconomic and institutional environment.

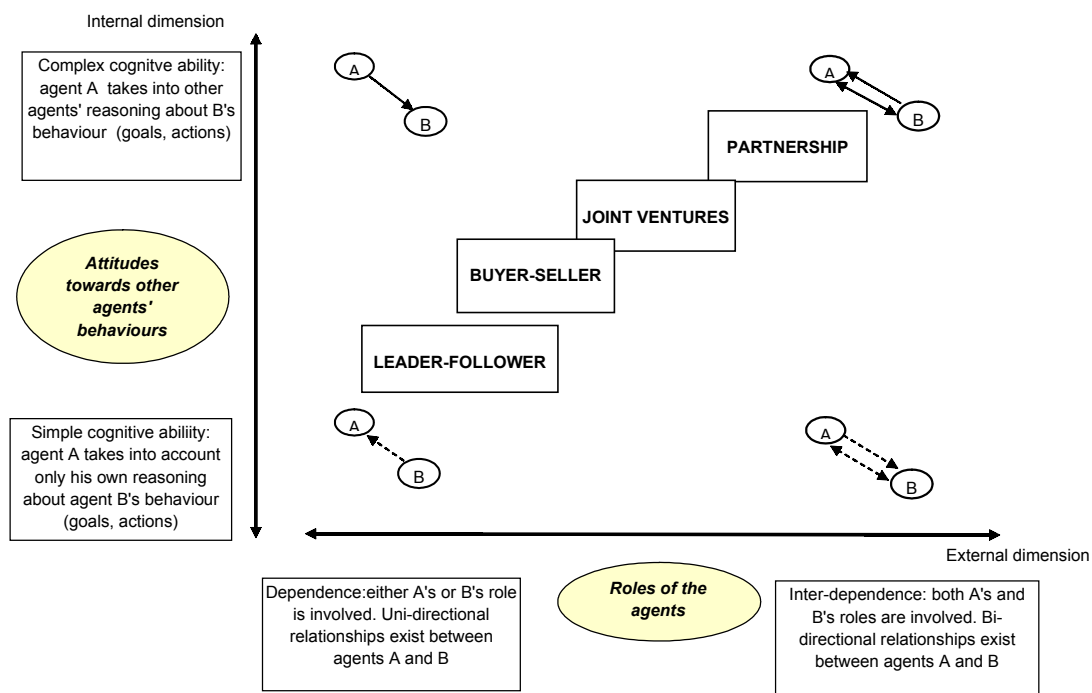


Figure 1 Ideal-types of cooperative situations according to the internal an external dimensions underlying the relationships between agents

This has already been clearly emphasized on a conceptual and methodological ground by a number of studies which have explored this issue by means of simulation experiments (see, Cohen, Riolo and Axelrod, 1998).

3. AN ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION

The aim of this section is to give an account of the evolution of the relationships between the EU and ACP states, on the basis of the key notions previously introduced.

Our attention will focus on the Lomé Conventions which, as previously mentioned, represented fundamental events in the evolution of North South relations and development co-operation. In fact, they established a very elaborate regime defining rules, regulations and arrangements concerning trade and aid relations between Northern developed and Southern underdeveloped countries. It took place in the context of a historical transformation in which state sovereignty replaced subjugation and colonialism as the ordering principles of the relations between the continents of Europe and Africa.

In the following paragraphs we first present a brief outline of the Lomé Conventions, we outline a general background for their understanding and finally recall the main approaches that in the literatures have been provided for their interpretation.

3.1 The Lomé Conventions

The Lomé Conventions sat at the apex of a “pyramid” of EU agreements with developing countries (Mishalani et al. 1981). Although the EU has had a range of such agreements for some time⁶, those established by the Lomé Conventions were the most comprehensive and dominated EU relations with the countries of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific islands (the ACP states)

In fact they established a legally binding agreement which (see W. Brown 2002)

- covered the provision of aid to the ACPs
- regulated the preferential trade access to EU markets

⁶ These include association and cooperation agreements with countries of the Mediterranean and Middle East, covering trade, financial and aid relations. It has also a variety of agreements with Latin American countries and Asia. The Lomé Conventions, however, were the most extensive and somehow “sat the tone” for the EU policies in agreement with the rest of the developing world lower down the “pyramid”.

- stabilisation of export earning of the ACPs (via the Stabex system)⁷
 - defined a commitment to deal with a whole range of development co-operation issues.
- They also contained mechanisms and institutions for “joint administration” of the agreement, as well as for periodic “dialogue” between the parties on its implementation. While the original convention responded to a general pattern of North-South relations, involving commitments from the EU but also from ACPs countries, it also reflected a more specific concern of the ACP for a reformed relationship with the international economy and, on the EU side, concerns over raw material supplies and its future relations with the South.

These issues remained but declined in importance as the Convention evolved and as North-South relations moved to a new phase in the 1980s. This focussed on an increasingly conditional offer of development cooperation from northern states in particular, demanding economic and subsequently political reforms in return of aid.

The Convention thus came to reflect this agenda incorporating such economic and political conditionality in terms (i.e. Structural Adjustment of the World Bank and IMF).

The EU-APC relationships are thus notable in that:

- from an economic point-of view, they do not constitute a common market, free trade area or a political alliance, although elements of all are included , i.e. they provide a trade regime and political issues are raised by the “dialogue”;
- from an organizational point-of-view, they are based on formalized negotiated agreements based rather than on a series of “ad hoc” agreements over aid programmes defined by member states through bilateral aid relationship,
- from an institutional point-of-view, they are enacted by sovereign states on the basis of legal equality of the parties.

3.2 A background interpretation to the Lomé Conventions

A number of studies have been carried out to analyse the Lomé Conventions. These have polarized around two rather different views, which for the sake of simplicity we will call the Liberal and Dependency view.

⁷ Stabex: system of tariff preferences which give ACPs countries a special fund to maintain price stability in agricultural products.

3.2.1 The Liberal view

The Liberal approach to the analysis of Lomé sustained that the signing of the original Convention represented a step away from colonial dependent relationship and a step towards a more interdependent, equitable relationship with Europe.

The Conventions, therefore, were due to bring about a number of important benefits and namely:

- a growing equality between the North and South countries;
- greater interdependence of ACPs countries
- a furthering of economic development and multilateral international ties for ACP countries and away from dependence on the old colonial power.

The view draws on liberal approaches to international relations in general and those that emphasised interdependence ⁸.

As far as the Lomé relationships are concerned, two major aspects have been emphasized (see Brown 2002):

- First the existence of interdependence is asserted in the mere fact of “co-operation” between states, as an attempt to define the mutual interests of each party in the agreements and in the growth of new multilateral channels of connectedness between states. As a result, we assisted at a widening of relationships in two ways: in the move away from bilateral ties of the colonial era to multilateral ties between two groups of countries; and in the expansion of the issue areas covered in the relationship – from imperial economic linkages to issues of aid, economic support, political dialogue and regional politics.
- Second, the assertion of the possibility, or actuality, of growing equality between the two groups of states. Furthermore, to an extent, the interdependence literature saw such developments as stemming from the growth of complexity in the economic field and linked these international manifestations of interdependence to the modernisation of

⁸ In a nutshell, these approaches argued that while the international system may or may not be characterised by anarchy (in the sense of the absence of a supranational organization above nation-states), nevertheless substantial areas exist for co-operation between states in the pursuit of mutual gains. These may exist in any arena of international relations, but are particularly apparent in attempts to govern the economic relations between states where joint agreements about standards and rules have proliferated, representing a substantial proportion of the range of multilateral arrangement that exist. The existence of regimes of rules and procedures help to lessen transaction costs, thus facilitating the translational spread of networks of interdependence.

developing countries. Basically, weak states could move from a situation of dependency on a single power to a fully integrated set of relations with a multitude of powers.

The achievement of economic take-off by the developing countries would therefore also mean a greater level of integration and diversification in external economic relations and foreign policies.

There are really two claims made within this approach to the Lomé Conventions:

- an argument, which however has been later challenged, that they represent a step towards greater equality;
- an argument that Lomé Conventions have to be understood as a regime and therefore should be placed within the wider context of regimes and international co-operation. As such they have:
 - rules governing trade relations between the two groups of states
 - procedures for allocating aid and renegotiating the terms of the agreement
 - institutional aspects in the shape of joint committees of ministers and political representatives
 - a functional role both in a general sense of “promoting development” and in the more basic but important sense of regulating economic interactions.

Mutual benefits often assumed to be present in regimes are subject to some qualification given the divergent power resources of each side, and there is reason to at least questioning the extent to which transaction costs are reduced. Nevertheless the Lomé Conventions certainly expressed some kind of shared interests in co-operation, demonstrated in the voluntary acceptance and promotion of the Convention by the two sides.

3.2.2 The Dependency view

The alternative view which developed in the early debate on Lomé drew a rather different picture (Hoogvelt, 1982).

In place of mutual vulnerabilities and growing interdependence, many observed a continuation of colonial-type patterns of economic relations. Domination by others means

(mostly economic) that the Convention was a new mechanism of dominance and control (Amin 1974). Dependency theory argues, in fact, that contrary to expectations of growing equality between states and increasing development of the Third World countries, there was in fact a process of underdevelopment of the Third World countries by the industrialised nations⁹.

Dependency theory postulated a bifurcated world divided between “core” and “peripheral” areas, with a conflict of interests based on economic exploitation of the periphery by the core, rather than co-operation as the basis of the global system. From this perspective Lomé reinforced a dependent relationship, through an emphasis on primary product exports to Europe from Africa, through a lack of promotion on industrialisation in Africa and through promoting a reliance on financial support from colonial masters.

Lomé was also seen to foster dependency through its claimed effects on African unity or prospects for pan-African regionalism. Attempts at African regional union were thwarted by the preponderance of “extroverted” links to Europe (Luke 1985). Such vertical linkages were particularly marked in the more developed African countries and thus exacerbated the problem, as these countries, with the closest links to Europe, were often the very ones at the centre of regionalist ventures. (Olofin 1977).

Another element that reinforces the dependency-perspective is seen in relation to the relative structural positions of Africa and Europe in the world economy.

Clearly within the Lomé context the Convention is seen to perpetuate this dependent relationship by maintaining the links to the “metropole” that ensure development remain blocked.

3.3 The EU-ACP co-operation in perspective

Broadly speaking, the EU policy towards developing countries can be defined “a European response” to the core demands of the Third World during the late 1950s onwards.

To completely recompose the web of EU development countries ties established over the years, one should analyse the debate within the Community about development perspective,

⁹ W. Brown, p. 8

policies and practices. These, however, are poorly documented in the official EU publications.¹⁰

During the Lomé's lifetime, in fact, the Commission simply posited that the Conventions should be taken at face value: as a joint agreement between sovereign states on the basis of equality with the aim of furthering the development of ACPs states.

Lomé was proclaimed as the most extensive co-operation agreement of the history of North-South relations covering trade, aid, joint management and funding for a wide range of development actions, their effects are mainly seen in terms of development "benefit" for the ACP states.

The outcome of the cooperation for the EU states are more often than not neglected.

Also the various changes the Conventions have introduced have been claimed to be "neutral" "apolitical" and "technical" in nature and mainly designed to achieve more effective development co-operation in the interests of the ACP countries¹¹.

As pointed out by a few commentators (see Lister 1988, Brown 2002, Grilli 1993), after more than four decades of EEC development policy one may declare that the Community system of development cooperation and all its political and economic offshoots as they have developed hitherto have been disappointing and failed to meet the needs of the poor southern states.

The positive results have been limited to a number of isolated cases (see Pons Grau, 1993)

Despite the acknowledged failures, the Community has never abandoned, nor revised its approach to development based on Eurocentric theories (Mehmet, 1995)

One can rightly wonder whether the efforts of the Community have been really genuine and recognize that a new asset of North-South relationships has been created or posit, instead, that these relationships simply reflect the asymmetries and unequal socioeconomic capabilities distinguishing the developed and underdeveloped counties in a world context.

Far from having the presumption to answer this question, it can be worth however making an effort to state the question more clearly. To this end we recall four main interpretive

¹⁰ The official publications of the EU Commission rarely deal with the politics of the changing international political economy in which this particular set of relations is set.. They thus fail to grasp important elements of the reasons for, the dynamics of the change of, and the constraints on, development co-operation policy in the Lomé Convention (see Brown 2002).

¹¹ EU interests and policy agenda are not considered as the main driving forces behind the modifications introduced (i.e. the introduction of funding for structural adjustment was presented as a Community response to a developmental need in the ACP states; and the shift in many areas of the Convention to an emphasis on encouraging the private sector, reducing the

approaches to the EU-ACP cooperation which have been put forward in the literature, and discuss them in the light of the concepts we elaborated in Section 2, see Tab.2

3.3.1 The modernization approach

This represents the official interpretation of the Community. It is also the interpretation which most explicitly draws from the earlier consolidated view of the liberal approach hinted in 3.2.1.

In accordance with that view, the main purpose of the EU-ACP cooperation is to meet an encompassing need for international solidarity. Through cooperation, in fact a greater interdependence is achieved which can be greatly beneficial for the economic development of the ACP partners.

Community has established a relation on the basis of a complete equality between the partners and in a spirit of international solidarity and this is understood as the most necessary and sufficient condition for cooperation to exist.

The various changes which have been introduced are claimed to be “neutral”, “apolitical” and “technical” in nature and intended to achieve more effective development cooperation in the interests of ACPs countries. EU interests and policy agendas are not seen to be the main driving force behind the modification introduced. Even the introduction of funding for structural adjustment was presented as a Community response to a developmental need in the ACPs states, and the shift in many areas of the Convention to an emphasis on encouraging the private sector, reducing the role of the state and, more recently, of reforming the state itself, are also presented as enhancing the possibility of development.

This school of thought neglects to acknowledge the existence of a changing environment: the underlying politics of the Convention, the politics of the changing international political economy in which this particular set of relations is set, and political and economic agendas other than concern for “development cooperation” which may exist in EU policy.

The literature shares a failing of an absence of critical awareness of the historical, social, economic and political contexts in which this institutionalised relationship has evolved.

3.3.2. The neo-dependency approach

role of the state and, more recently, of reforming the state itself, are also presented as enhancing the possibilities of

Rooted in dependency theory, this approach provides a diametrically opposed view, as it has its main roots in dependency theory. As mentioned in 3.2.2 this postulated a bifurcated world divided between “core” and “peripheral” areas, with a conflict of interests based on economic exploitation of the periphery by the core.

Table 2 A comparison of the main interpretations of the role of the Community in the EU-ACP relationships

	Modernization	Neo-dependency	Collective clientelism	State interest
Purpose	Broad aim of international solidarity	Maintenance of colonialist relationships	Partner protection for market volatility	Protection of donor interests
Outcome	Greater interdependence for promoting economic development	Asymmetrical economic exploitations	Market conditioned economic exchanges	Selfish economic exploitations
Agreement	Partnership among sovereign states	Formal arrangement to maintain the core-periphery dependency	Arrangement to maintain cliental ties between unequal actors	Arrangement to off load some donor partners
Decision-making	Coordinated	Independent / conditional	Independent / conditional	Negotiated, competitive

Community’s policy is mainly viewed as a ‘symbolic innovation’ which however does not substantially change the structure of colonial-type relationships existing between poor and rich countries. The EU-ACP relationships, therefore, are mainly interpreted as neo-colonial¹².

The main purpose of Community is the maintenance of a relationship forged in the colonial era and which the intervention of political independence has done to little to alter. Furthermore, the development path is chosen by the Community itself and it is not a result of a joint-effort.

development) (see Brown 2002).

¹²”In accord with the definition given by the dictionary of Politics: “ ...the conditions of poor countries are often no better and their peoples no freer than when they were governed by the European Colonial powers in the period up to the mid 20th century”. This statement is confirmed by the first leader of Ghana that after the independence of his country wrote: “ the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and its political policy is directed by outside”.

In this context, the Lomé Conventions, reinforced a dependent relationship, through an emphasis on primary product exports to Europe from Africa, through a lack of promotion of industrialisation in Africa and through promoting a reliance on financial support from former colonial masters.

The Conventions, therefore, are seen to encourage the continuation of inequality by giving support to primary exports through the Stabex system; by not allowing enough market access for manufactured exports to the EU from the ACP, and by not financing industrialisation through aid provisions.

Lomé was also seen to foster dependency through its claimed effects on African unity or prospects for pan-African regionalism.

3.3.3 The collective-clientelism approach

A third and more recent interpretation (see Moss and Ravenhill , 1982) is that of “collective clientelism”. This views the relationships between the Community and the Third World countries as an agreement between unequal parties, but where the dependent one is eager for the agreement. For this approach, in fact, the ACPs countries are aware that they are weak, even as compared with other low developed countries and Nics (Newly Industrialised Countries) but try to draw advantages from the dialectics of dependence. They try to exploit the current state of affairs of dependence and the special , historically evolved, relations in order to maintain resources as a means to ease independence. The cliental system offers the weaker partner the special chance of turning a weakness into strength, i.e. of drawing greater benefits from cooperation.

Collective clienteles offer the weaker partner protection from market volatility. It is an asymmetric relationship which can only exist between actors with unequal resource distribution. The relationship is furthermore characterised by a packet of “affective ties” and instrumental involved in a rational clienal relationship with the EU. For most countries, the Lomé Agreements provide the possibility of acquiring material benefits. The EU on the other hand shows an interest in vertical cooperation, since it considered the ACPs states as allies in the West-East conflict, in international debates and in intra-capitalistic competition, as well as means to securing raw material supplies.

3.3.4 The state-interest approach

The final and most recent approach to the EU-ACPs relationships focuses on the self-interests of the European states (see Lister 1988). Some commentators (Brown 2002) have argued that “donor interests” dominate the use of aid over “recipient interests”, ensuring that the self-interests of the European Union countries are carried through into the delivery of aid.

Others have focussed specifically on French interests in the foundation of Lomé and in its use of aid. Among all the European states it is France which has always had the greatest commitment to the relationship with the ACPs. In particular, the Conventions have been seen as a means by which France was able to off-load to its European partners some of the costs of maintaining this African relationship. They are also important to France’s middle-power status, thus emphasising the “power-politics” origins of apparent cooperation.

The emphasis on the pursuit of selfish interests, however, exposes the same kind of problem to that left by the neo-dependency approach: why would the southern states participate if donor interests are so dominant and given that there is no direct or indirect coercion to participate in the agreements?

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS: COOPERATION VS COOPERATIVE ACTIONS

Far from being exhaustive, from our overview a kind of blurred picture of EC development cooperation emerges. This, at least on an analytic ground, spurs for a quest to a general improvement in future programs.

In this regard, a need to critically analyse the unsatisfactory outcome in the programs carried out in the past, has already been widely acknowledged. Furthermore the current societal, technological and geo-political changes have also been recognised to have a crucial impact on the establishment of the future relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries

To briefly discuss the likely implications of their impact, these changes can be organized under three main headings which, to some extent, can be considered as major drives to cooperation, in the next decade, see Fig.2.:

- a re-definition of the developmental issues which EC-ACP cooperation programs should focus on;

- the contrasting trends of decentralization and globalization whose impact on the geo-political and institutional assets of countries is changing the conditions of cooperation;
- new ways of thinking about and approaching the definition of cooperative actions and their implications on the building and managing of human organizations in general.

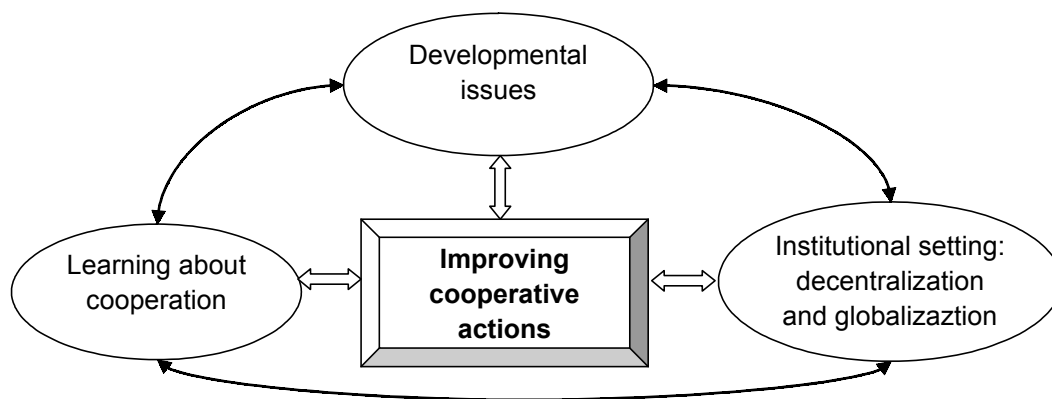


Figure 2 Major drives for cooperative actions

A twofold observation can be put forward:

- first that these drives widen the scopes of cooperation programs, i.e. they diversify and at the same time extend the goals of cooperation, therefore enriching the types of relationships which should be established among the partners;
- and second that they involve to a greater extent sub-national local governments and non governmental bodies of the EC and non EC states. As the number of eligible partners increases, also the kind of formal agreements should diversify in order to best respond to their targets. .

A general implication is that the potentials of cooperation are likely to be significantly expanded and be relevant not only for the relationships between the North–South, EU-ACP countries, but also, more generally, for the encompassing relationships between the so called core and peripheral areas within and between EC states.

4.1 Development issues and cooperation goals: redefining common interests

The evolution of the Conventions taken into consideration in this paper has demonstrated the complexity and problematic nature of such formalised relations between groups of states in a rapidly changing international environment.

The concept of partnership has been questioned throughout the paper. One major result of our analysis is that partnership cannot be assumed to exist simply because a contract has been signed, it needs to be achieved rather than declared.

In particular, the discussion in Section 3 suggests that those cooperation agreements were based on too many assumptions:

- the existence of a common vision underlying the shared objectives and interests:
- a static context of the environment in which the cooperation initiatives took place. In other words,, they largely failed to adjust to the major changes in the international policy environment (such as shifting views on the role of the state, participation of non-state actors) and to the new requirements of development cooperation (governance, accountability and transparency) as a result our form of cooperation is obsolete in many respect.

The process of definition of the goals of cooperation therefore appears to be of paramount importance. Notwithstanding this point has been widely recognized in the recent literature (see), we believe that the for the viability of this process both the changes in the institutional context (i.e. those produced by decentralization and globalization) and learning about cooperation should be taken into account.

4.2 The impact of decentralization and globalization

Decentralization and globalization are two contrasting trends of change that will further severely affect the future development cooperation programs.

The former reflects the worldwide thrust of political liberalisation, the changing perceptions on the role of the nation-state in development and a search for alternative channels to cooperate. It is seen as a step towards greater involvement of “the people” directly concerned by development programmers and a tool for the creation of a democratic fabric.

The latter is the process of creating an integrated global economy, polity and society. It provides a broader arena in which actors are compelled to perform in.

Although relatively recent¹³, decentralization has produced an increase in the number of the agents involved in partnerships, i.e. besides nation-states, other actors such as local governments and other non governmental bodies are entitled to cooperate.

As a consequence a more heterogeneous environment for cooperative actions has been created. Direct support to civil society actors may bring development closer to the people, enhance local ownership and accountability. Actively involving local actors is often seen to be the best investment in “capacity development”

Its fundamental aim is to promote the active involvement of the European civic societies in development actions. (see the projects of the Piedmont Region¹⁴)

The cornerstone of decentralised cooperation is the transfer of financial responsibilities to local actors. In this way the central government cannot interfere in the day-to-day management of decentralised operation.

Some distinctive basic features of the decentralised cooperation programmes are:

- a different political approach that enhances the participatory development and the formation of interest groups;
- the possibility to support initiative that originate directly from the local communities and association. In this way the “top-down approach” is avoided and the responsibility for programme identification and implementation is hence delegated to the lowest possible level.
- the improvement of the ability to learn from the cooperation experiences, strengthening the capacity of civil society to formulate their own objectives and aims.
- the augmentation of cooperation initiatives. Decentralized cooperation programmes, however, have to be seen as complementary actions and not in opposition to those undertaken by nation states.

Globalization can influence the process of cooperation in many ways. So far the most evident are:

- a greater role for the trade blocks, i.e. EU, NAFTA, Asia's Tigers;
- an erosion of bargaining power of weaker agents;

¹³ Decentralization in the context of cooperation has been developed in late eighties in Lomè IV.

¹⁴ For further information: Provincia di Torino “La cooperazione decentrata. Strumento di sviluppo dei poteri locali

- the greater influence of international financial institutions (WTO, IMF), through the Adjustment Structural Programmes.

4.3 Learning about cooperation

One major claim of this paper is that improving our understanding of cooperative actions is essential for the viability of cooperative initiatives also on an institutional ground.

In this regard, the discussion in Section 2 attempted to organize in a conceptual framework some major features which may support this understanding. In particular, it allowed us to show how some of these features, notably those concerned with the agent's cognitive abilities (which form the internal dimension of the framework), play an important role for the establishment of a so-called 'genuine' partnership, i.e. one which goes beyond the simple formal agreement.

Underlying the discussion of the taxonomy of cooperation types, there is also the presumption that the acknowledgement of the increasing complexity that we can observe in many cooperative situations today, cannot help considering the kind of knowledge 'about the cooperation questions' which is available to the involved actors. Following this line of argument, therefore, one may contend, perhaps naively, that the more 'information' there is about cooperation the more likely cooperation will be successful (i.e. achieve its goals, reinforce the capacity building of the weaker agents, use the allotted resources efficiently).

The current debate about the measurement, monitoring and assessment of the performance of cooperation initiatives supports this claim (see Lehtinen, 2000, www.Paris21.org). Collecting data, gathering information about best practices and implementing indicators are ways of learning about the many facets of development cooperation programs and related developmental issues.

As far as our conceptual framework is concerned, in particular, we can note that, as they are related to the representational function, this bundle of activities can also find a place in our conceptual framework, as far as be the agents' cognitive abilities are concerned.

A last comment worth being made here relates to the fact that cooperation in its broader meaning, i.e. as a dynamic situation of interacting individuals benefiting the group which the individuals belong to, is becoming increasingly important for coping with the complexities in today system organizations. In fact, it can represent a viable alternative for

overcoming the difficulties encountered by conventional approaches based on stereotyped juxtapositions such as those between state and market, individual and society, core and periphery. Also from an organizational point-of view, cooperative forms of relationships would provide useful alternative to deal with the management of functions and tasks at different levels (see, Kooiman, 1994). This also reflects a more profound quest about the very roots of human sociality and the formation of social order as a result of the behaviour of purposive agents (see, Macy, 1998, Castelfranchi, 1998b, David, Sichman and Coelho, 2001).

On a more theoretical ground, in particular, to deepen an understanding of human cooperation, also by means of simulation experiments, can help answering a number of practical questions, such as those concerning (see Axelrod, 2000, Cohen, Riolo and Axelrod 1998, Zimmermann et al. 2000):

- Under what conditions cooperation can be established and sustained in the long run ?
- What kind of strategy should be implemented for an interaction situation to become cooperative ?
- What kind of recommendation can be suggested to the decision-maker (the reformer) in order to favour the emergence of cooperation ?

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