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Transnational Governance and the Reduction of Inequality within and between Countries

By Clovis Demarchi & Elaine Cristina Maieski
Universidade do Vale do Itajaí

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Keywords: *transnational governance. social inequality. SDG 10. justice. vulnerable groups.*

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Transnational Governance and the Reduction of Inequality within and between Countries

Clovis Demarchi [α] & Elaine Cristina Maieski [σ]

Abstract- The object under discussion is transnational governance as a tool for identifying and reducing inequality, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries. The overall objective is to analyze to what extent transnational governance can contribute to the identification of vulnerable groups and, as a consequence, to enable transnational actors to cooperatively design actions to reduce inequality among peoples. Transnational governance can be understood as the reordering processes that the world has been going through, where various relations between the local and the global evolve at the same time, within and across borders. It was found that it is possible to point out that transnational governance aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals can indeed be considered an effective tool for reducing inequalities, both internally within and between countries, and that it can guarantee equity, justice, and uniformity for individuals who have equal rights and opportunities. The methodology is based on a qualitative and quantitative approach, and can also be classified, according to its objectives, as descriptive and prescriptive. The research technique will be bibliographic analysis.

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Introduction

At an amazing speed, the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent, and this has created opportunities and, at the same time, endless challenges for the most different nations. This increasingly competitive international scenario presents problems that must be faced in a common way and with joint actions, going beyond national borders.

In this sense, the article has as its object the analysis of transnational governance as a tool for identifying and reducing inequality, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequality within and between countries.

The general objective is to analyze to what extent transnational governance can contribute to the identification of vulnerable groups and, consequently, enable transnational actors to cooperatively design actions to reduce inequality among peoples.

Author α: Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Univali Santa Catarina, Brasil. e-mail: demarchi@univali.br
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0853-0818
Author σ: Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Univali Santa Catarina, Brasil. e-mail: maieski@edu.univali.br
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4090-1172

As a problem, the following question is posed: can transnational governance aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals be considered an effective tool for reducing inequalities within and between countries?

The concept of governance has been developing with greater emphasis since the phenomenon of globalization, comprising the displacement of power from the local or national sphere to global standards, with international interconnections.

The Report of the Commission on Governance emphasizes that humanity needs to recognize a set of rights and responsibilities common to all, ensuring a life of dignity and security, equitable treatment, and protection of the interests of future generations, through sustainable development with the safeguarding of the global commons.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are recognized as a framework for the establishment of goals that meet the diverse demands of humanity, being consolidated as an action plan for people, planet and prosperity, by which 193 UN member states, including Brazil, have committed to take bold and transformative steps to promote sustainable development by 2030, leaving no one behind.

Equality, on the other hand, is synonymous with equity, justice, and uniformity, and means to say that each individual has the right to have equal opportunities. All those under its aegis should receive the same treatment.

Given this context, to answer the problem presented in this article, the study is divided into three parts: 1) addresses the aspects of transnational governance, its nuances and concepts; 2) addresses the target 10.6, which, associated with SDG 10, aims to ensure a stronger representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making in global economic and financial institutions, in order to ensure more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions and, 3) verifies to what extent transnational governance can contribute to actions aimed at reducing inequalities.

The methodology is based on a qualitative and quantitative approach, and can also be classified, according to its objectives, as descriptive and prescriptive. The research technique will be bibliographic.

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I. Aspects of Transnational Governance

For many authors, the term governance has a polysemic character and can mean different social phenomena and activities, depending on the context in which it is used.

Governance can also be seen as a broad phenomenon of government, since it covers governmental institutions as well as non-governmental institutions, or even a democratic system of laws and social institutions, its progress being conditioned to a regulation established by some democratic consensus mechanism (Garcia, Santos, Garcia, 2020).

However, regardless of the different approaches it is possible to see a stable definition, which relates governance to processes of regulation of social agents and the establishment of order and cohesion of the social fabric (Bartley, 2015), involving collective regulation and actors or activities that go beyond national borders (Finkelstein , 1995).

To understand the completeness of the meaning of the word governance, Garcia, Santos, and Garcia (2020) remind us that it is necessary to make some distinctions between closely related terms such as government, governance, and governability.

According to the authors, government refers to activities supported by a formal authority and by the police power that ensures the implementation of instituted policies; governability refers to the state dimension of the exercise of power and is linked directly at the state level, representing a set of attributes for the exercise of government (Garcia, Santos, Garcia, 2020).

For Gonçalves (2022) governance as it is perceived today emerged in recent times. Previously, it was synonymous with government, and often associated with the pure and simple act of governing. According to the author, the word "governance" assumed its own specific character only in the late 1990s, when international financial institutions such as the World Bank started using the expression "good governance" as a set of guiding principles for member countries.

In 1992, the great watershed in the theory and application of the concept of governance occurred with the creation of the Commission on Global Governance, conceived by the UN, with the document entitled "Common Responsibility in the 90s: the Stockholm proposal on security and global governance" (Gonçalves, 2022).

According to the Commission's Report, global governance, which previously concerned basically intergovernmental relations, would no longer encompass only governments and intergovernmental institutions, but also non-governmental organizations, citizens' movements, transnational companies, the academic community, and the mass media, where states continue to be the main actors, but must act in collaboration with others.

The document also emphasizes that humanity needs to recognize a set of rights and responsibilities common to all, ensuring a safe life; equitable treatment; the opportunity to earn a decent living and provide for one's own well-being; participation at all levels of governance; equal access to the global commons and the protection of the interests of future generations, pursuing sustainable development and safeguarding the global commons, among others.

It is appropriate to mention that the concept of governance has been extended to the international level with the globalization phenomenon, comprising a multidimensional process that encompasses changes in the organization of human activity and the displacement of power from local or national orientation to global standards, with international interconnections (Perik, 2003).

Although they have some common aspects, transnational governance differs from global governance. The notion of global governance is used mainly in the field of international relations to analyze the rules that guide the development of globalization (Gomes; Merchan, 2017).

In turn, transnational governance - the focus of this article - focuses on the forms of regulation that emerge and are not operated exclusively by the state, from contemporary capitalism and the transnational relations that arise from it.

With the relative decrease in the importance of national borders for the regulation of economic and social activity, forms of regulation are no longer restricted to national borders, and, consequently, new forms of regulation are created, impacting the market, economic agents, work, and daily life at the local level (Djelic; Sahlin-Andersson, 2006).

As Gomes and Merchan (2017) transnational governance implies processes of reordering that the world has been going through, as diverse relationships between local and global take shape at the same time, within and across borders.

For the authors, transnational governance does not imply a reduction of national autonomy, much less mean that the nation-state has lost its sovereignty, but seeks to highlight that governance processes are immersed in geopolitical relationships and structures of interactions and institutions at multiple levels.

The prefix trans indicates that the transnational public structure can cross several states and, understanding transnational governance implies understanding how power relations are constituted, impacting the distribution of wealth both internally in countries and externally, between countries. (Gomes and Merchan, 2017).

It is in this context that the importance of working on transnational governance intertwined with

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the Sustainable Development Goals is inserted, especially goal 10.6, linked to SDG 10, as it presents aspects that discuss the reduction of inequalities through the strengthening of institutions and the power of participation in transnational decision making, in which nations should unite for the sake of a common good: humanity.

Therefore, we will address below the formation of the SDGs, with emphasis on SDG 10 and goal 10.6, and their developments on the way to ensure stronger representation and voice of developing countries in global decision-making.

II. ODS 10 - Reducing Inequality within and among Countries

The milestone that started the global debate on poverty and inequality took place in September 2000, with the Millennium Development Goals, eight major global objectives assumed by the member countries of the United Nations (UN) to be achieved by 2015, aiming to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger from the planet, quality basic education, gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction in child mortality, fight against pandemics, quality of life and respect for the environment.

After the deadline for the implementation of the MDGs, according to Garcia and Garcia (2016) "new goals are set by the UN, where the experiences of the first Goals served as a valuable lesson", giving rise to an agenda with 17 other fundamental objectives that, intertwined, propose general goals for reducing global inequalities.

Thus, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are recognized by several nations, becoming a milestone for the establishment of goals that meet the various demands throughout the planet (Demarchi; Maieski, 2022).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an action plan for people, planet and prosperity, which seeks to strengthen universal peace, in which 193 UN member states have committed to take bold and transformative steps to promote sustainable development over the next 15 years without leaving anyone behind.

SDG 10, proposes the reduction of inequality within and between countries, presenting ten goals established by the UN that were applied to Brazil. Among the ten goals, five were adapted to the national reality, six are classified as finalistic goals and four as implementation goals (Demarchi; Maieski, 2022).

The ultimate goals are those whose object is directly related (immediately) to the achievement of the specific SDG. Implementation goals, on the other hand, refer to human, financial, technological and governance resources (institutional arrangement and tools: legislation, plans, public policies, programs) necessary to achieve the SDGs (Gomes and Merchan, 2017).

Target 10.6 aims to ensure a stronger representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions, in order to ensure more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions. According to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2019, p. 257), goal 10.6 had the general United Nations text maintained in full by Brazil, "given the fact that the goal refers to representation in international economic and financial institutions, no adjustment would fit the Brazilian case."

Because it is interdisciplinary, target 10.6 is correlated with target 16.8 (SDG 16), which aims at expanding and strengthening Brazilian participation in global governance institutions, and with target 17.15 (SDG 17), which foresees the respect for political space and leadership of each country to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

For the fulfillment of target 10.6, it is important to mention that the relations of countries with other nations committed to reducing inequalities through transnational governance actions is fundamental. In terms of international relations, the classic instruments of power are considered to be, especially, economic dynamism and the size of the internal market, regional projection, and energy and territorial resources (Hirst, 2015).

According to Souza (2009), the diplomatic tradition, constitutional commitment, and public opinion together underlie a political culture that rejects international conflict as an option in contexts of disagreements among states and consolidates the consensus on which democracy is sustained.

Such consensus helps decision making in actions involving other transnational actors, seeking to increase the country's representative power, in addition to expanding its international responsibilities and commitments and, in this sense, foreign policy has to "seek to promote mediation policy initiatives, especially through coalitions with other emerging powers, directed at stimulating innovation and greater representativeness on the governance terrain" (Hirst, 2015).

Part of the scientific production on transnational governance points out that many "rules and regulations in policy areas, which were once activities that were solely the responsibility of states or government organizations, are now the purview of multiple actors (Gomes and Merchan, 2017).

In this sense, transnational governance, by uniting its actions with the SDGs, creates the possibility for nation-states to increase their representation and voice, making developing countries stronger and more

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participatory in international decision-making, and can ensure that transnational and common problems across borders are addressed with the implementation of policies aimed at reducing inequalities within and between countries.

Next, we will address the reduction of inequality through transnational governance in line with target 10.6 (SDG 10).

III. Transnational Governance in Reducing Inequality

Inequality finds no borders, quite the contrary, most causes of inequality are common among peoples, as Schmitz and Rocha (2017, p. 14) remind us, there is a strong interconnectedness of cases so that "the transnationality of certain issues, such as pandemics, migration, refuge, terrorism, human rights, climate, trade, and the internet, further aggravates the perception that solidarity-based solutions are increasingly necessary."

For the authors, issues that go beyond the borders of countries must necessarily be faced in a cooperative manner, involving a plurality of international actors, since such issues become even more complex with population growth and technological advancement.

The perception of acceleration of history, "is a continuous social and cultural process, a physical phenomenon that reflects the evolution of human activities" Viola; Franchini; Ribeiro, 2022, p. 256) and, to keep up with such evolution, international actors must act cooperatively on issues that are related and interconnected, under penalty of succumbing in the guarantee of rights, such as the right to equality.

According to Cruz and Bodnar (2012, p. 15), "many of the problems experienced today, especially the serious international financial situation, show an insufficiency of the modern theoretical model," in which the imbalance of some relations demonstrate that the transnationalization of power is inevitable. Thus, in the words of the authors, "a 'civilizing upgrade' of world society is more than necessary and urgent".

In the same sense, Beck (1999) has already proposed in several studies, the replacement of international relations of conflict by transnational relations of solidarity and cooperation, since an immense variety of demands connected among themselves crosses territorial boundaries, establishing new social circles, communication networks, market relations, and forms of coexistence.

Thus, according to Cruz and Bodnar (2012, p. 39/140), there is a growing need for the creation of public spaces of governance, regulation and intervention, whose control and functioning mechanisms are submitted to transnationalized societies.

It is in this context that transnational governance and the SDGs are inserted, which, when worked interdisciplinarily and together, can be a powerful tool to reduce inequalities.

Transnational governance provides an opportunity for transnational actors to interact in order to strengthen domestic demands in international discussions, and the SDGs offer a path to be followed through their 169 goals that cover social issues around the globe.

The demands that involve inequalities, common to Nations, in general, can be mitigated with cooperation actions between governments, cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors, even generating a greater strengthening of transnational actors within the United Nations system, putting human beings at the center of politics.

Citing Beck (2018, p. 168) and his thesis on emancipatory catastrophism, it is timely that humanity and transnational actors begin to identify "the positive side of evils," since, according to the author, "although they come laden with negative consequences, it is catastrophes that make invisibilities visible, building the global debates.

Inequality is and always will be a catastrophe. However, what is fundamentally at stake is the ability of transnational actors to discuss cooperative actions, aligning their goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, already consolidated as an agenda widely accepted and internalized by the States, in order to reduce inequalities, both inside and outside the countries, and this is only feasible through a transnational governance aligned to the SDGs.

IV. Final Considerations

The article sought to analyze transnational governance as an effective tool to be used to identify and reduce inequality, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries.

We sought to deepen the understanding of target 10.6, which, aligned with SDG 10, aims to ensure stronger representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making in global economic and international financial institutions, in order to ensure more effective institutions, with more representative actions of international actors.

The general objective of the article was to analyze to what extent transnational governance can contribute to the identification of vulnerable groups and, consequently, to enable transnational actors to cooperatively design actions to reduce inequality among peoples.

For a better organization, the article was divided into three parts: the first topic tried to address aspects of transnational governance, its nuances and concepts; the second part dealt with target 10.6, which, associated with SDG 10, aims to ensure a stronger representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making in

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global economic and financial institutions, in order to ensure more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions; and finally, it was verified to what extent transnational governance can contribute to actions aimed at reducing inequalities

Inequality finds no borders and most of the causes of inequality are common among peoples, creating a strong interconnectedness of cases, so that the transnationality of many issues such as pandemics, migration, refuge, terrorism, human rights, climate, trade, and the internet, ends up highlighting the need for solidarity and transnational actions.

Transnational governance can be understood as a phenomenon that involves collective regulation, actors, and activities that go beyond national borders, with actions exercised by various civil society organizations, within countries and across borders.

Issues that were previously linked basically to intergovernmental relations now encompass governments and institutions, non-governmental organizations, citizens' movements, transnational companies, the academic community, and the mass media; in short, the entire global civil society.

Transnational governance provides an opportunity for transnational actors to interact in order to strengthen domestic demands in international discussions, and the SDGs offer the path to be followed through their 169 goals that cover social issues across the planet.

In conclusion, as an answer to the problem presented, it is possible to point out that transnational governance aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals can indeed be considered an effective tool for reducing inequalities, both internally within and between countries, and can ensure equity, justice, and uniformity for individuals with equal rights and opportunities.

Transnational actors with a strong voice and greater representation in international discussions make possible a greater chance of consensus for decision-making and policies that encompass solidarity-based solutions to inequalities that transcend borders.

The subject does not end with the findings presented here. On the contrary, new discussions and possibilities for research open up, as well as sowing some uneasiness about what is intended for the future, about the responsibility of the State, academia, and society in the context of inequalities.

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