

# Brazilian Perspectives on Policy Transfer and South-South Cooperation

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**Abstract:** This paper introduces the dossier entitled 'Policy Transfer and South-South Cooperation'. Very often development cooperation programmes, particularly those labelled as part of South-South cooperation (SSC), use policy transfer as one of their key implementation tools. However, irrespective of cross-cutting dimensions and shared commonalities, both fields of practices have generated research traditions that have followed specific disciplinary (and sometimes interdisciplinary) trajectories which have seldom met. Policy transfer promoted by national and international, state and non-state agents of the Global South via development cooperation raises several questions that remain unexplored and overlooked by the scholarly literature. This dossier intends to promote a dialogue between these two fields, thus analysing how policy transfer through SSC may create new power relations, identities, world visions and practices. This introductory article presents a theoretical cartography and offers in the first section a brief literature review of both fields of research; in the second section it presents the historical background of SSC and Brazil's changing roles in it; the third section outlines possible conversations between policy transfer and SSC; finally, in the concluding remarks we bring a few reflections about future research agendas.

**Keywords:** policy transfer; development cooperation; South-South cooperation; Brazil; Public Policy; International Relations.

## Introduction

Policy transfer and development cooperation are fields of research, knowledge-production and practices that have been running alongside since their respective founding moments; however, they refer to empirical objects, methods and concepts that are intrinsically intertwined. In fact, very often development cooperation programmes, particularly

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within the framework of South-South cooperation (SSC), deploy policy transfer strategies and activities as part and parcel of their key implementation tools. The United Nations Organization, for instance, considers public policy SSC 'best practices' as potential models to be transferred from one to another developing country. What is interesting is that, irrespective of cross-cutting dimensions and shared commonalities, the two fields have generated research traditions which have followed specific disciplinary (and sometimes interdisciplinary) trajectories that have seldom met, resulting in the development of independent research agendas and the emergence of specialized debates around what they have tended to consider as their own particular subject-matters. In many ways, analyses of the current global order's hegemonic transition and how possibilities of international cooperation unfold would benefit greatly if these two fields became closer. The most evident aspect that both fields share is that policy transfer frequently takes place directly or indirectly via development cooperation, a reality that has become even more regularly observed in the case of SSC, where policy models conceived and implemented in developing countries and regional powers such as Brazil, India, Mexico, South Africa or Turkey have been transferred to other Latin American, African and Asian countries.

Scholars working on different strands of policy transfer research (diffusion, circulation and mobilities) have focused on distinct aspects of these phenomena (Porto de Oliveira and Pimenta de Faria 2017). However, the main focus of empirical research, especially in political science, international relations (IR) and public policy studies, was related to governments situated in the Global North and to global or regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the World Bank, the OECD and the European Union (Stone, Porto de Oliveira and Pal, 2019). There are still few researches that consider the empirical settings of the Global South and the United Nations, not only regarding how transfers occur between national and subnational governments or through social movements and civil society organizations but also regarding regional integration processes such as Mercosur, the Pacific Alliance, the Association of East Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Southern African Development Community, among others. Many southern countries have used UN agencies as multilateral platforms for the deployment of their SSC strategies, but the way these emerging actions of SSC and policy transfers impacts international organizations is currently understudied (Milhorance and Soulé-Kohndou 2017).

Because we believe that contexts matter when building concepts and theories, we also argue in this dossier for a diversification of contexts of research and knowledge production. In fact, the context-ignorant analyst is likely to be wrong in their interpretation or explanation. Contexts and contextual effects that are particular to southern countries lend themselves to systematic description and explanation, hence their proper understanding within the framework of South-South development cooperation may facilitate discovery of political, cultural and social processes, and reveal causal mechanisms that operate through this particular modality of policy transfer (Sartori 1994; Tilly and Goodin 2006).

Policy transfer promoted by national and international, state and non-state agents of the Global South via development cooperation raises several questions that remain unexplored and overlooked by the scholarly literature. They deserve attention to amplify

knowledge in both fields. How does policy transfer through SSC create new power relations? Which identities, world visions and narratives are being (re)produced? Which agents, both private and public (e.g. think-tanks, foundations, corporations, networks, governments, international organisations), are engaged in these processes? Are there exclusions? Why? When do resistance dynamics emerge around transfer impositions? What is being transferred (discourses, models, interests, economic operations, development practices, etc.), to where (city, state, international organisation, rural/urban settings) and how is it being translated into other contexts? In which spaces or institutions are models being legitimised (or losing legitimacy) and diffusion encouraged? How do arenas of (conflicting) interests operate? Do policy diffusion and SSC lead to mutual learning? In what way do staff recruitment and reconfiguration of international organisations' bureaucracy impact upon policy diffusion and development cooperation?

This dossier intends to provide answers to some of these questions with an ensemble of articles. Michelle Morais de Sá e Silva study is related to the Brazilian policies for the promotion of the rights of the excluded in El Salvador and Haiti. The author engages with the literature of public policy studies to discuss the role of bureaucracy, bringing the innovative idea of 'bureaucratic gains' for policy transfer and South-South cooperation studies. Following an anthropological approach of public action, Alila Brossard Antonelli presents a study on the cooperation between Brazil and Mozambique to implement a drug plant. Her work is particularly interesting for discussing an overlooked element in policy transfer research: the role of resistance to transfer and policy translation. Transnational arenas are analysed in the article presented by Juliana Luiz and Carlos Milani, who observe the duality of narratives of the Brazilian government in the internationalization of family farming policies as well as the diplomatic work performed by the country. The authors not only observe the spaces of policy transfer but also collaborate for our understanding of the dimension of the meanings in policy transfers and SSC, which is a crucial topic for the debate on policy translation. For a long time, the dimension of power and politics have been a blind spot in policy transfer studies. This is the gap that the article signed by Cristiane Kerches da Silva Leite, Júlia Mafra and Osmany Porto de Oliveira fills in by examining the relationship between the World Bank and Brazil on the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer Program *Bolsa Família* (Family Allowance). The authors discuss the role of knowledge in policy design and transfer, mutual gains and power asymmetries along the collaboration between the World Bank and Brazil. Finally, Carlos Aurélio Pimenta de Faria provides a theoretical reflection in order to bring together foreign policy and policy transfer. Analysing the two governments of former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the author argues that policy transfer can be interpreted as an instrument of foreign policy.

Altogether, the articles presented in this dossier are breaking into different frontiers of research. In various ways, they contribute to the main goal of this dossier, which is to generate a first dialogue between these two fields, thus associating cutting-edge research, theoretical innovation and empirical studies based on the case of Brazil. This dossier addresses several perspectives of Brazil's engagement in different fronts of SSC, such as transferring policy knowledge, techniques, and instruments that have been at the heart

of the country's SSC strategy particularly under the Lula and Rousseff administrations. This introductory article presents a theoretical cartography, and offers in the first section a brief literature review of both fields of research (policy transfer and SSC); in the second section it presents the historical background of SSC, its increasing relevance in the political field of international development cooperation and Brazil's changing roles in it; the third section outlines possible conversations between policy transfer and SSC; finally, in the concluding remarks we bring a few reflections about future research agendas.

## Two different traditions seeking conversation

Despite the existence of consolidated research fields in the study of policy transfer and SSC, scholars from these two research traditions need to dialogue more often. Taking into account the specializations of the two research traditions, which have been producing divisions among scholars, we also understand that conversation is a *sine qua non* for a more profound, complementary and broader understanding of the how and why policies travel from one context to another.

### Policy transfer research

With the rise of globalization, increased social and economic interconnectedness and the rapid upsurge of international public policy exchange, a fast-growing field of research emerged to understand how policies travel across countries. Distinct streams of research, with ontological and epistemological cleavages, are focused on explaining policy diffusion, transfer, circulation and mobilities (Porto de Oliveira 2021). Research projects of these different streams collaborated to open the space and integrate both public policy studies and international relations. For a long time, public policy studies were focused on the study of phenomena occurring within state borders. Policy transfer research contributed to overcome this so-called methodological nationalism (Stone 2008). Likewise, these dialogues have contributed to understanding how domestic politics may also be a key driver of states' behaviour in international relations. Therefore, both IR and policy studies have greatly benefited from this opening and integration.

In political science, the literature on *policy diffusion* arose in the 1960's with the pioneer work of Jack Walker attempting to understand the dynamics of the diffusion of innovations in the context of the United States federalism (Walker 1969). More recently, international policy diffusion issues have been addressed by different scholars interested in the way 'policy choices of one country are shaped by the choices of others' (Dobbin, Simmons, Garrett, 2007: 450). These studies were often (but not exclusively) based on quantitative analysis (Dobbin, Simmons, Garrett, 2007) and part of these focused on understanding mechanisms of diffusion, that is, the underlying forces causing this outcome, with particular attention to coercion, learning, competition and emulation (Graham, Shipan and Volden 2013; Kuhlmann 2021). A set of studies using qualitative methods under the leadership of Kurt Weyland were also published about Latin American state reforms and social policies (Weyland 2006). The work of Sarah Brooks about pension reforms and the

diffusion of the Chilean model brought to light the impact of policy instruments designed in the South that reached global recognition and were adopted across different regions (Brooks 2005, 2007).

In the 1990's another stream of research in public policy analysis relied on the work of Richard Rose about 'lesson drawing' (Rose 1991), focusing on the process of transfer, using case studies, small comparisons and qualitative research. This research tradition labelled 'policy transfer' provided an inventory of agents operating in such processes as well as a framework of analysis (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, 2000). Bringing together the micro and macro dynamics of policy transfers, Hadjiisky, Pal and Walker (2017) shed light into the importance of understanding the dimension of scale in policy transfers. Studies combining policy transfer and regional integration were particularly fertile to understand the process of norm harmonization, information exchange, policy instruments and models circulation in Europe (Saurugger and Surel 2006; Bulmer et al 2007; Radaelli 2008; Halpern and Galès 2011). Transfer agents were studied from different perspectives, as think-tanks (Laidi), international organizations, such as the OECD (Pal 2012) or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (Milhorance, 2018), individuals (Porto de Oliveira 2017), epistemic communities (Osorio 2018; Dunlop 2009), among others. More recently, policy transfer was also included in discussions concerning global public policymaking, which are broader processes of cooperation and co-ordination among different agents to produce global public goods (Stone 2019).

The French scholarship of sociology of public action (*sociologie de l'action publique*) produced insightful studies by revisiting in a critical way the literature of policy transfer and diffusion studies, adopting the notion of *policy circulation* (Hadjiisky et al 2021). From Bourdieu's work, this literature was interested on the role of elites (Dezalay and Garth 2002); from Latour's research on scientific innovation, on the translation of policy objects; and, relying on Foucault's idea of *gouvernementalité*, on the abstract and power dimensions of policy instruments being transferred (Halpern et al 2014).

It is also worth mentioning that urban geographers have produced a specific literature to understand the phenomena by using the concept of *Policy Mobilities*. A particular insight of these studies was the focus on cities and the territorial issues on policies moving transnationally. These authors were interested in local-global dynamics, which included power relations, historical legacies and adjustments in policy mobilities (McCann, Ward, 2011). Geographers were critic of the rational and linear dimension of analysis often present in part of policy transfer studies (Peck 2010). The argument that public policies, such as Conditional Cash Transfers and Participatory Budgeting, were moving fast across regimes had particular emphasis in some studies (Peck and Theodore 2015). Time was an important element for this stream of research, as shows the research of Astrid Wood (2015), discussing the multiple temporalities, sometimes more rapid and others slower, of the adoption of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in South African cities.

Finally, as far as the area of international relations is concerned, studies have focused especially on *norm and ideas diffusion* dynamics. The so-called norm 'life-cycle' was conceived by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) as a process involving three stages. Starting from its emergence, a norm can reach a threshold or tipping point at which it 'cascades'

and is broadly accepted. If this process is successful, norm internalization may occur. Internalization is associated with the moment when a norm is widely accepted by a high number of states and agents and its adoption is 'taken-for-granted'. In the intersection of International Relations and Social Movements studies, literature discussing networks of transnational activists brought to the debate the strategies agents employ to internationalize ideas, movements and campaigns. The notions of boomerang pattern (Sikkink 1999: 12), refers to a strategy used by NGOs to bypass the state and seek international support to bring pressure in the domestic context. Another notion is brokerage, when individuals or groups connects to other agents from different sites, expanding the possibilities of diffusion (Della Porta and Tarrow 2004). Since then, IR debates on norm circulation and norm life cycle have diversified and included new contexts of research, particularly in developing countries (Acharya 2004; Björkdahl 2010; Jinnah 2017). Whereas it is clear that policy transfer, diffusion, circulation and mobility have connections with different study areas, such as public policy, urban geography, and international relations, we argue in this dossier that there is still a gap to fulfil specifically between policy studies and South-South cooperation research. In the next section we will advance some of the main elements of this literature, before discussing how fruitful such dialogue can be in advancing our research agendas.

### *Research on South-South cooperation*

The field of studies on South-South cooperation is broad and interdisciplinary, encompassing international relations and foreign policy analysis (FPA), policy studies, development studies, political sociology, history, geography and anthropology, among others. Since the label 'South-South cooperation' is relatively new in the global lexicon and in the UN glossary, as we shall analyse in the next section, studies interpreting and explaining this empirical and historical reality of relations among developing countries in the broader field of international development cooperation are also recent. However, this does not mean that references to horizontal relations among Third World countries, technical cooperation involving developing countries, the non-alignment movement, the New International Economic Order or the New World Information and Communication Order, *inter alia*, have not hitherto acknowledged political, economic, cultural, social and technological dimensions that belong in today's scholarly and policy debates around SSC, both nationally and internationally (Malacalza 2020). In the past, SSC relations were stamped as technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), Third World politics, cooperation among non-aligned countries, and transnational anticolonial networks, to name just a few of historical designations of what is currently described within the broad spectrum of cooperation among developing countries. As Ayllón Pino (2014) recalls, the term 'Global South' is a symbolic designation for a wide range of developing nations, often in the wake of former expressions such as the Third World or simply the South, emphasizing histories, origins and traditions shared by developing nations in their multiple approaches to power and international politics.

In a nutshell, in the broader field of SSC studies, we focus here on two main contributions that have emerged and consolidated: one within IR and FPA, another within development studies. Within IR and FPA, firstly research on SSC discusses the historical background and the main milestones of how developing countries have converted potential exchanges of technical expertise in various public policy areas into effective political leverage in the international realm. Such studies have also stressed that it is not possible to understand SSC without referring to the non-material dimension of an emerging consciousness amidst developing nations (former colonies of Western powers) as a common 'South' which may express a collective political voice in international relations, particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War and in the wake of anticolonial movements and wars in Africa and Asia (Ul-Haq 1980; Bobiash 1992; Chin and Frolic 2007; Antonini and Hirst 2009; Sanahuja 2010; Chaturvedi 2012; Lechini 2012; Mello e Souza 2012; Ayllón Pino 2014; Cheng and Taylor 2017; Milani 2017).

Secondly, IR studies on SSC have focused on how developing countries, particularly regional and rising powers such as Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa or Turkey, may use aid/cooperation as a foreign policy agenda (Almeida and Kraychete 2013; Bacik and Afacan 2013; Besharati 2013; Prado Lallande 2013). Several scholars stressed how southern powers integrate multilateral agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organisation, as key partners in their respective SSC foreign policy strategies (Abdenur 2014; Beghin 2014; Milhorange and Soulé-Kohndou 2017).

Third, IR studies on SSC underline the geopolitical dimension of the re-emergence of South-South relations in the 21st century, thanks, in particular, to the Chinese economic and political rise as well as its wide-range development cooperation strategies, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the BRICS New Development Bank, the One Belt One Road initiative, among others. Scholars have clearly understood that SSC practices not only transfer knowledge, technology and policies, it also refers to deeper transformations in the world order (Gu, Shankland and Chenoy 2016; Scoones et al 2016; Mason 2017).

Fourth and finally, there is a set of IR studies on SSC that underscore the relevance of southern countries in the actual construction of international norms, changing from a traditional rule-taking role to a more diversified array of contestation, norm-shaking, and norm-making roles. In this connection, SSC would also refer to rising institutions and norms stemming from new roles, status and power sought or already taken by emerging southern powers (Acharya 2004; Six 2009; Sidiropoulos 2012; Terhalle 2011; Chin, 2012; Mawdsley 2012; Jinnah 2017).

Within development studies, literature on SSC has focused on lessons from North-South development cooperation (NSC) and possible cognitive, social, economic and political traps to be avoided by SSC. They have also compared NSC and SSC experiences, different practices of southern countries (for instance, Brazil and South Africa, China and India, etc.), thus producing a sociology of SSC agents and their relations with partner countries (Hirst 2009; Cabral and Weinstock 2010; Apaydin 2012; Chichava and



Fingermann 2015; Echart Muñoz and Carvalho 2016; Garcia and Kato 2016; Leite 2016; Cabral 2017; Lazo 2017; Mawdsley, Fourie and Nauta 2019). Moreover, scholars, governmental institutions and NGOs have also published a series of methodological studies, discussing issues related to evaluation and monitoring challenges of SSC activities (Campos, Lima and Gonzalez 2012; Development Initiatives 2013; IPEA 2010, 2013, 2016; Waisbich 2020).

## **Possible conversations between policy transfer and SSC**

This section outlines possible conversations between policy transfer and SSC. Two main avenues for discussion are set here. The first is related to soft power, narratives, and identities. Different elements are brought to light, such as the discursive distinctions between SSC and NSC. The second concerns modern diplomacy, decentralized co-operation, and policy instruments. In this section, elements as sectoral diplomacy, the engagement of cities, and the objects that are transferred via SSC are presented.

### *Soft power, narratives and geopolitics*

States' use of development cooperation as a soft power strategy and as a foreign policy instrument is not new in international relations. The difference that concerns South-South cooperation relates to the fact that emerging actors, such as China, India or Brazil, may use such tools in their own search for a reconfiguration of power and geopolitics in the international realm, depending on their respective national capabilities and political ambition. Nowadays, central powers are not alone in being able to seduce developing nations, particularly after the 2008 global financial crisis, the origin of which lies within the Western highly developed economies. Southern powers may also deploy soft power strategies based on what they proclaim as a new symbolic regime and an updated version of Third World solidarity in the field of development cooperation.

The symbolic regime, according to Bourdieu (2000) is a fundamental representational constituent of the political field (development cooperation), where a range of ideational and normative dimensions contribute to the definition of patterns of expected state behaviour (Adler-Nissen 2012). Portraying development banners and practices in the field of poverty-reduction or public policy management is not any more under the aegis only of Western powers. In fact, governments (both national and subnational) from the South have been investing on branding domestic policies, turning these into worldwide recognized best practices. Examples can be the Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Brazil and Mexico, or Bus Rapid Transit in Bogotá and Curitiba, among other cases. Being an expert in specific policies or domains can increase a government's international visibility and image, as well as attract new partners. In this sense policy transfer via SSC is a practice that goes beyond technical cooperation, as it includes a narrative of solidarity and the investment on relations with a plurality of partners from the Global South. By operating such actions countries may also aim to achieve new geopolitical status in the field of international aid and assistance.



The principles and history of SSC are quite different from those of North-South cooperation. The colonial experience and its building values and meanings constitute one of the most important distinguishing features between the two types of development cooperation. The colonial enterprise has generated historical traumas and expectations of distinction, the marks of which are still very much alive both in the mentality of the leading elites in some developing countries and in the Western donors' selective practice of political conditionality (Mazzaropi 2016). Contrastingly, in the case of SSC the emphasis on solidarity, horizontality and commonality can be found in the narratives of many national policies (South Africa, Brazil, India, among others). The symbolic regime of SSC is impregnated by complaints about the effects of Western domination and humiliation over the rest of the world (Mawdsley 2012; Badie 2014).

Historically, SSC narratives build their foundations in the 1954 dialogue between India and China, when both Asian powers affirmed the five principles of peaceful co-existence: i) mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; ii) non-mutual aggression; iii) mutual non-interference; iv) equality and mutual benefit; and v) peaceful coexistence. These five principles were later debated in Bandung in 1955 and became the normative embryo of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. They were also adopted by the UN after the approval by its general assembly of the Resolution on Coexistence in 1957 (Ayllón Pino, 2014). Many developing countries, including Brazil, signed and implemented technical cooperation agreements in the 1960s and 1970s. The South was then permeated by anticolonialism and the need to foster a New Economic World Order.

In the 1980s and in the aftermath of the oil crises, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were among the first nations in the developing world to significantly invest in the SSC field. Some countries have also created formal agencies to deal with the cooperation received from the countries of the North, as in the case in Brazil in 1987, Chile in 1990 and Turkey in 1992, and currently these agencies deal more often with SSC projects. Since the 2000s, SSC strategies have gained in density: thanks to higher economic growth rates and the increase in their geopolitical relevance, southern countries started to integrate SSC in their foreign policy agendas through alliances forged within multilateral organizations, regional integration processes, and also through financial support and technical cooperation in areas such as public health, education, environment, agricultural development, science and technology, public management and infrastructure development (Abdenur 2014; Gu, Shakland and Chenoy 2016; Lima and Milani 2016).

Nowadays, the cooperation developed by non-OECD countries is still small in relation to the main donors (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan); however, it represented about US\$9.3b in 2009, that is, 6.4% of the total official cooperation flows, some of which, like Saudi Arabia (US\$3.2b) and China (US\$1.9b), exceeding traditional donors that are members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (OECD 2011). According to a 2015 report, the 18 non-OECD DAC countries that report their data to the Organization increased their contributions from US\$6.4b in 2012 to US\$16.3b in 2013. This is mainly due to a significant increase in cooperation for the development of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia's net assets grew from US\$1.3b in 2012 to US\$5.7b in 2013. UAE development cooperation rose from US\$1b in

2012 to US\$5.4b in 2013. Turkey's program continued to grow at a rapid pace and reached US\$3.3b in 2013, representing a 31% increase, in real terms, compared to 2012. Turkish development cooperation more than tripled compared to 2010, when it reached the level of US\$967m. This increase was mainly related to the refugee crisis in Syria, with a loan of US\$1b granted to Egypt, disbursed in equal parts in 2012 and 2013 (OECD 2015). Data indicate that its development cooperation would have reached US\$6.2b in 2016, that is, about 0.8% of Turkish GDP (OECD 2017).

Therefore, southern countries have improved their partnerships with other developing countries from different regions of the world, acting either through bilateral cooperation (which makes them more capable of directly controlling the agenda) or multilateral organizations (which gives them a broader audience and an improved dissemination capacity). China has even created development banks and specific funds for this purpose, and its actions have a scale and impacts potentially much higher than those of other developing countries. In 2018, Beijing announced the establishment of its International Development Cooperation Agency. In fact, China has already invested heavily in development cooperation in Africa and Asia in different areas, promoting a narrative rooted in a 'mutual benefit' model. The Chinese government, in its report published in 2011, also emphasized that, 'through international aid, China has consolidated relations of friendship and economic and trade cooperation with other developing countries, promoted South-South cooperation and contributed to the common development of humanity' (China 2011: 1). In its latest 2021 report, Beijing presents SSC again as a form of mutual assistance among developing countries considered essentially different from North-South cooperation. From 2013 to 2018, China's cooperation reached approximately US\$42b, and Beijing cooperated with 122 countries and 20 international and regional multilateral organizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and Europe. Among them, there are 30 countries in Asia, 53 countries in Africa, 9 countries in Oceania, 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and 8 countries in Europe (China 2021).

However, new forms of domination and dependence can be forged despite solidarity claims of SSC (Alden, Large and Soares de Oliveira 2008). Although southern countries may build a symbolic regime that is distinct from NSC, they do not cooperate with other developing countries in a disinterested way. SSC can be considered as one of their foreign policy instruments (Milani 2018; also see Pimenta de Faria 2008). Offering assistance to other countries can be a strategy to strengthen bilateral relations with recipient states in a wide range of areas (energy, trade, infrastructure, access to lands and markets). It can also be used to exert influence in a particular region (as England in former colonies, China in Africa, Brazil in Latin America). It can also be a strategy to achieve recognition through an improved participation in multilateral settings. For instance, particularly during the Lula administration, Brazil invested in soft power via the construction of an international image of a leading country from the South that was able to produce efficient social policies to tackle poverty and hunger, combined with economic growth. Brazil invested in renewing relations and building new ties with developing countries and rising powers. In addition, Brazil's discourse in international arenas was used to showcase Brazilian domestic social policies (as Zero Hunger and Family Allowance) and, with the support of organizations

such as FAO and WFP, legitimise its domestic policies through policy transfer. The idea of technical cooperation as a tool of ‘solidarity diplomacy’ was also present, for example in the relations with Haiti, where the country conducted a peacekeeping operation (Valler Filho 2007). In its relations with Portuguese-speaking African countries, Brazil insisted on the notion of cultural proximity and a common historical background related to slavery.

If Brazil was attempting to use its domestic model as a source of legitimacy to South-South cooperation, the same is not valid for other countries in the game of policy transfer. China, for example, shows to the rest of the world that becoming a democracy and reducing the role of the state are not necessary conditions to promote sustained economic growth and alleviate poverty (Porto de Oliveira and Romano, 2022). However, as Brazil, China was also promoting capacity-building in Africa, training around 10000 African officials every year and using this as a strategy in the field of agriculture to exert soft power (Tugendhat, Dawit, 2016). These variations in strategies matter for both SSC research and policy studies, and they also occur when it comes to the exercise of paradiplomacy.

### *Paradiplomacy, decentralized cooperation and policy instruments*

Non-state actors and subnational entities also implement SSC projects and activities. With the progressive participation of non-state agents in international relations and the erosion of the monopoly of ministries of foreign affairs, different types of technical cooperation gained visibility. Not only central governments have been investing in different forms of sectoral diplomacy, such as France with green diplomacy, Brazil with food security diplomacy, Qatar with sports diplomacy, or China with health diplomacy, but subnational governments and non-state actors have also carried out international technical cooperation.

In addition, sectoral ministries (e.g., health, environment, agriculture, social development, justice, etc.) and international divisions of state agencies of different countries started to create international relations offices to respond to the multiple demands stemming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Technical expertise of sectoral state agencies, institutions and ministries, which in many cases is fundamental to international cooperation, is very different from the general skills and diplomatic *savoir-faire* of the staff of ministries of foreign affairs. As an example, a project related to technical cooperation in social protection will require the participation of civil servants of ministries or departments of social development, much more than diplomats, especially in the implementation phase.

The engagement of subnational governments in the international arena is also known as paradiplomacy (Aldecoa and Keating, 1999) and decentralized cooperation, among other labels. Subnational governments have been acting in international affairs for different reasons, such as cultural (because of identity and social ties historically generated by migrants), economic (related to investments, strategies of fund-raising, etc.) and political (when identity and politics converge, when subnational politics is a platform for electoral campaigns, etc.). These players often act through practices of decentralized cooperation, agreements of twin towns or sister cities, public services, cost-sharing strategies, among others. In some cases, a subnational government may deploy paradiplomatic strategies contesting its central or federal government’s foreign policy, due to identity, linguistic

and cultural reasons (as in the cases of Catalonia in Spain or Quebec in Canada), but also because of electoral disputes and partisan differences (as in the cases of the federated state of São Paulo during the Lula administration or of the city of Porto Alegre during the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration). Subnational governments may use SSC paradiplomacy and decentralized cooperation to showcase at the international level their political divergence or simply their policy innovation capabilities within the broader national context of public policy making.

In addition, cities have an ancient tradition of international dialogue on sharing urban management expertise. These practices have been occurring not only via formalized decentralized cooperation, but also through informal exchanges between mayors, government officials, bureaucrats, NGO's, social movements, academics, etc. International organizations such as the UN-Habitat, have an extended portfolio of projects of policy transfer in the South, such as slum upgrading projects, as well as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Latin America has been a particularly fertile ground for lesson-drawing among urban governments. The case of Bus Rapid Transit policies, which started in Lima in the early 1970's, was then introduced in Curitiba in the same decade and gained fresh elements in Bogotá in the 1990's, offers an example of such dynamic. In the process of diffusion of Bus Rapid Transit, different policy visits (from and to Curitiba and Bogotá) occurred to offer training for other cities, for example, in South Africa, as shows the study of Astrid Wood (2015). The case of Participatory Budgeting (PB) is another emblematic example of such relations. For some time, during the Worker's Party's (PT) mandates in the 1990's and early 2000's, the city of Porto Alegre (southern region of Brazil) used international relations in opposition to the national government ruled by a centre-right wing party (PSDB). The city was proactive on establishing relations with other cities in Latin America and on making PB an internationally recognized policy that was emulated all over the world.

Programs are rarely entirely copied from one place to another. Often, specific policy instruments are selected to be transferred from one government to another via SSC. In fact, as Rose (1991) argues there are different degrees of transfers, which can include either more or less elements from the original models. This process of adjustment and adaptation of policies is related to the phenomenon of policy translation (Hassenteufel; Zeigermann 2021). Often, governments pick one or a few instruments that compose a policy from somewhere else in order to build their own programme, meeting the different singularities of the context of adoption, which can be political, social, economic, cultural, geographic, etc. Instruments that do not serve or are too specific of a certain context may be discarded.

From another perspective, the notion of instrument can be related to an institutional and official channel through which ideas, techniques and knowledge about solutions for public problems travel internationally, often, but not exclusively, from one government to another. However, policy knowledge sharing does not always occur through institutional channels, as in international cooperation agreements or protocols. We call this a 'policy transfer instrument', that is, the formal or informal means for transferring ideas, knowledge and models from one place to another. Often the bureaucratic, normative

and political domestic structures hinder the exchange of policy ideas and instruments. Meetings involving state authorities, civil servants, academics and practitioners in transnational fora or visits of different natures, as well as the circulation of documents (e.g. guides, reports, briefings) and, more recently, digital platforms, may constitute informal instruments of policy transfer. Governments can learn solutions by simply discussing or exchanging advice with their peers with a longer experience in a particular field.

Digital platforms are also becoming hubs for knowledge transfer. In such an environment, case studies, best practices, contacts of experts, news and other different types of information serve as sources of policy transfer and advice. The Policy Transfer Platform of the Metropolis Network, and the South-South Galaxy, run by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), are examples of how these spaces work for cities and national governments. These digital platforms register hundreds of thousands of visitors and have a network of many experts from all over the world. More recently, with the context of the pandemic, Metropolis, with other partners, launched a brand-new platform called the Cities for Global Health<sup>i</sup> to fight against the Covid-19 outbreak, facilitating decision-makers to access information about how cities across the globe dealt to react to the pandemics (Cities For Global Health, 2021).

## **Brazil's role in international development cooperation: from foreign aid to SSC**

In this section, we briefly present Brazil's historical background in SSC and the way the country has changed its roles in it. We use different elements brought up before by the conversation between policy transfer and SSC to outline the Brazilian experience.

### *Brazil's background on SSC*

Amidst southern powers, Brazil has progressively become more interested in promoting its policies abroad. Indeed, social policies had long been part of Brazil's foreign policy (Pimenta de Faria 2012; Pinheiro and Milani 2012). Policies relating, for example, to conditional cash transfer programs, food purchase, health, child breastfeeding and family agriculture were transferred from Brazil to Latin American and African partners. Historically, there are three moments in which Brazilian diplomacy has more assertively highlighted relations with other developing countries in the country's foreign policy agendas: during the Independent Foreign Policy (1961-64), within the Responsible and Ecumenical Pragmatism (1974-1979) and during the recent Workers' Party's mandates (Leite 2011).

Under the Lula administration, in particular, the emphasis on South-South relations was instrumental to a more ambitious project of regional and global leadership, involving, but not without contradictions, Brazilian companies that competed in international markets mainly in the sectors of civil construction, energy, regional aviation and agriculture. In short, Brazil's foreign policy under the Lula administration and, to a lesser extent, under Dilma Rousseff's government featured SSC as one of its policy priorities. Nevertheless,

Brazil's involvement with SSC is not the creation of the Workers' Party, since the Brazilian government had initiated its technical cooperation program in 1971 through agreements with Paraguay, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana. As Mazzaroppi (2016) and Leite (2016) recall, the Brazilian diplomacy sought to emphasize in multilateral forums such as the WHO, the FAO and the General Assembly of the United Nations political notions of horizontal cooperation, shared commonalities and non-intervention in national affairs. Concomitantly, it sought to obtain the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) support for technical cooperation.

The main national agencies mobilized in bilateral technical cooperation programs in the 1970's were EMBRAPA, FIOCRUZ, SENAI, SEBRAE and the ministries of health and education. The adoption of this strategy sought to spread the country's image and facilitate the joint articulation of Third World countries in international forums. Moreover, as diplomat Wladimir Valler Filho points out, Brazil was then considered an emerging power, and technical cooperation with developing countries was closely linked to the promotion of exports and the opening up of markets for Brazilian consultants, business and equipment (Valler Filho 2007). The health sector has been an important mark of Brazilian cooperation, counting on formal and informal structures to work with foreign affairs since the 1950's. The country had a crucial participation in regional and global health response to HIV, not only by offering assistance to other countries with its national policies models since the 1990's, but also by leading negotiations at the WTO Doha Round that led to the adoption of TRIPS flexibilities in 2001, paving the way for increased access to AIDS drugs in the Global South. From the beginning of the 2000's, sectoral diplomacy grew progressively in Brazil.

According to official data published by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and the Brazilian Agency of Cooperation (ABC) (2010, 2013 and 2016) covering the years between 2005 and 2013, Brazilian development cooperation increased from approximately US\$158m in 2005 to US\$923m in 2010. During the same period, technical cooperation expenses were multiplied fivefold: from US\$11.4m in 2005 to US\$57.7m. Official data show that in nine years the federal government had spent about US\$4.1b with cooperation projects (IPEA and ABC 2016). When analysing the data between 2005 and 2013, it is noticed that the total amounts spent by the federal government were clearly increasing and that, although the budgets have been reduced after peaking in 2010, the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 present expenses in reais and in dollars higher than the previous three years of the series. This means that, despite the crisis that Brazil went through during Dilma Rousseff's first term, budgets for cooperation were still very significant (IPEA and ABC 2016).

### *Brazilian policy transfers via SSC*

The idea and the very DNA of Brazilian SSC is to transfer the country's most advanced policy ideas, techniques, knowledge and instruments. While other governmental agencies (e.g. USAID, GIZ, DFID, JICA, etc), international organizations (e.g. World Bank), philanthropic organizations (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation,



etc.) offer grants, loans or other types of funding for projects, the Brazilian development cooperation has been focused on policy transfer towards a few countries and regions considered as foreign policy priorities (mainly Latin America and Lusophone nations in Africa). During the Lula administration, SSC was used as part of a foreign policy strategy and used social policies as the brand of his government, as in the case of the family allowance (Morais de Sá e Silva 2017; Leite, Mafra and Porto de Oliveira in this dossier), a conditional cash transfer program, as well as family farming and food security policies (Porto de Oliveira 2020; Milani and Luiz in this dossier).

What are the Brazilian agencies involved in providing SSC? At the national level, ABC has the main responsibility for co-ordination, but there are also international cooperation units within 'domestic' ministries (health, education, culture, rural development, among others). During the Workers' Party's governments, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was also a special unit that dealt with food security cooperation programs (CG Hunger), which was extinguished in 2016. One can also recall initiatives from the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, national participation councils (for example, the very active Council on Food Security, CONSEA, as well as the Permanent Commission for International Affairs, CPAI, linked to the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development, CONDRAF), federal states and municipalities. This reality has resulted in a higher degree of diversity of practices, but also in the fragmentation of the Brazilian SSC overall strategy, which has produced problems of coherence between different national and subnational programmes and presented obstacles in the construction of a public cooperation policy.

Brazil made this 'solidarity diplomacy' an instrument of its foreign policy in the Lula-Rousseff years, and policy transfer was the main instrument of its development cooperation programmes. Providing technical cooperation through officials from ministries and public agencies is one of the main characteristics of Brazilian SSC. Civil servants are the country's main implementation agents, which is why projects tend to be less expensive than those implemented by national and international market professionals. On one hand, this has helped to prevent the growth of an 'aid industry' in Brazil; on the other hand, many civil society organizations have ended up being excluded from Brazilian SSC projects. There are exceptions, such as Viva Rio, *Associação Alfabetização Solidária* (ALFASOL), and *Missão Criança*, which are examples of NGOs which have been involved in educational and humanitarian cooperation projects. Far from being a consensual process, several Brazilian human rights NGOs criticized the Brazilian government under Lula and Rousseff for this deficit in social participation.

Brazil's use of transfer and cooperation was also a strategy to legitimise policies at the domestic level. Transfers cannot be considered as merely copies of foreign models abroad, they involve adaptation. In particular, translations can take place in the realm of discourse, political ideas and institutional design. There were, however, public-private tensions that have also characterised Brazil's 'solidarity diplomacy'. Such tensions result from the mobilization of different interest groups – business sectors, organizations of urban and rural workers, human rights or environmental protection – who try to influence the design and implementation of Brazilian SSC strategies and benefit from them directly or indirectly.



Tensions between public and private interests were generated in partner countries, for instance, when technical cooperation projects coincided with the presence of Brazilian transnational companies which had investments in mining, infrastructure and civil engineering projects, energy and oil prospection and large-scale agriculture.

On the subnational level, SSC was often set to exchange knowledge, especially about participatory practices, between cities such as Porto Alegre and Montevideo (Uruguay) in the 1990's. Later on, decentralized cooperation from Porto Alegre also reached Africa, as the partnership between the Brazilian city and Yaoundé (Cameroon) signed in 2012 reveals (Porto de Oliveira 2017). Along the 1990's and early 2000's, cities were engaging with their peers more independently from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Decentralized cooperation was also the object of national foreign policy efforts to include cities in SSC strategies. On this matter, in 2011 ABC launched bids to fund sub-national South-South cooperation. An example of such type of engagement is the case of the solid waste management trilateral cooperation project between Guarulhos (Brazil), Saint-Denis (France), and Maputo and Matola (Mozambique). The aim of this project was to improve solid waste management through the transfer of knowledge from Guarulhos to the two aforementioned Mozambican cities. Transfer would occur through technical missions in the cities in Brazil and Mozambique and training of civil servants involved with solid waste management in Mozambique (Porto de Oliveira, Sakai, Saraiva, 2020).

## Concluding remarks

In these concluding remarks we briefly bring a few reflections on future research agendas and present the articles in this dossier. Reflections about how scholars need to steer theoretical and methodological dialogues on SSC and policy diffusion arose especially during the International Conference on Policy Diffusion and Development Cooperation held in São Paulo in May 2018. This dossier is one of the results of that conference and aims to partially respond to the challenges of such dialogues.

The starting point of this dossier is that the Policy Transfer and South-South cooperation are fields of study that have been producing specific bodies of literature, without satisfactory theoretical exchanges, methodological conversations and reciprocal cooperation about their own practices. As argued and discussed in this article, the association of perspectives stemming from both fields is potentially fruitful to analyse the contemporary engagement of southern countries in international relations, in particular in the field of development cooperation. In addition, as most of research produced so far in the area of policy transfer studies has been developed by northern scholars who have largely considered empirical cases of North-North and North-South cooperation, this dossier innovates when it also responds to the challenge of analysing bilateral and multilateral empirical cases of SSC which have not been a frequent operation in policy studies.

In this connection, the contributions presented in this dossier shed light on different aspects of both policy diffusion and development cooperation. Carlos Aurélio Pimenta de Faria discusses the role of policy diffusion as a tool of foreign policy in his article, analysing

the case of Brazil during the Lula administration. In a similar direction, Juliana Luiz and Carlos Milani explore the specific case of internationalization of Brazilian policies in the field of family farming, analysing how this agenda was diffused through different arenas, from the Mercosur to the FAO and the WTO. Another case study about Conditional Cash Transfer is used by Cristiane Kerches da Silva Leite, Júlia Mafra and Osmany Porto de Oliveira to understand the linkages between the World Bank and Brazil in the implementation and diffusion of the *Bolsa Família* (Family Allowance) Program. Michelle Morais de Sá e Silva addresses from another perspective Brazil development cooperation in the area of human rights to grasp Brazil's SSC strategies of policy diffusion. Finally, Alila Brossard Antonielli discusses the role of resistance in Brazil-Mozambique cooperation in the area of public health.

These articles highlight the fact that Brazil was very active on the use of policy transfers as an international strategy in search of status and recognition. Particularly under the Lula administration, the federal government mastered the diplomatic use of policy transfer, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and also as a means for building legitimacy for domestic public policies. This dossier focuses on the case of Brazil because reflections on policy transfer and SSC can bring into light the different dimensions of Brazil's international engagement: not only world-wide recognition for its policies at that particular moment in history, but also contradictions and public-private tensions associated with SSC practices. Finally, the analysis of Brazil's past policy experiences also allows scholars to understand how contingent on governmental choices such SSC experiments are. Indeed, since the election of Jair Bolsonaro the implementation of SSC projects and activities have dramatically decreased. A dwindling SSC agenda, the lack of capacity and political will to safeguard environmental regulation, an anti-science and an anti-vaccine stance in the current fight against Covid-19, *inter alia*, are factors that have contributed to harm Brazil's international prestige and capabilities to act as a bridge-builder in multilateral institutions. Such startling changes in the country's diplomacy offers scholars more room to discuss and reflect about how the new configurations of international power and changing behaviour of Global South countries can influence dynamics of public policy transfer and SSC.

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## Perspectivas brasileiras sobre transferência de políticas e cooperação Sul-Sul

**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta a dossiê intitulada “Transferência de políticas e cooperação Sul-Sul”. Muitas vezes, os programas de cooperação para o desenvolvimento, particularmente aqueles rotulados como parte da cooperação Sul-Sul (CSS), usam a transferência de políticas como uma de suas principais ferramentas de implementação. No entanto, independentemente das dimensões transversais e semelhanças compartilhadas, ambos os campos de práticas geraram tradições de pesquisa que seguiram trajetórias disciplinares específicas (e às vezes interdisciplinares) que raramente se encontraram. A transferência de políticas promovida por atores nacionais e internacionais, estatais e não estatais do Sul Global via cooperação para o desenvolvimento levanta várias questões que permanecem inexploradas e negligenciadas pela literatura acadêmica. Esta dossiê pretende promover um diálogo entre esses dois campos, analisando assim como a transferência de políticas por meio da CSS pode criar novas relações de poder, identidades, visões de mundo e práticas. Este artigo introdutório apresenta uma cartografia teórica e oferece na primeira seção uma breve revisão da literatura de ambos os campos de pesquisa; na segunda seção apresenta o histórico da CSS e as mudanças de papéis do Brasil nela; a terceira seção descreve possíveis conversas entre transferência de políticas e CSS; por fim, nas considerações finais trazemos algumas reflexões sobre futuras agendas de pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: Transferência de política; Cooperação para o Desenvolvimento; Cooperação Sul-Sul, Políticas públicas; Relações Internacionais.

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