Brazil as ‘Southern donor’: beyond hierarchy and national interests in development cooperation?

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Abstract  This article analyses Brazil’s growing role in external development assistance. During Lula da Silva’s presidency, cooperation with developing countries grew dramatically. While the official position is that Brazilian development assistance is moved not by national economic or political interests, but by international ‘solidarity’, and does not reproduce the North–South traditional aid relations, we suggest that it is not completely divorced from national, sub-national or sectoral interests and cannot be viewed apart from Brazil’s broader foreign policy objectives. Brazil does pursue political, economic and commercial interests and, concomitantly, has made a positive difference in the recipient countries. However, more empirical research and field investigation are needed to better gauge the impact of Brazil’s assistance initiatives and their contributions to South–South cooperation more broadly. During Lula’s terms (2003–2010), Brazil could be classified as a ‘Southern donor’, which expresses the country’s own novelties, and tensions, of simultaneously being a donor and a developing country.

Introduction

Brazil’s rise as a provider of development assistance to other developing countries is starting to capture world attention.1 Although Brazil still receives technical and financial assistance from bilateral or multilateral sources, over the past six years2 the country has moved from being mainly an aid recipient to also being a significant provider. The shift is rooted in Brazil’s own recent developmental achievements.


2 In fact, technical cooperation provided by Brazil started to be emphasized and to grow in the 1980s, while the cooperation received by the country remained stable. In 1986, a project supported by UNDP with Brazilian resources BRA/86/001 was established to foster Brazilian technical cooperation to developing countries (TCDC). During the 1990s, TCDC did not grow in Brazil. The big leap was observed in the mid 2000s during the second term of Lula’s presidency.
Due to its sustained economic growth, Brazil has entered the ranks of middle-income countries, and this growth has provided the material capability to offer more external assistance to other developing countries. In the shift to middle-income country status, Brazil also became ineligible to receive many types of traditional development assistance, and the result has been a significant slowdown in new programmes as a recipient.³ Brazil’s gradual evolution into a net assistance provider is, equally important, also the result of changes in foreign policy. The presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva placed stronger emphasis on ‘South–South cooperation’ than previous governments, in terms of policy attention and resources. As a result, Brazilian technical cooperation to developing countries has seen dramatic increases in volume, number of projects, and partners. While these shifts are starting to draw the attention of international analysts and policymakers, there has been limited scholarly analysis of the foreign policy and related external assistance policy and programming shifts that make up the details of Brazil’s rise as a provider of development assistance. This is especially so with regard to the evolving intentions and objectives of Brazil’s external assistance, and analyses of the implications for the global development system.

This article analyses Brazil’s growing role in external development assistance, especially as a provider of technical cooperation for development.⁴ It will assess the main policies, motivations, operational modalities and collaborative mechanisms of the Brazilian government in providing external development assistance.⁵ Particularly, it highlights the role of Brazil’s foreign policy in shaping its international development cooperation policy and programmes. Special attention will be given to the key Brazilian institutions that are engaged in both managing and delivering external development cooperation programs.

Brazilian authorities prefer to characterize Brazil as a ‘Southern development partner’. The government resists the label of ‘donor’, as it objects to the idea that there is a hierarchical or vertical relationship in its ‘development partnerships’ with the country that is receiving Brazilian aid. Brasilia prefers instead, the terms ‘South–South’ and ‘horizontal cooperation’, suggesting that its international development assistance relations are qualitatively different from North–South aid relations.

The paper analyses the nature of Brazil’s external development assistance by focusing on the ‘technical cooperation’ that Brazil has provided to other developing countries.

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³ The Lula government advocated a gradual phasing-out of receiving ODA. This meant that the country continued to receive development assistance in some areas, even though there was a significant overall decline. Since the 1990s, the bilateral and multilateral assistance that Brazil has received has shifted mainly from supporting economic and industrial development to environmental protection, social welfare and sustainable development.

⁴ External development assistance, or what Fues (2009) calls ‘international development cooperation’, can be seen as a distinct subsystem of global governance which aims at universal poverty eradication and sustainable development. This kind of cooperation is shaped by tensions between foreign and domestic policy objectives.

⁵ Even though development assistance covers technical and financial cooperation, as Brazil provides mostly technical cooperation, which is one kind of development assistance, the two expressions will be used interchangeably. According to the DAC, ‘development assistance’ refers mainly to grants and loans to countries and territories on the DAC list of ODA recipients and to multilateral agencies to promote development and welfare. In addition to financial flows, it includes technical cooperation as aid. See <http://www.oecd.org/document/32/0,3343,en_2649_33721_42632800_1_1_1_1,00.html#ODA>, accessed 2 April 2010.
countries, including an examination of ‘triangular cooperation’ which involves another country or an international organization (IO) as a ‘co-donor’, in addition to the recipient country. The reason for this focus is that the technical cooperation provided by Brazil is the most concrete lens through which to examine Brazil’s evolving development assistance and the shifts in its national policy context and broader foreign policy goals over time. The main finding of this article is that the empirical evidence does not fully support the official rhetoric that Brazil’s external development assistance is beyond hierarchical international relations. The central argument is that it is accurate to classify Brazil as a ‘Southern donor’, which expresses both the novelty and tensions of simultaneously being a donor and a developing country. The underlying assumption is that the dual motivations of altruism and national interest are not necessarily mutually exclusive. International relations can be seen as a positive sum game, in which there is some room for mutual gains.

The long view

The origins of Brazil’s international cooperation policies date back to the 1950s (Inoue and Apostolova 1995). The evolution of Brazil’s external assistance can be divided into four periods. The first is from 1969 to 1978, and is characterized by the first attempt to create a national system to coordinate technical cooperation and the first agreements with other developing countries. The second ran from 1978 to 1987. In 1978, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries was signed and became a watershed for Brazil as a provider of technical cooperation. In this period, there was a visible increase in the number of Brazilian external aid projects and activities in other developing countries. The third period is marked by the creation of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) in 1987, and ended in 2003 when President Lula da Silva took office. Lula’s presidency initiated the latest phase of Brazilian development assistance.

There are three distinctive features of Brazil’s external development assistance which should be noted at the outset. First, the Brazilian government’s preference for referring to its technical, scientific, technological and financial cooperation programmes as ‘international cooperation’ rather than using the traditional donor language of ‘official development assistance’ (ODA) or ‘foreign aid’ was not only a philosophical distinction but also accurate in the earlier periods in the sense that, functionally, Brazil’s assistance programmes did not emphasize traditionally the grant and loan components as per the definition of ‘ODA’ used by the Development

6 Brazil has not provided significant amounts of grants, concessional loans or technological transfer to developing countries, and has concentrated instead on technical cooperation. However, there is a new tendency, yet to be consolidated, of providing special credits to other developing countries through the BNDES.


8 This may change, as there is a trend towards the growth of international operations of the BNDES, offering credits to countries in Latin America and Africa, and the creation of financial mechanisms like the one established between Brazil and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). See <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-impressa/discursos-artigos-entrevistas-e-outras-comunicacoes/presidente-da-republica-federativa-do-brasil/discursoduante-sessao-de-abertura-da-cupula-brasil-2013-comunidade-economica-dos-estados-da-africa-oidental-cedeao>, accessed 18 August 2010.
Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The philosophical distinction reflected the discomfort that successive Brazilian governments have expressed with the idea of a donor–recipient hierarchy in the relations with the traditional donors. Successive Brazilian governments have instead emphasized ‘cooperation’, rather than ‘assistance’ or ‘aid’, when participating in international fora such as the United Nations (UN). Brazil has consistently attempted to dissociate itself from the paternalism, conditionality and political interference in domestic affairs which has often been linked to the image of the traditional donor countries.

Functionally, Brazilian authorities have emphasized the importance of providing technical cooperation between developing countries, especially since the late 1970s. The Buenos Aires Action Plan gave rise to the conceptual evolution in Brazil’s international development cooperation policy from international technical assistance to international technical cooperation (Cervo 1994). Brazil together with other developing countries demanded that the UN Development Programme (UNDP) foster international technical cooperation between developing countries. Their advocacy led to the UN World Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in Buenos Aires in September 1978. The approval of the Buenos Aires Action Plan meant that technical cooperation between developing countries was officially introduced into the international system and Brazil started to ‘utilize its capacity for horizontal cooperation to overcome the limitations of North–South cooperation’ (Cervo 1994, 44). Recently, the Brazilian government has underscored the need to foster ‘South–South cooperation’. South–South cooperation is seen as broader than technical cooperation, as it also encompasses non-technical assistance modalities of cooperation such as debt forgiveness, economic cooperation or humanitarian assistance. Brazil’s South–South cooperation is also said to reinforce the idea of horizontal relationships given the avoidance of the donor–recipient hierarchy.

In December 2010, the IPEA (Institute for Applied Economics Research), a governmental research institute, published the first study about ‘Brazilian international cooperation for development’. The study uses a broad working definition of international cooperation which encompasses all the non-refundable resources invested by the federal government in other countries’ governments, in citizens from other countries in Brazilian territory, or in international organizations in order to contribute to international development understood as strengthening the capacities of international organizations and groups or populations from other countries to improve their socioeconomic conditions (IPEA 2010b, 17).

Second, based on the official data, Brazil remains, on balance, a net recipient. Brazil is listed as an ODA recipient on the official list of the DAC. The country has received concessional loans and grants in areas that have global impact, such as environment protection (Table 1).

It is, however, important to note that the government has only preliminary estimates for its total investment in development cooperation (IPEA 2010b), and

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9 In fact, the publication came after the main research for this article was done.
10 Free translation by the authors.
12 In December 2009, data from the SEAIN/MPOG show that 141 projects were being carried out, valued at US$17,864,297,000.
there is a general perception that the official figures understate the totals.\textsuperscript{13} The difficulty of obtaining accurate aggregate figures for Brazilian development assistance reflects loose coordination of data collection, and a dispersed pattern of the delivery of assistance. The various government organizations involved give several forms of assistance, and either do not keep comprehensive statistics or do not allow public access to the data. This research finds that the government has only started to collect and organize the information, and is trying to create a standardized system for that. Moreover, there appears to be an implicit distinction between ‘official’ and ‘inter-institutional’ development cooperation commitments which has been unaccounted for. The former is backed by official agreements between the Brazil government and its official counterparts (that is, state-to-state agreements); the latter involves Brazilian governmental and Brazilian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and counterparts in other countries.\textsuperscript{14}

According to IPEA (2010b), Brazilian international cooperation for development includes humanitarian assistance, scholarships, technical cooperation and contributions to international organizations. In 2009, it totalled around US$362.21 million.\textsuperscript{15} This estimate of the total amount of the broad range of contributions

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{llll}
\hline
Year & ODA received by Brazil (US$ million) & Brazilian contributions for South–South cooperation through UNDP (US$ million) & Brazilian scientific technical and technological cooperation (IPEA 2010b) (US$ million) \\
\hline
2001 & 156.82 & 5.54 & - \\
2002 & 197.64 & 7.10 & - \\
2003 & 184.3 & 1.87 & - \\
2004 & 147.36 & 10.40 & - \\
2005 & 174.62 & 5.61 & 11,422,103 \\
2006* & 74.95 & 7.34 & 15,046,398.49 \\
2007 & 270.02 or 321 & 8.31 & 18,256,036.71 \\
2008 & 378.95 or 460 & 3.74 & 32,097,329.36 \\
2009 & 338 & 30.31 & 48,872,380.00 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Development assistance received and provided by Brazil according to official data}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{13} We interviewed international cooperation officers in 2007 and 2010.
\textsuperscript{14} Such inter-institutional activities often go unnoted in the official data of the Brazilian authorities. These unofficial development cooperation commitments are not based on official agreements between states and tend to be much more dispersed and harder to assess in terms of results.
\textsuperscript{15} Table 3, from the Report \textit{Cooperação brasileira para o desenvolvimento internacional: 2005–2009} (IPEA 2010b, 21) shows the total amount of US$362,210,063.08 as the total expenditure for Brazilian international cooperation for development in 2009 including humanitarian assistance, scholarships for foreigners, technical cooperation and contributions for international organizations (annual average of the currency exchange for 2009).
that fall under the label of Brazilian cooperation for development may be too low. It does not include concessional loans by federal banks like the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), and it does not consider that each dollar spent in the Brazilian technical cooperation to developing countries (TCDC) programme should be multiplied by ten, because most of the Brazilian organizations that implement the projects are public institutions, and so they do not charge for their participation or for their know-how.16

Anyhow, what we have found is that Brazilian South–South cooperation (development assistance) has increased steadily over the past five years and ranges across a growing number of fronts: education (focusing on provision of scholarships), technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance, debt forgiveness, financial cooperation, participation in peacekeeping operations, refugee assistance, social–cultural programmes and science and technological cooperation (joint research programmes).17 The data are still highly dispersed. Numerous governmental agencies are involved, but there is no common focal point to provide national coordination, or to track the flows.

Third, the Federal government has tried to establish a more centralized system to coordinate official development-oriented international cooperation. It was also thought that a bureaucratic merger would help foster tighter coordination between the country’s internal developmental needs, its international technical cooperation (ITC) programming and the country’s broader foreign policy priorities. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)18 was created in 1987, through the merger of functions of the two federal bodies that were both then involved in Brazilian technical cooperation. One, the Division for Technical Cooperation/Department of Scientific, Technological and Technical Cooperation (DCOPT/DCT), was linked to the Ministry of External Relations (MRE) and the other, the Secretariat for Economic and Technical Cooperation (SUBIN), to the

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17 Vaz and Inoue (2007).

18 This is the translation into English as it appears on <http://www.mre.gov.br/ingles/index.htm>, accessed May 2007.

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Table 2. Annual increase in the number of technical cooperation projects and activities in developing countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total of programmes, including projects and activities</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>476 (236 projects)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>489 (189 projects)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ABC reports and public statements (IPEA 2010a).
Despite the creation of the ABC to coordinate Brazil’s external technical cooperation, different bureaucracies continued, on balance, to remain in charge of administering the different modalities of cooperation. Scientific and technological cooperation is coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), linked to MCT. Cooperation in education is under the Ministry of Education, with a particular role for its Coordination for High Level Capacity Building (CAPES). Cooperation in bilateral and multilateral aid financing is under the Department for International Affairs (SEAIN) of the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG). Other ministries and organizations also support development cooperation initiatives.

The recently published study mentioned above suggests that the government is beginning to take initial steps to identify and assess the wide array of South-South cooperation initiatives in which it is involved. These initial steps may eventually allow the various ministries and governmental agencies involved to consolidate their efforts, and senior officials to formulate more coherent external assistance policy. However, these trends are still mainly at the stage of promise.

**Big leap under Lula**

This section discusses Brazil’s evolving external development cooperation under the Lula da Silva government, outlining the key foreign policy shifts that preconditioned the dramatic increases in external assistance, and the evolving nature of Brazil’s external assistance programming, including the growing emphasis on triangular cooperation.

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19 Before 1987, the DCOPT was responsible for establishing relations with external partners and the SUBIN for national coordination. Both organs viewed the projects and activities as being part of the National System of Technical Cooperation and the idea was to link it to the National Development Plans (PNDs) (Inoue and Apostolova 1995).

20 Free translation.

21 This department is responsible for the relations with international financial institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank, as well as bilateral institutions such as KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau [Reconstruction Credit Institute]) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). SEAIN is also the operational focal point for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Brazil.

22 According to Schmitz and colleagues (2010), the resources for Brazilian international development cooperation comprise everything that has been invested by the federal government without reimbursement or with partial reimbursement in foreign governments, nationals from other countries in Brazilian territory, and international organizations aiming to promote international development. This is understood as strengthening international organizations, foreign groups and population capacities so they can achieve better socio-economic conditions.

23 The first report on Brazilian cooperation for international development (IPEA 2010b) was elaborated by the IPEA. It covers the period 2005 to 2009. It is a quantitative study that estimates the volume of resources that the Brazilian government invested in the IDC in that period (Schmitz et al 2010).
Foreign policy context

From 1930 to 2003, Brazil’s foreign policy targeted mainly the promotion of its own national development. While the goal was clear, strategies varied, reflecting two very different policy approaches to Brazil’s own domestic development: the first favoured the promotion of national autonomy as the most highly valued goal for development policies, thus leading to a more closed economy; the second approach relied on integration into international markets and a more open economy as the key development strategy: ‘national developmentism’ versus liberalism (Cervo 1994, 41).

The election of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva as president introduced important shifts in Brazilian foreign policy. On the one hand, Brazilian foreign policy sought a return to traditional policy guidelines such as emphasizing relations with other developing countries, South–South cooperation, regionalism and universalism24 in both foreign trade and multilateralism. On the other hand, some liberal economic orthodoxy introduced in the mid-1990s remained, such as in fiscal policy, and the priority on foreign trade. The main difference from preceding administrations is arguably the degree to which Lula da Silva’s government aimed to project Brazil’s influence as a global actor, seeking international activism in growing range of policy areas, including as a development assistance actor, and with South–South cooperation as the cornerstone of foreign policy.

President Lula turned the relations with other Southern countries into the policy priority. According to Gregory and Almeida (2008), the ‘sharp focus on South–South diplomacy’ represents a significant change in the country’s foreign economic and political position. The new emphasis on South–South relations may be associated with the search for more autonomy in the international arena and with a renewed activism in favour of development (Pino and Leite 2010). Sustained criticism of power concentration, economic and social asymmetries, and unilateralism, the quest for multipolarity, and an emphasis on strengthening multilateralism have been the central features of Brazilian foreign policy and Brazil’s efforts to turn itself into a more active and influential global actor.

‘Solidarity’ within the developing world is the officially stated motivation. Pino and Leite (2010) suggest several possible reasons for the policy shift to South–South relations. Political and economic interests must also be taken into account. For example, the promotion of multipolarity, democracy and peace may provide favorable conditions to expand Brazilian trade and investments in international markets. In terms of national political interests, the goal of achieving a permanent seat in the UN Security Council depends on the support of other developing countries, and this objective can be served through strengthening ties with countries in the South (Pino and Leite 2010; Lima and Hirst 2006; Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007).

24 The principle of universalism in Brazilian foreign policy has been continuously re-stated and has emerged to counter ‘Americanism’ or the idea of privileging foreign relations with the US. In general terms, the ‘universalist’ foreign policy approach means broadening the country’s relations throughout all continents according to timely determined national interests and not to a priori determined preferences.
Recent ambitions: Southern turn and the development cooperation governance architecture

It is important to highlight that, despite the emphasis on South–South development cooperation as a foreign policy priority, the government of Lula da Silva has not issued an official policy for external development cooperation. Nor has the government published a White Paper to officially outline its main priorities, concepts, objectives, strategies and guidelines for external assistance. There has, however, been no lack of official statements from the authorities about Brazil’s current vision. President Lula da Silva explains the growth in Brazil’s South–South ties as follows:

I want to tell you that finally Brazil is not a recipient country anymore, which thinks of itself as a very poor country, which was used to often asking money from NGOs, as if it was a three-million inhabitant country. Brazil accepts its vocation as a developing country. The country has important banks. We have agreed to extend to the African continent and to Latin-America the same kind of special credits to finance agriculture machinery, buses and trucks as the ones that are offered to Brazilian entrepreneurs.25

South–South development cooperation should be placed in the context of Brazil’s new foreign policy focus on Southern relations. According to Minister Marco Farani, Director of the ABC, South–South cooperation is inspired by the concept of ‘solidarity diplomacy’. At the same time, it is part of a broader effort:

... to strengthen the relations between Brazil and other developing countries ... South–South cooperation is an important instrument to show Brazil’s image and its potential to the outside ... Brazil transfers not only its best competences and skills, but also reveals the country’s attitude as an active actor in the international scene in support of development and solidarity, thus putting into practice a traditional principle of Brazilian foreign policy. (Farani 2009)

While solidarity is emphasized, the Minister does recognize that cooperation is a political instrument. It could be seen as a policy of prestige, related to the desire to occupy a more central position in the international system. Campos and colleagues (2011) highlight that Brazil has increasingly become an important actor in the international aid architecture. The authors argue that there is underway a process of reconfiguration of the international aid governance architecture to which Brasilia should pay close attention.

Our research found that Brazil has participated in several multilateral conferences about development assistance and South–South cooperation. Brazil is not a DAC–OECD member, and has not adhered to the Paris Declaration. For its South–South development cooperation, the Brazilian government staunchly refuses to be labeled an ‘emerging donor’. Márcio Lopes Correa, Coordinator-General of Multilateral Technical Cooperation for ABC, explained in his speech to the OECD–DAC that, despite the fact that Brazil is providing more and more technical, educational and financial cooperation, and emergency and

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humanitarian assistance, the country’s basic stance towards other developing countries and international development cooperation has not changed, which means that ‘Brazil continues to favor a horizontal approach rather than one that is vertical’. As mentioned, the government associates the concept of aid with a vertical relationship. From several official statements, one could deduce that Brazil does not consider the OECD–DAC as the ideal forum to discuss development cooperation.

Instead, the Brazilian government has promoted its vision of South–South cooperation at the global multilateral level via the UN system. During the follow-up conference on the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development in 2008, Celso Amorim, Brazil’s former foreign minister, suggested that South–South cooperation was one of the four ways to overcome the global financial crisis and its impacts on the developing countries.

At the UN’s High Level Conference on South–South Cooperation in Kenya (2009), the Brazilian delegation also suggested that ‘Southern’ summits, thematic high-level meetings among developing countries and other initiatives that are conceived and implemented by developing countries themselves, such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), entail the establishment of important new cooperation mechanisms that match more closely the priorities and needs of developing countries.

Brazilian authorities have added that although the UN system has played an important and supportive role for South–South cooperation, more could be done, especially in ‘matching the knowledge available in developing countries with global initiatives through better utilization of the United Nations network of field offices; that this network could be better utilized as a mechanism to complement South–South cooperation at the bilateral level’. The Brazil government has placed special emphasis in calling on the UN agencies to incorporate South–South cooperation into their regular operational modalities.

This emphasis and activism seem to indicate Brasilia’s preference for the UN system as the reference on development cooperation. Brazil has actively supported and tried to shape UN processes like the ECOSOC’s Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). The country is represented in all DCF relevant meetings. Senior Brazilian officers consider the DCF a high-level forum with the legitimacy and political conditions to discuss development cooperation.

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28 Brazilian delegation statement during the High Level UN Conference on South–South Cooperation, Nairobi, 1–3 December 2009.

29 Brazilian delegation statement at the High Level UN Conference on South–South Cooperation, Nairobi, 1–2 December 2009.

30 Brazilian officers interview with authors, November 2011.
External development cooperation

Despite the differences between the governments of Itamar Franco and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the former tending towards a more ‘autonomist’ foreign policy, and the latter towards liberal international integration, both gave importance to the idea that Brazil should occupy a ‘special’ place in the international system (Saraiva 2008). Since the start of its technical cooperation programmes, the first priority for Brazilian governments has been assisting other South American countries, and after the mid-1970s Brazil’s outreach expanded to Portuguese-speaking African countries. However, the period that preceded the presidency of Lula da Silva did not see a ‘big leap’ in Brazil’s external development assistance—only incremental growth. The period was highlighted by growing institutional rationalization (ABC’s role in coordinating external technical cooperation) and more regularized procedures for technical cooperation. These efforts provided the foundations for the growth in Brazilian development assistance after the mid-2000s.

Under President Lula da Silva’s presidency (2003–2010), external development cooperation has grown dramatically. As mentioned, the governmental research institute, IPEA, published a study on Brazilian international cooperation for development (IPEA 2010b). It was a first attempt to systematize and estimate the numbers for humanitarian assistance, scholarships, technical cooperation and contributions to international organizations. In 2005, the total contribution was around US$158 million and in 2009 around US$362 million. In the period covered (2005–2009), humanitarian assistance increased from around US$750,000 to US$43.5 million. Technical cooperation grew from around US$11.4 million to US$48.9 million. A more recent trend has been the provision of special credits to other developing countries by the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES). The increases in humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation are clear indications of the shifts in foreign policy priorities, and we suggest that a more direct line between humanitarian assistance and Brazil’s desire to have a seat in the UN Security Council could be drawn.

While Brazil’s diplomats and senior officials promote ‘South–South cooperation’, much of the government’s efforts are actually focused at the

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31 Until the mid 1970s, the country did not have an explicit policy towards the Portuguese-speaking African countries, which became an issue for Brazil’s international development assistance efforts because the ‘Treaty of Friendship’ between Brazil and Portugal restricted Brazil from openly opposing Portuguese colonialism. With the demise of Portuguese colonial power and the emergence of Brazil’s ‘pragmatic’ foreign policy vision in the 1970s, outreach to Portuguese-speaking Africa became a policy priority, in addition to relations with South American countries.

32 The figures were given in average cost of the dollar in the year 2009. Precisely, the figure for 2005 was US$158,103,452 and for 2009 US$362,210,063.

33 In the study, the figures for technical cooperation include also scientific and technological cooperation.

34 See the quote from former President Lula’s speech above (footnote 27).

35 For government authorities, South–South cooperation could mean anything from policy coordination among Southern countries as in the IBSA scheme to all the forms of cooperation for international development’ that were included in the study by IPEA (2010b): humanitarian assistance, scientific, technical and technological cooperation (under the rubric of ‘technical cooperation’), scholarships and contributions to international organizations. The study does not include, however, special credits provided to other developing countries.
level of providing increasing amounts of technical cooperation to other developing countries. According to Brazil’s former foreign minister: ‘Technical cooperation is a central instrument of Brazil’s external action. Brazil’s South–South cooperation focuses on transfer of skills, capacity building, empowering local workers and projects adapted to the reality of the country in question.’ As such, significant effort is now being put into strengthening the ABC’s legal frameworks, staffing capacities, and financial capabilities. The expansion of the network of Brazilian embassies abroad, which took place during President Lula’s government serves, among broader foreign policy purposes, to support this cooperation effort (Farani 2009).

From 2003 to 2009, ABC coordinated the negotiation, approval, signing and implementation of over 400 South–South technical cooperation agreements, including ‘triangular initiatives’ (discussed in detail below). During the same period, the number of beneficiary countries more than doubled from 21 to 56 countries (IPEA 2010a).

Under Lula da Silva, South America has continued to be Brazil’s immediate priority region for technical cooperation, and development cooperation is seen as a tool for regional integration. However, the Lula government has given more attention to Africa, particularly, Portuguese-speaking countries. Brazil opened 16 new embassies in Africa. Trade with the continent was multiplied five-fold between 2002 and 2008. Presidente Lula visited 27 African countries in eight years, more than any other Brazilian president. Official statements point to ‘common cultural background’ and the ‘African people’s contribution to Brazilian national identity’. Moreover, this move can be seen as part of an effort to consolidate Brazil as a global player.

Marco Farani, Director of ABC, states that President Lula instructed the Ministry of External Relations to expand bilateral horizontal technical cooperation with developing countries (Farani 2009), and the ABC’s own list of priorities and recipients to include:

- commitments made by the Republic President and the Chancellor during their visits to other countries;
- South American countries;
- Haiti;
- African countries, especially Lusophone countries;
- East Timor;
- other Latin American countries and the Caribbean;
- support for the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP);
- improving triangular cooperation initiatives with developed countries through their cooperation agencies and international organizations.

37 Ambassador Celso Amorim, MRE, writes, ‘Brazil has broadened its dialogue with Africa since President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office. The strategy of strengthening ties with that continent is part of a broader effort that seeks both to consolidate Brazil as a global player and to ensure that Brazilian foreign policy takes into account elements of the country’s national identity’, ABC (2009).
East Timor, a member of CPLP, was added to the priorities, as well as Haiti, given Brazil’s contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in that country (Valler-Filho 2008).

A range of Brazilian governmental and non-governmental organizations participate in the implementation of external assistance programmes. The programmes cover a wide range of issue areas from agriculture, health (particularly HIV/AIDS), water, professional education, public administration, meteorology, energy, environment, electoral support, cooperation in sports, and the production and use of biofuels (especially ethanol and biodiesel). More recently, newer themes considered relevant for less developed countries such as e-government, renewable energy, international trade and disaster relief have been added. Our research indicates that the area of energy and biofuels is becoming particularly important, and will see increases in external development projects.

In Africa, Brazil assistance projects have targeted education, enterprise development, telecommunications, social development related to gender issues, and developing relationships between international organizations and civil society as ‘issues of concentration’. Cooperation projects with the Portuguese-speaking countries in particular have focused on professional education, health and education. Available official data indicate that 28 per cent of the allocated resources went into professional education while agriculture and health accounted for 27 per cent and 19 per cent of the resources, respectively. These sectors comprise two-thirds of Brazilian technical cooperation. Projects in these areas focus on ‘capacity development that enables people and organizations in developing countries to improve their own capabilities and solve their own problems’. Human resources training, led by Brazilian specialists, is a major component of these projects.

Since 2006, the Brazil government has further expanded the geographical scope of its South–South cooperation. In addition to making Africa a regional priority, Brazil has returned to its own region and pursued a number of development cooperation projects in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico. This has enabled Brasilia to further strengthen its presence in the region (ABC 2006). In Table 2, we can see that technical cooperation provided by Brazil has grown considerably in the past five years. The total number of projects and partner countries increased exponentially from 23 projects and 21 countries in 2003 to around 489 technical cooperation projects and activities in 56 countries in 2009. The gains were mainly in Latin America and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. The portfolio of projects and activities totalled around US$90 million. By 2009, in Africa, Brazil was providing technical cooperation to 22 countries, totalling around US$45 million. Projects and activities in Latin America added up about US$40 million, and technical cooperation to East Timor totalled US$5 million.

It is important to bear in mind that the figures above give only a rough estimate of the amounts of technical cooperation that Brazil has provided to other developing countries given that the data are based mainly on expenses such as air transport, per diem, and do not include the full contributions related to equipment provided and infrastructure support. The exact total of Brazil’s international development

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39 The data were obtained during the interviews with the author at the ABC in May–June 2007 and March 2010.
assistance as a provider is unknown, as the costs incurred by the Brazilian organizations that implement the projects are dispersed and not tracked by one focal point institution. Research indicates that there has not been a precise accounting of the exact value of the know-how and expertise that Brazilian experts have transferred to counterparts in other developing countries (Schmitz et al 2010).

In 2008, the ABC also adopted a new strategy that emphasizes the formulation of ‘groundwork projects’, instead of traditional narrowly based projects, which means broader structural interventions. The official view is that the advantages of groundwork projects are: ‘enhancing the social and economic impact on target populations; ensuring greater sustainability of the outcomes stemming from Brazilian cooperation; facilitating the mobilization of Brazilian institutions for the implementation of different project components; and creating avenues for the mobilization of three-way partnerships with other international actors’. One example that has been featured by the authorities is the technical cooperation supported by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária [EMBRAPA]), on the sustainable development of cotton production chains, which has been provided to the so-called ‘Cotton-4’ countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali). Brazilian authorities see this case as a model of ‘partnership for development’, which emphasizes ‘shared efforts and benefits’.

Institutional arrangements

Brazil’s institutional arrangements for external technical cooperation are centred on the ABC, which acts as the official organ under the Ministry of External Relations. The role of the ABC is to negotiate, promote and monitor the Brazilian government’s external technical cooperation programmes and projects. The primary role of the ABC is to coordinate the relationship between the Brazilian executive agencies (project implementation organizations) and their counterparts in the partner country. The ABC also acts as a subsidiary financing agency, coordinating the allocation of financial resources to support the project.

Our field investigation has revealed, however, that this system of project design and delivery is quite loosely coordinated. The diffusion of projects and activities makes it difficult to ensure that external assistance strategies are actually properly implemented in a coherent and comprehensive manner. The ABC has overall regulatory responsibility for Brazil’s external technical cooperation programmes, but due to the diffuse structure of project design and delivery, and a continuing lack of personnel, its effectiveness is impaired. Several Brazilian executing organizations are usually involved in one technical cooperation programme as the implementers. Another challenge is the lack of regular project monitoring or evaluations that are designed to measure the impact of Brazilian external assistance programmes. The new strategy of ‘groundwork projects’ may

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40 Minister Marco Farani (ABC 2009)
42 Field investigations were done in Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro in the first semester of 2007, and in Sao Paulo and Brasilia in the first semester of 2010.
contribute to stronger programmatic coordination, but the challenge of results and performance monitoring remains.

Opportunities for political influence are quite evident in the institutional arrangements of Brazil’s external assistance programming. Bilateral state-to-state agreements provide the legal basis for technical cooperation between Brazil and its partner countries. The political will for cooperation must first be stated in a ‘Framework Agreement’. After an agreement is signed, meetings known as ‘joint commissions’ (Comissão Mista—Comista) are held for parties to negotiate the details of the areas of concentration and guidelines for the programmes, projects and activities to be implemented in the field. At these meetings, representatives of partner countries deal with the ABC, as well as with other Brazilian government agencies that are the main deliverers of the specific forms of technical cooperation. The ABC itself is guided by foreign policy directives, whose implementation is overseen by the Ministry of External Relations.

The strategic direction of the ABC is also guided by Brazilian national development priorities, at the level of sectoral plans and programmes, and the ABC is formally responsible for supervising the implementation of the projects. Leading Brazilian organizations in the sectors of education, agriculture and health are all involved in providing external technical cooperation: Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, known as Fiocruz, linked to the Health Ministry; the International Affairs Office of EMBRAPA, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (which is affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture); and SENAI (the National Service for Industrial Learning), a non-governmental body that serves the Brazilian industrial sector. Other federal organizations that have been directly involved in implementing projects in other developing countries are: the National School of Public Administration (ENAP), which works in capacity-building for the staff of the public administration and in improving public management methods; the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), a government-backed research institute that has helped developing countries to prepare economic policy reports and documents; the Federal Savings Bank (CEF), a public bank with expertise in urban development and housing, especially in financing and offering credits for housing to low- and middle-income families, which has provided capacity-building in alternative construction technology models and pricing systems, for formulating urban development policies and developing criteria for housing legislation; and the Federal Data Processing Service (SERPRO), which has cooperated in the establishment of e-government services (for example, intranet and database systems, and online services).

**Triangular cooperation**

A growing portion of Brazil’s external development assistance has involved triangular cooperation. According to the ABC, ‘Triangular cooperation occurs when two countries, or one country and one international organization, implement joint actions to provide professional qualifications, strengthen institutions, and exchange technicians in favour of a third party.’ Márcio Lopes Correa, the ABC’s Coordinator-General for Multilateral Technical Cooperation, explains:
Triangular projects must be complementary to the existing bilateral South–South cooperation ... react to demands originated in developing countries; there must be an effective transfer of knowledge between the developing countries necessarily involved in a triangular partnership; do not interfere in the beneficiary country’s internal affairs.43

ABC representatives state that bilateral South–South technical cooperation is a priority, and that triangular partnerships are mechanisms to strengthen the impact of development initiatives. They also suggest that such mechanisms are positive when ‘fair partnerships are developed, and when there is real ownership by the beneficiary’. They further note that the differences in terms of practices and procedures between the partners should not jeopardize the process.44

Thus, the Brazilian government sees triangular cooperation as a ‘particular modality’ of South–South cooperation. According to Minister Marco Farani, Director of ABC, ‘in triangular operations, there is a combination of, on one side, Brazilian comparative advantages with, on the other, comparative advantages of a traditional donor’ (Farani 2009). ABC senior officials define Brazil’s comparative advantages in terms of culture, ethnic diversity and commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to using development as an instrument of reducing asymmetries. They also mention that, as a developing country, the knowledge and technology Brazil can offer is easier to adapt to the realities of other developing countries. The third party, the traditional donor, is noted by them as the partner who can mobilize larger amounts of resources and technical inputs, widening the scale of projects, and favouring actions that produce bigger impacts:

If we could say there is a ‘vocation’ or ‘mission’ for Triangular Cooperation, it would be the conception of joint strategic programs or projects, that may go a step ahead from bilateral cooperation provided through North–South and South–South modalities.45

The ABC has selected some countries as the main partners for triangular cooperation, with Japan in the lead, then Germany and the United Kingdom (UK).46 According to IPEA (2010b, p 34), Japan, United States (US), Germany, France, Canada, Argentina and Spain are the main trilateral cooperation partners. Australia and Belgium have demonstrated interest in this kind of partnership. There is information about projects in different areas such as health, public administration, reforestation and professional education, among others, developed with the US, Canada, Spain, France, Norway and Italy. The projects are at different stages in their cycle, varying from negotiation to implementation. The beneficiaries are Haiti, African Portuguese-speaking countries, Bolivia, and Cameroun.

Brazil has also established trilateral operations with multilateral organizations, including the International Labor Organization (ILO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Ibero-American States Organization (IASO) the World Food Program (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the World Bank, the European Union, the UNDP, the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and others (Table 3).

One case of triangular cooperation for Brazil is its collaboration with Japan in providing development assistance in Latin America, Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor. For Japan, this triangular collaboration with Brazil is a priority, as it views Brazil as a major emerging country that can transfer know-how to other developing countries, and a major emerging country with which it shares similar political characteristics. Tokyo has viewed such development cooperation with Brazil as unlike the case of China—a rising power with whom Japan is competing for international influence. This triangular relationship is initiated with the ‘Training for Third Countries’ agreement in 1985, which had trained more than 2000 people by 2008. It targets Latin America, the Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor as the recipient third parties. Sixteen projects were identified for 2009/2010. There have been five joint seminars per year. The Japan–Brazil Partnership Program (JBPP) was established in 2000. Eight projects are currently being implemented in targeted developing countries. Brazil and Japan have been cooperating on health, professional education, public administration, water services and sanitation, community police, and agriculture projects benefiting countries like Angola, Paraguay, Madagascar, Mozambique, Honduras, Guatelmala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Mexico.

Germany considers Brazil an important partner for triangular development assistance, due to Brazil’s growing economic weight and role in external development assistance and international security in the Latin American region. The German government perceives Brazil as having an important role to play in global natural resource and environmental protection. Growing Brazilian–German triangular cooperation is having a multiplying effect in neighbouring countries. Table 4 lists some of the ongoing Brazil-Germany triangular projects.

It is no surprise that both Japan and Germany have also shared with Brazil the diplomatic objective of gaining membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC). The growing assistance cooperation could be seen as an outgrowth of these countries relations when Tokyo, Berlin and Brasilia worked closely together in a failed bid to join the UNSC in 2005.

As of March 2006, bilateral assistance from the UK to Brazil was phased out, and replaced with a regional programme approach, in which Brazil is seen as central to the region. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK has chosen to continue working in Brazil as a Latin American regional focal point for policy research that shares DFID’s so-called ‘lessons learned’ on issues ranging from trade policy, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction to advancing the Millennium Development Goals. DFID’s ‘graduated’ policy-level development

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<th><strong>Table 3. Triangular initiatives between Brazil and international organizations</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Beneficiaries and programmes</strong></td>
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<td>Brazil–ILO</td>
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<td>Brazil–UFPA (South–South sub-programme)</td>
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<td>Brazil–ACTO–IASO</td>
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<td>Brazil–WFP</td>
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<td>Brazil–FAO</td>
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<td>Brazil–UNDP</td>
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*Source: ABC.*
assistance to Brazil is now an integral part of Britain’s regional strategy for Latin America.50

Brazil has broken through the North–South–South pattern of triangular cooperation. The country has collaborated with Argentina to assist Haiti and in July 2009 Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Egypt to promote ‘trilateral technical cooperation initiatives’ in African countries. The main areas of this new South–South–South triangular cooperation are knowledge and information exchange, and support for capacity-building efforts involving African human resources. Most recently, Brazil has entered into MoU discussions with Israel about joint trilateral programmes and contributing to multilateral initiatives in which the focus would be on capacity-building in the fields of agriculture, gender and community development. Another interesting development is the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBAS) Fund against poverty and hunger, which is managed by the UNDP. The focus is on capacity-building projects. Any developing country can be supported. Guinea Bissau and Haiti were the first countries to receive cooperation from the Fund. 51

Some Brazilian officials are concerned that triangular operations may divert the country’s assets to priorities that are other than those of Brazil. Moreover, according to ABC representatives, triangular cooperation ‘should not become a channel where Brazilian organizations subcontract their development cooperation work to others’.52 Our research indicates that Brazil is inclined to follow a careful and selective approach to triangular operations. Not only will it seek to avoid replicating the traditional patterns of North–South development assistance, but

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<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<td>Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa</td>
<td>Combat to HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>2007–2011</td>
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<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Risk and catastrophe management</td>
<td>2010–2015</td>
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<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Metrology</td>
<td>2008–2013</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>Environmental management in the Amazon</td>
<td>2010–2013</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>To establish an environmental technology centre</td>
<td>2010–2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>To promote small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
<td>2010–2013</td>
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Source: GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), which recently became, with other organizations the German Society for International Cooperation, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit).

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its cautious though growing investment in triangular cooperation is balanced with national economic and diplomatic interests.

To what extent do Brazilian officials need to be concerned about diversion resulting from triangular cooperation? It is useful to note that, despite the growth, triangular collaborative arrangements do not yet represent a significant proportion of Brazil’s development assistance in comparison with its external bilateral assistance programmes (489 projects and activities in 2009), less than 10 per cent in number of projects and activities in the implementation or pipeline stage. Our research indicates that estimates of the total disbursement for Brazil’s triangular cooperation and regional programmes are not available and difficult to make, given that compilation of the costs of consultancy work and training (mostly the salaries, equipment, publications, travel and per diem expenses) is inhibited by the lack of centralized accounting, or the lack of public reporting on such figures, and due to the lack of international cash transfers in the implementation of technical assistance programmes. Our general assessment is that triangular cooperation and regional programmes will become increasingly important for Brazil as its bilateral assistance as a recipient is phased out. Countries such as Japan, Germany and the UK seem to have changed their foreign aid relations with Brazil, restricting their assistance and gradually expanding triangular arrangements.

**Beyond hierarchy and national interests?**

Brazilian authorities highlight that their country’s assistance has no conditionality, and is not driven by commercial interests. In its official statements, for example at the UN South–South Conference of 2009, the Brazilian government emphasized that the traditional assistance assumptions, management approach and performance standards that characterize North–South cooperation should not apply automatically to South–South cooperation:

> Now that South–South cooperation is getting more widespread and stronger, both in its technical and economic dimensions, there are views that it should adhere to the mechanisms designed to guide, monitor and evaluate traditional international development assistance programmes.\(^54\)

During the same conference, the Brazilian delegation declared that South–South cooperation should not be seen as a step or ‘training’ stage for a developing country to become a donor country. They also highlighted that North–South cooperation practices should not be reproduced and the differences between the two not to be ignored. In their official remarks to the OECD, Brazilian representatives claimed that,

> In our view, South–South cooperation cannot be associated with the traditional development assistance flows, as it is not predicated necessarily on the provision of financial resources. For us, the utmost success indicator to evaluate our South–South cooperation is the qualitative leap that may be measured in terms of expanded human capital, institutional strengthening and productive output.\(^55\)

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53 See Tables 3 and 4. Please note that the table also considers the years after 2009.
54 Brazilian delegation statement during the High Level UN Conference on South–South Cooperation, Nairobi, 1–3 December 2009.
In sum, the Brazilian government defends different standards and mechanisms to guide, monitor and evaluate South–South development cooperation. The government shows no interest in reproducing the North–South cooperation pattern. ‘South–South cooperation is not deprived from management, monitoring and accountability mechanisms.’56

In interviews with the authors, Brazilian authorities have emphasized the statements that have been made on several occasions about Brazil not being an ‘emerging donor’ or ‘new donor’, since they believe that aid is related to a vertical relationship and that Brazil instead favors a ‘horizontal approach’.57 Underneath this is a perspective that real debate on the causes of poverty and hunger, and on issues like foreign trade, technology transfer, finance, foreign direct investment and so on would not be likely to happen if traditional North-South patterns were to be reproduced.58

This current sensitivity of the Brazilian government and its insistence on framing its assistance as ‘cooperation’ and ‘partnership’ are motivated by Brazil’s own past experiences as an aid receiver and preconditioned by a longer-held belief and conscious desire to confront the traditional assumption that international relations is a zero-sum game of realpolitik and unending power contestation. Instead, Lula’s government has suggested that Brazil is taking an alternative moral position that expresses solidarity with Southern counterparts over national interests.

The ABC states that Brazil’s external cooperation efforts do not have a commercial purpose, and instead are based on ‘shared interests’ and ‘mutual help’.59 Some academic observers have pointed out, however, that Brazil’s international technical cooperation (ITC) enlarges and strengthens the country’s interests by opening markets for its products and services (Machado 2004, 75). Brazil’s technical cooperation is said to be used as a ‘political instrument’ to strengthen its leadership in Latin America (Machado 2004, 75), and cooperation with the Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOPs) opens markets and creates new possibilities for economic, political and social cooperation (Correia 1997, 2). Moreover, since Brazil primarily provides technical assistance to less powerful countries,60 its technical ‘cooperation’ should still be viewed as an expression of Brazilian inter-state influence or power (Machado 2004, 94–97). The ABC also recognizes the political meaning of its external technical cooperation in its own statements,61 which note that Brazil’s external technical cooperation ‘strengthen[s] Brazil’s presence in the countries and regions that are identified as associated with its national interests’. The ABC notes on its webpage that

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56 Brazilian delegation statement during the High Level UN Conference on South–South Cooperation, Nairobi, 1–3 December 2009.
58 Senior officer interview with authors.
60 Among the exceptions are Mexico and Argentina.
International technical cooperation is an important development instrument that helps the country to foster structural changes in their productive systems and overcome limits that hinder their growth. Cooperation with developing countries is an important foreign policy instrument through which Brazil has assured a positive and increasing presence in countries and regions that are first priorities for Brazil. What the above statement suggests is that Brazil’s external technical cooperation relations inevitably entail a degree of hierarchy, and they are not motivated by altruism alone.

Pino and Leite (2010), who argue that the main objective of Brazilian cooperation is to promote the socio-economic development of its partner countries, also add that there is a ‘fundamental political character, in terms of the kind of society that Brazil aims to promote’, i.e. liberal democratic, with regard to the partner countries. Moreover, they argue that external development cooperation is an instrument that can be used to disseminate a particular Brazilian ‘image of modernity’, and that the growing international influence of this image helps to build support for Brazil’s efforts to gain a permanent seat on the UNSC. Going beyond the concept of the monolithic state, the foreign policy decision to move more robustly into Africa was a direct result of the Workers Party’s adoption of ‘solidarity diplomacy’ as a guiding principle of its foreign policy. Pino and Leite (2010) furthermore note that there are also regional political interests behind Brazil’s external development cooperation. With respect to South America, the continuing evolution of the region towards political stability, growing wealth and unity also helps Brazil.

Rather than simply seeing the Brazilian state as a billiard ball, it is useful to note that foreign policy is also driven by differing domestic sectoral interest, as well as by the interests of competing political parties and bureaucratic organizations. Several of the bureaucratic organs, such as EMBRAPA affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fiocruz (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation) affiliated to the Ministry of Health, and SENAI (a private organization that provides professional education) are especially proactive in advocating for their sector interests, including pushing for increased external cooperation ties.

Although not readily acknowledged by the authorities, political, economic and commercial interests appear to be part of Brazil’s external development cooperation activities. It is tenable to suggest that national self-interest is not the only motivating factor behind international cooperation. However, it would be problematic to assume that national sectoral, bureaucratic or other state interests have no role in Brazil’s external development cooperation programmes. A more sophisticated conceptualization would be that interests and unequal international power relations are part of these Brazilian foreign relations, but that external development cooperation can nonetheless also be win–win.

One stream of research has highlighted the links between external development cooperation and the ‘internationalization’ of Brazilian economic interests. Machado (2004) argues that the Brazilian government has used external technical cooperation to strengthen national economic interests, by pursuing international economic cooperation arrangements with other Southern countries.

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which involve opening new markets for Brazilian goods and services. Pino and Leite (2010) examine the relationship between Brazil’s external development cooperation and the growth of its biofuel industry, and how this relate to competition with other rising states, namely China and India. In Africa, Brazil’s fast-growing national corporations seem to have levered their new linkages to Brazil’s growing external development cooperation activities in Africa to further expand their investments. Petrobrás (Brazil’s national oil company), Brazil’s three largest infrastructure construction, supply and engineering companies (Odebrecht SA, Camargo Correa SA and Andrade Gutierrez SA) and its next tier builders (Gerdau, Companhia Vale) have all expanded their international operations during the same period of time Brazil expanded its South-South cooperation.

Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional (CSN, the steel producer and mining and infrastructure company), Embraer (aircraft manufacturer) and, more recently, Cosan (sugar-ethanol corporation) have also seen dramatic growth in their international operations. The growing activities of these major national companies have greatly strengthened Brazil’s economic presence and relations throughout the developing world.

We should also note that the internationalization of Brazilian companies and of the economy as a whole has become part of the country’s external strategy. Brazil’s foreign direct investments have increased an average of 14 per cent a year since 2005 (Cervo 2010, 19). Moreover, Baumann (2010, 46–47) argues that the process of internationalization of domestically owned firms should be seen as a peculiar characteristic of the Brazilian external sector in the 2010s; for example: Gerdau (steel) has operated in 13 countries, Vale (mining) in 25, Petrobras (energy/oil) in 26, Votorantim (various sectors) in 14, Camargo Correa (various) in 13 and JBS (meat) in 14 countries. The author highlights that the Brazilian government has adopted an explicit policy to stimulate investment abroad. He adds that the BNDES has financed mergers with and acquisition of larger companies, as a means to strengthen and consolidate selected domestic firms as major players in specific sectors, enabling them to face international competition (Baumann 2010, 47).

In sum, if we consider that international development cooperation is a foreign policy instrument, we cannot detach it from the whole foregoing policy context or from the power shifts that have been going on in the international system (Nye 2010). Cervo (2010, 9) states that besides preserving Brazil’s historical participation in multilateral organizations, Lula’s government increased by more than 30 per cent the number of countries where Brazil maintains diplomatic representations. There were three external objectives: market liberalism with reciprocity of benefits; expansion of business abroad through trade and internationalization of Brazilian companies; and reinforcement of military power to influence global order and sectoral regimes. It is also useful to remember Saraiva’s (2008) argument about the belief held by policymakers and leaders that Brazil should occupy a ‘special’ place in the international system (Saraiva 2008). Schläger (2007) argues that the country’s rise as a development assistance donor is linked to its desire to be a global player and to engage in shaping the world’s governance architecture. International cooperation and a pacific stance seem to be the way the country has found to exercise its role as a rising power.
Brazil exercises its role as a rising power by engaging in consistent efforts to expand and strategically anchor South–South cooperation, and in doing so, it has proven to be a constructive actor in shaping the architecture of global governance.63

Brazilian development cooperation should be seen in relation to the country’s broad policy objectives as well as in the context of international power shifts in which Brazil is emerging as a middle power. Sousa (2008) analyses Brazil’s role as an increasingly important development cooperation actor and highlights the country’s hybrid position between the North and the South, as a country that projects its identity as the voice of the developing world, and perceptions that identify Brazil as a crucial country for regional stability and development. She defines the country’s position as ambiguous, being at the same time a developing country and one of the key players in the international system.

Conclusion: Brazil as a Southern donor

Brazil’s experience as a recipient of traditional foreign aid and its self-identification with other developing countries have made successive governments sensitive to the terms ‘foreign aid’, ‘donors’ and ‘development assistance’. Brazilian governments have consistently emphasized that Brazil’s foreign assistance is an alternative to traditional donor relations, with their hierarchical treatment of the recipient. Brazil has instead sought to go beyond hierarchy and national interests by emphasizing the language of ‘partnership’ and ‘collaboration’. As early as 1978, Brazil successfully promoted the inclusion of these concepts in the UN framework, and helped develop the notion of technical cooperation among developing countries. At the same time, Brazil’s provision for technical cooperation has been related, though often indirectly, to its broader foreign policy objectives. The main goals have included strengthening its foreign relations with other developing countries, increasing its international presence, opening and consolidating markets for Brazilian goods and services, and enhancing Brazil’s science and technology capabilities. In the words of ABC, Brazilian external cooperation policy aims to ‘strengthen the country’s presence internationally, especially in Latin America’.64

Under Lula da Silva’s presidency, the Brazilian government elevated the concept of South–South cooperation to a foreign policy priority. It reaffirmed technical cooperation as the core of external assistance, and broadened the external assistance agenda to encompass a wider range of modalities including scientific–technological, educational, economic and financial cooperation. Under South–South cooperation, the Brazilian government also provides scholarships, humanitarian and refugee assistance, volunteers, research for development, and financial and cultural cooperation. It has also expanded into offering humanitarian assistance and debt forgiveness and contributed to UN peacekeeping operations.

63 Schläger 2007, 3.
Despite the push towards more comprehensive involvement in South–South cooperation, the Brazil government has not established a central agency for national coordination of its South–South contributions. Nor has it set up a nationally coordinated and standardized system to collect, process and publish information about the growing amounts of development assistance that it is providing. To date, Brazil continues to lack an official external development cooperation policy, or any regulations on how its contributions should be reported.

Brazil’s foreign policy under President Lula da Silva gave more focus to expanding ties with South America and Africa, which were both identified as priority regions. Another new political priority was strengthening ties with other major emerging market countries, especially India and South Africa under the IBSA. Relations with these new focus countries centre on international cooperation in the health and agriculture sectors, and the development of human resources (see the articles in this issue by Sachin Chatervedi on India, and Brendan Vickers on South Africa). Brazil has also tried to advance closer cooperation with the IBSA partners in energy cooperation, particularly in ethanol. However, the number of actual projects is small. Brazil has actually built much broader and deeper economic ties with China over the past decade, the other major emerging country, especially through rapidly expanding trade and investment relations. Massive exports to China have enabled Brazil to build up its foreign currency reserves, which in turn have allowed Brasilia to pay down its foreign debt. This has led to an improvement in Brazil’s international credit rating, and its international image more broadly.

During Lula da Silva’s presidency, cooperation of all forms with developing countries grew dramatically. An innovative trend has been trilateral cooperation projects that involve Brazil and another country, or international cooperation to contribute to the development of a developing country. The official position is that, even as Brazil provides more cooperation, this cooperation continues to be horizontal and does not reproduce the North–South pattern, as characterized in the traditional aid relations of the OECD–DAC members, in their approach to ODA. We have suggested that the claim that Brazil’s external development assistance is non-hierarchical, and can be classified as ‘horizontal’, needs to be scrutinized in detail, and likely denies the reality of international power relations that are inherent in what continues to be, in essence, international assistance.

Brazilian authorities suggest that their external assistance is moved not by national economic or political interests, but by international ‘solidarity’ and a sincere intention to support the development of its Southern partner countries. While this may be the intention, what is missing in the official rhetoric is that the dual motivations of altruism and national interest are not necessarily mutually exclusive. If we approach international relations through a positive sum lens, there is some room for mutual gains and cooperation, even if power imbalances in international relations persist. We suggest that Brazilian cooperation is not completely divorced from national, sub-national or sectoral interests and cannot be viewed apart from Brazil’s broader foreign policy objectives and the power shifts in the international system. Brazil does pursue some political, economic and commercial interests through its provision of international development cooperation. However, the external development cooperation that Brazil
provides can, and has, made a positive difference in the recipient countries. The focus on capacity development and on the demands from these countries can be considered a demonstration of solidarity. For instance, numerous human and institutional capacity-building projects have contributed to the development of recipient countries.

Brazil has built a positive ‘Southern partner’ image for itself through its external development assistance ties, even as the lack of coordination on the provision of assistance between Brazil and other rising assistance providers such as China and India has perhaps diminished the internal consistency of the concept of South–South cooperation. More empirical research and field investigation are needed to better gauge the impact of Brazil’s assistance initiatives in the field, as well as their real contributions to South–South cooperation more broadly. For the period since President Lula da Silva came into office (2003), Brazil could be classified as a ‘Southern donor’, which expresses its own novelties, and tensions, of simultaneously being a donor and a developing country. While the Brazilian government has emphasized ‘solidarity’ and the non-commercial intentions of its external assistance, shared interests and mutual help, our research and that of other scholars (Dreher et al 2010) have identified the reality that state interests (political and economic) and Brazilian corporate interests are part of the mix of motivations in Brazil’s external development assistance. Our assessment is that Brazil—similar to China, India and South Africa—is driven by a complex set of forces, factors and motivations when providing international development assistance.

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